

# Response Statement - Shorthead Sculpin

*December 8, 2011*

**Common Name:** Shorthead Sculpin

**Scientific Name:** *Cottus confusus*

**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 Shorthead Sculpin 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 Threatened. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans will consult with the government of British Columbia, Aboriginal peoples, stakeholders, and the public on whether or not the Shorthead Sculpin should have its Schedule 1 status of Threatened 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:** In Canada, this small freshwater fish is endemic to the Columbia River basin where it has a very small geographic distribution. It is sedentary as an adult, making it particularly susceptible to habitat loss and degradation from water flow alteration, drought, and pollution. It occurs at a small number of locations and there is a continuing decline in habitat quality. A change from Threatened (2001) to Special Concern reflects an increase (to 13) in the estimated number of locations.

**Occurrence:** British Columbia

**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 and fish habitat are protected under the *Fisheries Act*.

**Conservation activities underway:** The Shorthead Sculpin has been listed as Threatened under SARA since 2003. The federal *Fisheries Act* prohibits destruction of fish habitat. Sculpin studies are being undertaken as part of the Columbia River Water Use Plan led by BC Hydro and the results of these studies will inform decisions around water management.