

Criteria and Rating Scale for Ranking the General Status of All Wild Species

General Status of Alberta Wild Species

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	Criteria	Rating Scale			
		A	B	C	D
Abundance & Distribution	Population Size	Very small (< 1,000)	Small (1,001 – 3,000)	Medium (3,001 – 10,000)	Large (> 10,000)
	Number of Occurrences	Very small (< 5)	Small (6 – 20)	Medium (21 – 100)	Large (> 100)
	Distribution	Very Restricted (< 3% of jurisdiction)	Restricted (3 – 10% of jurisdiction)	Regional (11 – 50% of jurisdiction)	Widespread (> 50% of jurisdiction)
Trend	Trend in Population	Rapid decline (> 50% in 10 years)	Decline (> 20% in 10 years)	Stable (natural fluctuations included)	Increasing
	Trend in Distribution	Rapid decline (> 50% in 20 years)	Decline (> 20% in 20 years)	Stable (natural fluctuations included)	Increasing
Threats	Threats to Populations	Extreme	Moderate	Limited	None
	Threats to Habitat	Extreme	Moderate	Limited	None

Summary of Criteria	
Criteria	Definitions
Population Size	<p>The current estimate of the total number of mature individuals capable of reproduction. In cases in which populations are characterized by natural fluctuations, the minimum number is used. Likewise, if the population is characterized by biased breeding sex ratios, lower estimates are used for the number of mature individuals to take this into account.</p> <p>For many species, a figure of fewer than 1 000 individuals is an appropriate guideline for what constitutes a small population. The figures in Table 2 are presented as general guidelines because it is impossible to give numerical values that can be applied to all species.</p>
Number of Occurrences	<p>Estimated sites where the species currently persists. Ecologically, a site occurrence is a habitat that sustains or otherwise contributes to the survival of a population. It will be defined differently for different species depending on their natural history.</p> <p>When a species' distribution is extremely limited and there are very few site occurrences, the species is very susceptible to any</p>

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	number of ecological disturbances, both predictable and unpredictable. This criterion is, therefore, the single most important factor influencing overall rank when the number of occurrences is few. More information on element occurrences can be found on the NatureServe website: http://www.natureserve.org/prodServices/heritagemethodology.jsp
Distribution	The current range; the area within the shortest continuous imaginary boundary drawn to encompass all known, inferred or projected sites of occurrence, not including cases of vagrancy and significant areas where the species does not occur. For migratory animals, the geographic distribution is the smallest area essential at any stage for the survival of the species.
Population Trend	An estimate of the change in the number of mature individuals over time. See Table 2 for how trends are ranked. Natural fluctuations are not normally counted as part of a decline, and an observed decline is not considered a natural fluctuation unless there is evidence for it.
Distribution Trend	An estimate of the changes in geographic distribution of a species over time. See Table 2 for how distribution trends are ranked.
Threats to Population	Observed, inferred or projected factors affecting individuals or populations (e.g., direct exploitation, harassment, ecological interactions with predators, competitors, pathogens or parasites) that may result in population declines. See Table 2 for rankings of Threats to Population. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Extreme</i> threats are significant, affect more than half the population and are unmitigated. • <i>Moderate</i> threats are also serious but affect less than half the population or are mitigated by some level of human protection. • <i>Limited</i> threats are less significant to population viability or are being mitigated through protective measures.
Threats to Habitat	Observed, inferred or projected habitat alterations (e.g., loss, conversion, degradation or fragmentation) that may result in population declines. See Table 2 for rankings of Threats to Habitat. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Extreme</i> threats are significant, affect more than half the population and are unmitigated. • <i>Moderate</i> threats are also serious but affect less than half the population or are mitigated by some level of human protection. • <i>Limited</i> threats are less significant to population viability or are being mitigated through protective measures.