



Species at Risk Public Registry

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Species Profile

Fin Whale Atlantic population

Scientific Name: *Balaenoptera physalus*

Taxonomy Group: Mammals

Range: Atlantic Ocean

Last COSEWIC Assessment: May 2005

Last COSEWIC Designation: Special Concern

SARA Status: Schedule 1, Special Concern

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Related Species

Species	COSEWIC Status	SARA Status
Fin Whale	Non-active	Special Concern

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Image of Fin Whale

Protection

Federal Protection

More information about SARA, including how it protects individual species, is available in the [Species at Risk Act: A Guide](#).

Provincial and Territorial Protection

[To know if this species is protected by provincial or territorial laws, consult the provinces' and territories' websites.](#)

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Documents

PLEASE NOTE: Not all COSEWIC reports are currently available on the SARA Public Registry. Most of the reports not yet available are status reports for species assessed by COSEWIC prior to May 2002. Other COSEWIC reports not yet available may include those species assessed as Extinct, Data Deficient or Not at Risk. In the meantime, they are available on request from the [COSEWIC Secretariat](#).

10 record(s) found.

- [COSEWIC Status Reports](#) (1 record(s) found.)
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COSEWIC Status Reports

[COSEWIC assessment and update status report on the fin whale *Balaenoptera physalus* in Canada](#) (2005)

Southern and northern hemisphere fin whales are considered subspecies based on slight morphological differences and suspected reproductive isolation: *B. p. physalus* in the northern hemisphere and *B. p. quoyi* in the southern hemisphere. Common English names include finback and finner. French common names include rorqual commun, baleine à nageoires and baleinoptère commune.

COSEWIC Assessments

[COSEWIC Assessment - Fin Whale](#) (2005)

Fin Whale (Pacific population) This species was considered a single unit and designated Special Concern in April 1987. Split into two populations (Atlantic and Pacific) in May 2005. The Pacific population was designated Threatened in May 2005. Last assessment based on an update status report. _____ Fin Whale (Atlantic population) This species was considered a single unit and designated Special Concern in April 1987. Split into two populations (Atlantic and Pacific) in May 2005. The Atlantic population was designated Special Concern in May 2005. Last assessment based on an update status report.

Response Statements

[Response Statements - Fin Whale](#) (2005)

The size of this population was reduced by whaling during much of the 20th Century. However, sightings remain relatively common off Atlantic Canada and they have not been hunted since 1971. The current abundance and level of depletion compared with pre-whaling numbers are uncertain. The whales face a number of current threats including ship strikes and entanglement in fishing gear, but none is believed to seriously threaten the population.

Management Plans

[Management Plan for the Fin Whale \(*Balaenoptera physalus*\), Atlantic Population in Canada](#) (2017)

The Atlantic population of fin whales was reduced by whaling during much of the 20th century. Since 1971, however, the species has not been hunted in Canada and sightings remain relatively common off the Atlantic coast and in the Estuary and Gulf of St. Lawrence. The species was designated “special concern” in May 2005 by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada and was officially added to Schedule 1 of the Species at Risk Act in July 2006 because it was considered likely to become threatened or endangered due to a combination of threats and biological characteristics.

Orders

[Order Acknowledging Receipt of the Assessment Done Pursuant to Subsection 23\(1\) of the Act - Vol. 139, No. 24](#) (2005)

Her Excellency the Governor General in Council, on the recommendation of the Minister of the Environment, hereby acknowledges receipt of the assessments done pursuant to subsection 23(1) of the Species at Risk Act (see footnote a) by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) with respect to the species set out in the annexed Schedule.

[Order Amending Schedules 1 to 3 to the Species at Risk Act](#) (2006)

Her Excellency the Governor General in Council, on the recommendation of the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to section 27 of the Species at Risk Act, hereby makes the annexed Order Amending Schedules 1 to 3 to the Species at Risk Act.

COSEWIC Annual Reports

[COSEWIC Annual Report - 2005](#) (2005)

2005 Annual Report to the Canadian Endangered Species Conservation Council (CESCC) from the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada.

Consultation Documents

[Consultation on Amending the List of Species Under the Species At Risk Act: November 2005](#) (2005)

The Government of Canada proclaimed the Species at Risk Act (SARA) on June 5, 2003 as part of its strategy for the protection of wildlife species at risk. Attached to the Act is Schedule 1, the list of the species that receive protection under SARA, hereinafter referred to as the 'SARA list'. Canadians are invited to comment on whether all or some of the species included in this document should be added to the SARA list.

[Species at Risk Act - Legal Listing Consultation Workbook, Fin whale \(Atlantic Population\)](#) (2005)

Your opinion is being sought to assist the government of Canada in making an informed decision on whether to add the fin whale to the Schedule 1 (the List of Wildlife Species at Risk) of the Species at Risk Act (SARA). Your input on the impacts of adding this species to the List is important. This workbook has been developed to give you an opportunity to provide Fisheries and Oceans Canada with your feedback, advice, and other comments regarding adding this species to Schedule 1 of SARA (Schedule 1 identifies which species are legally protected under SARA).

Recovery Document Posting Plans

[Recovery Document Posting Plan - Fisheries and Oceans Canada - Fiscal Year 2016-2017](#) (2016)

Under the Species at Risk Act (SARA), the competent Minister(s) must prepare a recovery strategy within one year of listing a species on Schedule 1 of SARA as endangered and within two years of listing a species as extirpated or threatened. A management plan must be prepared within three years for a species listed as special concern. Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is accountable for 111 of the 518 species listed under SARA. As of February 2016, proposed recovery strategies, management plans and action plans for 57 of those species have not yet been posted to the Species at Risk Public Registry. An additional 23 aquatic species have proposed management or action plans coming due in the future. The following outlines the Department's plan for posting proposed documents for 64 species on the Species at Risk Public Registry. The Department has a plan to post recovery strategies for 9 species, management plans for 13 species, and action plans for 42 species over the next year.

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