



SPECIES AT RISK ACT

CONSULTATION WORKBOOK on the addition of a species to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk

Spring Cisco



Photography by Michel Hénault, MRNF

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Aussi disponible en français



Fisheries and Oceans
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CONSULTATION WORKBOOK

The Spring Cisco

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SUMMARY
**ADDING THE SPRING CISCO
TO THE LIST OF WILDLIFE SPECIES AT RISK -
WHY ARE WE HAVING THESE CONSULTATIONS?**

The *Species at Risk Act (SARA)* was proclaimed on June 5, 2003, by the Government of Canada. The Act provides a framework for actions across Canada to promote the survival of wildlife species, subspecies and distinct wildlife populations. It requires Canada to provide for the recovery of *threatened* or *endangered* species, and to manage *species of special concern* to make sure they do not become *endangered* or *threatened*. SARA is the result of the *Canadian Strategy on Biodiversity*, developed in response to the United Nations *Convention on Biological Diversity*.

The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) has proposed that Spring Cisco be placed as endangered on the List of Wildlife Species at Risk. This proposal is based on available scientific assessments.

To determine whether a species should be added to the list of species protected under SARA, the Government of Canada carries out a series of public consultations aimed primarily at groups directly concerned by the species or for whom the species holds a special interest. This consultation can only be on the addition of the species and not on its status, which can only be determined by COSEWIC. A decision is taken only after careful examination of information received from the consultations and of factors such as the potential social and economic impacts of adding the species to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk.

Aquatic species at risk fall under the purview of Fisheries and Oceans Canada which is presently seeking your views to assist in making an informed decision on whether to add the Spring Cisco to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk of the *Species at Risk Act*.

Though each and every Canadian shares in the responsibility to protect threatened species, the impact of SARA on you or your organization will vary according to the species concerned and according to the nature of your activities. Your ideas, understanding, and advice will assist the government in assessing the impacts of adding this species to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk.

CONSULTATION WORKBOOK

This workbook provides background information on government requirements for adding a species to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk, and on the nature and application of SARA provisions. This general information is outlined in Part 1. Part 2 describes the current status of the Spring Cisco, based on assessments provided by the COSEWIC. Part 3, which is detachable, consists of a questionnaire to be filled out and returned. It is intended to assist you in articulating your concerns and advice.

A downloadable workbook is available at:

www.registrelep.gc.ca/involved/consultation/default_e.cfm.

Your views on whether to add the Spring Cisco to the SARA List of Wildlife Species at Risk are important to this consultation process. Your opinion will be read carefully and will be taken into serious consideration.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To promote participation in the public consultation process, the SARA Public Registry (www.sararegistry.gc.ca) provides information on the application of SARA provisions. Additional information can be found on the Fisheries and Oceans Canada Species at Risk website (www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/species-especes/) and on the website of the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) (www.cosewic.gc.ca).

SUBMIT YOUR COMMENTS

Please send your comments on the addition of the Spring Cisco to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk **before 30 April 2010**.

Species at Risk Management
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
P.O. Box 1000, 850, route de la Mer
Mont-Joli, Québec
G5H 3Z4

Email:
especiesperilqc@dfo-mpo.gc.ca
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1-877-775-0848

1. WHAT IS THE *SPECIES AT RISK ACT*?

The *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) was created to ensure the survival of wildlife species and the protection of our natural heritage. It requires Canada to provide for the recovery of species at risk owing to human activity, and to manage species of *special concern* to make sure they do not become *endangered* or *threatened*. The Act provides protection for species, their residences and critical habitat.

In analyzing the implications of adding a species to the official List of Wildlife Species at Risk, we must consider the impacts that the subsequent management strategies may have on:

- upholding the automatic prohibitions provided by the Act concerning the particular species listed as *extirpated*, *endangered* and *threatened*;
- meeting the objectives of the recovery plan.

1.1 Legal Listing - What does this mean?

A species is not protected under the *Species at Risk Act* until it is included on the List of Wildlife Species at Risk (Schedule 1 of the Act).

COSEWIC assesses the status of candidate species for inclusion on the List of Wildlife Species at Risk and submits its proposals for the listing to the federal government. COSEWIC, an independent committee of experts, assesses and designates which wildlife species are in some danger of disappearing from Canada. Following receipt of COSEWIC assessments and public consultations, the federal government must do one of the following:

- a) Accept the assessment and add the species to the List;
- b) Decide not to add the species to the List; or
- c) Refer the current assessment back to COSEWIC for further information or consideration.

The decision on whether to add a species to the List takes into account the COSEWIC assessment, information received from consultations, and factors such as the potential social and economic impacts of the listing.

Species that COSEWIC proposes the government adds to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk fall under one of the following categories: *extinct*, *extirpated*, *endangered*, *threatened*, or of *special concern*. It is with the status designated by COSEWIC that a species is added to the List.

SPECIES ON THE LIST OF WILDLIFE SPECIES AT RISK
- OFFICIAL STATUSES -

Extinct - A wildlife species that no longer exists.

Extirpated - A wildlife species that is no longer found in the wild in Canada but may be found elsewhere.

Endangered - A wildlife species facing imminent extirpation or extinction.

Threatened - A wildlife species likely to become *Endangered* if nothing is done to reverse the factors threatening it.

Special Concern - A wildlife species that may become a *Threatened* or *Endangered* species because of a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats.

Once a species is legally listed as *extirpated*, *endangered*, or *threatened*, specific protection measures come into effect barring any harmful actions against species at risk. In addition, a recovery process must be completed within timelines prescribed by SARA.

1.2 What protection does the Act give to legally listed species?

Once species are legally listed as *extirpated*, *endangered* or *threatened*, automatic prohibitions apply. SARA has general prohibitions against killing, harming, taking, possessing, capturing, and collecting legally listed species, and damaging or destroying their residences.

Enforcement measures apply immediately to ensure respect of the automatic prohibitions. The implementation of a recovery strategy is a more long-term endeavour. The recovery process will be initiated after another series of public consultations.

1.3 Recovery strategies

The recovery process is designed to improve the status of species at risk. There are two parts to the recovery planning process for species listed as *extirpated*, *endangered* or *threatened*:

- 1) the development of a recovery strategy which identifies threats to species, describes recovery objectives for that species, and identifies the species' critical habitat;
- 2) the development of an action plan which describes activities to be carried out to reduce threats to the species, protect its critical habitat and promote the recovery of the species.

For species of special concern, management plans establish the measures that must be implemented to protect the species and their habitats.

The timeline for establishing recovery strategies will be one year from the time of legal listing for *endangered* species, two years for species listed as *extirpated* or *threatened*, and three years (for a management plan) for species of *special concern*.

The recovery strategy and action plans are prepared in cooperation and consultation with Wildlife Management Boards, Aboriginal organizations that are directly affected by the recovery strategy, and jurisdictions such as provincial or territorial governments who are responsible for the management of the species. Landowners and other stakeholders will also be consulted.

2 THE SPRING CISCO

2.1 Status

The COSEWIC considers the Spring Cisco as an endangered species.

2.2 Last evaluation by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC)

The updated status report was published in summer 2009. The COSEWIC reviewed the status of the Spring Cisco and now considers this species as being endangered. The Government of Canada is now considering adding the Spring Cisco to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk as an endangered species.

2.3 Species biology and distribution

Related to the Lake Cisco (*Coregonus artedii*), which spawns in autumn and has a wider distribution in Canada, the Spring Cisco (*Coregonus* sp.) spawns in the spring and has a distribution restricted to the Lac des Écorces. The temperature conditions of the Lac des Écorces, relatively high summer temperatures, late cooling in the fall, may be conducive to spring spawning and could explain the evolution of this population. Reproductive isolation and observed morphological differences support its genetic specificity.

Its sides are silvery while the colour of its back varies from blue-green to black. Adults generally measure between 15 and 30 cm. The Spring Cisco prefers cold and well oxygenated lake water. In the summer, it makes daily vertical migrations in the bottom layer of the lake. During the fall and winter, it is always captured at water depths exceeding 12 m. During spring spawning, Spring Ciscos are captured primarily at depths of 20-30 m. The substrate at these sites is usually soft, composed mainly of a thick layer of fluid silt.

Spring Cisco of both sexes spawn for the first time at three years of age. The adults are dispersed throughout the main part of the lake until the spring, when they concentrate in a few specific areas to reproduce. Spawning occurs in deep water, from mid-May to early June. The fry hatch at the end of July, then migrate toward the surface of the lake. The Spring Cisco feeds mainly on zooplankton. Rainbow Smelt is a significant predator of Spring Cisco larvae.

2.4 Where is the Spring Cisco found?

Although Lake Ciscos are widely distributed across North America, the Spring Cisco is unique because it can only be found in the Lac des Écorces (46°31'48" N, 75°25'03" W) in the regional county municipality Antoine-Labelle, in the Laurentides.



Figure 1. Location of the Lac des Écorces

2.5 How many ciscos are there?

This population is only known since 1981 and population size as well as demographic trends have not yet been determined because of the low number of individuals caught. Based on fish sampling conducted since 1981, catch per unit of time and average length of spring ciscos are declining. According to available data, there is a high probability that the population decreased by more than 50% over the past 3 generations, approximately 15 years.

2.6 Threats to the population of Spring Ciscos

For over 50 years, the Lac des Écorces sustained many disruptions from a diversity of sources. Human activity intensified around the 1970s with residential and touristic development. Until 1995, untreated sewage from municipalities of Lac-des-Écorces and Chute-Saint-Philippe was directly poured into the Kiamika River, the main tributary of the lake, speeding up the lake's aging process. Leaching into the lake of pesticides and fertilisers also occurs on the bovine and pig farms along the River Kiamika. For several years, a great quantity of aquatic vegetation, including Eurasian water milfoil, has been observed in the lake, suggesting nutrient enrichment. Despite all these disruptions, dissolved oxygen content of the lake remains adequate for ciscos all year long. Many fish stocking were carried out in the lake in order to promote sport fishing. The recent colonisation of the Lac des Écorces by the rainbow smelt, uncovered in 1999, seems to have a negative impact on the Spring Cisco population.

2.7 Why does COSEWIC consider the Spring Cisco an 'endangered' species?

COSEWIC has determined that this subspecies, which is found nowhere else in the world, is threatened with imminent extinction. The state and the size of the population are unknown, but captures in experimental fisheries are declining. The introduction of competitors or predators like the rainbow smelt as well as degradation of water quality in the Lac des Écorces and of habitat are threats to the survival of this population.

2.8 What will happen if the Spring Cisco is added to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk?

If the Spring Cisco is added to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk, it will benefit from the automatic prohibitions applying to all listed species. It will be prohibited to kill, harm, take, possess, capture, and collect a Spring Cisco. A strategy for the recovery of the population must be prepared within one year of the legal listing, in collaboration with the principal stakeholders. The recovery strategy will also be submitted to public consultation. For more information on the provisions of the *Species at Risk Act* and the consequences of its implementation, please consult Part 1 of the present workbook.

3 LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK

The following questionnaire invites you to reflect on the implications of adding the Spring Cisco to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk (Schedule 1 of SARA) with the endangered species status. Your answers and comments will tell us what you think about the protection and recovery of this unique population, and especially about the possible effects the decision to add it to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk would have.

You can also supply your answers and express your point of view in another format of your choice.

If you wish to keep the other sections of this workbook, please feel free to detach them and return only the questionnaire.

Return the completed questionnaire or your comments by mail, fax or E-mail to the following address:

Species at Risk Management
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
P.O.Box 1000, 850, route de la Mer
Mont-Joli, Québec
G5H 3Z4
E-mail : especiesperilqc@dfo-mpo.gc.ca
Fax: 418-775-0718
Toll-free: 1-877-775-0848

Please submit comments by
30 April 2010

THANK YOU!

Consultation on the Spring Cisco

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. In what capacity are you completing this questionnaire?

- ☐ Individual
- ☐ Representative of an organization, aboriginal community or company (please specify):

☐ Other (please specify):

2. Your name (optional): _____

3. Where do you live (if individual)? / Or, what territory does your organization or company cover?

- ☐ Province of Québec
- ☐ Region or locality of the Laurentides region
- ☐ Outside Québec, specify: _____
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

4. Which sectors do you represent? Check all that apply.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-profit Organization - economic, social and community development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal community | <input type="checkbox"/> Service Sector - public administration, health and social welfare |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Service Sector - tourism, culture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Construction | <input type="checkbox"/> Service Sector - transportation and communications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forestry | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hunting, Fishing and Trapping | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hydroelectric or Wind Energy - exploration, production, transportation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mines, Oil and Gas - exploration, exploitation, transportation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-profit Organization - environmental, sustainable development | |

Please return this questionnaire by 30 April 2010

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5. How familiar are you with the *Species at Risk Act*?

- ☐ I am not familiar with the Act
- ☐ I know this Act well
- ☐ I have heard about this Act in the media
- ☐ I have gathered some information on this Act
(pamphlets, websites, consultation workbooks, etc.)
- ☐ I have participated in information sessions or public consultations relating to
this Act
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

6. a) Do you think the Government of Canada should add the Spring Cisco to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk under SARA with the status "endangered species"?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Undecided

b) If you have answered "Yes" or "No", please indicate the reasons for your answer. If possible, please provide information which could help us in deciding whether to add the Spring Cisco to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk:

Please return this questionnaire by 30 April 2010



c) If you have answered "Undecided", please indicate why:

7. Based on your understanding of the *Species at Risk Act*,

a) how would your activities be affected if the Spring Cisco were added to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk?

☐ Positive Effect ☐ Negative Effect ☐ No Effect ☐ Not Sure

b) If you believe the effect would be **NEGATIVE**, please describe how your activities would be negatively impacted. What suggestions would you make to minimize these effects?

Please return this questionnaire by 30 April 2010

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c) If you believe the effect would be POSITIVE, please describe how your activities would be favourably impacted.

8. Do you have any other comments concerning the legal listing of the Spring Cisco on the List of Wildlife Species at Risk? (include additional sheets, if necessary)

Please return this questionnaire by 30 April 2010

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9. Which of these options best reflect your agreement or disagreement with the following statements concerning the Spring Cisco:

The Spring Cisco	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Indifferent	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	No opinion
is of social, cultural and traditional importance in my community						
has economic value (<i>e.g.</i> sport fishing)						
creates job opportunities in the local economy (<i>e.g.</i> tourism)						
plays an important role in maintaining a healthy freshwater ecosystem						
is an important part of the Canadian heritage						
will be a valuable resource for future generations						
I value them, though I have never seen them						
Other (please specify):						

Please return this questionnaire by 30 April 2010



The following questions are optional

10. Has this workbook helped you

a) understand how the listing process works under SARA?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Undecided

b) understand the important issues concerning the Spring Cisco?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Undecided

c) find an effective way to communicate your views on the potential listing of the Spring Cisco?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Undecided

11. What changes or additions can we make to the workbook to make it easier to understand and more user-friendly?

THANK YOU!

Please return this questionnaire by 30 April 2010

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Please submit your comments on the addition of the Spring Cisco to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk by mail, fax or electronic mail to:

Species at Risk Management
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Mont-Joli, Québec
G5H 3Z4

Email: especesperilqc@dfo-mpo.gc.ca
Fax: 418-775-0718
Telephone (toll-free): 1-877-775-0848

The last day to submit your comments is
30 April 2010



Please return this questionnaire by 30 April 2010

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