



Bering Cisco

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Information summary and survey for the consultations on adding Bering Cisco to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk as Special Concern – **Please provide your input by March 20, 2020.**

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 Bering Cisco (*Coregonus laurettae*) will be added to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk as Special Concern, the Government of Canada 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 (Schedule 1). Public consultations are conducted to gather the opinions of Canadians and are an important step in this process.



Figure 1: A gravid female Bering Cisco. Photo: R. J. Brown, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Facts about Bering Cisco

The Bering Cisco is an anadromous Whitefish species that is almost entirely confined to Alaska, with limited numbers

observed in Canada and the eastern coastal regions of Siberia. It occurs in brackish coastal regions of

the Beaufort, Bering and Chukchi seas, with spawning migrations in the Kuskokwim, Sustina, and Yukon rivers. The known Canadian range of Bering Cisco consists of a 145 km stretch of the Yukon River – from the Alaska/Yukon border to Dawson City, Yukon.

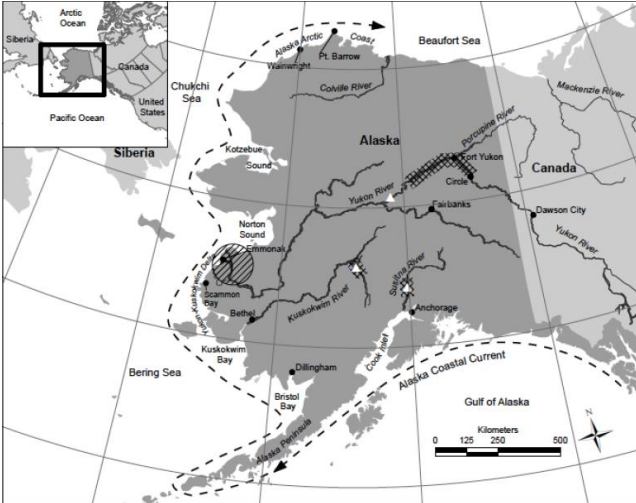


Figure 2: Global distribution of Bering Cisco (Bering Cisco COSEWIC Status Report and Assessment. 2017)

Bering Cisco share morphological similarities with other cisco species; however, the Bering Cisco has a more elongate, less laterally compressed body, and pale pelvic and pectoral fins in comparison to other cisco species.

Bering Cisco reach sexual maturity between 4 and 9 years old, with a maximum recorded age of 13 years. Bering Cisco feed on small fishes, zooplankton, crustaceans, and aquatic insects. Feeding occurs primarily in nearshore coastal waters and deltas.



Aquatic Species at Risk



Bering Cisco has limited interactions with humans in Canada due to its small Canadian distribution and remote location.

Who assigned the Special Concern status to Bering Cisco?

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. COSEWIC assessed Bering Cisco as 'Special Concern' in November 2017. Under SARA, a species of Special Concern 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 Bering Cisco at risk?

COSEWIC assessed Bering Cisco as 'Special Concern' because the species is confined to a small range in Canada, and it may be exposed to a variety of potential threats. This anadromous fish annually migrates through Alaskan waters of the Yukon River to access the upper reaches of the river in Canada to spawn. The abundance of the species in the Canadian portion of the Yukon River is unknown, but low compared to Alaskan sections of the river. The primary threat to the population in Canada is a combination of directed and bycatch fisheries, but these are currently poorly quantified. If harvest is not managed effectively, the species may become Threatened.

Very little is known about this species, and it is therefore important to conduct scientific research to address knowledge gaps.

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

If Bering Cisco is listed as Special Concern, the prohibitions of SARA (for example, prohibitions against killing, harming, and capturing) would not apply. However, listing would result in the development of a SARA management plan that would include conservation measures for this species in Canadian waters.

We would like to receive your comments on the potential impacts of adding or not adding Bering Cisco as a Special Concern species to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk under SARA.

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 link below:

- [2017 COSEWIC Assessment and Status Report on Bering Cisco \(*Coregonus laurettae*\) in Canada](#)

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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