

# Response Statement - Pitcher's Thistle

December 8, 2011

**Common Name:** Pitcher's Thistle

**Scientific Name:** *Cirsium pitcheri*

**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 the Environment will forward the COSEWIC re-assessment of the Pitcher's Thistle to the Governor in Council (GiC) within three months. This species is currently on the *List of Wildlife Species at Risk* (Schedule 1) under the *Species at Risk Act* as Endangered. The Minister of Environment will consult with the government of Ontario, Aboriginal peoples, stakeholders, and the public on whether or not the Pitcher's Thistle should have its Schedule 1 status of Endangered changed to Special Concern.

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 globally vulnerable endemic thistle of the Great Lakes occupies a small area including a series of sandy shoreline habitats from southeastern Lake Huron to Pukaskwa National Park on the north shore of Lake Superior. The species' core range in Canada occurs along the southern margin of Manitoulin Island and nearby islands. Increases in population size and number have occurred over the past decade due to increased surveys. This species is at continued but reduced risk because of its specialized life history of flowering and reproducing only once at age 3-11 years before dying, its mainly small populations that undergo fluctuation, and ongoing habitat impacts from a variety of causes. Such threats as recreational ATV use in the species' habitat, presence of an exotic grass (Common Reed) and spread of woody plants into its habitat affect various populations.

**Occurrence:** Ontario

**Competent Minister(s):**

Minister of Environment

Minister responsible for the Parks Canada Agency

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

Ontario

**Applicable federal legislation:** When the species is found within national parks of Canada or other lands administered by the Parks Canada Agency, it is protected or managed under the *Canada National Parks Act* or through measures or management tools available to the Parks Canada Agency under other legislation.

**Conservation activities underway:** A National Recovery Team has been put in place and a recovery strategy has been written for the Pitcher's Thistle (*Cirsium pitcheri*) and has been posted as final on the SAR Public Registry.