

State of Harvested Species in Nova Scotia



Introduction to the series

This report fulfils, in part, a larger commitment to report on the status of forests and biodiversity in Nova Scotia as recommended by the Natural Resources Strategy.

This summary of the assessment of large mammals is based on the best available knowledge assembled to determine the state of priority harvested species in Nova Scotia. The assessment used a methodology adapted from Non-Detriment Findings assessments.

We found that the harvest of most species is considered sustainable based on population trends, current levels of harvest, and management structures.

What does **Non-detriment findings** mean?

Non-detriment findings (NDF) refer to the outcome of an internationally recognized systematic assessment that determines that the continued utilization of the species is not detrimental to the survival of the species.

Exceptions were Species at Risk — mainland moose, American marten, and Canada lynx. General gaps in baseline population monitoring and a lack of dedicated management plans were identified across the breadth of species examined. The development of robust monitoring and management plans would not be feasible nor necessary for all harvested species. Prioritizing these for species that exist in lower numbers in the province — like fisher, otter, and bobcat — may be considered.

The assessment and compilation of the relevant information for each species provides managers with tools for decision making and helps guide best practices and adaptive management of harvestable species in Nova Scotia, particularly for those species which do not currently have management plans.

The biological and management information used in the assessment process has been reviewed by experts in the field. As such, this represents our best collective knowledge of the state of priority harvested species in Nova Scotia.

Project rationale, objective, and overview

This project contributes to reporting on the status of forests and biodiversity in Nova Scotia as recommended by the Natural Resources Strategy.

Using a methodology adapted from the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), we assessed and compiled relevant information for each species. The information gathered and reports produced can assist managers to confirm if existing or future levels and methods of harvest of harvested species in Nova Scotia are/would be sustainable. Assessments were designed to identify monitoring gaps to ensure that adaptive management is based on adequate levels of monitoring, resulting in sustainable wildlife harvesting in the province.



Assessment methodology

Each species assessment compiled the following information:

- life history
- regional population size and trends
- distribution/range
- existing harvesting regulations
- past and current levels and type of harvest
- current management and monitoring systems

Information was derived from the literature and from communications with relevant experts and managers.

Information was collected and organized using an adapted CITES NDF questionnaire template that reflects the need to assess the sustainability of harvest in Nova Scotia.

Completed questionnaires were used to

- identify knowledge gaps
- analyze existing levels and types of harvest with current management and monitoring systems
- assess whether the level of rigor in existing management practices is sufficient to detect and mitigate any negative impact of harvest or ecosystem change at the species level in Nova Scotia
- assign a sustainability category for each species

Sustainability categories

Sustainable: Based on the existing type and level of threats, existing levels of harvest, and assuming no change in the existing management regime, current management and/or monitoring measures are sufficient to identify and allow for the mitigation of potential conservation concerns should they arise.

Likely Sustainable: Based on the existing type and level of threats, existing levels of harvest, and assuming no change in the existing management regime, current management and/or monitoring measures are likely sufficient to identify and allow for the mitigation of potential conservation concerns should they arise.

May not be sustainable: Based on the existing type and level of threats, existing levels of harvest, and assuming no change in the existing management regime, current management and/or monitoring measures may not be sufficient to identify and allow for the mitigation of potential conservation concerns should they arise.

Data-deficient: Insufficient information is available to determine sustainability of use.