



***Species at Risk Act* Consultation, Cooperation and Accommodation Project**

Workshops on the Proposed Listing of Three
Species of Migratory Bats: Hoary Bat (*Lasiurus
cinereus*), Eastern Red Bat (*Lasiurus borealis*), and
Silver-haired Bat (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*) under
the federal *Species at Risk Act*

February 20th & 28th, 2024

Participant Summary Report

Created by:
The Canadian Wildlife Service
May 2024



Unless otherwise specified, you may not reproduce materials in this publication, in whole or in part, for the purposes of commercial redistribution without prior written permission from Environment and Climate Change Canada's copyright administrator. To obtain permission to reproduce Government of Canada materials for commercial purposes, apply for Crown Copyright Clearance by contacting:

Environment and Climate Change Canada
Public Information Centre
Place Vincent Massey building
351 St-Joseph boulevard
Gatineau Quebec K1A 0H3
Toll free: 1-800-668-6767
Email: enviroinfo@ec.gc.ca

© His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, as represented by
the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, 2024

Aussi disponible en français

Acknowledgements

Environment and Climate Change Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service (ECCC-CWS) would like to thank the Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources (CIER) and the participants that attended the virtual *Species at Risk Act* Consultation, Cooperation, and Accommodation Project workshop titled 'Migratory Bats: Pre-Listing Workshop' on February 20th & 28th, 2024.

List of Acronyms

CIER: Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources
COSEWIC: Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada
CWS: Canadian Wildlife Service
ECCC: Environment and Climate Change Canada
SARA: *Species at Risk Act*
SARA-CCA: *Species at Risk Act* Consultation, Cooperation and Accommodation

Contents

Acknowledgements.....	3
List of Acronyms.....	3
Contents	3
Introduction	4
Participants	4
List of Facilitators, Translators & Presenters	4
Graphic Recordings	5
Workshop Purpose.....	7
Overview of Presentations	7
Presentation 1: Opening Prayer and Story by Caley Doran (Cape Croker Park Anishinaabe Cultural Experiences).....	7
Presentation 2: The potential listing of three migratory bats under the federal <i>Species at Risk Act</i> by Wendy Eskowich (ECCC – CWS)	7
Presentation 3: Canadian Wildlife Service Bat Program by Michael Anissimoff and Beth Thurber (ECCC – CWS).....	8
Presentation 4: Fostering Bat Conservation Through Indigenous Collaboration: Apakwaajiin (Bats) of Mnidoo Gamii (Georgian Bay) by Steven Kell (Biologist for Shawanaga First Nation)	9
Discussion Summary	10
Key themes and summarized Q&A	10
Word cloud.....	11
Appendix A. Workshop Agenda	13

Introduction

The objective of the multi-year *Species at Risk Act* Consultation, Cooperation and Accommodation (SARA-CCA) Project is to facilitate Indigenous communities' and organizations' participation in Environment and Climate Change Canada's (ECCC) listing and recovery planning processes for terrestrial species at risk as part of implementing the federal *Species at Risk Act* (SARA).

The Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources (CIER) role is to support and facilitate a range of activities between ECCC and Indigenous communities and organizations on developing recovery documents, sharing knowledge and language, addressing threats to terrestrial species at risk survival, recovery, and land use planning for species at risk. CIER also manages the provision of funds on behalf of ECCC, including SARA workshop participation fees and capacity funding for Indigenous-led species at risk projects.

The workshop was organized and facilitated by CIER and led by ECCC. Caley Doran (Cape Croker Park Anishinaabe Cultural Experiences) opened the workshop with a prayer, and shared the Lake Superior Anishinaabe Nation story of how bats came to be. This was followed by three key presentations, 'The potential listing of three migratory bats under the federal *Species at Risk Act* by Consultation Biologist Wendy Eskowich (ECCC), the 'Canadian Wildlife Service Bat Program' presented by Biologists Michael Anissimoff and Beth Thurber (ECCC), and 'Fostering Bat Conservation Through Indigenous Collaboration: Apakwaanajiin (Bats) of Mnidoo Gamii (Georgian Bay)' presented by Biologist Steven Kell (Shawanaga First Nation). A discussion period followed, in which participants were invited to share their knowledge and experiences with migratory bats, discuss ongoing concerns, and discover other projects of interest brought forth by the various communities and organizations.

Participants

The invitation for this online event was distributed by ECCC to all Indigenous groups on regional contact lists, representing 806 organizations. For the first workshop (20th of February), 96 individuals registered to attend the event and 53 of those attended on the day. For the second workshop (28th of February), 84 individuals registered to attend the event and 45 of those attended on the day. Participants (not including CIER and ECCC staff) represented 79 Indigenous nations and organizations, three private companies, and one academic institution.

List of Facilitators, Translators & Presenters

Kate Cave (CIER)

Rachel Charette (CIER)

Kat Hewitt (CIER)

Caley Doran (Cape Croker Park Anishinaabe Cultural Experiences)

Wendy Eskowich (ECCC)

Michael Anissimoff (ECCC)

Beth Thurber (ECCC)

Steven Kell (Shawanaga First Nation)

Nancy Lynn Hancock (Interpreter)

Caroline Chandonia (Interpréteur)

Aaron Russell (Conference Doodles)

Graphic Recordings

Graphic recordings (Figures 1 and 2) were created by Aaron Russell (Conference Doodles) to highlight key themes that were raised by presenters and workshop participants. Participants had the opportunity to review the graphic recording and provide feedback in real time.



Figure 1. Graphic Recording from the Migratory Bats Listing Workshops held February 20th, 2024

Workshop Purpose

The purpose of these workshops was to provide an opportunity for Indigenous Peoples to discuss the possible impacts of the potential listing of three migratory bat species (Hoary Bat (*Lasiurus cinereus*), Eastern Red Bat (*Lasiurus borealis*), and Silver-haired Bat (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*)) as Endangered under Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act*. The workshops aimed to create an ethical space for participants to voice comments or concerns for inclusion in the public record, to help inform the Minister's recommendation on whether or not to add these bat species to Schedule 1 of SARA.

Objectives of the workshops included:

- Communicate details of the federal process for assessing and potentially listing migratory bats under the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA);
- Discuss the current status of migratory bats in Canada including threats and reasons for the COSEWIC assessment and designation as endangered;
- Give space for participants to speak to the significance of migratory bats for their communities and voice comments or concerns about the potential listing of migratory bats;
- Provide a venue to build relationships and start a broader discussion on the recovery of migratory bats in Canada;
- Have regional ECCC staff available to engage in a Q&A to clarify the Species at Risk recovery process and available funding to support Indigenous participation in this process;
- Allow participants to provide verbal comments or concerns about the potential listing of migratory bats.

Overview of Presentations

Presentation 1: Opening Prayer and Story by Caley Doran (Cape Croker Park Anishinaabe Cultural Experiences)

Caley began with a prayer, and shared the Lake Superior Anishinaabe Nation story of how bats came to be.

Presentation 2: The potential listing of three migratory bats under the federal *Species at Risk Act* by Wendy Eskowich (ECCC – CWS)

The objective of the presentation was to share information about the federal *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) process (see Figure 3 below) with emphasis on the potential listing of three migratory bat species as endangered, under the federal SARA. SARA is designed to work in a complimentary fashion with provincial and territorial legislation, to prevent species at risk from becoming extinct or extirpated, and to recover species that are extirpated, endangered and threatened as a result of human activity. The consultation process for the potential listing of the three migratory bats was described, and workshop participants were invited to share comments about the potential listing, during the workshop or through submission to the SARA registry afterwards. Any comments received will help inform the Minister's recommendation on whether to list the migratory bats under SARA, or not list them. When making a recommendation whether to list a species, the Minister considers:

- Recommendations from the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) and the Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge sub-committee;
- Comments submitted and information regarding:
 - If the species supports livelihoods (e.g., through harvesting, subsistence, or medicine);
 - Potential impacts to people's activities including cultural, social, or economic costs or benefits to individuals, communities, or organizations if migratory bats are listed;
 - Any current/planned activities that may overlap the migratory bats' range and may harm the bats and/or destroy part of their habitat;
 - Any other information people choose to share during consultation

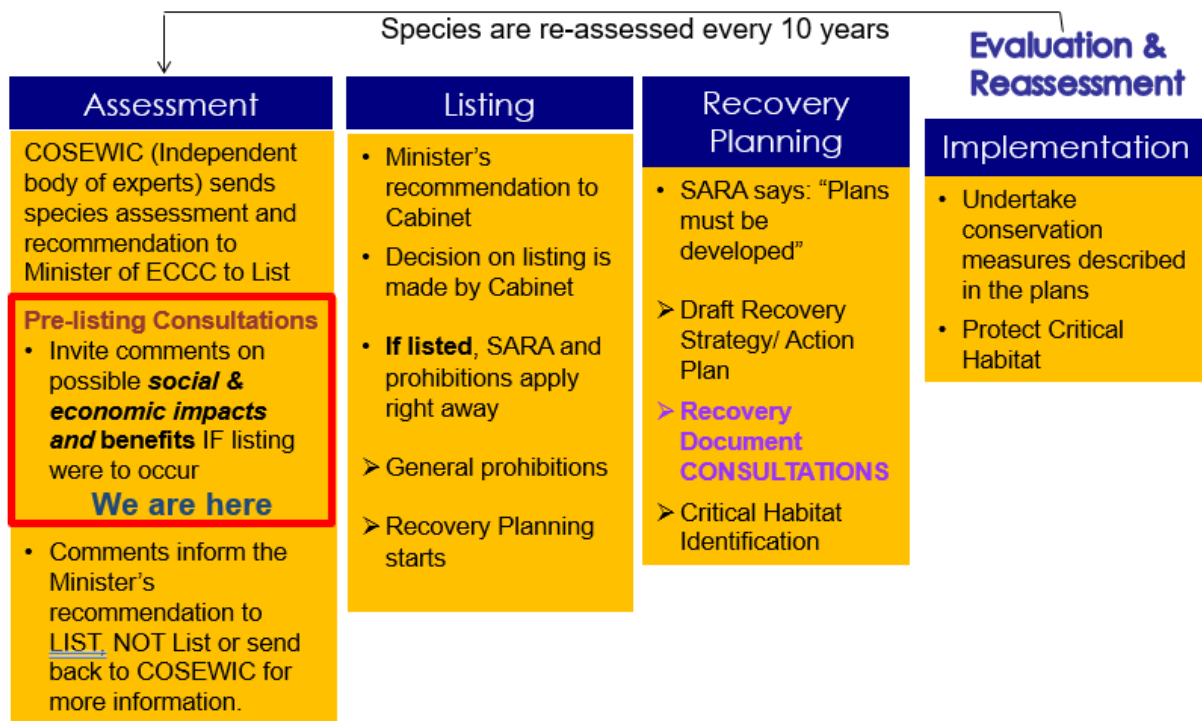


Figure 3. The federal SARA process as it relates to migratory bats. Adapted from SARA presentation by Wendy Eskowich, ECCC–CWS.

Presentation 3: Canadian Wildlife Service Bat Program by Michael Anissimoff and Beth Thurber (ECCC – CWS)

The objective for this presentation was to provide an overview of bat biology, the threats facing bats, and ECCC's roles and responsibilities for bat conservation.

Bat biology:

- There are 1400+ bat species in the world, and there is a wide variety in their characteristics
- There are 18 bat species in Canada
- All bats eat insects, and provide valuable services to humans by managing populations of insect pests

For bats to survive the winter in Canada, they have to either migrate or hibernate. There are three migratory bats up for listing: Hoary, Eastern Red (Figure 4), and Silver-haired.

Declines in migratory bats:

- The estimate for the Hoary Bat's annual decrease in numbers is 21%
- The estimate for the Eastern Red Bat's annual decrease in numbers is 27%
- The estimate for the Silver-haired Bat's annual decrease in numbers is 29%

For migratory bats, the focus is mortality due to renewable energy (i.e., wind turbines) with taller turbines resulting in higher bat mortality. The solution to this could be "operational curtailment", where turbines would be shut down when bats are present or likely to be present. Another, but less important, threat is pathogens (viruses, bacteria, and fungi) from the import of bat guano as agricultural fertilizer.

Canada's Bats: Eastern Red Bat

The estimate for the Eastern Red Bat's annual decrease in numbers is 27%



Credit: Brock and Sherril Fenton 10

Figure 4. A slide from Michael Anissimoff and Beth Thurber's presentation on bat species in Canada. An Eastern Red Bat with a geolocation device is shown.

Presentation 4: Fostering Bat Conservation Through Indigenous Collaboration: Apakwaajiin (Bats) of Mnidoo Gamii (Georgian Bay) by Steven Kell (Biologist for Shawanaga First Nation)

The objective for this presentation was to give an overview of bat conservation programs that collaborate with Shawanaga First Nation and other First Nations in the Georgian Bay area. The purpose of the Apakwaajiin of Mnidoo Gamii project is to engage with communities, build capacity for research, establish baseline data for provincial Lands Departments, collect scientific data on bats, and weave scientific data with traditional ecological knowledge. The general goals were to identify critical habitat, investigate diversity, abundance, and movement of bats. Specific questions were left up to each community to decide. Bats were captured using nets and tagged with Motus transmitters (small devices that use radio waves to track animal movements), which

communicate with Motus towers and handheld receivers. Using these, researchers were able to find several important roosting sites (Figure 5).



Figure 5. A Hoary Bat with two pups, found by researchers in collaboration with Shawanaga First Nation. Photo credit Steven Kell.

Discussion Summary

Key themes and summarized Q&A

The key themes are highlighted below. A summarized version of the question and answer portion of the workshop is also presented.

There were lots of chi-miigwech (thank yous) to Caley Doran for sharing his story and prayer.

There were some question and discussion clarifying the legal protections under SARA, like distinguishing between a residence and critical habitat or what it means for habitat to be effectively protected by the provinces and territories. Participants also asked if species were protected outside of their critical habitat.

There were questions and concerns over how critical habitat is identified, and the implications of those for forestry and agriculture practices which are important to First Nations. Participants were interested to know if the identification of critical habitat happened in collaboration with Indigenous communities and whether CWS would consider hosting a workshop on critical habitat designation.

There were questions and comments about wind turbines, and options for different designs or deterrents that may help. Participants were generally supportive of mitigation measures to support bat conservation. One participant shared that they felt wind turbines were harmful to human health as well as all beings. There was a comment about roll out awnings on houses being a potential source of mortality for bats.

There was lots of general interest in bats, and several comments about the cultural and ecological importance of bats. Several participants expressed support for listing migratory bats, to ensure their protection and several participants expressed that bats had cultural importance for them or their indigenous group. One participant emphasized that bats are an important species and are a part of nature's equilibrium.

Some participants expressed that they like the research being done on bats and some participants shared bat research and projects they are involved in. There were comments about Indigenous organizations wanting to help and/or start their own bat conservation programs, including requests for funding resources (ex. bat monitoring protocols) for Indigenous Guardians to set up their own program. In general, there were multiple comments stating interest in involvement in conservation efforts.

Word cloud

At the beginning of the meeting, participants were asked, "What word comes to mind when you think about Bats? Or if you wish to share, what is the word for bat in your language?" Their responses were captured in a word cloud (Figures 6 and 7).

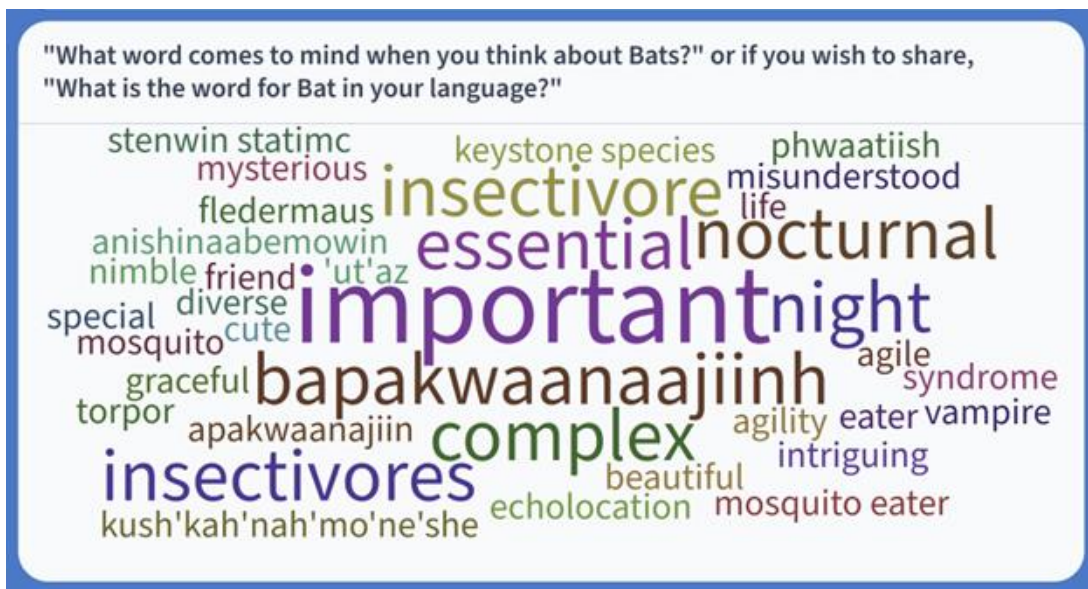


Figure 6. Word cloud exercise for workshop help 20th February 2024.

What word comes to mind when you think about Bats? or if you wish to share, "what is the word for bat in your language".

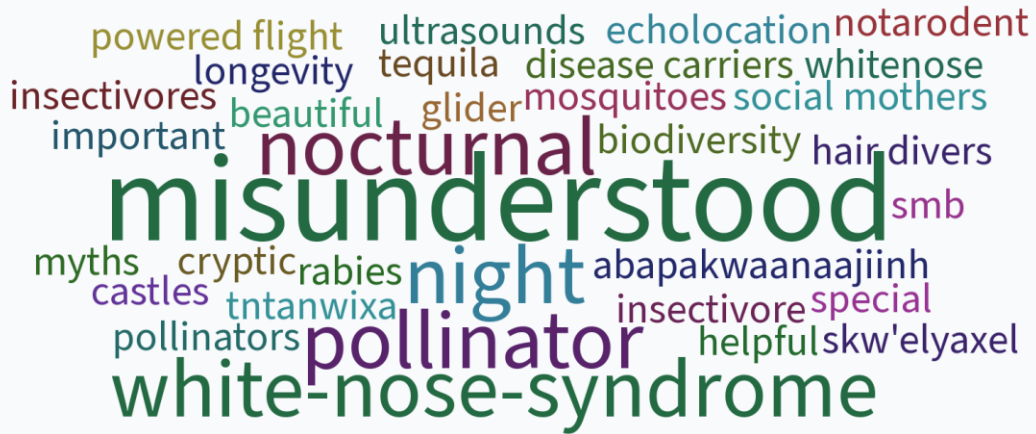


Figure 7. Word cloud exercise for workshop help 28th February 2024.

Appendix A. Workshop Agenda

Time	Agenda Item	Presenter
12:00 – 12:01	Welcome	Rachel Charette / Kat Hewitt
12:01 – 12:09	Opening Prayer and Story	Caley Doran
12:09 – 12:19	Introductions, agenda and housekeeping, word cloud activity	Rachel Charette
12:19 – 12:44	The potential listing of three migratory bats under the federal <i>Species at Risk Act</i>	Wendy Eskowich
12:44 – 13:05	Canadian Wildlife Service Bat Program	Michael Anissimoff and Beth Thurber
13:05 – 13:24	Fostering Bat Conservation Through Indigenous Collaboration: Apakwaanajiin (Bats) of Mnidoo Gamii (Georgian Bay)	Steven Kell
13:24 – 14:00	Graphic recording update; Q&A	Rachel Charette / Kat Hewitt