

# Response Statement - Eskimo Curlew

**December 2, 2010**

**Common Name:** Eskimo Curlew

**Scientific Name:** *Numenius borealis*

**Status assessment by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC):** Endangered

**How the Minister of the Environment intends to respond to the assessment:** The above assessment confirms the classification of this wildlife species in Schedule 1, the *List of Wildlife Species at Risk* as Endangered. Activities will continue to be undertaken in a manner consistent with the purposes, and according to the timelines identified in, the *Species at Risk Act*.

**Reason(s) for status designation provided by COSEWIC:** This bird is a species of shorebird with 100% of its known breeding range in Arctic Canada. Formerly abundant, the population collapsed in the late 1800s, primarily owing to uncontrolled market hunting and dramatic losses in the amount and quality of spring stopover habitat (native grasslands). The population has never recovered, and there have been no confirmed breeding records for over 100 years, nor any confirmed records of birds (photographs/specimens) since 1963. As such, less than 50 years have elapsed since the last confirmed record. However, there are some recent sight records that suggest the possibility that a very small population (fewer than 50 mature individuals) may still persist in remote arctic landscapes. The primary factors limiting recovery are the very low population size, no known chance of rescue from outside populations, and the historic and ongoing conversion of native grasslands on its spring staging areas in Canada and the U.S. and on its wintering grounds in Argentina.

**Occurrence:** Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut

**Competent Minister(s):**  
Minister of Environment

**Applicable federal legislation:**

This species is protected under the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994*.

**Conservation activities underway:** The final Recovery Strategy for Eskimo Curlew (*Numenius borealis*) in Canada is posted on the Species at Risk Public Registry.

Recovery of the Eskimo Curlew is not considered feasible at this time, because no nests have been located in 140 years and there are very few, if any, individuals left in existence.

Recent efforts to locate remaining individuals have been unsuccessful, and it is possible that this species is extinct. Species-specific research and surveys for Eskimo Curlews are not warranted at this time, although surveys for shorebirds or waterbirds in potential habitat should include this species. In addition, reported observations of Eskimo Curlews should be investigated and confirmed if feasible.