

Response Statement - Cryptic Paw Lichen

January 7, 2020

Common Name: Cryptic Paw Lichen

Scientific Name: *Nephroma occultum*

Status assessment by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC): Threatened

How the Minister of the Environment intends to respond to the assessment: On 2019-10-09, the Minister of the Environment received the COSEWIC reassessment of the Cryptic Paw Lichen, which is currently on Schedule 1 as Special Concern and concluded its status has changed. Within 24 months of this date, the Minister will seek to obtain a Governor in Council decision on whether to amend the List for this species. A summary of the consultations and an analysis of why the regulation is appropriate will be provided. During the extended consultations, the Minister of the Environment will undertake extended consultations with the government of British Columbia, Aboriginal peoples, stakeholders, and the public on whether or not the Cryptic Paw Lichen should have its status on the *List of Wildlife Species at Risk* (Schedule 1) under the *Species at Risk Act* of Special Concern changed to Threatened. The Minister of the Environment will also consult with the Nisga'a WMB (Nass Wildlife Committee).

Once a species has been assessed by COSEWIC, further steps must be undertaken before it is added to Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act*. For more information on this process, please view [The Species Listing Process Under SARA](#).

Reason(s) for status designation provided by COSEWIC: This leafy lichen is endemic to western North America. In Canada the total estimated population is approximately 12,000 individuals. The species has specific habitat requirements, growing in humid old coastal and interior cedar-hemlock forests that have depressions kept moist by input from groundwater. The lichen reproduces only by vegetative propagules with limited capability for dispersal. The species is threatened by habitat loss as a result of forest harvesting, and by climate change leading to altered patterns of winter precipitation and warmer drier summers that can enhance the frequency and severity of fires. The IUCN Threats assessment calculator result for this species was Very High to High.

Occurrence: British Columbia

Competent Minister(s):

Minister of Environment

Province(s) and territory (territories) to be consulted:

British Columbia