

Nova Scotia adds to the Endangered Species List



By DNR staff

The Endangered Species Act

was proclaimed in May 1999 and reflects Nova Scotia's commitment to the National Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk. The four additions bring the total to 24 species in Nova Scotia that have been placed under protection. To view the entire list, or for more information about species at risk, visit our web site at <http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/wildlife/endnrd/specieslist.htm>



In October 2003, four species – two plants, a mammal and a reptile – became protected under Nova Scotia's Endangered Species Act. Two are listed as endangered while the others are recognized as threatened. Endangered means that the species could become extinct in Nova Scotia if steps to remove the threats to these species are not taken.

Endangered: The Moose

The number of Moose (mainland population) is limited to approximately 1000 individuals in isolated sub-populations across the mainland. The population has declined by at least 20 per

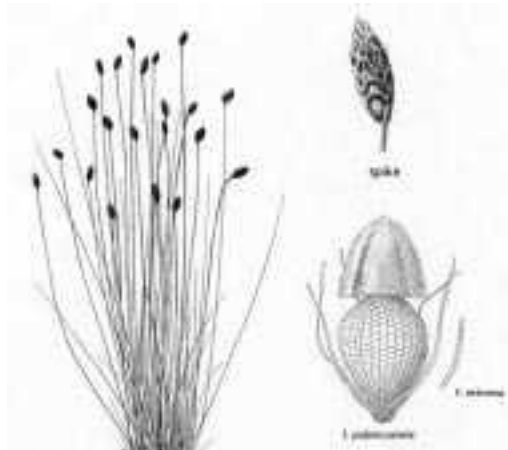
cent over the past 30 years with much greater reductions in distribution and population over more than 200 years, despite hunting closures since the 1930's. The decline is not well understood but involves several threats such as over harvesting, illegal hunting, climate change, parasitic brainworm, increased road access to moose habitat, spread of white-tailed deer, high levels of cadmium, cobalt deficiencies, and possibly an unknown viral disease.

Moose on Cape Breton Island are not at risk. That population is abundant as a result of a re-introduction of moose from Alberta in the 1940's.



Endangered:
The Boreal Felt Lichen

The Boreal Felt Lichen has experienced a decline of over 90 per cent over the last two decades. This lichen is now known in Nova Scotia at only one site that includes three individuals within an area of only a few hundred square meters. The primary threats to this species are atmospheric pollutants and acid precipitation. Forestry and other land use practices can be threats if they disrupt the moist microclimate that is essential for the species.



Threatened:
The Tubercled Spikerush

The Tubercled Spikerush is found in Canada on the shores of only five lakes in Nova Scotia. One population is considered to be a distinct endemic form. Threats to this species are linked to its small, very localized populations, human alteration, the loss of lakeshore habitats, and the destruction of populations and habitats by ATVs and other recreational activities.



Threatened:
The Eastern Ribbon Snake

The Eastern Ribbon Snake exists as a small isolated post-glacial relic population confined to the southwestern part of the province. This semi-aquatic snake is restricted to specialized habitats on lake shores and other wetlands. Little is known about the species. As such, it is unique and due to its apparently small population is susceptible to demographic and environmental fluctuations. In addition, the species is threatened by habitat loss due to shoreline development.