

Response Statement - Lake Winnipeg Physa Snail

March 18, 2007

Common Name: Lake Winnipeg Physa Snail

Scientific Name: *Physella winnipegensis*

Status assessment by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC): Endangered

Reason(s) for status designation provided by COSEWIC: Populations of this Canadian endemic are confined to Lake Winnipeg where there are continuing declines in extent of occurrence, area of occupancy and extent of habitat due to habitat alteration, human disturbance and quality of habitat. Evidence suggests that nutrients and contaminants from sewage lagoons, industries, waste storage facilities and/or landfills are contributing to the declines.

Competent Minister(s): Minister of Fisheries and Oceans

Occurrence: Manitoba

Provinces and territories to be consulted: Manitoba

Applicable federal legislation: Habitat is protected under the *Fisheries Act*.

Background: On January 15, 2004, the Minister of the Environment received the COSEWIC assessment of the Lake Winnipeg Physa Snail. The Minister of the Environment responded to this COSEWIC assessment on April 21, 2004. On April 6, 2006, following extended consultations by Fisheries and Oceans Canada with the government of Manitoba, Aboriginal peoples, stakeholders, and the public on whether or not the Lake Winnipeg Physa Snail should be added to the *List of Wildlife Species at Risk* (Schedule 1) under the *Species at Risk Act*, Governor in Council referred the assessment for the Lake Winnipeg Physa Snail back to COSEWIC for further information and consideration, providing rationales.

In December 2006, COSEWIC, reaffirmed the original assessment without reassessing the species, citing an absence of new information that would lead to a change in the status of this species.

How the Minister of the Environment intends to respond to the confirmation of assessment: In the coming months, the Minister of the Environment will forward the COSEWIC assessment of the Lake Winnipeg Physa Snail to the Governor in Council (GiC). Information respecting further opportunities to comment will be posted on the public registry. Comments received during current and previous consultations will be reviewed. Following consultations with the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the Minister of the Environment will make a recommendation to the GiC on whether or not to add the Lake Winnipeg Physa Snail to the List. The GiC will make a decision within nine (9) months of having received the assessment.