

Response Statement - Eulachon, Nass / Skeena Rivers population

December 18, 2013

Common Name: Eulachon, Nass / Skeena Rivers population

Scientific Name: *Thaleichthys pacificus*

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

How the Minister of the Environment intends to respond to the assessment: The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans will undertake consultations with the government of British Columbia, the Nisga'a Joint Fisheries Management Committee and the Nisga'a Wildlife Committee, Aboriginal peoples, stakeholders, and the public on whether or not the Eulachon, Nass / Skeena Rivers population, should be added to the *List of Wildlife Species at Risk* (Schedule 1) under the *Species at Risk Act* as Special Concern. The Minister of the Environment will forward the COSEWIC assessment of the Eulachon, Nass / Skeena Rivers population, to the Governor in Council upon completion of consultations.

Once a species has been assessed by COSEWIC, further steps must be undertaken before it is added to Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act*. For more information on this process, please view [The Species Listing Process Under SARA](#).

Reason(s) for status designation provided by COSEWIC: This short-lived species spends over 95% of its life in the marine environment. It spawns in the lower reaches of two rivers in northern British Columbia where its spawning areas are small (<500 km²). Recent information from this area indicates the population appears stable and threats in the freshwater environment are considered to be small. However, the abundance of the species in adjacent areas has declined substantially in the recent past. The causes of these declines are poorly understood and are likely to be due to threats in both the spawning habitat and the marine environment. Threats in the marine environment would also affect the Nass and Skeena rivers population. This population could become Threatened in a relatively short period of time if marine survival deteriorates or threats in the spawning area increase.

Occurrence: British Columbia, Pacific Ocean

Competent Minister(s):

Minister of Fisheries and Oceans

Province(s) and territory (territories) to be consulted:

British Columbia

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

Conservation activities underway: Since 1995, DFO has undertaken specific activities to protect Eulachon including closure of the commercial Eulachon fishery on the Fraser; suspension of dredging on the Fraser River during Eulachon spawning season; closure of the shrimp fishery in Queen Charlotte Sound; implementation of bycatch reduction measures in the commercial shrimp trawl fishery including bycatch reduction devices and potential closures when cumulative Eulachon bycatch level is reached; closure of recreational fishing in all tidal waters; and an annual egg/larval survey to monitor stock on the Fraser in conjunction with First Nations.