

Response Statement - Barn Owl, Western population

December 8, 2011

Common Name: Barn Owl, Western population

Scientific Name: *Tyto alba*

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 Minister of the Environment will forward the COSEWIC re-assessment of the Barn Owl, Western population, 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 Special Concern. The Minister of Environment will consult with the government of British Columbia, Aboriginal peoples, stakeholders, and the public on whether or not the Barn Owl, Western population, should have its Schedule 1 status of Special Concern changed to Threatened.

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: Western Canada supports a small fraction of the global population of this charismatic nocturnal raptor that preys on small rodents. Owing to its intolerance of cold climates and deep snow cover, populations in Canada are restricted to parts of southern British Columbia and southwestern Ontario. The Western population in British Columbia is small and threatened by ongoing loss and degradation of grassland and old field habitat to intensive agriculture and urbanization and by the conversion of old wooden barns and other rural buildings to more modern structures. This owl is also exposed to increasing levels of road-kill mortality owing to expansion of the road network and increases in traffic volume.

Occurrence: British Columbia

Competent Minister(s):

Minister of Environment

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

British Columbia

Applicable federal legislation: Where it occurs in a National Wildlife Area this species is subject to the *Wildlife Area Regulations* under the *Canada Wildlife Act*, which prohibits activities that could be harmful to species and to their habitat, unless a permit is issued indicating the permitted activity.

Conservation activities underway: A management plan is under development for the Western population of Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*).