



Eastern Pondmussel

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Information summary and [survey](#) for the consultations on potentially down-listing the Eastern Pondmussel from “Endangered” to “Special Concern” on the List of Wildlife Species at Risk – **Please provide input by Sept. 24, 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 the Eastern Pondmussel (*Ligumia nasuta*) will be down-listed on the List of Wildlife Species at Risk from Endangered to Special Concern, we would like to hear your opinion, comments, and suggestions regarding the possible ecological, cultural, and economic impacts of down-listing or not down-listing this species under SARA.

Downlisting a species from Endangered to Special Concern on the List of Wildlife Species at Risk

The process of down-listing a species under SARA consists of several steps: it begins with a status reassessment 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 down-list a species on 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 the Eastern Pondmussel

The Eastern Pondmussel was once among the most common species of freshwater mussels in the lower Great Lakes of Ontario. It is a medium-sized mussel (average length is 7 cm) and a member of the family Unionidae. The shell is thin, strong, narrow and long; colour ranges from yellowish- or greenish-black in juveniles to dark brown or black in adults.



The preferred habitat of the Eastern Pondmussel is nearshore, sheltered areas of lakes or slow-moving streams and rivers in substrates of fine sand and mud at depths up to 4.5 m.

In Canada, Eastern Pondmussel occurs only in Ontario (Figure 1 and 2) where it is now found in low numbers in the St. Clair River delta, Lake Erie (including Long Point Bay, Turkey Point marsh as well as McGeachy Pond adjacent to Rondeau Bay), several coastal wetlands bordering Lake Ontario and Lyn Creek (near Brockville). Most recently, Eastern Pondmussel was confirmed within a tributary of the Welland River as well as several inland lakes of eastern Ontario, including Loughborough, Fishing, Beaver and White lakes.

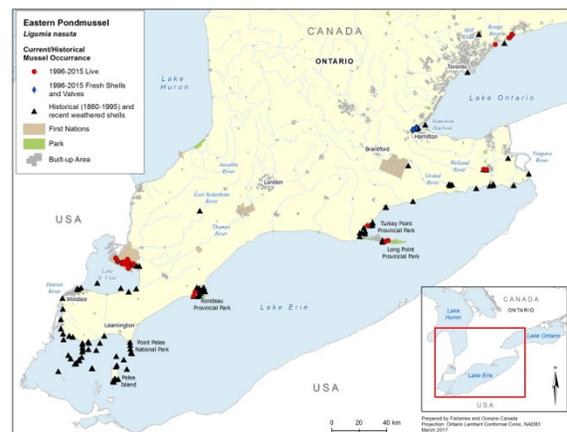


Figure 1. Eastern Pondmussel distribution in Canada (western portion of range)

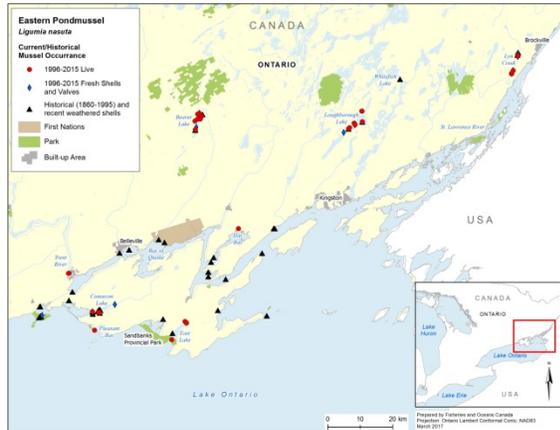


Figure 2. Eastern Pondmussel distribution in Canada (eastern portion of range)

Who assigned the Special Concern status to the Eastern Pondmussel?

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 2007, COSEWIC assessed the Eastern Pondmussel as Endangered within Canada. However, in 2017, COSEWIC reassessed Eastern Pondmussel as Special Concern due to the recent discovery of new subpopulations at several locations. Under SARA, a Special Concern species is defined as one that may become a Threatened or an Endangered species because of a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats.

Why is Eastern Pondmussel at risk?

COSEWIC re-assessed Eastern Pondmussel as Special Concern because of newly discovered locations that came to light as a result of increased sampling effort. The most significant threats to the species include invasive species (e.g., Zebra and Quagga mussels, European Common Reed) and pollution. More than 90% of the historical range of the species is now infested with Zebra and Quagga mussels, which attach to and smother native mussels or out-

compete them for food and habitat.

The majority of sites occupied by Eastern Pondmussel are near urban and agricultural areas. These populations are exposed to run-off of known toxins to mussels (e.g., road salt, endocrine disruptors, ammonia, heavy metals), as well as agricultural run-off, resulting in high nutrient and sediment loading.

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

If the Eastern Pondmussel is down-listed from Endangered to Special Concern, the prohibitions of SARA would no longer apply. However, Fisheries and Oceans Canada would be required to produce a SARA Management Plan (to replace the existing Recovery Strategy and Action Plan) for the species in an effort to ensure that it does not become endangered due to human activity.

We would like to receive your comments on the potential impacts of down-listing or not down-listing the Eastern Pondmussel on the List of Wildlife Species at Risk under SARA from Endangered to Special Concern. Your comments are important.

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

Before completing this survey, you may wish to review the following background information found at the links below:

- [Recovery Strategy and Action Plan for the Eastern Pondmussel in Canada \(proposed\)](#)
- Other information can be found on the Species at Risk Public Registry at www.sararegistry.gc.ca.

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