

# Response Statement - Sei Whale, Pacific population

**December 18, 2013**

**Common Name:** Sei Whale, Pacific population

**Scientific Name:** *Balaenoptera borealis*

**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 above assessment confirms the classification of the Sei Whale, Pacific population, which is already on Schedule 1, the *List of Wildlife Species at Risk*. This species will thus remain on the List as Endangered and activities will continue to be undertaken in a manner consistent with the purposes of, and according to the timelines identified in, the *Species at Risk Act*.

**Reason(s) for status designation provided by COSEWIC:** Individuals off the coast of British Columbia are likely part of a northeastern Pacific population that was depleted by whaling. The infrequency of observations (visual and acoustic) suggests that numbers in Canada are currently very low (well below 250 mature individuals) and reports of this species are similarly rare in adjacent US waters to the north (Alaska) and south (Washington, Oregon, California). Threats to this species along the coast of British Columbia are poorly known, but may include ship strikes, anthropogenic noise, and long-term changes in climate (which could affect the abundance of their zooplankton prey).

**Occurrence:** Pacific Ocean

**Competent Minister(s):**

Minister of Fisheries and Oceans

**Other applicable legislation:** Protected under the federal *Marine Mammal Regulations* under the *Fisheries Act*. Habitat protected under section 35 of the *Fisheries Act*.

**Conservation activities underway:** Sei Whales are protected under the *Species at Risk Act*, and by the *Marine Mammal Regulations* under the *Fisheries Act*. DFO, Parks Canada Agency, the Province of British Columbia, and partners developed and published on the SARA Public Registry a Final Recovery Strategy for Blue, Fin and Sei Whales in Pacific Canadian Waters (2006), which identifies: threats to the species; studies required to identify critical habitat; actions completed or underway; knowledge gaps; recovery goals and objectives; and approaches to achieving recovery objectives. DFO collaborates with First Nations, United States National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) researchers, independent research organizations, and academia in both Canada and the United States, to advance efforts to expand knowledge of Sei Whales and identify critical habitat.