

Response Statement - Rainbow

January 11, 2017

Common Name: Rainbow

Scientific Name: *Villosa iris*

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: COSEWIC has reassessed the the Rainbow , currently on the *List of Wildlife Species at Risk* (Schedule 1) as Endangered and concluded its status has changed. The Minister of the Environment will forward the new COSEWIC assessment of the Rainbow as Special Concern to the Governor in Council as soon as possible after the close of the normal consultation period and analysis as appropriate. During the normal consultation period the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans will consult with the government of Ontario, Indigenous Peoples, stakeholders, and the public on whether or not the Rainbow 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 small mussel is widely distributed in southern Ontario. Surveys since the previous assessment in 2006 have found large numbers of individuals in previously unknown localities, especially at headwaters of larger rivers. There is strong evidence of recent recruitment in six of the seven subpopulations examined. Although it has been lost from Lake Erie and the Detroit and Niagara Rivers, it was apparently never common in these waters. Two subpopulations (Ausable River and Lake St. Clair) have low abundance and are showing signs of continued decline. Ongoing threats to some subpopulations include invasive species (dreissenid mussels and Round Goby) and pollution (household sewage and urban wastewater as well as agricultural effluents). The species may become Threatened if threats are not effectively managed or mitigated.

Occurrence: Ontario

Competent Minister(s):

Minister of Fisheries and Oceans

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

Ontario

Other applicable legislation: Protected under the Fisheries Protection and Pollution Prevention provisions of the *Fisheries Act*.

Conservation activities underway: A recovery strategy for the Rainbow has been developed and was posted as proposed on August 25th, 2016; a finalized document will be completed in the coming months. Over the past several years, the Rainbow has received ongoing benefit from ecosystem-based recovery programs for the Ausable, Thames, Grand and Sydenham rivers. 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 ten other species at risk mussels (with distributions that overlap with the Rainbow) has greatly benefitted the Rainbow and provided updated knowledge of its distribution.