



House of Commons  
CANADA

# Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development

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ENVI • NUMBER 015 • 3rd SESSION • 40th PARLIAMENT

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EVIDENCE

**Thursday, May 6, 2010**

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**Chair**

**Mr. James Bezan**



# Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development

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• (1530)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC)):** I'll call the meeting to order. It is 3:30, and we're having our last panel on the Species at Risk Act. We've been having a very fulsome discussion for 12 months now. It's good to get to the end of our witness testimony so we can start working on our report.

Joining us today from the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board is Michael d'Eça, legal counsel; from the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters we have Terry Quinney, provincial manager of fish and wildlife services. Welcome.

Joining us by video conference from St. Andrew's By-the-Sea in New Brunswick, we have the Atlantic Salmon Federation and Frederick Whoriskey, vice-president of research and environment.

Mr. Whoriskey, can you hear us well?

**Dr. Frederick Whoriskey (Vice-President, Research and Environment, Atlantic Salmon Federation):** I can hear you very well. Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Perfect. With that, we're going to go to our opening comments. I ask all witnesses to keep their opening testimony under 10 minutes.

Mr. d'Eça, if you could kick us off, we'd appreciate that.

**Mr. Michael d'Eça (Legal Counsel, Nunavut Wildlife Management Board):** Good afternoon, committee members. It is a pleasure to appear before you today.

I'm representing the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, which I will refer to as the NWMB, or the board, in my comments today.

It's an institution of public government, established by the terms of article 5 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, known as the NLCA. The board is the main instrument of wildlife management and the main regulator of access to wildlife in the Nunavut settlement area. That's a massive expanse of Canada's polar region, approximately the size of continental Europe. Comprising the major part of the territory of Nunavut and 23% of Canada's land mass, this settlement area encompasses a region spanning more than 2.1 million square kilometres, including the marine areas of the arctic archipelago and the 12-mile territorial sea adjacent to Nunavut. In addition, approximately 43% of Canada's ocean coastline is found within the Nunavut settlement area—that's 104,000 out of a total of 243,000 kilometres.

Within its extensive wildlife management jurisdiction, the NWMB has exclusive decision-making authority with respect to establishing,

modifying, or removing quotas, and all other harvesting restrictions on all wildlife, including species at risk, in the Nunavut settlement area.

The board also has the exclusive decision-making authority to approve the designation of rare, threatened, and endangered species—that is, to approve the legal listing of all species at risk found within Nunavut. It has the authority to approve plans, including recovery strategies, for the management and protection of particular wildlife and wildlife habitats, including species at risk and their habitats. It also has the authority to approve the establishment of conservation areas, and from our perspective today, that includes critical habitats, which are related to the management and protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat.

The NWMB's decision-making authority is subject only to the minister's authority to accept, reject, or vary that decision, strictly in accordance with the terms of the NLCA.

The NWMB submission, which I think you have received, includes four recommendations, with supporting rationales and evidence that the board hopes you will find sufficiently reliable and persuasive to convince you to adopt the recommendations as worthy improvements to SARA and related federal species-at-risk programs.

Very briefly stated, the recommendations are as follows. First, because SARA as currently written fails to fully recognize the decision-making jurisdiction of the NWMB and the significance of the NLCA article 5 decision-making process, the NWMB recommends that you add a new section to SARA, section 27, which states:

The Minister and the Governor in Council must take into account any applicable provisions of treaty and land claims agreements when carrying out their functions.

That same direction already applies to COSEWIC in virtually the same circumstance—that is, the circumstance of the assessment and listing of species. The existing COSEWIC provision can be found in subsection 15(3) of the act.

The second recommendation is to develop and implement an effective plan to address the conclusions and recommendations found in the 2006 independent evaluation of federal species-at-risk programs. That thorough and professional evaluation was requisitioned by the federal government and conducted by the respected environmental management consulting firm of Stratos.

The third recommendation is to remove the ineffective non-derogation clause currently in section 3 of SARA and replace it with an effective non-derogation provision, but placed inside the federal Interpretation Act. I don't believe you will find any aboriginal support for section 3. You will find a consensus, including within the Department of Justice, that the current ad hoc approach to legislated non-derogation clauses—an approach that features an absence of aboriginal consultation—is unsustainable. That approach is the one that was used in this very Species at Risk Act that you are reviewing on behalf of Parliament. Proceeding by way of an appropriate clause in the Interpretation Act has already been successfully adopted by two provincial jurisdictions, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and has been fully endorsed by the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs.

• (1535)

The last of those recommendations is to improve the language of SARA concerning the inclusion of aboriginal traditional knowledge in management, protection, and recovery measures undertaken pursuant to the act, and consider the establishment of an aboriginal traditional knowledge institute.

Because of time considerations, I'm going to focus on recommendation 4 during my remaining opening remarks, but our submissions cover the reasons and evidence with respect to the other recommendations.

For the purposes of this submission, the term “aboriginal traditional knowledge” refers to all types of information relating to the environment, derived from the experience and traditions of aboriginal people. The use of the word “traditional” is meant to convey that particular knowledge is informed by the experience and traditions of many generations, including the current ones. It is not meant to convey that the knowledge in question is old, dust-covered, and unchanging. ATK, as it's known, is dynamic, evolving, and iterative in nature. It is informed by the past and the present. It includes both traditional and current elements. Its purpose is to provide practical, realistic, tested information and explanation to people who are highly dependent on the land.

While legitimate concerns can certainly be raised about the adequacy of and weight given to ATK in the assessment and listing of species at risk, the fact is specific requirements are set out in the act to at least attempt to ensure that necessary assessment and listing decisions are made on the basis of, among other considerations, the best available ATK.

This is not so with respect to the development and implementation of management, protection, and recovery measures for species at risk. Except for the statement in the preamble that says “the traditional knowledge of the aboriginal peoples of Canada should be considered...in developing and implementing recovery measures”, the act says nothing further about the inclusion of ATK in management, protection, and recovery efforts for species at risk.

While consultations carried out pursuant to the act might elicit some useful ATK, that approach would be far from ideal. The analogy would be to try to obtain relevant scientific information by relying on comments, if any, from appropriate scientific specialists, if any, who happened to attend a public meeting. It is essential to take specific and necessary steps in accessing relevant ATK, just as

one would do in accessing particular scientific knowledge and expertise.

When considering these points, please keep in mind that as of June 2007—almost three years ago—389 species had been listed under SARA as being “at risk”. That number has continued to steadily rise. In 2009 it stood at 425. Recovery strategies as of June 2007 should have been completed by that time for 228 of those 389 species. In fact, only 55 species, 24%, had applicable recovery strategies, and only 16 critical habitats, a mere 7%, had been identified. It's clear that a primary focus of SARA during the coming years must be on the measures necessary to manage, protect, and recover the growing hundreds of listed species in Canada.

To guarantee that the best management, protection and recovery measures are employed, it is essential to ensure that both science and ATK, which are vital, complementary knowledge systems, are considered and applied.

With respect to the recommendation to establish an aboriginal traditional knowledge institute, the NWMB is of the view that the time has come to seriously consider such a step. The ATK institute could, first and foremost, provide invaluable assistance in the development of the growing number of recovery strategies, action plans, and management plans that would benefit from the inclusion of ATK. The institute could also serve as an effective forum for the necessary dialogue and collaborative work that needs to be undertaken between scientists and ATK holders, through the organizing and holding of science and ATK meetings, workshops, colloquia, and symposia.

In addition, best practices in accessing, considering, and relying on ATK need to be developed and advocated. Such practices would not override established community practices. Rather, they would serve as a backstop, a set of standards that would apply in the absence of local requirements.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, it's important to also keep in mind that the most valuable and abundant ATK resides in elders across this country. Sadly, many of those elders, with their rich lifetimes of experience and strong connections to previous generations, are passing away. Every reasonable effort needs to be made to ensure that their ATK is authentically and respectfully preserved. The development and maintenance of a database and audio and video library on ATK could form an important part of the mandate of such an institute.

• (1540)

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Quinney, you're on.

**Dr. Terry Quinney (Provincial Manager, Fish and Wildlife Services, Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. The 100,000 individual anglers and hunters and 670 member clubs that make up the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters membership and subscribers are among the most committed fish and wildlife conservationists in Canada. We have provided you, ladies and gentlemen, with a written submission. I'm not going to go through that written submission in its entirety. I hope you will be able to at some point. If you have at that time additional questions or if we can be of additional assistance, please feel free to contact us at any time.

Our conservation legacy includes populations of abundant, healthy fish and wildlife fully restored from near extinction. Through voluntary efforts and lobbying for effective conservation laws and enforcement, many species that were once almost extirpated are again common today, species such as wild turkey, moose, wood ducks, beavers, Canada geese, and eastern bluebirds, to name a few. Importantly, these populations were restored without provincial or federal endangered species legislation. Rather, they were restored because they are valuable to anglers, hunters, trappers, and other naturalists who have a vested interest in protected habitats and a healthy environment.

Our legacy of game and non-game species recovery continues today with OFAH members volunteering their time and their money to the restoration of, for example, eastern elk, Atlantic salmon to Lake Ontario and its tributaries, native trumpeter swans, spotted turtles, and peregrine falcons, to name but a few.

Our efforts continue to focus on preventing species from becoming endangered in the first place. To us, it has always been clear: maintaining healthy habitats and biodiversity requires federal and provincial vigilance and support on many fronts, including protection of natural habitats through sustainable development and wise land use planning; protection of Canadian ecosystems from pollution and the invasion of harmful exotic species; provincial and federal support for private land stewardship; scientifically based fish, game, and fur-bearer population management and associated sustainable resource use; and, as the last line of ecosystem defence, effective species at risk legislation and recovery programs.

The Species at Risk Act, SARA, and associated programming should be just that, the last line of biodiversity defence. It should not, in fact must not, come at the expense of effective conservation and management programs that prevent fish, wildlife, and their habitats from becoming at risk in the first place.

That was the overarching message and concern the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters expressed about Bill C-5, the Species at Risk Act, back in 2002. We warned the government of the day that Bill C-5, SARA then, would first create, through legislation, an expensive and reactive bureaucracy that would ultimately not be very effective at recovering most species at risk, and, second, would result in too many resources being directed to the service of this new species at risk bureaucracy to the detriment of existing federal fish and wildlife management and conservation programs that prevent species from becoming at risk in the first instance.

• (1545)

Now, eight years later, the OFAH takes no consolation in looking back and saying, "We told them so." The SARA track record since 2002 speaks volumes, and we've documented that record for you.

Now, eight years later, we remain very concerned that other fish and wildlife management, conservation, enforcement, and habitat protection programs have suffered because of the increasing fiscal and human resource costs of this growing SARA bureaucracy.

Three years after implementation, the federal government allocated an additional \$110 million for SARA implementation. In Ontario we've experienced an 80% reduction in the number of federal fisheries officers stationed in Ontario since 2006. We're also aware that the migratory game bird assessment monitoring and management programs of the Canadian Wildlife Service of Environment Canada have been cut because of the shifting of resources to the SARA program—robbing Peter to pay Paul.

The likelihood that limited resources and staff are being taken away from practical, on-the-ground ecosystem monitoring and conservation management to serve a reactive SARA paper exercise is most alarming to us. We only need to look at the longer record of the United States Endangered Species Act and associated programming to predict how ineffective and expensive the reactive single species protection model can become. Again, I urge you to particularly visit the website that provides the documentation in the next page or so of our submission to show just how expensive and ineffectual species recovery as a result of federal legislation in the United States has been over the last 33 years.

On the home front here, in 2006, Stratos presented an independent SARA audit. At the time, when we reviewed the results of the Stratos audit, quite frankly, we agreed with many of the observations and recommendations therein, and we urge this committee to revisit that Stratos report.

In fact, it forms the basis of the nine recommendations that the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters brings forward to your committee. They are resource community involvement. You've heard the first speaker this afternoon refer to the importance of integrating and incorporating aboriginal traditional knowledge. In the same way, the community knowledge that resides with those who have a vested interest in the sustainable harvest of a species and/or the stewardship of habitat affected by a proposed species must be afforded reasonable opportunities to provide input into COSEWIC's species assessments, socio-economic regulatory impact assessments, and any subsequent recovery and policy development.

Under the category of assessment and listing, we have three recommendations for you. COSEWIC assessment criteria should be reviewed and amended where it does not make it clear that where there's insufficient science to accurately assess the status of a species, species should not be assessed as endangered or threatened, but rather the data-deficient category would be the most appropriate classification.

In the face of scientific uncertainty about species, it's critically important, both for accountability and relevant socio-economic conditions, that the minister retains the authority to accept or reject the COSEWIC listing recommendations. That ministerial discretion, in our view, remains important. We would of course point out the fact that the minister has accepted 449 of 551 listing recommendations—that is some 81%—which indicates to us a respect by the minister for those COSEWIC assessments.

•(1550)

Geographical assessments and designations at lower than the species level should be strongly discouraged in COSEWIC assessment criteria. Unless there is strong genetic evidence of geographical sub-speciation, designation of eco-types or local populations should not be proposed or accepted. On the other hand, we do recognize the value of de-listing species at a geographical level, and we would certainly recommend that become policy.

In terms of recovery strategies themselves, we have a couple of recommendations for you. For species that could impact resource users, the OFAH strongly recommends that recovery strategy teams include non-government representatives with expertise on the sustainable management, use, and recovery of such species and/or their habitats.

We also recommend development of policies and guidelines for recovery strategy team composition, stakeholder involvement, threat assessment, and population objective setting to help ensure more consistent development of effective recovery strategies.

We also recommend the development of appropriate criteria and an effective framework for assessing the socio-economic impact of species listing and recovery planning. Regulatory impact statements should include sound socio-economic analysis, including potential costs incurred by regulators, by those being regulated, and the conservation cost-benefit for the species at hand.

We also seek increases in efficiencies from SARA, not costs. Our second to last recommendation to you is that the OFAH recommends against feeding SARA's growing appetite for more funding and human resources. Rather, large cost savings and greater efficiency would be realized if Environment Canada were more serious about harmonizing provincial and federal species at risk efforts, which, for example, in Ontario are often redundant, inconsistent, and confusing to both agencies and the public.

Thank you very much.

•(1555)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Quinney.

Our final presentation before we go to our questions is by Dr. Whoriskey in Saint Andrews.

You have the floor.

**Dr. Frederick Whoriskey:** Thank you very much.

I am a research scientist pinch-hitting for the president of the organization, who could not be here today.

The nature of our testimony is really about our experience of life under SARA. A subpopulation of the Atlantic salmon was the first group of marine fish to be listed there. So that is the spirit in which I deliver my comments here today, on behalf of the Atlantic Salmon Federation.

The Atlantic Salmon Federation is an international, non-profit organization headquartered in St. Andrews, New Brunswick, with regional offices in Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador. We also have offices in the northeastern United States.

We are dedicated to the conservation and restoration of wild Atlantic salmon and the river and marine ecosystems on which their survival depends.

We work closely with seven regional councils and 120 volunteer river organizations that are our grassroots in eastern Canada and the northeastern United States. This network covers the freshwater range of wild Atlantic salmon in North America.

In carrying out our programs, we use scientific research, advocacy, and public awareness.

As I mentioned, I believe Atlantic salmon was the first marine species to be listed under SARA, and those were the inner Bay of Fundy Atlantic salmon populations. We are very concerned that without urgent action the wild Atlantic salmon populations of the approximately 32 inner Bay of Fundy rivers that have been listed under SARA will become extinct.

The range of the inner Bay of Fundy salmon includes all rivers draining into the Bay of Fundy from the Mispec River in New Brunswick, which is east of the Saint John River, around the bay to the Pereaux River in Nova Scotia, which is east of the Annapolis River. It is estimated that when populations were healthy in these rivers, more than 40,000 Atlantic salmon returned each year. A precipitous decline began in the late 1980s in these returns, so that by 1998 the wild salmon population was estimated to be fewer than 500, and now fewer than 200 return annually.

These salmon remain largely within the Bay of Fundy and in the adjacent water of the Gulf of Maine throughout their life at sea. This is unusual for Atlantic salmon, which typically range great distances in the North Atlantic. Many go as far as Labrador or Greenland.

While freshwater issues such as logging practices, agricultural runoff, building of the massive Petitcodiac tidal barrier—the gates of which were recently opened by the Province of New Brunswick—and smaller dams played a part in the declines historically, it appears the major critical problem now is at-sea survival. Theories on the mortality at sea have ranged from declining food supply to modification of environmental conditions; impacts from salmon farming that include disease transfer and increased infestations of sea lice; increased predation by seals, cormorants, and other predators; and changes in salmon behaviour due to declining numbers. Perhaps some combination of all these act together.

During the time that wild Atlantic salmon began their decline in the Bay of Fundy, the aquaculture industry was growing quickly, with very little regulation and enforcement in place. There was little monitoring of the effects of sea lice and other impacts on wild juvenile salmon, called smolts, as they made their way out to the ocean. We acknowledge that steps have been taken to improve the operational practices in this industry, but we remain concerned about the potential ill-effects of interaction between wild and farmed Atlantic salmon. With the growing resistance in our region of farmed Atlantic salmon to sea lice treatments in recent months, this threat to wild salmon must be monitored and appropriate action taken as needed.

The draft recovery document for the inner Bay of Fundy salmon complex states very clearly that the problems with the inner Bay of Fundy salmon populations are in the marine environment. We have a major knowledge gap about the marine life of inner Bay of Fundy salmon, but there is little in this document to reflect plans for work in this area. The report states that major marine mortality occurs during the post-smolt stage—this is shortly after they enter the sea for the first time as juvenile fish—but there is no committed research in this document on that phase of the salmon's life cycle.

Salmon from inner Bay of Fundy rivers are being held or “gene-banked” at three locations, all operated by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, to ensure that genetic material is available for restoration efforts; however, there is no dedicated long-term funding for these operations.

The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada has indicated these populations were endangered in 2001, and they were listed under the Species at Risk Act in 2003.

● (1600)

It took until December 2009 for Fisheries and Oceans Canada to issue a draft recovery plan to which the public was invited to provide input. Once the recovery plan is approved, DFO expects it to take another four years to develop and finalize action plans. This is a very, very long time, an unacceptably long time, to bring these actions to bear.

The Atlantic Salmon Federation and our regional councils recommend that DFO expedite the process to develop the required action plans to achieve the recovery goals and objectives identified in the recovery strategy. In addition, we recommend that DFO dedicate and provide the additional funding that's needed to carry out the recovery strategy and confirm the importance of the live gene bank program to recovery by including it in the department's annual A-base budget.

We recommend that marine critical habitat work become a priority and that the required resources be directed at this work, particularly regarding the post-smolts in the ocean, in order to give the recovery the greatest chance of success.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to speak with you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. We're going to open up our seven-minute round.

Mr. Scarpaleggia, you have the floor.

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair. This has been a very interesting set of testimonies.

Mr. Quinney, I was really intrigued by your testimony. If I understand correctly, you're speaking against the kind of formalized approach to protecting endangered species that is expressed through legislation such as SARA, and you're suggesting that your group is better placed to do much of SARA's work.

Do I understand correctly? I wasn't sure I followed the thread of the argument.

How big is your organization? What area does it cover? How does it contribute to saving wildlife, which you said it does very effectively without the bureaucracy that flows from legislation such as SARA?

**Dr. Terry Quinney:** Thank you for the question. Yes, you understand our submission.

Our submission is fundamentally that, 10 years ago, Canada chose to follow the existing American model, which is really a litigious, highly bureaucratic model. We believed, based on the track record of the United States of America at that time, that would be mistake for Canada.

Since that time, not only has the federal SARA record, we believe, proven us correct, but so has the most recent Ontario species at risk legislation, because it, too, basically uses now the Canadian federal and the American model, which is, first, a very strong legislative hammer, so to speak, instead of a cooperative stewardship approach; and secondly, the creation of a brand new institutionalized and clearly huge bureaucracy, the end result of which is seldom the actual on-the-ground recovery of species.

I think it's fair to say that there are alternative models, not only in Ontario and not only those demonstrated by my organization in cooperation with other organizations, including both the federal and provincial governments.

The point is cooperation, stewardship, and partnership first, not the legislative hammer and not an insatiable bureaucratic appetite for more resources that do not result in the on-the-ground successful recovery of species.

● (1605)

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Your brief is very good, but it's also a little abstract for someone like me who is not an expert in these issues. So could you give me an example of where the federal hammer has been used, and how your organization's approach would have been more supple and would have brought about better results? What reverberates with me in your message is that the traditional complaint from, for example, fishers in Newfoundland at the time the cod was undergoing a threat was that the biologists at DFO in Ottawa didn't know what they were doing and were mismanaging the fish stocks. So could you give me an example in your experience of where the federal hammer has been used and it's been counterproductive? And how would you have done things differently?

Your organization...again, I asked the question at the beginning. What sort of territory does it cover? Are there other organizations like yours that would complete the map of Canada, if you will? I'm sure you do excellent work, but whenever you're dealing with a territory as big as Canada, you need to bring some kind of rationality to bear, especially if you're going to have any kind of accountability at the government level. Your approach seems to be very much an on-the-ground laissez-faire approach. I'm not saying you're not successful, but we need to look at this in a comprehensive, rational way, or there's no accountability to Parliament.

**Dr. Terry Quinney:** Thank you.

Firstly, geographically, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters has dues-paying members in all corners, so to speak, of Ontario—in other words, right across the province. I mentioned 100,000 members, subscribers, supporters. We have approximately 85,000 dues-paying members.

Among our greatest strengths is that we have over 600 member, community-based, conservation clubs. Those community-based conservation clubs continue to devote volunteer time and their own money to conduct hands-on, “get your feet wet and your hands dirty” projects in their backyard right across the province. I think it's fair to say that both the provincial government and the federal government have learned that those community-based volunteer clubs are a tremendous asset to the protection of habitats and species, just generally speaking.

In the case of specific examples, in the interests of time, I'll list you several—

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:** One or two would be fine.

**Dr. Terry Quinney:** —bad experiences we've had with reference to endangered species legislation, both provincially and federally in the province of Ontario, and they include species such as lake sturgeon, bobwhite quail, snapping turtle, and, unfortunately, the American eel.

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:** What happened in those cases? What did the federal government do that got in the way of your interests?

**Dr. Terry Quinney:** They are diverting our time and resources, we think, from more productive avenues of restoration.

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:** What does that mean?

**The Chair:** Time has expired. Thank you, Mr. Quinney.

*Monsieur Bigras, sept minutes, s'il vous plaît.*

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to our witnesses. This is proving to be a very interesting meeting.

My questions will focus on two areas. My first question is for Mr. D'Eça. The second will be for the Vice-President of the Atlantic Salmon Federation.

If we go by what the scientists told us yesterday or the day before that, there seems to be a problem with species. The problem is mainly biological in nature. The scientists who testified were fairly clear about that.

We are not going to get very far with applying the legislation in the case of Nunavut. From the outset, one of the problems with species listing is the whole decision-making process. Of course, you have a land claims agreement that I feel is strong, and maybe even stronger than any other protocol signed a few years ago.

It's clear in your minds that the land claims agreement supercedes the act and takes precedence in the decision-making process. You are hoping that the provisions of the land claims agreement respecting the decision-making process and species listing will apply and take precedence over any action officials might take. I understand that you signed a protocol further to a working group's recommendations. However, this does not appear to have produced any results.

Is it your opinion that under the land claims agreement, the provisions of the Species at Risk Act must apply as per the discussions that have taken place in recent years? The protocol signed with the government does not appear to have produced much in the way of results. Which of the two documents has precedence, legislation that you might enact, or the statute enacted by Canada's Parliament?

• (1610)

[English]

**Mr. Michael d'Eça:** Merci, Monsieur Bigras.

First of all, the protocol I think you're referring to is a memorandum of understanding. It was signed a couple of years ago. Actually, both government and the NWMB would say that it has been very successful. It actually flows into your other question about whether the land claim comes first and what happens about the Species at Risk Act.

If there's a conflict between a constitutionally protected document and a statute, a regulation, or a policy, the law is clear: the constitutionally protected document must prevail. But that's only when there's a conflict. There should not be a conflict between the Nunavut Lands Claims Agreement and the Species at Risk Act. In many instances, there isn't. We mentioned one today, and we have a straightforward recommendation to address that. But that one conflict that we do have, we addressed through the memorandum of understanding. As I say, it helps to blend the listing process under SARA with COSEWIC, the minister, the Governor in Council, and the decision-making process under the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. It has been quite successful in doing that, but it's not a legal document.

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Bigras:** I see. However, you state on page 5 of your submission that the MOU “does not solve the underlying problem of SARA's failure to properly recognize the decision-making jurisdiction of the NWMB and the significance of the NLCA Article 5 decision-making process“. My understanding of the situation is that while discussions may have taken place, there continues to be problem.

When the federal government and NWMB have discussions, are they viewed as government-to-government discussions?



[English]

**Mr. Michael d'Eça:** First of all, the discussions for the development of the memorandum of understanding were between the NWMB, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and Environment Canada. Included in our discussions was the Government of Nunavut and the main Inuit party to our land claims agreement, Nunavut Tunngavik. There were a number of parties in the discussions. The parties that signed the MOU were DFO and Environment Canada representing the crown and the NWMB in its own right.

Again, what I want to underline is that the MOU actually works well, but it only goes so far. With the MOU, some of the opening language says it is not a contract, it is not legally binding; it's a memorandum of understanding. So the parties have worked well with it, and we're not complaining about the MOU at all. What we're saying is the act itself is still not in line. It doesn't line up properly with the land claims agreement.

We have an opportunity. This is an example of why you would have a parliamentary review. After five years you see that the land claim and the statute don't line up properly; therefore, you make appropriate revisions to the Species at Risk Act.

• (1615)

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Bigras:** The committee heard testimony from the National Aboriginal Council on Species at Risk, or NACOSAR. It seems that the Council is experiencing a few problems.

When you wish to make recommendations to the government, do you go through NACOSAR, or do you deal directly with the appropriate minister? How would you describe your relationship with NACOSAR?

[English]

**Mr. Michael d'Eça:** The NWMB is actually an administrative tribunal. It's a regulatory agency, like the National Energy Board or the CRTC, or all those administrative boards that we're all familiar with. So it is not an aboriginal organization, but it's established under a land claims agreement and much of its public is aboriginal, the Inuit people. So the NWMB plays the same role as another administrative agency.

It's arm's length from Inuit, from the National Aboriginal Council on Species at Risk, from Environment Canada, and so on. It operates under the terms of administrative law and the land claims agreement, but it's an independent institution of public government.

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Bigras:** I have one final question, since my time is running short. It is for the Vice-President of the Atlantic Salmon Federation.

Mr. Whoriskey, you painted a rather bleak picture of the state of the Atlantic salmon, of declining stocks since 1998. You have identified a number of human activities that are to blame. Some scientists have recommended separate recovery and action plans, so that greater emphasis is placed on scientific and biological considerations in the assessment process. The socio-economic assessment should happen a little later.

Would that have made a difference in terms of addressing the lengthy delays you talked about today in getting a species listed?

[English]

**Dr. Frederick Whoriskey:** I do not believe so. In point of fact, the biologists and the socio-economists who were involved in this dossier would agree that they were both suffering mightily. The species declined extraordinarily rapidly, and so did the jobs related to the sports fisheries for these species in these areas. They were lost at the same time. So there was a driver on both sides to try to do something.

If I could add a comment here in relation to what Mr. Quinney has been saying, we do tend to get lost in trying to get a species listed as the primary focus, and that's not the point. What we're trying to do is get a species recovered.

If SARA has a weakness, in our opinion, it is the fact that much time and resources go into the effort to get a species listed on paper—the paper exercise—but once we get to the point where a species is listed, the resources are not in place to actually implement the recovery effort and bring back the benefits that we've been missing. So I would hope that, in the future, it will be the kind of direction we'll move in.

**The Chair:** Mr. Donnelly, you have the floor.

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank all three of our presenters for providing their testimony today. My question is for Dr. Whoriskey.

Dr. Whoriskey, you've said in your submission that the wild Atlantic salmon stocks began to decline at about the same time as aquaculture grew significantly in the Atlantic region. You can certainly correct me if I'm wrong.

**Dr. Frederick Whoriskey:** That's correct.

**Mr. Fin Donnelly:** Could you comment on the connection that open-net salmon farming in the Bay of Fundy may have had in the die-off of these wild Atlantic salmon, and could this have been avoided?

**Dr. Frederick Whoriskey:** We know that there have been impacts from the net pens upon the wild salmon populations. Massive numbers of escapes occurred in the early days of the salmon farming industry, and these genetically swamped wild populations replaced the wild gene pools with basically farmed salmon pools that are not capable of surviving in the wild. They've been bred to live in a totally different environment from what a wild fish lives in.

We have also detected the presence of diseases that were in epidemic proportions in the sea cages present in wild populations at the same time, although we are not in a position where I can tell you quantitatively how many wild fish we lost to these diseases that were driven perhaps by epidemics in the farm areas.

Clearly the interest of both the aquaculture industry and the wild industry is for a healthy, disease-controlled farming industry that keeps all of its fish in its cages. It has been in that spirit that we've been working, trying to keep an eye on where the impacts are, documenting them, and calling for corrections when they were needed, and there has been significant change and significant corrections over time.

• (1620)

**Mr. Fin Donnelly:** Thank you.

Do you think that if fish farm operations move to close containment, it would help with the restoration process of Atlantic salmon?

**Dr. Frederick Whoriskey:** We view the aquaculture and salmon farming dossier as one of probably a sequence of events that are affecting salmon right now.

There are many straws that have gone onto the camel, and the camel's back is broken right now. I don't know how many of them I'm going to have to take off to fix, but certainly the more I can take off, the better chance I'm going to have. Anything we can do to clean up the aquaculture industry so that it is one of the straws that is removed would be good.

**Mr. Fin Donnelly:** In that vein, do you know of evidence in the Atlantic that there is growing resistance to the application of pesticides like Slice to sea lice?

**Dr. Frederick Whoriskey:** Yes. We are in a position right now where on an emergency basis we are trialling alternate chemicals to Slice, because Slice is proving not to be as effective as it was before. There is evidence of a resistance developing in this particular region.

**Mr. Fin Donnelly:** Thank you.

Finally, what steps do you think DFO can take immediately to prevent the extinction of Atlantic salmon?

**Dr. Frederick Whoriskey:** The primary step they've already implemented are these live gene banks. A live gene bank is the genetic stock from a number of these inner Bay of Fundy salmon rivers that has been put into hatcheries, and they are maintaining fish populations through breeding. They are maintaining the genetic diversity and can go back into the rivers over time.

What we need to do is maintain that over an extended period. The funding is not in place at this time to guarantee it will be there. On a year-on-year basis, DFO was trying to cobble together the funds from internal budgets to make that happen.

Our real beef here is that we've gone through the process of SARA, gotten to a SARA listing, and now the rubber is meeting the road. We're at the point where we really need to take action. Resources are not in place to guarantee that these action plans can be implemented.

**Mr. Fin Donnelly:** I appreciate your responses.

I'll turn the remaining time over to my colleague.

**Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, NDP):** Hi, Mr. Quinney, it's nice to see you.

**Mr. Terry Quinney:** Hello, Mr. Hyer.

**Mr. Bruce Hyer:** Under your recovery strategies, under question 7, you say "The O.F.A.H. recommends the development of appropriate criteria and an effective framework for assessing the socio-economic impact of species listing and recovery planning." I hope I'm not reading it right, but I want to get clarification.

We heard evidence on Tuesday. There seemed to be a consensus from those witnesses that it should be straight science with no socio-economic benefit analysis on listing and determining what critical habitats are and what position the species are in. Where a socio-economic benefit analysis would come into play would be in the recovery planning stage. In other words, politically you might decide it's not worth the money or not really needed or too expensive—that that could be contentious. But hopefully the science, while imperfect, would not be that contentious.

Could you clarify what you meant here?

**Dr. Terry Quinney:** Yes, and thank you for the question.

I'm a research scientist by training. Biology is my specialty, but I fully acknowledge the veracity of the sciences of economics and sociology. Those are every bit as legitimate branches of science as biology and ecology.

We would say to the committee that in keeping our eye on the ball, which in this case is ultimate recovery of a given species, that socio-economic information can be as relevant and just as important as the ecological information and therefore needs to be brought to bear at the earliest instance, not at the latest.

• (1625)

**Mr. Bruce Hyer:** I would beg to differ with you, but thank you for clarifying. I've never seen economics as much of a science, myself.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Mr. Hyer?

**Mr. Bruce Hyer:** Those are all my questions.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Calkins, you're doing the last seven minutes of questions on the first round.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Wetaskiwin, CPC):** Great, thank you.

I appreciate the testimony I've heard today. It's quite refreshing. I think all Canadians want to make sure we protect the ecological integrity and biodiversity of our country. I think every witness we've heard would agree with that statement. But I am concerned that the Species at Risk Act... When you read it, "Species at Risk Act" sounds like a nice title. But if you look at what a species is, it's actually a species, subspecies, variety, or geographically different population. I think this is where we get bogged down in some of these details. Mr. Quinney, I think this is where you addressed it quite well.

I'll give you an example. When I was a fisheries technician in Alberta, we were working on walleye populations. You could argue that in a particular lake, because our lakes are not joined by rivers as much as they are in Ontario, the species of fish in those lakes have been separate from each other for a long enough period of time that one could make the scientific argument that they're distinct genetic populations, regardless of the fact that biologically they could probably interbreed and produce fertile offspring, which is the biological definition of a species.

The Province of Alberta, through its bequeathal of fisheries from the Government of Canada, was responsible for managing those walleye populations, which we did. When fishing pressure got to the point where populations collapsed, we brought in management practices such as a no-catch or a catch-and-release-only on certain species. You know how these things work.

At the same time, as I read this act, and as you correctly point out, anybody paying attention could have made the argument that a species of walleye in a particular isolated lake that was below a certain population level could have qualified to be listed as a species at risk. I think the point you're trying to make is whether that is as worthwhile an effort as spending the time, effort, and resources on the management and tracking of the populations at the provincial level in the first place.

**Dr. Terry Quinney:** Yes, sir, you get it. One has to be extremely careful not to let scarce resources, whether human or financial, be spent on anything but the most important areas. If, for example, the province of Alberta generally speaking has an overall healthy walleye or pickerel population and there are problems in certain specific geographical areas, I would agree with you that SARA is not the tool to address those site-specific problems. Furthermore, if SARA were used as a tool, it would be the inappropriate tool.

Finally, we want to again ensure not only our members.... I agree with you that all Canadians want to see healthy nature, healthy fish and wildlife. I think SARA is a symbol for Canadians, but in a way it's a symbol of society's failure to adequately protect species and habitats. That's why I've been emphasizing on behalf of my organization that we must keep the other 95% of species and their habitats healthy so that in 50 years we won't need a SARA. That should be our goal.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** I couldn't agree with you more. I think that's a noble goal, to be sure. I want to talk to you a little bit, because I do value organizations like yours, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters. I'm a former conservation officer as well. I've worked hand in glove with various organizations in the province of Alberta, where I'm from, such as Trout Unlimited and the Alberta Fish and Game Association.

We spend a lot of time, without any disrespect, talking about the value that aboriginal traditional knowledge plays in this, and it's well documented in this legislation. What's not well documented is the tremendous value that I think various conservation organizations play. Trout Unlimited, the Pacific Salmon Foundation, the Atlantic Salmon Federation, and the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters are not mentioned in here. We have a mention of some other kinds of organizations that are more scientific and academic, but not so much at the applied level such as yours.

Could you recommend anything to us insofar as the act or the legislation being changed to compel the minister to involve organizations such as yours in the recovery or in the assessment of the listing?

• (1630)

**Dr. Terry Quinney:** I would fear waiting for a regulatory or legislative change. I think if the government will were there, then the appropriate departments would make it policy to make sure they picked up the phone with Trout Unlimited or the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters or Ducks Unlimited, whatever chunk of geography, as well as native people living in those communities. That those organizations and the native peoples are at the recovery tables is our point. This local knowledge is extremely important to the ultimate recovery of the species.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** I agree.

**Dr. Whoriskey,** I think you hit the nail right on the head, and you certainly got my attention. I'd be interested to see what some of the other witnesses here would think about your comment when you said this act needs a focus. It's tremendously prescriptive in the process of listing a species, yet it's not as prescriptive and it's not as clear in the legislation about what needs to happen in the recovery stage. I'd like you to comment a bit more on that.

From my perspective, I think that when Canadians hear the title "Species at Risk Act", they're thinking of things like the whooping crane in Alberta, which had a strong recovery far before the Species at Risk Act was ever created. It's a shining example of how these kinds of efforts can happen outside the existence of legislation like this. However, we have this piece of legislation now; we're trying to fine-tune it to make it better. I would be curious to find out if, in your collective opinions, you think we spend too much time and effort listing species rather than making more of a socio-economic decision earlier on in the process so we don't spend as much time listing species but actually identify those species we deem to be most important for recovery and putting the resources from the listing process or other aspects of this legislation into the recovery.

Does anybody want to touch that?

**Dr. Terry Quinney:** Sorry, I thought your question was directed to Dr. Whoriskey.

**Dr. Frederick Whoriskey:** I'm confused as to who the question is directed to.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** I agreed with your point and I wanted to find out if the other witnesses here agreed with your point.

**Dr. Terry Quinney:** Absolutely, sorry.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** Okay, that's good.

**The Chair:** We're going to go to the five-minute round.

Mr. Trudeau, you have the floor.

**Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Chair.

One of the things we heard in the last series of presentations on SARA was from a panel of scientists who were talking about the importance of looking at different juxtapositions and contrasting science versus socio-economic impacts and injecting a level of clarity and transparency and openness in both consultations and in the timelines and reporting of those timelines.

I understand the resistance by Dr. Quinney to a process that hasn't been particularly fruitful as yet. When you see the numbers you brought forward, it's very compelling. But one of the things we have heard is that now we're five years in, we're much further along, and there's going to be an increase in the numbers of action plans and recovery strategies. It took that long to get going.

My question is more specific than that. When you talk about the efforts that organizations such as yours, comprised of active, engaged individuals who care very much on a personal and on a recreational level for the natural spaces and the wildlife that inhabit them and their actions toward preserving that, how is that in theory in contradiction with having a strong, clear regulatory regime? Or is it really just a question of in practice? Because as you say, if they don't pick up the phone it ends up not being effective as a process.

• (1635)

**Dr. Terry Quinney:** Thank you.

The latter point I would agree with. The consequence is one of ineffectiveness and certainly inefficiencies when those kinds of contacts and relationships aren't built.

I would say that ultimately our point remains, regardless of the government of the day, that healthy nature, healthy habitats, healthy species must become a priority regardless of the particular day of the year or year of the millennium we are at. Otherwise, unfortunately, we are doomed to repeat our mistakes, and the list will only get longer.

**Mr. Justin Trudeau:** Then I guess my follow-up question, more concretely, is other than better consultations, can you give me an example of actions that the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, for example, would be pleased to be engaged in with a more action-oriented, shall we call it, version of SARA that might be brought in?

**Dr. Terry Quinney:** Yes, thank you. A short, concrete example: if you review our nine recommendations, among them you will see that we'd appreciate an invitation.... The species has to be appropriate, geographically and from a knowledge base that we have. We'd appreciate an invitation to participate in some of these recovery teams. We think we could actually help the federal government achieve the objective, get those critters healthy again sooner than later.

In addition to that committed volunteerism and maybe some of the associated resourcing that comes with it, we have highly trained staff. And it's not just the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters that can claim that.

**Mr. Justin Trudeau:** But as we get you involved, can you give me an example? Would you be physically restocking certain lakes and streams if that was asked of you? Would you be going out and putting banners around certain areas that would let your membership

know not to hunt there, for example? What kind of concrete action would it be?

**Dr. Terry Quinney:** Yes, sir, those are among the types of contributions we could make. I prefaced it by saying it's species specific, it's site specific. Quite frankly, it would depend on what the recovery plan that was finalized called for. Yes, we would want to contribute, as examples, in those ways.

**The Chair:** Your time has expired.

Mr. Warawa.

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to each of the witnesses for being here. I think we've all found it very interesting.

I think back to when SARA was being proposed and debated. Dr. Quinney, you said in your presentation that you could say "I told you so" when you brought the point that we may be creating a bureaucracy that would take away valuable and limited resources.

When SARA was being debated, some of the concerns raised at that time were that it would create this bureaucracy, that compensation to farmers should be fair, and there were some big concerns about compensation and *mens rea*, intent. So here we are later, and some of those concerns continue.

We've generally heard, though, that SARA should not be scrapped; it should be retained and improved. Dr. Quinney, you did include recommendations. I'm assuming that along with the recommendations, you're assuming SARA will stay in place and be improved. Is that a proper assumption?

• (1640)

**Dr. Terry Quinney:** Yes, sir. Our recommendations do not include throwing it out the window. We have to work with what we have.

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** Yes. Good.

I'd like to focus on socio-economic factors. You said, if I understood you correctly, that it should be done at the earliest stage. We've heard from the department that a species is identified through COSEWIC as being at risk. At that point, scientifically it's identified that the numbers are of concern, and it would then go to the minister.

When it's at the early stages, it's totally scientific, there are totally biological numbers. There are no socio-economic factors in that decision. It's just this species could be in trouble. When it goes to the minister and to cabinet, at that time there are socio-economic factors. Then at the latter stage, when critical habitat is identified, again, socio-economic factors are not considered.

Could you elaborate more at what stages you would see—at the beginning stages and the middle stages and the ending stages?

**Dr. Terry Quinney:** Yes. We know from experience that those people who may be most directly affected, whether they be farmers, whether they be our native people, whether they be our commercial fishermen, have a lot of intimate, hard-earned knowledge about the habits, behaviours, and habitats of those species, and they can make a valuable contribution at that listing stage for the COSEWIC committee, in our opinion.

Finally, we are part of these ecosystems. These critters, whether they are endangered or not, are going to have to live alongside us in order to succeed. They actually need us. So that would be as succinct, perhaps, as I could put our rationale for incorporating all relevant information and the relevant players at the table, at the outset.

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** The scientists who we heard prior to your testimony—and I don't know if you've had a chance to review any of those previous testimonies—are not supportive of socio-economic factors being considered, particularly at the early stages. Why would you think that science would not want that included?

**Dr. Terry Quinney:** I don't know. Based on the SARA track record so far, I can't speculate. But I do know that the science is evidence-based, and in many cases what SARA is showing is that it takes a long time to produce that evidence to support designation or not a designation. In some cases, the time and the resources can be what can only be described as excessive. What are we to do in the meantime?

**The Chair:** Monsieur Ouellet.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Christian Ouellet (Brome—Missisquoi, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Quinney, I nearly fell out of my chair earlier, listening to you speak as a scientist. I must admit that after hearing you blow hot and cold at the same time, I'm not exactly sure what your position on SARA is.

You stated that there should no longer be any need for species at risk legislation in 50 years' time. Given global pollution and climate change, I cannot see that happening. I think we will need this legislation even more in 50 years' time, not less. I thought the initial focus of the act was primarily on biodiversity. The legislation's objective was much broader than merely saving a particular sport fishing species.

You maintain that volunteers can be a tremendous help. I agree, but they can also be worse than the scientists. There was an incident several years ago. Fortunately, SARA had already been in force when this incident occurred three or four years ago. According to scientists, the rare soft-shelled turtles in Missisquoi Bay were threatened with extinction. However, all of the anglers wanted to get eradicate the turtles because they ate fish eggs. Had we let the volunteers have their way, the soft-shell turtle would now be extinct and that would have been a loss for biodiversity.

I've also seen volunteers in La Vérendrye Park remove German carp, an amazing species of fish, and kill them because they supposedly ate pickerel eggs. So then, can we rely on volunteers who are merely go with the trend. Pickerel was a popular species at

the time, unlike carp. Today, people might prefer carp because they keep the lakes cleaner.

Can you clarify your position on this controversial, albeit critically important, as I see it, piece of legislation? Bear in mind that SARA was enacted only five years ago.

• (1645)

[*English*]

**Dr. Terry Quinney:** Yes, sir. Thank you very much for your comments.

I may still be somewhat of an idealist, but from a pragmatic point of view, I agree with you that regardless of the title of a piece of legislation or law, enforcement is required. Enforcement is a good thing. And I agree with you that while most people may have honourable intentions and may want to do what is best for nature in their backyards, there are some who don't and won't, and that's why we need that kind of enforcement, regardless of whether it's called a Species at Risk Act or not.

That does allow me to repeat my request to the federal government that resourcing be restored, for example, to the DFO cuts that have occurred throughout the Great Lakes basin of Ontario, so there can be a comprehensive approach, and we don't have to depend on SARA for the future of healthy fish and wildlife in the country.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Christian Ouellet:** Would you not agree that SARA is important in terms of protecting species that are not sport fishing or commercially viable species, such as frogs, flies and bugs that are critically important to our ecosystem? You even state in your submission that if there is not enough scientific data, then such species should be protected.

Couldn't we just rely on our observations that small frogs are at risk, instead of waiting for the scientists to warn us that the species is threatened with extinction?

[*English*]

**Dr. Terry Quinney:** Sir, I agree with what you've just said, that the protection of the entire ecosystem, the entire food chain, is needed. SARA is part of that, but SARA is the last defence, we say. We say the first defence is before SARA. Make sure the habitats of all those frogs are adequately protected. That's what biodiversity conservation is. Are there adequate federal and provincial policies in place across the country at that first step so we don't have to rely on SARA?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Christian Ouellet:** Is my time up?

• (1650)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Time has expired.

We're going to keep moving along.

Mr. Woodworth.

**Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to all the witnesses who are here today. It's very good for democracy when people take the time to come to inform legislators.

As I have been listening to the evidence, not just today but over the months we've been studying SARA, it occurs to me that SARA really is an attempt to put a square peg in a round hole. In a certain sense, all human activity is fundamentally inconsistent with a completely pristine environment, so what we're attempting to do, and what it's really all about, is finding the right balance. We have 33 million people co-existing with acres of diverse species and we have to find the right balance.

I'd like to tackle something that hasn't been discussed today but is of interest to me, because I have a feeling it's one of the biggest challenges under SARA and I find it referred to in the report on behalf of the NWMB.

Mr. d'Eça, what I'm referring to in your written brief is a reference to the fact that only 16 critical habitats, or 17%, have been identified. First, I want to get the parameters of that. I'm assuming that is a statistic for the whole of Canada, not just for Nunavut. Is that correct?

**Mr. Michael d'Eça:** Yes, that's correct. We got that information from the 2008 status report of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development to the House of Commons.

**Mr. Stephen Woodworth:** Right.

The reason I am focusing on this is that quite clearly if we don't know the critical habitat of a species it's pretty difficult to figure out what we have to do to protect the species. And it really is almost more of a scientific question, but each of the witnesses who are here today has had experience with the SARA process.

So there really are two questions, but I'll ask them one at a time. The first is, what are the challenges you're aware of to identifying critical habitat? Let's stick with that for a moment, and if there is time I'll come back and ask you what you think the solutions are.

And since I started with Mr. d'Eça.... I know you're a lawyer and not a scientist, but lawyers of course know a little bit about a whole lot of things, and I wonder if you have any comment about the challenges to identifying critical habitat.

**Mr. Michael d'Eça:** Yes, I can say a couple of things about that.

First of all, though, you mentioned it's a scientific question. It is a scientific question, but it's a question you want to put to aboriginal peoples. And I expect my colleague will say you want to put it to organizations and individuals who have community knowledge.

In terms of challenges, the challenge is to locate and speak with the correct people. You want to speak to the scientists, for sure. But if you're looking at wolverine, Inuit have been harvesting wolverine and living in an ecosystem with wolverine—at least in Nunavut—for a thousand years. So they have a lot to say about the location of the critical habitat, what kind of protection should be offered, etc.

**Mr. Stephen Woodworth:** We almost have to ask our witnesses to speak in point form because of the strict time limits, so I get the point on who to consult or consulting broadly enough.

Is there any other challenge you'd want to mention, or should I move on to another witness?

**Mr. Michael d'Eça:** No. Move on.

**Mr. Stephen Woodworth:** Okay.

Dr. Quinney, do you have any comment on that question?

**Dr. Terry Quinney:** Sure I do, because the challenges the biological scientists face in identifying critical habitat for any species boil down to the availability of the empirical evidence and the data. And for a lot of these critters—we've got 450 designated so far—that empirical evidence hasn't been collected, so it's not part of the scientific arena yet.

Among the challenges that are faced in the determination of critical habitat is how best to obtain the required empirical evidence for the scientists to do their thing.

• (1655)

**Mr. Stephen Woodworth:** Thank you.

Since I have such limited time, and you've each given me one—

**The Chair:** Your time has expired, Mr. Woodworth, so we'll pass this from one lawyer to another.

Mr. McGuinty.

**Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.):** I'd like to facilitate my colleagues here. Maybe Mr. Trudeau could go for a minute or two. Is that okay, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** That's fine, Mr. McGuinty.

Mr. Trudeau.

**Mr. Justin Trudeau:** Thank you.

I'd like to go back, Dr. Quinney, to something you mentioned earlier that I wanted to follow up on in my first round: the parallels you're making between socio-economics as a science or as a source of information that can help preserve species and aid species recovery, and science itself.

While I understand we can use economics and human populations to help recover species, I'm not entirely clear on the capacity to do that as well as scientific knowledge would bring in, or without a strong pure science basis to our actions.

**Dr. Terry Quinney:** Why don't we try it? Let's give it a try.

**Mr. Justin Trudeau:** I find your response cute—

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Justin Trudeau:** —but I have to say I'm not entirely sure how that would go.

**Dr. Terry Quinney:** It's not cute. I'm sorry, it's not cute at all. What we're proposing is an alternative approach to what has unfolded over the last six years.

Are we doing the best we can? We think improvements can be made, and we're making suggestions to do so. We've brought nine concrete ones forward to you.

**Mr. Justin Trudeau:** Thank you. It was just more on that specific one. I'm not questioning your recommendations.

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Anyone can take this.

It seems to me that the reason we require such rigorous science in terms of listing species is precisely because of the economic interests involved, and maybe the jurisdictional interests as well, or the potential for jurisdictional conflict between the federal government and the provinces. In other words, if we're going to bring in a recovery plan for a particular species, we'd better be sure that we have the supporting evidence that will allow us to withstand a barrage of criticism from economic interests that could be affected. It seems to me that when you really get down to it, it's like with accounting rules and big organizations, you really have to protect yourself. That seems to me to be why we rely on the rigorous science.

I'm wondering if there's a way—thinking creatively and not being a scientist, not being a lawyer—that a system can be established whereby if there are no really strong economic interests involved, the science could be made maybe a little less rigorous because there wouldn't be economic interests at stake that could rise up and challenge a recovery plan. I don't know if anyone has a comment to make about that.

Second, if there's time, in the case of the anglers and hunters, I understand your expertise and the fact that you care for the species, but if everything were given over to you to protect a species, because you must have a particular focus on particular species, would you overlook species like the snail, for example? You must have a particular focus.

Those are my two questions for whomever would like to answer them.

**Mr. Michael d'Éca:** First of all, I think it is necessary to prioritize your resources. From the perspective of the NWMB and the land claim under which we operate, it talks in terms of social, economic, and cultural needs of Inuit. So we tend to look at that.

But actually in terms of determining whether a species is endangered or a special concern, the NWMB is focused entirely upon conservation issues, upon the evidence that can be brought forward or not with respect to whether that species is at some level of risk.

Now what we do, of course, is look at science and the important knowledge of aboriginal peoples.

• (1700)

**Dr. Terry Quinney:** Sir, the answer to your question about the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters' priorities is yes, it would be fair to say that our members love to go hunting and fishing. They're fishing and hunting naturalists, though, in the sense that they love healthy nature, all the components of nature, including that snail.

They have funded the recovery of not only game species and game fish but those that have ecosystem value, like turtles that they

don't harvest or like peregrine falcons, which they don't harvest. They love those animals too.

**The Chair:** Mr. Armstrong.

**Mr. Scott Armstrong (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC):** I'm almost scared to speak. After you speak you tend to disappear on this side.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Scott Armstrong:** I'll give it my best shot here and see if I can manage to survive.

Dr. Whoriskey, I see by the sun shining there that it's another beautiful day in Atlantic Canada. I'll be home later tonight.

On fish, you mentioned that the Atlantic salmon literally hit the mortality rate where things become very troubling for them when they enter the marine climate. You talked about some steps that are already being taken by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to maintain the genetic nature of this wildlife.

What type of sustained funding that you mentioned on an annual basis would be required to maintain the genetic fish banks that currently exist? What type of money are we looking at there? Would you be aware of that?

**Dr. Frederick Whoriskey:** You're probably talking in the range, for the live gene banks, of a couple of hundred thousand dollars a year to maintain them for the 32 populations that are present in those areas. I would hope as well we'd begin to address some of the core problems, such as the habitat issue. They're disappearing somewhere out in the ocean.

Canada has already made a stab, kind of indirectly, towards that. Canada is a world leader in a technology called sonic telemetry. Various firms in this country have developed the ability to track animals out into the oceans. Through the Canada Foundation for Innovation international joint ventures fund and funding from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, a project called the "Ocean Tracking Network", based at Dalhousie University, is beginning to wire critical points of the world's oceans and would be able to detect fish marked with those tags. Some of that OTN tracking ability is going to go into the Bay of Fundy, with the specific goal of trying to look at these endangered Atlantic salmon. What we have to do is get the additional funding to put into some of the fish coming out of these rivers so that we can track them into those areas, and that's probably going to be a couple of hundred thousand dollars a year as well, just for the technologies.

**Mr. Scott Armstrong:** My riding borders on the Bay of Fundy, and there's a great deal of coastline there. One of the recent things that has been done to help protect Atlantic salmon, of course, is the opening of the river gates on the Petitcodiac River. This is an issue that also brings socio-economic concerns, because even though the Petitcodiac River is in New Brunswick, some of the constituents in my riding are concerned that there will be some environmental damage from things coming out with that water. There's a dump on that river and some other things that may cause some damage to some different shellfish and groundfish in the bay, and they're looking for compensation.

Do you have any comments on the impact that opening those river gates may have on the greater environmental concerns of the Bay of Fundy?

**Dr. Frederick Whoriskey:** The project is proceeding in the correct fashion. They've decided to undertake a two-year trial. A monitoring program is in place to try to address some of those concerns. Rather than speculating and compensating somebody for an impact that may not occur, let's go and find out whether the impact is actually occurring in the first place.

I suspect, personally, that we are actually going to find things like the lobster fishery doing better rather than poorer, as has been suggested, once the causeways open up. At that point in time, I'd hate to be spending the taxpayers' money on a second salary for somebody who's making more money than they ever did in the first place.

• (1705)

**Mr. Scott Armstrong:** Thank you for your comments.

So would you say that some of the steps being taken with this initiative may actually be a very positive and applicable use of the SARA legislation?

**Dr. Frederick Whoriskey:** I think this is a very positive step. Something in the order of 35% of the available habitat for inner Bay of Fundy salmon were located in the Petitcodiac River itself. This is an extraordinarily important keystone river for that particular complex of salmon, so this is very positive from the point of view of that benefit.

We know from a meeting I had just yesterday that already over 5,000 gaspereau have cropped up in the fish traps that have been monitoring in the river. They're already moving in there. There's a restoration that's going to happen naturally of that particular anadromous fish. That becomes bait for the lobster fishermen, which is a wonderful benefit for the area. So already it's having positive benefits, and they're going to have socio-economic benefits as well.

**Mr. Scott Armstrong:** So already, just in the short two weeks that it's been happening, we've already seen some positive ramifications from application of this legislation.

**Dr. Frederick Whoriskey:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Scott Armstrong:** Thank you, Dr. Whoriskey.

Mr. d'Eça, thank you for your presentation and submission, as I thank all three submitters.

I have some significant experience of first nations both on the west coast with the Nisga'a people and on the east coast, of course, with the Mi'kmaq people. Traditionally, knowledge is transmitted between generations orally. There's a deep oral tradition in both those populations on both coasts. I have no experience myself in Nunavut.

Is that the case in the Nunavut first nations populations as well?

**Mr. Michael d'Eça:** Yes, it's very much the case within Nunavut. It's an oral tradition.

**Mr. Scott Armstrong:** In regard to this oral tradition, you had mentioned the concern that many of the people who have this

traditional knowledge are elders, and of course are going to be leaving us soon. Have there been any efforts made by anyone to do some recording of this—and of course they may be doing it in their traditional language—to preserve some of that traditional knowledge in Nunavut?

**Mr. Michael d'Eça:** Yes. There's a research centre in Igloolik, on Baffin Island, that has been, for many, many years, collecting traditional knowledge, known among Inuit as *Qaujimajatuqangit*. There are lots of individual efforts at collecting traditional knowledge right across the country, and certainly the same kind of thing is going on in Nunavut—nothing coordinated, but the major collector, I think, would be the Igloolik Research Centre.

**The Chair:** Thank you. Your time has expired.

*Bienvenue, Madame Boucher. Vous avez cinq minutes.* You can share it with someone else if you wish.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC):** I don't have any questions.

**The Chair:** Scott, you can go ahead.

**Mr. Scott Armstrong:** I have a question on that same trend, Mr. d'Eça. Would you think it would be pragmatic of us, as part of our SARA review, to make a recommendation that we should have some sort of coordination among all these different groups across the country that are recording traditional aboriginal knowledge and maybe have some expertise that we could go to on a routine basis instead of trying to find someone in every different part of the country? Would having it all coordinated be a recommendation you would see us including in the new SARA legislation?

**Mr. Michael d'Eça:** That kind of echoes the recommendation for this aboriginal traditional knowledge institute we are calling for. However, the nature of traditional knowledge is that it's often local. So yes, there should be coordination. There should certainly be standards for collecting traditional knowledge. Right now it is kind of wide open, so often a scientist or a scientific assistant will go and collect traditional knowledge. There are very specific ways—and I think they actually flow across different nations and different aboriginal groups—as to how best to collect that knowledge. So we need to systematically look at the collection of traditional knowledge in much the same way as we would look at the collection of science. It's not simply dropping in on a community and talking to whoever you run into about the species that's on your mind. It's a much more systematic and culturally sensitive exercise. So certainly there should be more attention paid to the collection of traditional knowledge.

We have a number of recommendations to you, but certainly one is the idea of an ATK institute.

**Mr. Scott Armstrong:** One of the concerns we've heard from several groups that have presented is with timelines, and how we have to do this very quickly and efficiently. I think Dr. Quinney mentioned that too. It takes forever, and there's a big bureaucracy buildup. But as parliamentarians, we have to find a balance between doing things as quickly and efficiently as possible and taking the time to consult. One of the things we've heard from several groups is that they feel there needs to be more consultation, particularly in the first nations group.



Mr. d'Eça, do you have any comments about how we can effectively put recommendations in SARA to effectively consult with our first nations population?

• (1710)

**Mr. Michael d'Eça:** First of all, I can tell you that the NWMB, an administrative tribunal whose public is for the most part aboriginal people, sympathizes with the kinds of concerns you are laying out in terms of consultation and in terms of being able to react quickly and so on.

I think an underlying problem, certainly in Nunavut, is consultation, and let's say, more generally, communication. It hasn't been there. It hasn't been put into place properly, so there is a mistrust of the act, where there probably ought not to be, where there are misunderstandings.

So yes, if the committee could do one thing, I would say try to get the act to concentrate better on proper communication and proper consultation.

**Mr. Scott Armstrong:** Thank you.

Dr. Quinney, just on the same subject, you spoke heavily about bureaucracy and how things are slowed down and how resources could be put to better use somewhere else. You also talked about how your organization would like to take part and be better consulted and maybe use their resources to our advantage. Again, balanced with that is that the more consultation is done and the more groups are included the more slowly things happen and the more bureaucracy there is. Could you discuss how we balance that and push through that?

**Dr. Terry Quinney:** I'm sorry, but I'm not sure I accept your premise that the more consultation you have the more slowly things go. I think it's extremely important that the appropriate people, the right people, are adequately consulted. We have examples of really good consultation, not for SARA.

Sorry, I don't accept the premise. I think we can do this.

**Mr. Scott Armstrong:** Can you give me an example of other legislation for which it has been done very effectively, so maybe we could look at that as a model?

**Dr. Terry Quinney:** I'm certainly not going to point to Ontario's Endangered Species Act. I'm not going to point to that. But I will point to Ontario's Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act and the relationship that, for example, organizations like mine have with the staff within the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources responsible for overseeing, implementing, and enforcing that act. It has become standard operating procedure for those staff, with the blessings of their managers and ultimately the government. So that's an excellent example I would point to.

**The Chair:** That wraps up our second round. We have time for a third round, and I'm going to suggest that, with the amount of time we have left, we do a four-minute round.

Mr. Trudeau, you're on.

**Mr. Justin Trudeau:** Thank you.

Dr. Whoriskey, in your brief you mention concern for the extended timelines that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans is bringing forward as to how long it will take to develop and finalize

action plans. To your mind, what's missing? Is it resources? You talk about allocating resources, probably funding and personnel, to the action plan part of SARA. Or is it political will, coordination, or something that simply is going to take time to get right?

I'd like to hear a little bit more from you on what you think we can do to respond more quickly, but also the right way to be able to protect the Atlantic salmon from those rivers.

**Dr. Frederick Whoriskey:** In the case of these inner Bay of Fundy Atlantic salmon, I think the issue is clearly resources. We know the problem is marine survival. Everybody agrees on that. We know what the technologies are to attack it, to find out where the murder site is, and when and where they're going. Once you know where the murder site is, maybe you can identify what the causes are through correlations with environmental variables, the predators there, or something akin to that.

I think that's the fear, that there aren't enough resources in-house within the government to make this happen. So what do you do with that?

• (1715)

**Mr. Justin Trudeau:** Specifically, it would be resources to hire scientists to do studies and to go out and do field research.

We're talking about the ocean and a "murder site", which is obviously more a figurative term than a concrete term, but whatever it is that ends up happening. Are there scientists available for that, if the funding were available, or does it just take a good scientist and a handful of graduate students?

I know I'm getting very specific, but I'm trying to understand some of the concerns around the implementation of action plans and recovery strategies.

**Dr. Frederick Whoriskey:** Highly qualified personnel are available. We can probably cobble together, through partnerships, the equipment necessary to do this. What is missing is the operational funding.

**Mr. Justin Trudeau:** How much would it take in this specific case—just to get our minds wrapped around it?

**Dr. Frederick Whoriskey:** We're probably talking a couple of hundred thousand dollars a year. It would probably have to go on for about ten years.

**Mr. Justin Trudeau:** Is that what you expect would be the conclusion in four years of the further consultations? Is it that kind of result that you would see, four years to develop and finalize action plans? Is that the kind of recommendation that you could see coming out in four years, to spend a couple of hundred thousand dollars on it for the next ten years?

**Dr. Frederick Whoriskey:** I am honestly mystified by the consultation procedures, because when you get to the point where everybody seems to agree on what needs to be done and how to do it, it then disappears into government considerations and doesn't come out again, for reasons that are totally unknown. I really don't know what's going on there.

**Mr. Justin Trudeau:** Okay. Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Trudeau.

[Translation]

You have four minutes, Mr. Bigras.

**Mr. Bernard Bigras:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have another question for Mr. Quinney.

You told us today that you consider SARA to a somewhat symbolic piece of legislation. While it may be necessary, at the same time, you also believe that the implementation process leaves much to be desired and that there is a great deal of bureaucracy.

Do you have any members or chapters of your federation in the Great Lakes Basin?

[English]

**Dr. Terry Quinney:** We sure do. We have a large number of individual members, surrounding the Great Lakes.

If I may just take this opportunity, there are elements of the act, superior to others, that have been underutilized. I point you towards the stewardship components of the act that actually promote the type of volunteerism and community involvement that I've been advocating on behalf of my organization.

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Bigras:** Correct me if I'm wrong, but you advocate an educational approach when it comes to protecting habitats and species at risk, that is to say, you favour education over a shotgun approach. However, there is one reality that we must contend with at the same time.

Take the Great Lakes Basin, for example. I read somewhere today that industries discharge five million kilograms of pollutants into the Great Lakes Basin.

Are you saying that SARA won't necessarily guarantee us a healthy ecosystem? What about other pieces of legislation, specifically the Canadian Environmental Protection Act?

Do you think other acts need to be strengthened? I'm only trying to understand your position. When it comes to species protection, do you believe education is the key? Other acts need to be strengthened, in addition to SARA. Is that what you're saying? I'm just trying to understand your overall position.

[English]

**Dr. Terry Quinney:** Yes, sir, you're exactly correct. I'll give you a concrete contemporary example right now. What is known as the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, an international agreement between the United States of America and Canada, is being renegotiated for the first time in more than 25 years. Pollution control has increased. Canadians should be proud of the efforts and improvements that have been made in improving the quality of the water in all the Great Lakes, including the St. Lawrence River, which of course receives all that water eventually. We can't stop there. We can do better. For example, the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement addresses pollution as one of its components.

We sure hope the federal government, in renegotiating this Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, takes a full ecosystem approach this time around, as opposed to a narrower water chemistry approach

that was followed 25 years ago. That would be the type of recommendation we would give you too, yes, sir.

• (1720)

**The Chair:** Merci.

Mr. Hyer.

**Mr. Bruce Hyer:** Thank you very much.

First of all, Mr. Quinney, despite my terse comment before on the point I disagreed with, I want to make a comment. I have a lot of respect for the document you brought today and also for your reputation. I didn't get a copy of this report until today, and I'm finding that even though it's fairly short, it's action-packed. To be honest, I couldn't get my head around it today, so I'll probably have follow-up questions later in a different venue.

You mentioned that the OFAH clubs.... Let's just say the OFAH and aboriginal groups and other local and traditional users should have significant input into this, as you suggest. I'm very supportive of your idea that you're more involved. You have a lot of members with a lot of knowledge. They not only have info and knowledge to educate scientists and bureaucrats and politicians and policy-makers and managers, but the opportunity to buy into the process and feel they're involved is important. I will fight hard, if I can, to see that the opportunity for your members and other local and traditional users is enhanced, at least maintained and enhanced, if possible.

Two hours just isn't enough for the wealth of information you're bringing to us today. We need to bring you back for a conference sometime, not just two hours. So I'm not going to ask you a further question, although after the question I'm about to ask, if there's extra time and you want to comment further, I'd welcome it.

I have a specific question for Mr. d'Eça—three, actually. The government has testified previously that the consultations carried out before listings can take longer than nine months, and we heard today more evidence that it can take a long time. Further, they indicated that when an assessed species occurs in Nunavut they follow a special process to engage with the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board to respect land claims and this process must be complete before a species may be listed. So could you describe the consultation process the government follows before listing a species that occurs in Nunavut, in very brief terms, bullet form?

Secondly, what would be a reasonable timeframe for the government to carry out such consultations, in your opinion?

The third question is do you have any recommendations for how the consultation process can be enhanced, or is it just too prescribed by the process now? Is there room for adaptation and improvement?

**Mr. Michael d'Eça:** Thank you for the questions.

On the consultation process the government follows, if you don't have a copy of this MOU we've talked about today between the NWMB and government, the committee should probably get a copy of it, because it is actually a good-news story under SARA. What we've agreed on there is not what takes place in consultations, but how long they will take place.

We have section 37—Environment Canada, Parks Canada, Fisheries and Oceans conducts relevant public consultations in Nunavut, including with relevant Inuit organizations, between November and mid-February. So that's about four and a half months for consultations.

But what actually takes place, which I think is very sensible, depends on the species. Right now the listing of polar bears is before the board. It's a huge issue, as I'm sure you're all aware. There the government did a really tremendous job in its consultations. It went to every single community in Nunavut and had oral face-to-face consultations—the best kind of consultation. It took a number of months. But for wolf-fish, which occur in Nunavut waters, there's nothing like that going on because of prioritizing, and so on. The economic, social, and cultural needs and interests of Inuit are taken into account.

So it really depends upon the species. But the Cadillac version would be what was done recently with polar bears. The NWMB held a three-day public hearing and is expected to make a decision on the listing of the polar bear this June and go to the minister in July. So I expect that some time in the fall there will be a final decision. So within a reasonable timeframe look at the species and take it from there. But certainly under the MOU we think you can generally get everything done within those four and a half months. It may not take that long. You may be very busy for the whole four and a half months.

On how to enhance it, even with what I just said, consultations and communications with the public of Nunavut, primarily Inuit, over the first five or six years of SARA have not been adequate, and there are problems. People are distrustful of the act. They're suspicious when the consultations take place. There really has to be a redoubling of efforts to communicate and consult in an appropriate manner with the public of Nunavut, and I suspect with the aboriginal public right across the country.

• (1725)

**The Chair:** Thank you. Your time has expired.

As many of you know, I like to use sport metaphors now and then, such as batting clean-up. I'm going to give Scott the ball to carry, but I'm not going to say I'll pass the ball to shoot the winning basket in the game because he never showed up for the game last night.

Scott, you have the last question.

**Mr. Scott Armstrong:** It's a good thing. I would probably be too tired to be on this committee today.

**Dr. Whoriskey,** my question is going to be on a listing. When the Fisheries Council of Canada was here they suggested that we apply the Department of Fisheries decision-making framework to assess whether a fish species was at risk, rather than the criteria of COSEWIC. COSEWIC's assessments are currently based on

international criteria and apply to both terrestrial and aquatic species. Which type of criteria, in your opinion, would be better?

**Dr. Frederick Whoriskey:** I prefer the COSEWIC criteria because they are based on the biological ones. This comes back to some of the earlier questions that the committee was discussing.

The COSEWIC process uses the best available science. In other words, you may not have a whole lot of information on certain species, whereas you have nearly complete counts on all the animals for others. COSEWIC's process does not block, because they don't have complete counts everywhere on things. They use whatever the best available information is. If your sampling in a few sites shows alarming declines, they raise the warning bell and try to get the issue addressed more quickly. So I would argue that's an effective and proper way to attack these kinds of issues.

**Mr. Scott Armstrong:** Dr. Quinney, I know you might not have any expertise in that particular area of listing, but do you have any comments from your organization about the current listing process used through SARA? Do you think it's effective?

**Dr. Terry Quinney:** We address that briefly in the written presentation, but we'd be happy to provide more detailed comments on that specific topic, absolutely.

**Mr. Scott Armstrong:** Sure.

Mr. d'Eça, I have one last question for you. I know I was picking on you before, I guess.

The government supports initiatives such as lands claims, wildlife co-management boards, and the aboriginal funds for species at risk. That particular organization supported 333 projects, with \$10.2 million over the last four years. That benefited over 250 species at risk.

Do you think these initiatives are helping build a collaborative approach between government and aboriginal peoples? Is using that process a good thing that we should continue in the legislation?

**Mr. Michael d'Eça:** I didn't catch where that's being applied, but those aren't Nunavut's statistics you're giving me.

**Mr. Scott Armstrong:** No. The aboriginal funds for species at risk is specific money allocated and supported by the federal government. Do you think that's a good way to collaborate, a good way to partner with aboriginal groups to support species at risk?

**Mr. Michael d'Eça:** I do think it is. I think you have to make aboriginal people more aware of it. You may have to look at increasing the budget for it. And I should also tell you that only about \$550,000 of that per year goes to basically all of the west and NWT and Nunavut. So very little finds its way into the north.

That said, I don't think there has been really good communication, so there are not a lot of requests for that money, as well. But I think it is a very good program and ought to be enhanced.

•(1730)

**Mr. Scott Armstrong:** So the concept of the program is very effective; however, the application of funds and the distribution of the process needs a lot of work, and the communication around it.

**Mr. Michael d'Eça:** Correct, yes.

**Mr. Scott Armstrong:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

As committee members know, this is our last panel on the SARA review we're studying. And today, at midnight, is also the last day for submissions by other groups interested in presenting to committee through written briefs. So we are shutting it down at midnight, and then we can start our work on the report.

I want to thank Mr. d'Eça, from the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, Dr. Quinney, from the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, and Dr. Whoriskey, from the Atlantic Salmon Federation, for your briefs and comments, and for the different opinions we received today compared with those of some of the other experts we've had here. We appreciate that.

With that, I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

**An hon. member:** So moved.

**The Chair:** We're out of here. Have a great weekend.

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