

Response Statement - Eastern Sand Darter, Ontario populations

December 2, 2010

Common Name: Eastern Sand Darter, Ontario populations

Scientific Name: *Ammocrypta pellucida*

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

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 Threatened. 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 species prefers sand bottom areas of lakes and streams in which it burrows. There is continuing decline in the already small and fragmented populations; four (of 11) have probably been extirpated. The extent of occurrence of this species in Ontario is approximately half of what it was in the 1970s as a result of habitat loss and degradation from increasing urban and agricultural development, stream channelization and competition with invasive alien species.

Occurrence: Ontario

Competent Minister(s):

Minister of Fisheries and Oceans

Applicable federal legislation: Fisheries are managed and fish habitat is protected under the *Fisheries Act*.

Conservation activities underway: There are currently four aquatic ecosystem-based recovery strategies (Thames River, Sydenham River, Grand River and Essex-Erie region) being implemented that address several populations of Eastern Sand Darter. Recovery activities implemented include active stewardship and outreach/awareness programs to reduce identified threats. Funding for these actions is supported by the Government of Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk. A colour brochure of fish species at risk (including the Eastern Sand Darter) was distributed to baitfish harvesters in 2006 to raise general awareness and help prevent incidental harvest through this means. Targeted fish surveys have been conducted by various agencies within areas of known or suspected occurrence of the Eastern Sand Darter. Eastern Sand Darter was previously listed as Threatened under the *Species at Risk Act* and therefore the *Species at Risk Act* prohibitions already apply.