



Northern Sunfish (Great Lakes – Upper St. Lawrence Populations)

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Information summary and [survey](#) for the consultations on the listing of Northern Sunfish (Great Lakes – Upper St. Lawrence populations) on the List of Wildlife Species at Risk as Special Concern – **Please provide input by July 25, 2017**

Consultations

Let your opinion be heard

Canada's *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) provides legal protection for wildlife species at risk to conserve biological diversity. It also acknowledges that all Canadians have a role to play in the conservation of wildlife species.

Before deciding whether Northern Sunfish (*Lepomis peltastes*) (Great Lakes – Upper St. Lawrence populations) (Northern Sunfish from this point forward) will be added to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk as Special Concern, we would like to hear your opinion, comments, and suggestions regarding the possible ecological, cultural, and economic impacts of listing or not listing this species under SARA.

Adding a species to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk

The process of listing a species under SARA consists of several steps: it begins with a status assessment by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) and ends with a Government of Canada decision on whether or not to add a species to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk. Public consultations are conducted to gather the opinions of Canadians and are an important step in this process.

Facts about Northern Sunfish

The Northern Sunfish is a small fish (length usually less than 13 cm), and was previously considered to be the Longear Sunfish (*Lepomis megalotis*). The species can be distinguished from the Longear Sunfish by its smaller size and shorter opercular flap.



Photo courtesy of Konrad Schmidt.

It prefers warm shallow waters with abundant vegetation within lakes, ponds and slowly flowing watercourses.

Northern Sunfish is found at a number of locations in south-western, south-central and eastern Ontario, as well as in South-Western Québec.

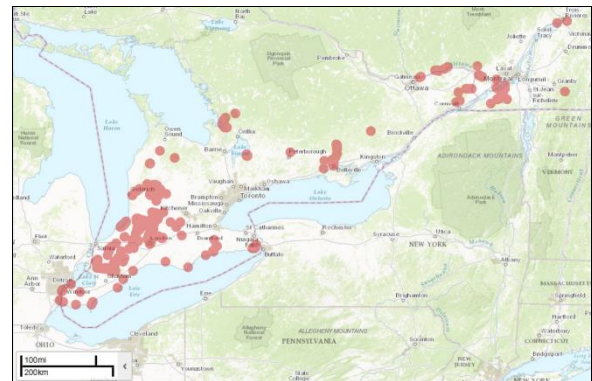


Figure 1. Distribution of Northern Sunfish (DFO unpublished data).



Who assigned the Special Concern status to Northern Sunfish?

COSEWIC is an independent committee of experts that assesses which wildlife species are in some danger of disappearing from Canada and assigns a status to these species. It conducts its assessments based on the best available information including scientific data, local ecological knowledge, and Aboriginal traditional knowledge. In 2015, COSEWIC assessed Northern Sunfish as Special Concern. Under SARA, a Special Concern species is defined as one that could become threatened or endangered because of a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats.

Why is Northern Sunfish at risk?

COSEWIC assessed Northern Sunfish as Special Concern because of its low dispersal capacity and declining habitat quality.

The main factor affecting Northern Sunfish is habitat degradation, which is mostly caused by eutrophication, siltation and contaminants where the intensity of agriculture and other forms of development such as urbanization is high. Other potential threats are invasive species, collection for the ornamental fish trade, and bycatch in the bait and recreational fisheries.

If a species is listed under the *Species at Risk Act*

If Northern Sunfish is listed as Special Concern, the prohibitions of SARA would not apply. However, DFO would be required to produce a SARA Management Plan for the species in an effort to ensure that it does not become Threatened or Endangered due to human activity.

We would like to receive your comments on the potential impacts of adding or not adding Northern Sunfish to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk under SARA as Special Concern. Your comments are important.

Please fill out the [survey](#): we want to hear from you.

at the links below:

- [2016 COSEWIC Assessment and Status Report on the Northern Sunfish](#)
- Other information on the species can be found on the Species at Risk Public Registry [here](#).

Thank you for completing this [survey](#).

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Before completing this survey, you may wish to review the following background information found



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