



Species and Ecosystems of Management Concern

Cariboo-Chilcotin Business Area



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1.0	BA CSO	First iteration of the SOMC Field Book	----	Complete.
	<u>Note:</u> This field book was based on requirements for local BA's to create training material for staff, licensees and contractors.			
2.0	Dominique Bailey	Updated Local Management Objectives to ensure alignment with FSP	June 10, 2026	Complete
	Dominique Bailey	Updated Short-eared Owl Management objectives to correct error	March 12, 2026	Complete

1.0 Introduction

Sustainable forest management is one of the three overarching principles that govern all BC Timber Sales (BCTS) activities. BCTS has both legal and stewardship obligations to manage and conserve specific species, ecosystems and habitats that might occur within BCTS operating areas and be adversely affected by forestry activities. These **species and ecosystems of management concern** (SOMC) are identified by a variety of sources, including provincial and federal legislation and policy; independent bodies such as the BC Conservation Data Centre (CDC) or the Committee on Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC); local resource management plans; and forest certification programs. Some of these species and ecosystems are considered at risk; others are not at risk but require special management for social and/or economic reasons.

This field guide provides background on the various provincial and federal processes that rank the status of species populations and identifies the local species for management in the Cariboo Chilcotin Business Area to meet BCTS commitments under Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) certification for the management of species at risk.

To meet legal requirements for managing wildlife, plants, and ecosystems, BCTS is required to meet several obligations under the following federal and provincial legislation:

- Federal *Species at Risk Act* (SARA)
- Federal *Migratory Birds Convention Act* (MBCA)
- Federal *Fisheries Act*
- Provincial *Wildlife Act*
- Provincial *Forest and Range Practices Act* (FRPA)
- Provincial Land Use Orders under the *Land Act* and Notices under the *Forest Planning and Practices Regulation*.

1.1 Conservation Status of Species

In the context of species conservation in British Columbia, the term “species” includes species, subspecies, plants, and ecological communities (plant communities). Plant communities are considered “species” in the context of rare species conservation. Additional information on the various ranking systems for evaluating the status of species at risk in BC and Canada are included in Appendix A. These ranking systems are used to identify species to be included in BCTS SOMC programs.

1.2 Legal and Policy Tools Related to Management of At Risk Species or Ecosystems

These regulatory policies are important to consider when establishing a SOMC program as they identify legal requirements for the management of species at risk. A summary of each of these acts are presented below.

Forest and Range Practices Act (FRPA)

To meet legal requirements under FRPA BCTS must consider the following:

- Section 7 Notices are objectives set by government for wildlife for the purposes of forestry planning including species at risk and ungulate winter range. The notices are found at: <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/frpa/notices/sar.html>
- Species at Risk, Regionally Important Wildlife, Ungulates (GAR S. 13) Species identified in the category of Species at Risk and in the category of Ungulates are listed at: <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/frpa/species.html>
- Wildlife Habitat Areas (GAR S.10), Wildlife Habitat Features (GAR S.11), Ungulate Winter Ranges (GAR S.12) and General Wildlife Measures (GAR S.9).

Identified Wildlife Management Strategy (IWMS)

The IWMS (2004) is the policy mechanism used by the BC government to guide establishment of Wildlife Habitat Areas (WHAs) and General Wildlife Measures (GWMs) for designated species at risk that are affected by forest or range operations. IWMS can be found at <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/frpa/iwms/iwms.html>.

Wildlife Act – British Columbia

Section 13 of the Designation and Exemption Regulation of the BC *Wildlife Act* specifically identifies four “endangered” or “threatened” species in B.C. (Burrowing Owl, Sea Otter, Vancouver Island Marmot, American White Pelican). Section 26 of the Act prohibits hunting, trapping, wounding, (etc.) of endangered or threatened species, while Section 5 allows designation of “critical wildlife areas” to protect habitat of endangered or threatened species within a Wildlife Management Area (a land designation under the *Wildlife Act*).

Although not limited to endangered or threatened species, Section 34 of the *Wildlife Act* is relevant to BCTS business because it prohibits (except as provided by regulation) possession, taking, destruction (etc.) of birds and eggs, nests of an eagle, peregrine falcon, gyrfalcon, osprey, heron or burrowing owl, and other nests when occupied by a bird or its egg.

Migratory Birds Convention Act (MBCA) – Canada

Affords protections to a long list of North American migrating bird species and their nests during the nesting season. Most species of birds in Canada are protected under the MBCA and can be searched here Birds protected under the Migratory Birds Convention Act - Canada.ca. Some species that are not protected under the MBCA are owls, jays, crows, ravens, falcons, eagles, and hawks. Some migratory birds are also considered Species at Risk under the SARA and the BC CDC.

2.0 Sustainable Forest Management Certification Requirements

In BC, forest certification supplements the comprehensive laws that the province has in place to ensure that its public forests are well managed. Third-party certification of forestry activities is broadly accepted as a best practice for sustainable forest and resource management and BCTS has committed to 100% of its operations subject to a form of SFM certification. All BCTS operations are certified under the SFI Forest Management Standard. Key components of SFI as they related to SOMC are described below.

The SFI standard ([SFI 2022 Standards - forests.org](https://forests.org)) specifies the requirements of compliance with the program.

Objective 4. Conservation of Biological Diversity

To maintain or advance the conservation of biological diversity at the stand- and landscape-level and across a diversity of forest and vegetation cover types and successional stages including the conservation of forest plants and animals, aquatic species, threatened and endangered species¹, Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value², old-growth forests³, and ecologically important sites⁴.

Performance Measure 4.2. *Certified Organizations shall protect threatened and endangered species, critically imperiled and imperiled species (Forests with Exceptional Conservation Values), and natural communities and old-growth forests.*

Indicator 4.2.1: *Program to protect threatened and endangered species.*

Indicator 4.2.2: *Program to locate and protect known sites of flora and fauna associated with viable occurrences of critically imperiled and imperiled species and ecological communities, defined as Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value.*

SFI defines a *Program* as an organized system, process or set of activities to achieve an objective or performance measure.

Conformance with these indicators is being achieved through the development of Species of Management Concern (SOMC) guidance and implementation programs. This includes the identification of SOMC, development of training materials and delivery of SOMC awareness training for staff, and guidance on the management of SOMC.

¹ Threatened and endangered: Listed under the Canadian Species at Risk Act and listed under applicable state or provincial laws requiring protection.

² Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value: Critically imperiled (G1) and imperiled (G2) species and ecological communities.

³ Old-growth forests: A forested ecosystem distinguished by old trees and related structural attributes, such as tree size, down woody debris, canopy levels, and species composition. Certified Organizations should utilize a definition specific to their region and particular forest types.

⁴ Ecologically important: Ecologically important can be defined as applying to natural communities, biological, ecological or physical features which, either by themselves or in a network, contribute significantly to an ecosystem's productivity, biodiversity, and resilience. Ecologically important areas may be so identified by the inclusion viable occurrences of species or natural communities that are integral to the identity or function of an ecosystem, but which may be relatively uncommon on the landscape, including species or ecological communities with a high "S-Rank" or "G-Rank" from NatureServe, subject to the discretion of the Certified Organization.

3.0 BCTS Species of Management Concern Program

Each Business Area is required to have the following SOMC program components to meet SFI certification requirements and to support BCTS in meeting legislative requirements:

- Species of Management Concern and At Risk Ecological Communities Standard Operating Procedures
- Business Area Focus List
- Species at Risk Awareness Training

Species of Management Concern Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

The SOP covers all aspects of forestry planning, block and road development. It includes and applies to relevant Business Area staff, licensees, and contractors working for BCTS.

The following table outlines the specific program documents that are available to support BCTS operations and clients in meeting requirements for SOMC.

Program Document	BCTS Staff	MPAD ¹	Road Contractors	Silviculture Contractors	TSL LPs
	Intended For (✓) :				
SoMC and AREC SOP	✓	✓			
SoMC and AREC Program Guide(s)	✓	✓			
SoMC Species Field Guide	✓	✓			
TCC Focus List – SoMC and AREC	✓	✓			
SoMC Operator Awareness Sheets and Migratory Birds	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SoMC Survey App	✓	✓			
AREC Field Procedures	✓	✓			

Master Species List

The Species of Management Concern (SOMC) Master Species Lists were derived from the BC Conservation Data Centre Species and Ecosystems Explorer tool. BC's Conservation Data Centre is a member of NatureServe and incorporates NatureServe data into its mapping and conservation assessments of BC's species and ecosystems available through the BC Species and Ecosystem Explorer tool. The data extracted from the site was based

¹ Multiphase and Development Contractors
BCTS TCC SOMC Program Guide

on filters to select red- and blue-listed species and ecosystems, some yellow-listed species of regional management concern, critically imperiled (G1/S1) and imperiled species and ecosystems (G2/S2), species identified under FRPA and GAR order species. The Master Species Lists include all species and ecosystems meeting these filter requirements in the province and can be sorted or further filtered by many categories including Business Area, Forest District, conservation status and risk rating.

Animals and Plants

The Master Species Lists for animals and plants were developed through the application of selected filters to the BC Conservation Data Centre Species and Ecosystems Explorer. The Master Species Lists are separated into two excel files, one for animals and one for plants.

The list includes:

- Provincial Red and Blue Listed animals and plants (vascular plants, moss, and lichen) species,
- NatureServe Global G1/G2 species
- Species at Risk Act (SARA), Schedule 1 listed species
- Forest and Range Practices Act (FRPA), FPPR Section 7 (GAR) species
- Species included in the Identified Wildlife Management Strategy (IWMS)
- BC Wildlife Act species

Risk Rating System

A key component of the BCTS SOMC process is the application of a risk assessment to determine the subset of species that are considered a management priority, known as the SOMC **Focus List**. The Risk Rating System was used to rank each species within the Master Species Lists. The risk assessment incorporates elements such as the probability of impacts due to forest operations and the consequences (social, economic, or environmental) of impacts to the specific species or ecosystem, with or without special management measures being applied. The rating system outlines the rules used to create the ranking system and is therefore objective and repeatable. A Risk Rating System was created for plants and animals (Appendix B) as well as a specific system for rating At Risk Ecological Communities (Appendix C).

The rank that was determined for each species or ecosystem in the Master Species Lists is included in the Excel file.

Business Area Focus List

The finalized Risk Rating System was applied to the Master Species Lists to determine the species or ecosystems to be included in the Focus Lists. For the plants and animals, all species that were rated as High based on the Risk Rating (Appendix B) were included on the Focus List with additions to include any species that were not ranked as High but are an Identified Wildlife Species or are listing in the *Wildlife Act*. This list was filtered based on the geographic location of the species to develop 12 Business Area Focus Lists. The Focus Lists present the minimum number of species to be included in the SOMC program. Business Areas may add additional species to their Focus List that are of specific concern or interest to their operating area.

A rationale for any changes in the species on a Focus List should be documented and included in the local SOMC program.

3.1 SOMC REPORTING

BCTS has implemented online reporting of SOMC through the Species of Management Concern Survey123 mobile data collection app.

The tool ensures alignment with the BCTS spatial data infrastructure, our SOMC and AREC programs, and SFI certification commitments while supporting operational planning. The objectives and benefits of using the Species of Management Concern Survey123 field form are:

- Efficient data collection and reporting through a simplified process
- Easy data capture with standardized data inputs and drop-down fields which will result in consistent data and improved data quality
- Alignment of collected data with BCTS spatial data infrastructure while supporting our operational planning
- Immediate data access via the dashboard

Quick start instructions

1. Download ArcGIS Survey123 application from the app store. Can be loaded on your laptop, iPad and cell phone

2. Log in using the credentials below:

For Staff

Username: PX.BCTS.FieldWorker

Password: BCTSago@fw01

For External Contractors

Username: PX.BCTS.Contractors.MW

Password: BCTSCont@ago25

3. Download the “BCTS PO Species of Management Concern Survey” in Survey123

4. Collect data of SOMC or AREC incidental observations – priorities for data collection are:

- High value wildlife habitat features used for breeding by species in our SOMC program – dens, nests, eggs, tadpoles. These locations would trigger management actions during block development
- Observations of SOMC species included in our BCTS Focus Lists. Commonly encountered species do not need to be recorded, such as black bears or ungulates
- AREC included on BCTS Focus List. Collect a point via the field form to flag the location for future review and data collection

5. View collected data via the BCTS PO Species of Management Concern Dashboard: [BCTS PO Species of Management Concern Dashboard](#) (sign in using log in credentials above)

Instructions

Detailed instructions on the Species of Management Concern Survey123 field form have been documented in an Operational User Guide found on the BA EMS/SFM Website for contractor use.

3.2 SPECIES FIELD GUIDE

The Species Field Guide for the Cariboo Chilcotin Business Area contains information for staff and contractors to utilize in species and habitat identification of species listed in TCC's Focus List.

The Species Field Guide also provides general and Business Area specific management recommendations for consideration in development of plans. It is important to note that these recommendations do not replace any requirements set out by higher level plans (CCLUP), approved Forest Stewardship plans, or legislation.