

**Alberta Conservation Association
2009/10 Project Summary Report**

Project Name: *Alberta Wildlife Status Reports*

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Partnerships

Alberta Sustainable Resource Development

Key Findings

- ACA has published 66 status reports (eight of which have been updated) on species at risk in Alberta since 1997, including reports on mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates and plants.
- Published four status reports (one new, three updated) in 2009/10.
- Reports include current information on each species' conservation biology, habitat, population, distribution, limiting factors, and management in Alberta.
- Reports are used by Alberta's Endangered Species Conservation Committee to recommend a legal status designation to the Minister of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development.

Introduction

Every five years, the Fish and Wildlife Division of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (ASRD) reviews the general status of wildlife species in Alberta. These overviews, the most recent of which was conducted in 2005 (*The General Status of Alberta Wild Species 2005*), assign 'ranks' to individual species that reflect the perceived level of risk to populations. Such designations are determined from extensive consultations with professional and amateur biologists, and from a variety of readily available sources of population data. A key objective of these reviews is to identify species that may be considered for more detailed status assessments.

The Alberta Wildlife Status Report Series is an extension of the general status exercise, and provides comprehensive current summaries of the biological status of selected wildlife species in Alberta. Priority is given to species that are considered *At Risk* or *May Be At Risk* in *The General*

Status of Alberta Wild Species 2005, or that are considered to be at risk at a national level by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC; www.cosewic.gc.ca).

Status reports are the primary source of information on species at risk used by the Scientific Subcommittee (of Alberta's Endangered Species Conservation Committee; ESCC), an independent body of scientists that completes a formal status assessment for the target species using criteria developed by The International Union for Conservation of Nature. The Subcommittee then provides the ESCC with both the formal status evaluation and conservation recommendations. The ESCC, which is comprised of members from groups representing resource-based land users, corporate and government land managers, conservation organizations and university scientists, then decides what recommendations to make to the Minister of ASRD concerning the legal designation (e.g., *Endangered* or *Threatened* under Alberta's *Wildlife Act*) (see Figure 1). Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) is a voting member of the ESCC.

Reports in this series are published and distributed by ACA and the Fish and Wildlife Division of ASRD.

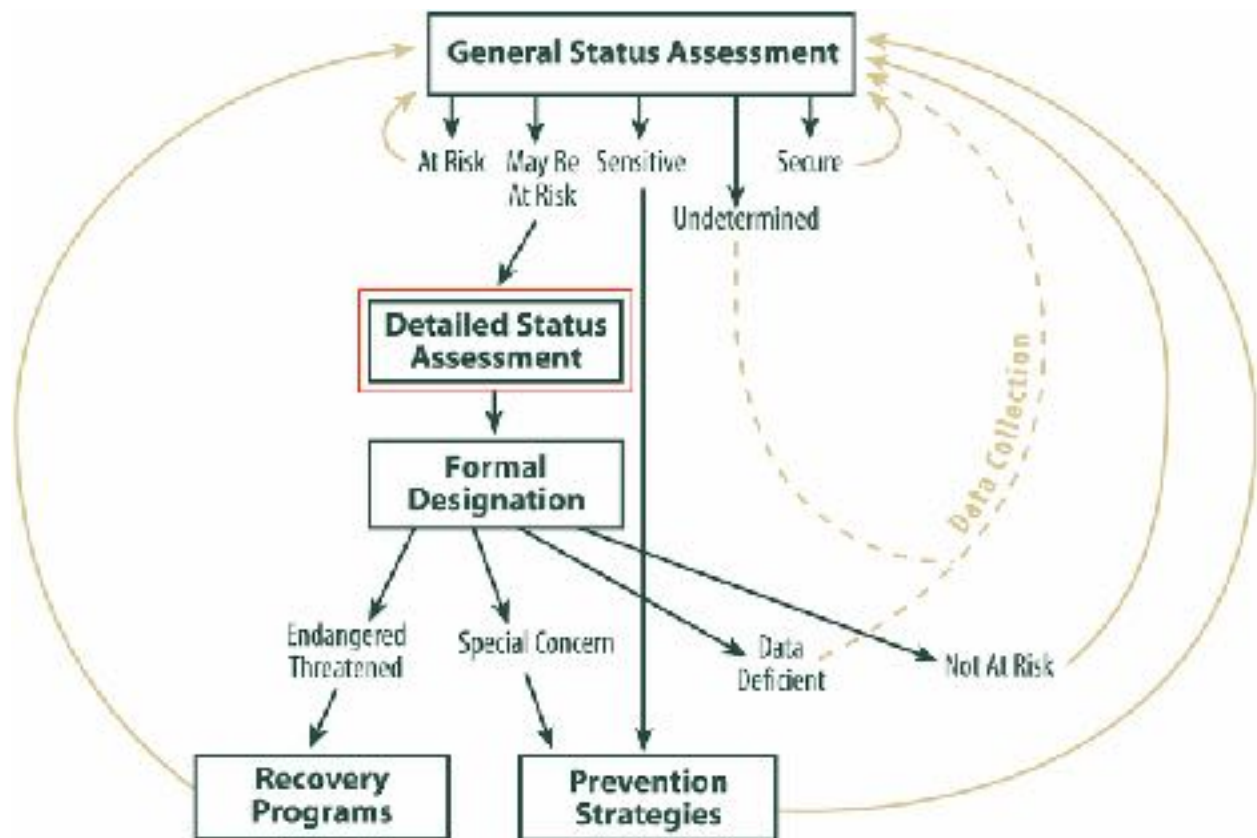


Figure 1. This flowchart (taken from Fish and Wildlife Division 2005) shows the species at risk process; the box outlined in red is where the Alberta Wildlife Status Report Series (and hence, Alberta Conservation Association) plays a key role.

Methods

Each spring, our staff meet with ASRD's provincial wildlife status biologist and one or more of their species at risk biologists to prioritize the species that are most in need of a detailed status assessment. We use the following criteria to prioritize species: the general status rank, COSEWIC priorities, the availability of new Alberta data, and new threats to a species at risk in Alberta.

Once a suite of new species has been decided, ACA contracts species experts (individuals with unique local expertise in the biology and management of each species) to write the status reports. We manage these contracts, receive and edit the report drafts, supervise the external review process, format the reports for printing, distribute the reports, and ensure they are loaded onto the internet (<http://www.ab-conservation.com>).

Results

In 2009/10, we published four status reports: Athabasca Rainbow Trout, northern myotis update, slender mouse-ear-cress update, and Bull Trout update. In total, we have published 66 reports on species at risk in Alberta in this series since 1997, including reports on mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates and plants (Figure 2). Eight older reports have also been completely updated with new information.



Figure 2. Example of a status report cover.

Conclusions

The Alberta Wildlife Status Report Series plays a key role in assisting ASRD in identifying *Endangered* and *Threatened* species in Alberta that need legal protection to keep them from becoming extinct or extirpated. As well, species of *Special Concern* and those that are *Data Deficient* are identified using status reports, instigating the necessary actions to either prevent their decline, or to obtain the information needed to further clarify their status in the province.

Communications

- All of the reports published in the series since 1998 have the ACA logo on the cover.
- All status reports are available digitally online (ACA and SRD websites) and as hard copies.

Literature Cited

Alberta Sustainable Resource Development. 2007. The general status of Alberta wild species 2005. Available online: www.srd.alberta.ca/BioDiversityStewardship/SpeciesAtRisk/GeneralStatus/Default.aspx.

Fish and Wildlife Division. 2005. Alberta species at risk program and projects 2003–2004. Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Fish and Wildlife Division, Alberta Species at Risk Report No. 100, Edmonton, Alberta. 64 pp.

Fish and Wildlife Division. 2008. Alberta's strategy for the management of species at risk (2009–2014). Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Fish and Wildlife Division, Edmonton, Alberta. 30 pp.