

# Accompanying Documentation for the NS Department of Natural Resources Significant Species and Habitats (Sighab) Database

*October 2004, Compiled by: Samara Eaton*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Significant Species and Habitats ('Sighab') Database contains location data for species and habitats that are at risk, are of conservation concern, or are sensitive to human activities. The database is maintained and housed at NS Department of Natural Resources (NS DNR) Wildlife Division and can be downloaded from the NS DNR website: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/wildlife/Thp/disclaim.htm>. Information in this database can be used to assist in conservation and management decisions.

This document contains information regarding the structure and contents of the database as well as important points regarding use and interpretation of the data. For additional information regarding the background, partners, and release of information please refer to the Significant Species and Habitats Database Policy document online.

## **KEY POINTS ABOUT THE DATABASE**

In order to ensure that this data is utilized effectively and correctly there are some key points that users should keep in mind when using and interpreting this data

- ▶ The database is not a complete survey of all significant habitats in the province
- ▶ This is the best data currently available and it is continually being updated
- ▶ It is important to ensure that you have the most current data and can do so by checking the website and/or by contacting NS DNR
- ▶ For interpretation of the data contact a NS DNR wildlife biologist or regional biologist
- ▶ Species and habitat locations are sensitive information and therefore are only identified as polygons
- ▶ More detailed information for each polygon exists, however public access to this requires a written request to NS DNR (see Sighab Database Policy document online)
- ▶ Other databases with information on significant species and habitats in NS may be available from other sources in NS

## **DATABASE INFORMATION**

### *How to Obtain the Database*

- ▶ The data is available online at the NS DNR website: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/wildlife/>
- ▶ The data can be viewed online or can be downloaded as a zipped Arcview shapefile
- ▶ The downloadable data for the province is divided into three regions (Central, Eastern, Western)
- ▶ The data projection is NAD83; if you require another format please contact us

**Database Variables**

There are eight variables, or fields in the downloadable Sighab database; the table below provides a brief explanation of each variable. Note that the key variable which identifies what habitat category each polygon represents is “Wc1”.

<b>Variable / Field</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Area	Area of the polygon
Perimeter	Perimeter of the polygon
Mapsheet	Topographic mapsheet number
Wildnum	Unique identifier that links to other NS DNR databases with additional information. Alphanumeric code with the letters abbreviating the county in which the record is located.
wcode1	Numeric code, not necessary for use of data
wcode2	Numeric code, not necessary for use of data
wcode3	Numeric code, not necessary for use of data
Wc1	Habitat categories included in database *see below for additional explanation of each habitat category in Wc1 field
Wc2	No data in this field
Wc2	No data in this field

**Habitat Category (“Wc1”) Explanations**

The “Wc1” field in the database consists of twelve habitat categories. Included in the table below is a brief description of each of the categories. With respect to the recovery of species at risk and the conservation of wildlife and habitat categories “species at risk” and “of concern” (which is short for ‘species of conservation concern’) are the two key categories to consider.

<b>Habitat Category</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
species at risk	Any species that is legally listed under the NS Endangered Species Act, the federal Species at Risk Act, or by COSEWIC
of concern	“of concern” = Species of Conservation Concern, any species that is ranked as Red or Yellow under the NS General Status Assessment process, but is not listed under legislation.
rare plant	A historic record of a plant that is not legally protected but is rare
migratory bird	Any migratory bird records, not including species at risk or species of conservation concern. More comprehensive data on migratory birds can be obtained from the Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment Canada. <sup>1</sup>
IBP sites	“IBP” = International Biological Program, IBP sites identified in NS
moose wintering	Moose wintering sites for the Cape Breton population
deer wintering	Important habitat for white-tail deer which may be jeopardized by human activities

wetland	Some of the sensitive wetlands in NS. Note that this does not represent all of the wetlands in the province. Detailed wetland information is available through the NS DNR wetlands database. <sup>2</sup>
saltmarsh	Coastal saltmarsh habitat that is
freshwater	Any body of freshwater that has been noted as particularly sensitive to human activities. Note that this does not represent all of the freshwater habitats in the province. There are other NS DNR GIS databases of information on freshwater that can be obtained. <sup>3</sup>
old forest	Some of the old forest sites in NS
other habitat	Other significant wildlife habitats, such as those that are of local natural history interest (e.g. eagle perch trees)

<sup>1</sup> Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment Canada: (506)

<sup>2</sup> NS DNR Wetlands Database: Randy Milton, NS DNR Wildlife Division, (902) 679-6091

<sup>3</sup> NS DNR freshwater data: Lawrence Benjamin, NS DNR Wildlife Division (902)

## CONTACT INFORMATION

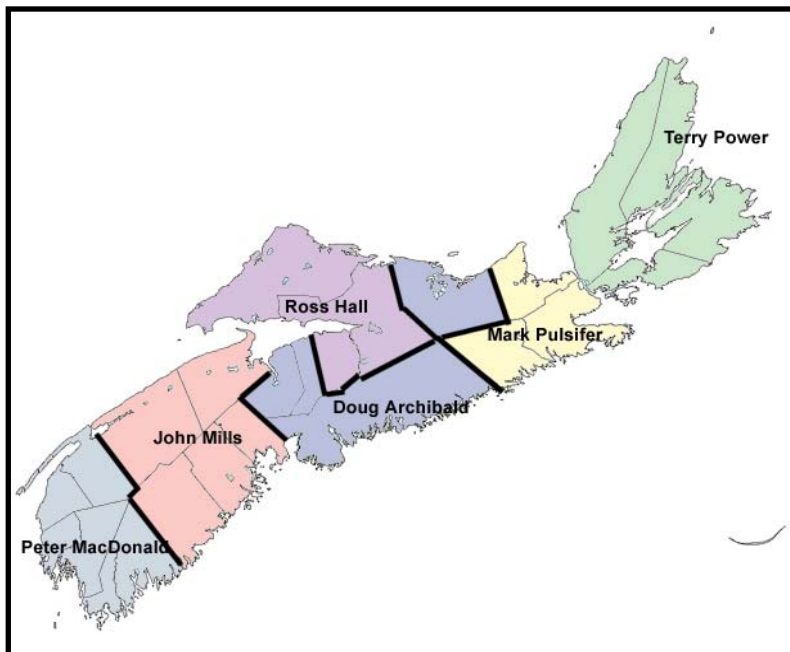
The following individuals can be contacted for questions related to species at risk, species of conservation concern, and other significant wildlife habitats in NS

**Samara Eaton**, Wildlife Biologist, Phone: (902) 431-8089 / Email: [eatonst@gov.ns.ca](mailto:eatonst@gov.ns.ca)

**Dr. Sherman Boates**, Wildlife Manager, Biodiversity Program, Phone: (902) 679-6146 / Email: [boatesjs@gov.ns.ca](mailto:boatesjs@gov.ns.ca)

**Mark Elderkin**, Species at Risk Biologist, Phone: (902) 679-6219 / Email: [elderkmf@gov.ns.ca](mailto:elderkmf@gov.ns.ca)

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### *NS DNR Regional Biologists*

The Wildlife Division of the ND DNR has Regional Biologists in 6 regions throughout the province.

If you have any specific questions about wildlife in your area feel free to contact the appropriate regional biologist. You can also always contact the biologists within the Wildlife Division (see above).

The map (left) indicates which biologist is located in your area.

<p><b>Doug R. Archibald</b> Regional Biologist NS Department of Natural Resources Arlington Place, 1st Floor 664 Prince St., PO Box 68 Truro, NS, B2N 5B8 Phone: (902) 893-6353 Fax: (902) 893-5613 Email: <a href="mailto:archibdr@gov.ns.ca">archibdr@gov.ns.ca</a></p>	<p><b>Ross Hall</b> Regional Biologist, NS Department of Natural Resources Arlington Place, 1st Floor, 664 Prince St. PO Box 68, Truro, NS, B2N 5B8 Phone: (902) 893-5630 Fax: (902) 893-5613 Email: <a href="mailto:rhall@gov.ns.ca">rhall@gov.ns.ca</a></p>	<p><b>John Mills</b> Wildlife Biologist Western Region NS Department of Natural Resources 99 High Street Bridgewater, NS, B4V 1V8 Phone: (902) 527-5360 Fax: (902) 543-0624 Email: <a href="mailto:millsjk@gov.ns.ca">millsjk@gov.ns.ca</a></p>
<p><b>Peter MacDonald</b> Wildlife Biologist, Western Region NS Department of Natural Resources Box 99 Tusket, NS, B0W 3M0 Phone: (902) 648-3540 Fax: (902) 648-3548 Email: <a href="mailto:macdonpr@gov.ns.ca">macdonpr@gov.ns.ca</a></p>	<p><b>Terry Power</b> Regional Wildlife Biologist NS Department of Natural Resources 300 Mountain Road Sydney, NS, B1L 1A9 Phone: 902-563-3370 Fax: 902-567-2535 Email: <a href="mailto:powertd@gov.ns.ca">powertd@gov.ns.ca</a></p>	<p><b>Mark Pulsifer</b> Wildlife Biologist, Eastern region NS Department of Natural Resources 190 Beech Hill Rd, RR#7 Antigonish County, NS Phone: 902-863-7523 Fax: 902-863-7342 Email: <a href="mailto:pulsifmd@gov.ns.ca">pulsifmd@gov.ns.ca</a></p>

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

### **NS Department of Natural Resources, Significant Species and Habitats Database**

The online, viewable and downloadable GIS database discussed in this document. with location information for significant wildlife species and habitat.

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/wildlife/Thp/disclaim.htm>

### **NS Department of Natural Resources, General Status Assessment**

A thorough explanation of the General Status Assessment process in NS and a searchable database to examine the general status of all species in NS.

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/wildlife/genstatus/>

### **Government of Nova Scotia Permits Directory**

All permits, licenses, approvals, registrations, and certification requirements organized according to provincial government departments.

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/paal>

### **Environment Canada's Species at Risk Website**

Information on species at risk in Canada, federal legislation pertaining to species at risk, a searchable database, funding opportunities descriptions, and more.

<http://www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca/>

### **Government of Canada's Species at Risk Act (SARA) Public Registry**

The public registry for the federal Species at Risk Act (SARA) contains background and general information on the Act, the text of the full act, the species list, and more.

<http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca/>