

Response Statement - River Darter, Great Lakes - Upper St. Lawrence populations

January 11, 2017

Common Name: River Darter, Great Lakes - Upper St. Lawrence populations

Scientific Name: *Percina shumardi*

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 Minister of the Environment will forward the COSEWIC assessment of the River Darter, Great Lakes - Upper St. Lawrence populations to the Governor in Council as soon as possible following completion of the extended consultation period, and analysis as appropriate. During the extended consultation period the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans will undertake consultations with the government of Ontario, Indigenous Peoples, stakeholders, and the public on whether or not the River Darter, Great Lakes - Upper St. Lawrence populations should be added to the *List of Wildlife Species at Risk* (Schedule 1) under the *Species at Risk Act* as Endangered.

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 is a small-bodied species that inhabits medium to large rivers and shorelines of larger lakes. It has a very restricted distribution, occurs at few locations, and is exposed to high risk of threats from shoreline hardening, exotic species such as Round Goby, dams and water management, dredging, nutrients and effluents from urban waste, spills, and agriculture.

Occurrence: Ontario

Competent Minister(s):

Minister of Fisheries and Oceans

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

Ontario

Applicable federal legislation: Protected under the Fisheries Protection and Pollution Prevention provisions of the *Fisheries Act*.

Conservation activities underway: The Thames and Sydenham river watersheds, where River Darter are present in southwest Ontario, have received ongoing benefit from ecosystem-based recovery programs. Recovery activities implemented include research and monitoring programs and 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 (HSP) for Species at Risk. In addition, the ongoing implementation of recovery strategies for other fishes with overlapping distributions (e.g. Eastern Sand Darter and Northern Madtom) have benefitted the River Darter and provided updated knowledge of its distribution.