

British Columbia is home to thousands of species and ecosystems – some of these are at risk of disappearing from B.C. Working together at a federal, provincial and local level is essential to protect them.

BCTS works to manage and protect Species at Risk (SAR) and their critical habitat through the Species at Risk Act, the Wildlife Act and the Forest and Range Practices Act.

HOW DOES THE SPECIES AT RISK ACT (SARA) PROTECT SPECIES AT RISK?

To ensure the protection of species at risk, SARA contains general prohibitions that make it an offence to:

- kill, harm, harass, capture, or take an individual of a species listed in Schedule 1 of SARA as endangered, threatened or extirpated;
- possess, collect, buy, sell or trade an individual of a species listed in Schedule 1 of SARA as endangered, threatened or extirpated;
- damage or destroy the residence (e.g. nest or den) of one or more individuals of a species listed in Schedule 1 of SARA as an endangered or threatened species or as an extirpated species if a recovery strategy has recommended the reintroduction of the extirpated species into the wild in Canada.

SARA also protects migratory birds listed in the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994* that are also listed as endangered, threatened or extirpated in Schedule 1 of SARA.

Visit the searchable SAR registry at the site below:

[Species at Risk](#)



Caribou – special concern
Pixabay.com-Free source photo



Grizzly Bear – Special Concern
Pixabay.com-free source photo

AT RISK SPECIES CLASSES:

Endangered species:

Species facing imminent extirpation or extinction.

Threatened species:

Species which are likely to become endangered if nothing is done to reverse the factors leading to their extirpation or extinction.

Special concern species:

Species which may become threatened or endangered because of a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats.

Extirpated species:

Species which no longer exist in the wild in Canada but exist elsewhere in the wild.



Common nighthawk – Some Concern
Pixabay.com-Free source photo

WHAT IS CRITICAL HABITAT?

Critical habitat is the living environment necessary for the survival or recovery of a listed endangered, threatened or extirpated species. If known Critical habitat occurs in or near your project area it will be incorporated into the project plan. SARA contains a prohibition against destroying any part of critical habitat of endangered, threatened or extirpated species (if a recovery strategy has recommended the reintroduction of that extirpated species into the wild in Canada), but also provides other options for protection. SARA recognizes that protecting the critical habitat of species at risk is key to their conservation. The intent of SARA is to protect critical habitat as much as possible through voluntary actions and stewardship measures. If these measures are unable to protect the critical habitat, the SARA's critical habitat prohibition may come into play.



Wolverine – Special Concern
Photo Credit: Zefram, free-source photo

HOW CAN I FIND OUT IF THERE COULD BE SPECIES AT RISK IN THE AREAS I AM OPERATING IN?

There are a number of resources that may be able to assist you in finding out whether species at risk, their residences or critical habitat may be present in the areas in which you are operating:

- Know sites or habitat identified by BCTS staff during the planning stage of your project will have management strategies incorporated into your project plan.
- Gather information on SAR that **may** occur or be seen in your project area may be provided by BCTS staff.
- The SARA Public Registry has an “Advanced Search” tool that allows you to search for species listed under SARA based on their distribution, taxonomic group and risk category;
- Environment Canada’s species at risk website (www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca) offers general biological information about species at risk in Canada, including their distribution and habitat requirements;
- Environment Canada’s Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) regional offices can access databanks on species at risk found on federal lands. If your business is located near federal land, CWS may be able to assist you;

Keep in mind that while a species may be found within a certain geographical range, the species may not be present in the particular area you operate because the habitat may not be suitable.



Sharptailed Grouse – Imperiled
Photo Credit: Nathan Voth, FLNRO

WHAT DO I DO IF I SEE A SPECIES AT RISK?

- Stop!** Are you going to harm, disturb or harass the species by continuing operations? If so, cease activity in the immediate area!
- Attempt to photograph the species
- Take notes on specific location, number observed, were there young, any nests or dens etc.
- Report the sighting to your supervisor
- Supervisor reports to BCTS

HOW ELSE CAN I HELP CONSERVE SPECIES AT RISK?

All Canadians have a role to play in protecting and recovering species at risk. As a business, you can:

- operate according to your plan;
- be observant and report sightings of known species at risk to your supervisor;
- direct activities toward less sensitive areas and time projects to avoid or minimize impacts to species at risk; and
- participate and encourage colleagues to participate in public consultations.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

BC government species at risk:

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/species-ecosystems-at-risk>

BC Conservation data centre:

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/conservation-data-centre>

Reporting sightings of SAR:

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/conservation-data-centre/submit-data>