

# Response Statement - Harbour Porpoise, Pacific Ocean population

January 11, 2017

**Common Name:** Harbour Porpoise, Pacific Ocean population

**Scientific Name:** *Phocoena phocoena vomerina*

**Status assessment by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC):** Special Concern

**How the Minister of the Environment intends to respond to the assessment:** The above assessment confirms the classification of the Harbour Porpoise, Pacific Ocean population on the *List of Wildlife Species at Risk* (Schedule 1) as Special Concern. Activities will continue to be undertaken in a manner consistent with the purposes of, and according to the timelines identified in, the *Species at Risk Act*.

**Reason(s) for status designation provided by COSEWIC:** This species is found in the coastal waters of the eastern North Pacific Ocean and uses British Columbian waters year-round. It is highly susceptible to mortality by entanglement in fishing gear, and particularly sensitive to noise. Although surveys are too infrequent to determine population trends, there is ongoing deterioration of habitat quality due to coastal developments, increasing noise, and other factors which are unlikely to be reversed.

**Occurrence:** British Columbia, Arctic Ocean, Pacific Ocean

**Competent Minister(s):**

Minister of Fisheries and Oceans

Minister responsible for the Parks Canada Agency

**Other applicable legislation:** Protected under the federal *Fisheries Act* (Section 35 and Section 36) and the *Marine Mammal Regulations* (Section 7), made under that Act. When the species is found within national parks of Canada or other lands administered by the Parks Canada Agency, it is protected or managed under the *Canada National Parks Act* or through measures or management tools available to the Parks Canada Agency under other legislation.

**Conservation activities underway:** A *Species at Risk Act* Management Plan was finalised and published on the Species at Risk Public Registry in 2009, outlining the conservation measures necessary for the maintenance of a self-sustaining Harbour Porpoise population within Canadian Pacific waters. The species remains listed as Special Concern under the *Species at Risk Act* and is also afforded protection by the *Marine Mammal Regulations* in the *Fisheries Act*. Measures contributing to Harbour Porpoise conservation include ongoing annual multi-species cetacean surveys, and increased efforts to recognise and address acoustic impacts on the animal.