

## 2013 Zoology Conservation Status Rank Review and Changes

### Birds:

A subset of the birds was reviewed with few changes occurring.

There were three birds that had a Conservation Rank change to less imperiled. Two of these, American Avocet and Double-crested Cormorant were due to actual changes in status rather than increased knowledge. The American Avocet went from S2B to S2S3B. There are breeding records from the Peace River area, Kootenays and the Central interior and although it has the wide range that has increased from previous assessments, it is still not abundant therefore the split rank. The rank for Double-crested Cormorant went from S3B to S3S4B, the increase in numbers in the interior colonies being the main driver.

There have been small declines in White-winged Scoter numbers as indicated through Christmas Bird Counts, Breeding Bird Surveys, CWS 2009 and harvest data.. The rank changed to S4S5B from S5B.

Connecticut Warbler was deemed less at risk because an increased level of surveys in the north east portion of the province found these birds in many more locations than previously known (S2S3B from S2B).

Williamson's Sapsucker had been tracked under the two subspecies, *nataliae* and *thyroideus* until this year. Based upon Gyug et al. (2012) and recommendations from Gyug (pers. comm), these two poorly defined subspecies have been lumped into the whole species. The COSEWIC assessment and designation has also been done on the whole species.

Please see the "Animal 2013 List Changes" for the bird scientific names changes. These were made per the American Ornithological Union recommendations and checklist.

A couple of new records for the province occurred this year and excited bird watchers; Cave Swallow and Citrine Wagtail have been added as "accidental" for the province.

### Butterflies:

All of the butterflies were reviewed this year: 315 species and subspecies. The majority of the rank changes were due to the re-assessment of original information using current ranking methodology. Three of these species were taken off of the Blue list and placed on the Red list, including *Eyrnnis propertius* (Propertius Duskywing) and *Euphyes vestris* (Dun Skipper), both found on Vancouver Island and the adjacent mainland, along with *Papilio machaon pikei* (Old World Swallowtail, pikei subspecies) from the grassy slopes of the Peace River canyon.

*Hesperia colorado oregonia* (Western Branded Skipper, oregonia subspecies) changed from S2S3 to S1 (Blue to Red list). This species has few occurrences within a limited range on Vancouver Island and threats are very high within the remaining habitat. It is found within Garry oak and coastal sand ecosystems which are both rare and endangered within the province. Of the 16 historical sites known, only four are extant.

*Cupido comyntas* (Eastern Tailed Blue) was re-assessed to exclude unconfirmed records outside of the Pend-d'Oreille River valley; this resulted in a more at risk rank; changing from S4 to S2S3, putting it on the Blue List. This butterfly has a very small range in the Pend-d'Oreille valley and adjacent lower Columbia River valley.

One new species, *Plebejus anna* (S4), was added to the Provincial List this year, along with 12 subspecies: *Callophrys gryneus plicataria*, *Callophrys gryneus rosneri*, *Cercyonis oetus charon*, *Cercyonis oetus oetus*, *Cercyonis oetus phocus*, *Hesperia comma Manitoba*, *Plebejus anna ricei*, *Plebejus anna vancouverensis*, *Polygonia oreas silenus*, *Polygonia oreas threatfuli*, *Speyeria callippe chilcotinensis* and *Speyeria callippe semivirida*.

### **Mammals:**

The 18 species of bats that occur in B.C. were reviewed this year. They had been last reviewed in 2006 and in the intervening years there have been a number of surveys, changes in threats and the introduction of the rank calculator.

*Myotis lucifugus* (Little Brown Myotis) is one of the species that is susceptible to the devastating disease, White-nose Syndrome that has decimated colonies in the east. It has not reached B.C. yet but it introduces a serious threat to these populations. *M. lucifugus* was assessed an S4 (was S5). *M. thysanodes* (Fringed Myotis) went from S2S3 to S3. There were captures made in the southwestern portion of the province, extending the range. There also were a number of new locations found for *M. septentrionalis* (Northern Myotis), increasing the range, but it is also a species that is vulnerable to White-nose Syndrome. The result was a split rank of S2S4 (was S2S3). The ranks were fine-tuned for Eastern Red Bat (*Lasiurus borealis*) (S1 from S1?) and for *M. keenii* where the rank was narrowed to S2S3 from S1S3. Both of these were the results of more information and the refinement of the ranking methodology.

There were a couple of name changes this year; Elk are now *Cervus elaphus* (was *C. canadensis*) and Fisher gets a genus name change, *Martes pennanti* is now *Pekania pennanti* to better reflect their closer evolutionary relationship to wolverines and tayras than to the martens (Sato et al. 2012).

Normally the addition of an "accidental" species is reserved for birds, but this year there was a new mammal added! A Ribbon Seal was seen in Richmond in June, some 4000km from its usual Arctic home.