Native Women's Association of Canada

L'Association des femmes autochtones du Canada

PARTNERSHIP DFO

Framework for Aquatic Species at Risk Conservation

02 Developing a new framework for conserving Canada's aquatic species at risk

Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Pêches et Océans Canada

Introduction:

Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) is seeking input in developing a new framework for conserving Canada's aquatic species at risk.

The Framework for Aquatic Species at Risk Conservation will be used as a policy guide to implement multi-species approaches for conserving and recovering aquatic biodiversity throughout Canada.

- Canada is rich in natural landscapes, coastlines, wetlands, and waterways. Furthermore, there exists remarkable biodiversity within these ecosystems.
- Regrettably, the rich biodiversity in Canada's ecosystems is under tremendous threat.
- In the face of these threats, Canada has been implementing measures to prevent biodiversity loss.
- One such measure is the Species at Risk Act.

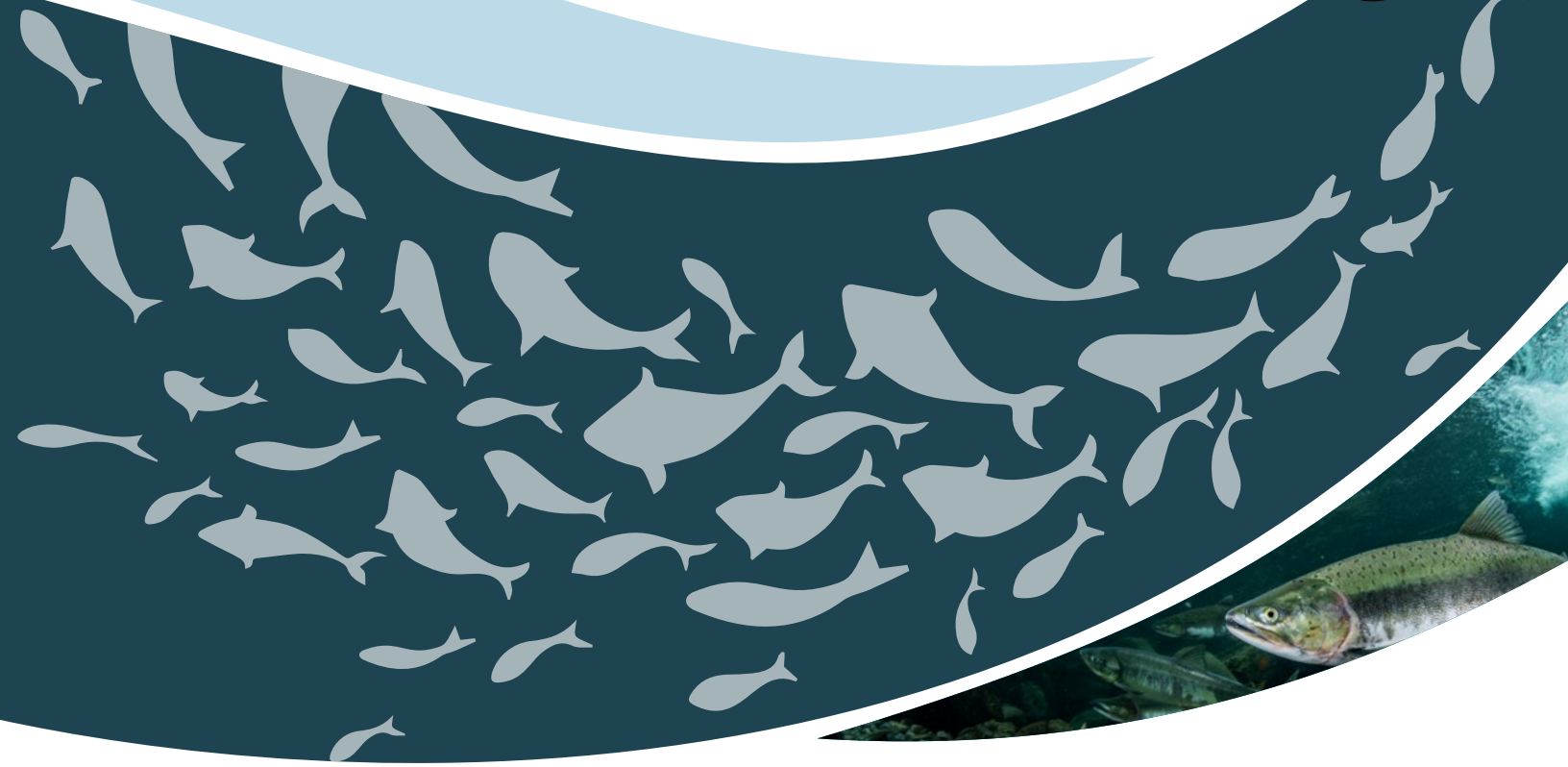
Species at Risk Act:

- The ***Species at Risk Act*** **(SARA)** has been in place since 2002.
- **SARA** is the Federal Government of Canada's key tool for conserving and protecting Canada's biodiversity.
- **SARA** provides legal protection for **species at risk.**

Species at risk refers to species listed as Extirpated (no longer exist in Canada's wild), Endangered, Threatened, or of Special Concern under **SARA**, as well as species that are assessed as "at risk" by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC).

Challenges with Species at Risk Conservation:

- Even with SARA in place, many aquatic species continue to decline.
- Tackling these complex threats, one species at a time, has become particularly challenging.
- The DFO would like to explore methods to address these challenges, such as the use of **multi-species approaches.**



Framework for Aquatic Species at Risk:

- The DFO is developing a Framework for Aquatic Species at Risk Conservation to tackle challenges related to aquatic species.
- The Framework will serve as a policy guide for applying multi-species approaches to the conservation and recovery of aquatic species at risk.
- **Multi-species approaches** are not new in conservation. The DFO has adopted multi-species approaches before to leverage the benefits of these strategies.
- **The Framework** can build on existing approaches and develop new tools where it makes sense to do so.

Single species approaches will still be used where needed.

Multi-species approaches:

- **Multi-species approaches** consider multiple species collectively, rather than a single species. The goal is to develop actions to address multiple species simultaneously.
- **Types of multiple-species approaches include:**

Conservation actions focusing on multiple species at risk, found in the same place.

Conservation actions focusing on addressing, or mitigating, a threat that affects multiple species at risk.

Conservation actions can be applied **to multiple aquatic species at risk because** they are taxonomically similar, e.g., Cumberland Sound Beluga and Ungava Bay Beluga.

Benefits to multi-species approaches:

- Addresses needs of multiple species at risk simultaneously.
- Conserves more than one specie more efficiently, leading to improved conservation outcomes overall.
- They are proactive; meaning they benefit other species beyond those at risk.
- Maintains ecosystem functionality and resiliency.

Development of the Framework for Aquatic Species at Risk Conservation:

- The Framework for Aquatic Species at Risk Conservation will be developed in collaboration with Indigenous communities, provinces, territories, as well as other partners and stakeholders.
- This provides an exciting opportunity for Indigenous engagement and participation in the development and implementation of Species at Risk conversation and recovery.

In developing the Framework:

The DFO is seeking feedback on the following:

1.

Your perspectives on the use of multi-species approaches, such as place and threat-based approaches to conserve and recover aquatic species at risk.

2.

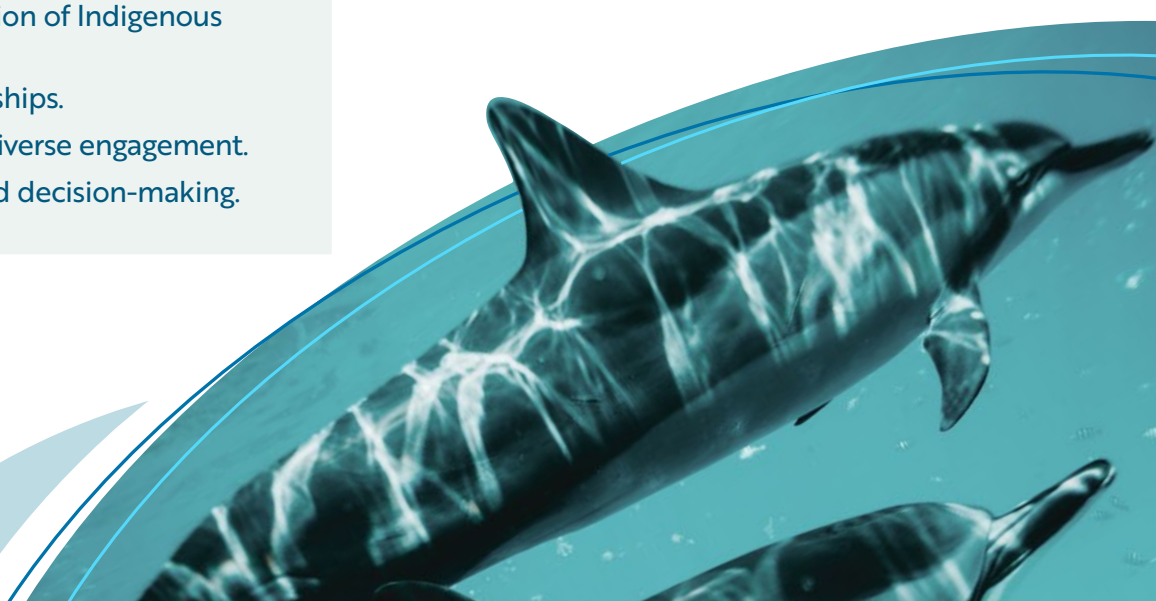
Guiding principles for the development and application of the Framework.

- **The DFO is seeking input on guiding principles to help identify and implement opportunities for multi-species approaches. These can build upon internationally accepted principles, including those set out by:**
  - The United Nations Declaration of Rights for Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).
  - The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
  - The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
  - Open Standards for Conservation.
- **Important guiding principles include:**
  - The incorporation of Indigenous perspectives.
  - Strong partnerships.
  - Effective and diverse engagement.
  - Evidence-based decision-making.

3.

Considerations for identifying when, and where, to apply multi-species approaches:

- Many factors could be considered when identifying opportunities to apply multispecies approaches to the conservation of aquatic species at risk.
- **Opportunities for multi-species approaches can be identified through considerations, such as:**
  - **Indignons perspectives** such as increasing opportunities for engagement and participation.
  - **Socioeconomic considerations** such as the ccontribution to social well-being.
  - **Biological considerations** such as presence of critical habitat.
  - **Feasibility considerations** such as partnership opportunities to implement a multi-species approach.



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The DFO's engagement on the **Framework for Aquatic Species at Risk Conservation** closes on October 31, 2022. However, other opportunities may exist to collaborate with, or to provide feedback to, the DFO on matters relating to conserving and recovering aquatic species at risk.

For example, a draft framework will be available for review in early 2023

For more information on the **Framework for Aquatic Species at Risk Conservation**, please visit the DFO's Talk Fish Habitat engagement portal at: **talkfishhabitat.ca**

Native Women's Association of Canada

120 Promenade du Portage
Gatineau, Quebec
J8X 2K1

613-722-3033
reception@nwac.ca