

Editorial

Celebration of 40 years of COSEWIC and its Close Association with *The Canadian Field-Naturalist*

The year 2017 was celebrated by many as the 150th anniversary of Canada. Some also celebrated the 40th anniversary of the establishment of The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC). While the inaugural meeting of COSEWIC occurred in 1977, the first species assessed by COSEWIC occurred in 1978. Federal, provincial, and territorial ministers responsible for wildlife recognized COSEWIC as the source for independent advice on the status of species at risk in Canada in the 1998 *Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk*. When the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) became law in 2002, COSEWIC was formally established (S. 14) as the body that assesses the risk of extinction or extirpation for all wild flora and fauna within Canada, with the exception of bacteria and viruses, and recommends to the federal government legal listing and protection under SARA.

There has always been a close but informal association between COSEWIC and *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* (CFN). Currently, five Associate Editors of CFN—and yours truly—are, or used to be, members of COSEWIC. Similarly, the numerous reviewers of manuscripts submitted to CFN not only include current and former COSEWIC members but also members of the various Species Specialist Subcommittees, who are tasked with awarding the contracts for and then reviewing the multiple stages of the species status reports, the documents COSEWIC uses to assign status. Many of these status reports, especially those on fishes and marine mammals, were published in CFN from 1984 through 2002 (Halliday 2017). After 2002, COSEWIC status reports have been readily available at sararegistry.gc.ca. While the need to publish COSEWIC status reports in CFN has ended, articles, notes, and thematic collections published in CFN continue to reference COSEWIC status reports or the SARA listings based on COSEWIC status reports. For example, in the four issues of CFN volume 131 for 2017, there are 14 references to COSEWIC status reports or to COSEWIC itself and another six references to species profiles post-

ed on sararegistry.gc.ca resulting from COSEWIC status reports.

Original descriptions and information on a species' former and current distribution, abundance, behaviour, and interactions with the environment are essential data needed by COSEWIC to assign status. I have long suspected that many articles published in CFN contain these essential data but was surprised to find that there were 62 references to articles published in CFN in the status reports for the 45 wildlife species recently assessed by COSEWIC (see <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/committee-status-endangered-wildlife.html> for the results of the April 2018 Wildlife Species Assessment Meeting). More astonishing is that one of the references cited in a COSEWIC status report was for an article (Latchford 1887) published in the first volume of *The Ottawa Naturalist*, a precursor to CFN (Brunton 1986, 2004)—a nice link to help celebrate 40 years of COSEWIC and CFN.

Literature Cited

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DWAYNE LEPITZKI

Editor-in-Chief, *The Canadian Field-Naturalist*
Member of COSEWIC