

Saskatchewan Activity Restriction Guidelines for sensitive species in natural habitats (see Table 1 on this website)
September 2003

- These guidelines are to assist proponents during the planning of proposed projects. If your project will include any activity falling within the listed setback distances, you are advised to contact the appropriate Saskatchewan Environment EcoRegion office early in the planning stage to ensure all work will be completed in a manner that will minimize impact. Discussing your project in advance with Saskatchewan Environment will reduce the chance your project will be delayed during the construction phase due to concerns with potential impacts on rare or endangered species.
- Activity Restriction Guidelines have been provided by the SKCDC for most species identified in Table 1 for nearly a decade through data requests and other directed queries.
- The SKCDC was asked to review their existing activity restriction guidelines due to changes in federal legislation regarding species at risk. (*The Species At Risk Act* (SARA) was proclaimed in June 2003 by the federal government.) The intent of this review was to update and integrate Saskatchewan's guidelines with those used by Environment Canada for species at risk.
- For most species of provincial concern, the set back distances and times have not changed from existing guidelines that we currently distribute. There should be minimal confusion with the disturbance categories as each species has the same set back distances for medium and high disturbance categories.
- The procedure for distributing these guidelines will not change. To clarify, for any given data request submitted to the SKCDC, guidelines are only provided for species of known occurrence in the area of new development.
- The guidelines have been posted on the internet to facilitate public access.
- See the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) website <http://www.cosewic.gc.ca/index.htm> for a complete listing of species at risk in Canada. These species are listed under SARA.
- For Environment Canada's industry guidelines see <http://www.pnr-rpn.ec.gc.ca/nature/petroleum/dg00s00.en.html>
 - Scobie and Faminow developed these guidelines for Environment Canada through consultation with more than 100 leading experts as well as industry representatives.
- The scope of human activities in the environment is a continuum and cannot be easily classified. Three categories of disturbance have been adopted by Environment Canada. However, these are guidelines only and should be treated as such.

- These Activity Restriction Guidelines reflect current knowledge of each species. Changes to the guidelines may occur as information becomes available. Please contribute your knowledge.

Reports and rare species occurrences can be submitted to:

<http://www.biodiversity.sk.ca/submit.htm>

or

Saskatchewan Conservation Data Centre,
Rm. 436, 3211 Albert St.,
Regina, Saskatchewan, S4S 5W6

AMPHIBIANS

- Federal guidelines were adopted for Great Plains Toad and Northern Leopard Frog which are listed under SARA.
- Current set back distances used by Grasslands EcoRegion for wetlands, water bodies and watercourses adopted (0-90m) for species of provincial concern (Canadian Toad and Plains Spadefoot (toad)).

REPTILES

- The existing guidelines stated 200 m for development activities so there was no change. A major issue for snakes is road mortality. Previous reports indicate that the mean distance of movement by hognose snakes is 200 m (Wright and Didiuk 1998).

BIRDS

- The setback distances are not only to address auditory disturbances but also permanent alteration in habitat.
- For Piping Plover, the high water mark is used, as it is typically the same as the outer edge of suitable habitat. This is a globally rare species, G3, therefore permanent habitat loss is of major concern.
- Changed Golden Eagle guidelines to meet Grasslands EcoRegion setbacks.
- No change was made from the existing restriction guidelines for colonial nesting birds and Osprey.
- Sage Grouse are critically imperiled in Saskatchewan. (Setback distances have already been increased to 1000 m on lands managed by PFRA.)

- Nesting habitat of bird species that use the same nest site year after year (i.e., Loggerhead Shrike, Ferruginous Hawk and colonial nesting birds) should not be destroyed at any time.

MAMMALS

- Ord's Kangaroo Rat inhabits highly sensitive active dune areas. This species is listed under SARA therefore federal guidelines were adopted.
- Swift Fox were extirpated from Saskatchewan and is still found in very low numbers. This species is listed under SARA therefore federal guidelines were adopted.

PLANTS

- Plants make up the bulk of the species of concern and the one-size-fits-all approach is an attempt to simplify matters.
- The 0 m setback distance is for foot traffic only (FTO), ATV and other small vehicles would fall under a higher disturbance category.

Literature Cited

Scobie, D. and C. Faminow. 2000. Development of standardized guidelines for petroleum industry activities that affect COSEWIC Prairie and Northern Region Vertebrate Species at Risk. Prepared for: Environment Canada, Prairie and Northern Region, Edmonton, Alberta.

Wright, J. and A. Didiuk. 1998. Status of the Plains Hognose Snake (*Heterodon nasicus nasicus*) in Alberta. Alberta Environmental Protection, Fisheries and Wildlife Management Division, and Alberta Conservation Association, Alberta Wildlife Status Report No. 15, Edmonton, AB. 26 pp.