

Response Statement - Striped Bass, St. Lawrence River population

December 18, 2013

Common Name: Striped Bass, St. Lawrence River population

Scientific Name: *Morone saxatilis*

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 Minister of the Environment will forward the COSEWIC re-assessment of the Striped Bass, St. Lawrence River population, to the Governor in Council (GiC) as soon as possible after the close of the normal consultation period. This species is currently on the *List of Wildlife Species at Risk* (Schedule 1) under the *Species at Risk Act* as Extirpated. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans invites comments from the government of Quebec, Aboriginal peoples, stakeholders, and the public on whether or not the Striped Bass, St. Lawrence River population, should have its Schedule 1 status of Extirpated changed to Endangered.

Reason(s) for status designation provided by COSEWIC: This population was assessed as Extirpated in 2004 and is the subject of a re-introduction effort, using fish from the Miramichi River, that has resulted in natural spawning, some increase in abundance, and an increase in distribution. It is, however, unclear if the population is self-sustaining without continued supplementation. The population is susceptible to by-catch in commercial fisheries, and although the threat of dredging has been reduced, it is still operating.

Occurrence: Quebec, Atlantic Ocean

Competent Minister(s):
Minister of Fisheries and Oceans

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

Other applicable legislation: Fisheries are managed and fish habitat is protected under the *Fisheries Act*.

Conservation activities underway: Ongoing conservation activities: The Striped Bass population in the St. Lawrence River is currently designated an extirpated species on the *List of Wildlife Species at Risk* under the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA). Significant efforts have been made to reintroduce this population, leading to a definite increase in species abundance and distribution. A recovery strategy was developed with the Government of Quebec and principal stakeholders and was published in the SARA Public Registry in 2011. It includes those recovery

measures necessary to ensure the recovery and survival of this population in Canada, such as surveys and monitoring, the acquisition of knowledge about artificial production and stocking, and protection, restoration, stewardship and outreach measures. Critical habitat has been partially designated, and studies are underway to complete designation.