

SUBMISSION TO THE NWMB
FOR

Information: X

Decision:

Issue: COSEWIC Assessment for Buff-breasted Sandpiper

Background: The Buff-breasted Sandpiper was assessed by COSEWIC in May 2012. The Committee recommended that this species be listed as Special Concern because the species which was once common and possibly even abundant suffered big declines due to intense market hunting. Hunting is now banned in North America but the numbers are still much lower than before the species became hunted. Loss of habitat on the wintering grounds in South America and along the migration routes is believed to be the biggest threat.

Under SARA, there are no requirements to restrict harvest or regulate habitat for species that are listed as Special Concern. There is a requirement to develop a management plan within 3 years of a species being listed.

Species Description

The Buff-breasted Sandpiper is a medium sized shorebird that has a brownish-red coloured face and belly. It has brown and black speckling on its wings and back. The Buff-breasted Sandpiper is the only shorebird in North America where the males gather together and display themselves to attract the attention of females at the beginning of the breeding season.

The Buff-breasted Sandpiper breeds in the high Arctic of eastern Russia, Alaska and north-central Canada. It spends its winters in South America. Most of the Buff-breasted Sandpipers in North America are found in Canada, breeding along the mainland north coast of the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut, as well as the high Arctic.

Habitat loss, fragmentation and degradation are believed to be the main threats affecting Buff-breasted Sandpipers. Oil and gas development in the arctic may impact breeding habitat. Loss of native grasslands in the south has forced Buff-breasted Sandpipers to start using human-altered habitats such as croplands which may expose the birds to farming chemicals.

Next Steps:

This briefing is the notification of COSEWIC's status assessment of Buff-breasted Sandpiper as a species of Special Concern at their May 2012 meeting.

Once COSEWIC has finalized its status and assessment report, which is due in the fall, it will provide this to the Minister of Environment.

Environment Canada's proposed method of consultation will be to send out information packages to Nunavut communities within the range of the Buff-breasted Sandpiper to provide information about the assessment and give them an opportunity to provide information/ask questions in advance of working with them to decide whether in person meetings will also be required.

A list of the communities that will be contacted is attached. Copies of the consultation materials will be provided once they are completed (letter, hard copy and CD of powerpoint presentation).

CWS will provide an update to the Board on the final COSEWIC assessment and status report if there are any changes from the information presented in September.

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