



Environment
Canada

Environnement
Canada

SUBMISSION TO THE NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD (NWMB)

FOR

Information: X

Decision:

Issue: Proposed Management Plan for the Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*)



Background: The Short-eared Owl is a medium-sized owl that lives in all parts of the world except Australia and Antarctica. In the northern hemisphere, it has one of the largest ranges among owls and breeds in open habitats across the North Temperate zone. The species breeds in all provinces and territories in Canada, but is most common in the Prairies and along the Arctic coast (see Figure 1). The Short-eared Owl was assessed by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) as a species of Special Concern in April 2008. It was listed as Special Concern on Schedule 1 of the federal *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) in 2012.

The Short-eared Owl was listed as Special Concern because the species has suffered a continuing population decline over the past 40 years, including a loss of 23% in the last decade alone. Major threats to the species include habitat loss and degradation on its wintering grounds, while continued habitat

loss and degradation on the breeding grounds in southern Canada and the use of pesticides are also threats.

Management Plan:

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.

The proposed management plan objective is to maintain and, where possible increase the abundance of the populations as well as the area that the owls occupy on the breeding and wintering ranges in Canada. It may not be possible to bring Short-eared Owls back to their historical levels because of the drastic and mostly permanent and unchangeable reductions of prairie habitats over the past decades. It is necessary to ensure that suitable habitat is available throughout the range of the Short-eared Owl in Canada, including the restoration of large areas of habitat in human-occupied landscapes, for management and recovery of the species.

The broad strategies and conservation measures that are required to meet this management objective are: conservation and management of the species and its suitable habitat; surveys, monitoring and research on the species and its habitats across the breeding and wintering ranges; and, promoting awareness and collaboration among stakeholders.

There are no activities proposed in the management plan that would occur in Nunavut.

Community Consultation:

Environment Canada's proposed method of consultation on the proposed management plan for Short-eared Owl is to send out information packages, this September, to 10 Nunavut communities within the range of the species. The information will provide information about the proposed management plan and give communities an opportunity to provide information/ask questions and to decide whether in person meetings will be required. Information packages will be comprised of:

- a letter to the HTO/HTA (in English and Inuktitut)
- a plain language summary of the proposed management plan (in English and Inuktitut)
- a copy of the complete proposed management plan (in English only)
- a narrated powerpoint presentation summarizing the proposed management plan (in English and Inuktitut)

- a questionnaire/response form for the HTO/HTA to indicate whether they support/do not support/are indifferent to the proposed management plan (in English and Inuktitut)

The communities we plan to consult are: Arviat, Baker Lake, Bathurst Inlet, Cambridge Bay, Chesterfield Inlet, Kugluktuk, Rankin Inlet, Sanikiluaq, Umingmaktok and Whale Cove. We will be asking for their response by October 30th, 2014 so that we may present the results at the NWMB quarterly meeting in December to ask for a final decision.

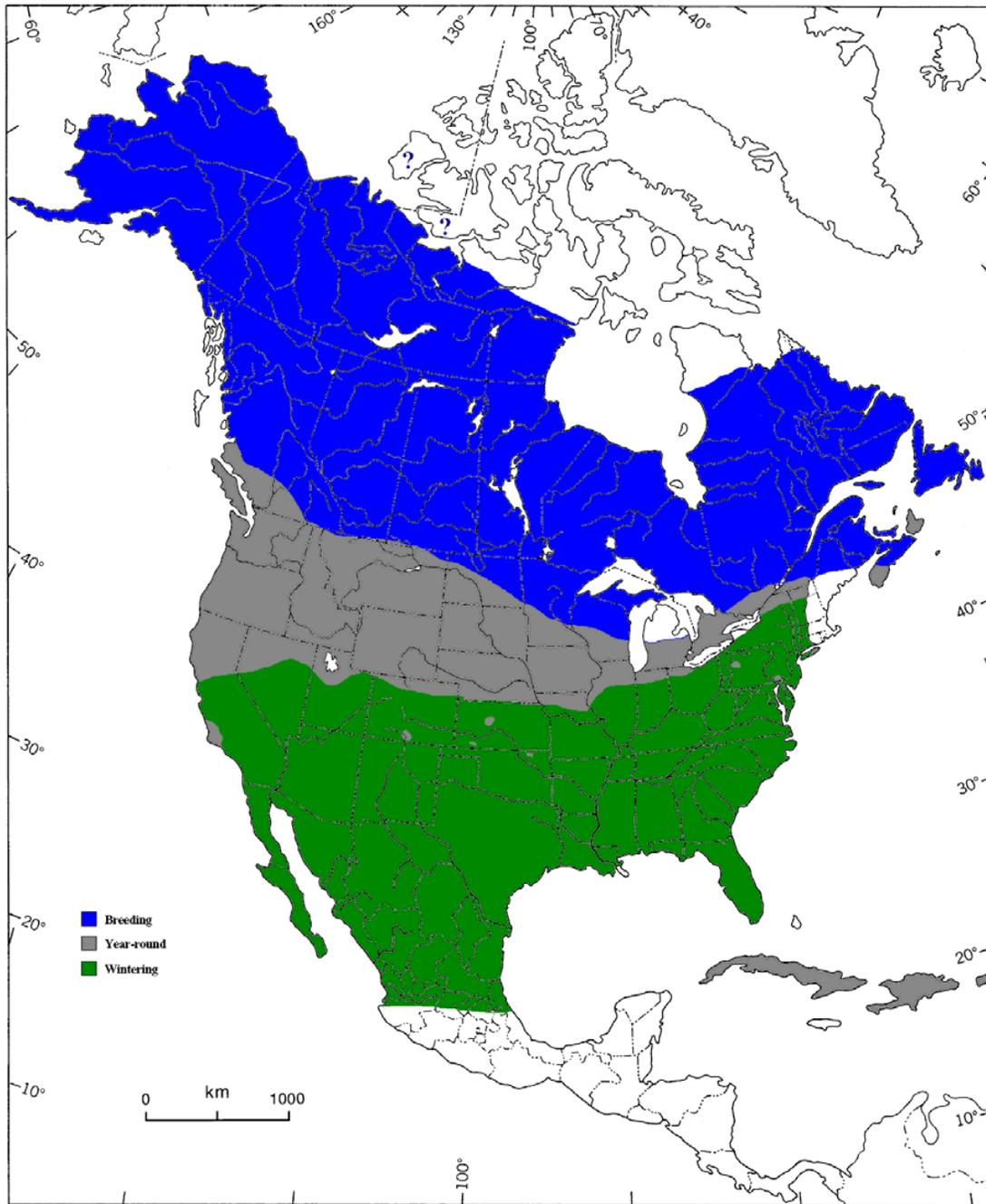


Figure 1. This is Figure 1 from the COSEWIC Assessment and Status Summary for Short-eared Owl. It indicates breeding habitat, wintering habitat and the year-round range of the owl.

Prepared by:

Lisa Pirie
 Canadian Wildlife Service, Iqaluit

1 August 2014