



Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA)
Risk or Reward: An Investigation of Ontario Farmer Perceptions of Species at Risk

With funding support provided by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF)

**Risk or Reward:
An Investigation of Ontario Farmer Perceptions of Species at Risk
and
A Survey of the Species at Risk Farm Incentive Program Evaluation**



Photo credit: Steve Borichevsky, 2012

**Prepared by Lyn Garrah
for
The Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association**

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Executive Summary

The Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA) delivers the Species at Risk Farm Incentive Program (SARFIP) to aid farmers in land restoration and protection for Species at Risk (SAR) habitat improvement or protection through cost-shared projects. To better understand the range of Ontario experiences with SAR and attitudes toward them, OSCIA commissioned a focus group and survey of Ontario farmers to engage in discussions on SAR. In addition, OSCIA wished to evaluate SARFIP based on experiences of past participants in order to improve program delivery, which was administered as a survey.

An overwhelming majority of the Ontario farmers surveyed care about the environmental health of their land (96%) while 77% state that they care about protecting SAR. Moreover, 59% would like to learn more about how they could better support SAR and 62% feel that the current policies in place to protect SAR provide a benefit to society. On the whole, however, the survey results show that awareness of specific currently listed SAR is quite low among the respondents.

Results of the focus group and larger survey show that there is some concern about the potential risk on-farm SAR may pose to respondents' farming operations or land uses under current legislation, and that farmers are unclear what it might mean if SAR are found on their land or how current SAR legislation may affect them. 78% of respondents agree that farmers have more of a burden to bear when it comes to protecting SAR in comparison to other private landowners, with financial setbacks from restricting farm activities or taking valuable land out of production due to the presence of SAR expressed as concerns. Although 39% of respondents state that they are aware of how the Ontario Endangered Species Act may affect them, almost half (43%) are unsure of how the act impacts them or their agricultural activities.

Overall, satisfaction with the SARFIP program was high (>95%). Despite the concerns that some respondents have, results show that Ontario's farm community is interested in learning about SAR, with farmers expressing interest in learning about how they can create on-farm SAR habitat. The OSCIA may have a functional role to play in continuing to promote SARFIP and improving knowledge of SAR and SAR-related protection policies in the Ontario farm community.

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1.0 Introduction

In 2012, Ontario's agri-food sector generated \$34 billion in GDP and accounted for 10.9% of all Ontario employment¹. Clearly, from both an economic and social standpoint, the agricultural industry is an important focus for the Ontario government and policy makers, but the needs of the sector should be balanced by the necessity for environmental protection of soils, water, and wildlife. Agricultural lands provide habitat for many of Ontario's species at risk, among other wildlife and native plant populations. The Ontario government has made the identification and protection of species at risk and their habitats a priority. Legislation exists to protect SAR provincially and federally, but these policies and regulations have in some cases conflicted with farmers' ability to conduct farm business activities. Because the Ontario Endangered Species Act restricts activities that will adversely affect SAR or their habitat, farm activities that disturb SAR or their habitat contravene the Act. Thus, finding a balance between the habitat needs of SAR and a thriving agricultural sector is viewed as important.

OSCIA works with farmers and the environment through the delivery of environmental education programs such as the Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) and cost-share initiatives such as the Species at Risk Farm Incentive Program (SARFIP)². To effectively deliver such programs, OSCIA must find common ground between farmers and species at risk protection. Dramatically varied thoughts, feelings and experiences exist amongst producers in relation to the impact and presence of species at risk (SAR) on agricultural landscapes.

A comprehensive understanding of farmer perspectives on species at risk will better enable OSCIA to deliver future environmental programs effectively. OSCIA aimed to develop a dialogue with the farming community to gather farmer knowledge and experience through a focus group and survey. The information from this project may be useful in determining how to tailor OSCIA programs to meet the needs of Ontario's farming community, to determine how species at risk issues are being portrayed and interpreted, to determine the extent to which farmers understand species at risk policies and protection rationale, and the degree to which farmers are willing to, or are affected by, the presence of species at risk. Information provided through the project will be used to inform future program activities related to agricultural producers and SAR. Results may inform future decisions regarding policy reviews, program development, and communications. Results from this project will also be used to evaluate SARFIP.

The focus group and survey were designed to evaluate and summarize farmers' understanding of species at risk, their opinions of species at risk and regulatory legislation or policies, and the concerns that on-farm SAR occurrence may present. The purpose of the work was to provide a current picture of the average Ontario farmer's experience with species at risk. The project aims to identify key barriers to participation in species at risk recovery initiatives and in participation in SARFIP. The Species at Risk Farm Incentive Program (SARFIP), delivered by the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA) is a cost-share program aimed at farmers across the province, for projects that support species at risk habitats. Having reached its 6th year of delivery, the program is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) through the Species at Risk Stewardship Fund and the Government of Canada through the Habitat Stewardship Program. A comprehensive evaluation of the program will enable OSCIA to better deliver the program in the future and meet the needs of farmers looking to participate.

¹ Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food. 2013. The Premier's Agri-Food Challenge: Building on Success. Available at <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/about/agrifoodchallenge.htm>.

² In 2013-14, for example, the OSCIA delivered four environmental cost-share programs: SARFIP, The Grassland Habitat Farm Incentive Program, Farming Power, The Water's Edge Transformation Program and educational workshops such as the Environmental Farm Plan and Growing Your Farm Profits.

Land owners in Ontario have expressed concern with reporting species at risk on their property or allowing access for biological studies due to the apprehension over what might follow if species at risk are present. Many land owners perceive the Endangered Species Act as an intrusive piece of legislation that limits land owner rights and their ability to use their land as they choose³. Private land stewardship is critical for the recovery of species at risk, as the majority of species at risk habitat in Canada are found on private land⁴.

The 2007 Ontario Endangered Species Act came into effect on June 30, 2008. It prohibits the harming or harassing of an endangered and threatened species, or the destruction of their habitat. 215 species or species populations are currently listed under the ESA as endangered, threatened, of special concern, or extirpated. The Act created some tension with farmers when two grassland bird species, the Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark, were designated as SAR and thus protected under the Act. Potential Bobolink habitat impacts over 50% of Ontario farms, as the species prefers pastures, hayfields and meadows for habitat and nesting. A substantial portion of Ontario's farmland acreage is dedicated to pasture or production of hay and other fodder. Agricultural operations were exempt from the ESA for activities affecting the Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark for a period of three years. The exemption period ended on October 31, 2014 to allow time for solutions to be identified that would address both farmers' operational needs and the needs for the Act to protect species at risk.

2.0 Project Goals and Objectives

The project aimed to identify farmer attitudes and gaps in knowledge related to species at risk policies and SARFIP program application requirements. The overall goal of the work was to gather information on farmer attitudes and understanding of SAR and SAR protection policies in order to inform on how the Species at Risk Farm Incentive Program may be improved upon.

The project objectives were to determine:

- Whether SAR are perceived positively, negatively, or neutrally
- How farmers feel when there are SAR on their property
- Gain an understanding of perspectives on various agencies involved in the delivery of SAR information, protection, research, or regulation
- Identify farmer perceptions on the Species at Risk Farm Incentive Program
 - Which funding programs have farmers participated in?
- Identify farmer knowledge and perceptions of species at risk
 - Are there differences in farmers' level of understanding and/or in perception for different species?
 - In what way are SAR a benefit or a challenge for Ontario farmers?
 - Is the need to protect SAR clear in farmer attitudes and understandings?
- Identify farmer knowledge and perceptions of species at risk policies
 - Which SAR policies are farmers aware of?
 - Which policies are most troublesome from a farmer perspective?
 - Which policies provide the greatest benefit from a farmer perspective?
 - Which areas of policy would they like to see changed, if any?

³ Eastern Ontario Model Forest, 2012. Species at Risk and the ESA: what we heard – a synthesis of discussions. Eastern Ontario Model Forest. Retrieved online: http://www.eomf.on.ca/~eomf/media/k2/attachments/Focus_Group_on_Species_at_Risk_and_the_Endangered_Species_Act_What_we_Heard_A_Synthesis_of_Discussions_Final_Jan_2012.pdf

⁴ Baria, P., Douce, I.A., and Green, I.D.M.S. 2000. Protecting habitats of endangered species on private lands: Analysis of the instruments and Canadian policy. *Canadian Public Policy*. 26: 95-110.

- Identify areas of concern and areas for improvement related to farming and species at risk protection

3.0 Methods

To determine perspectives of the Ontario farm community on species at risk, funding programs and policies to improve SARFIP, a survey and a focus group were employed. The focus group and survey were designed to encourage open dialogue with the farm community to gain an understanding of their knowledge of and perspectives on SAR. A focus group was delivered to select participants to engage in open dialogue on species at risk issues related to farming, and a survey was developed for the same general objectives with an additional component to evaluate SARFIP.

3.1 Focus Group Design

The focus group was designed to gain a more fulsome understanding of farmer perspectives on SAR through open discussion. The focus group was held on Tuesday, February 4, 2014. A small group of farmers from diverse locations and representing various farm sectors was selected to take part. There were 12 participants in the focus group, which was led by OSCIA staff. The participants were experienced farmers and respected members of the farm community.

Three general questions were developed, each with corresponding sub-questions designed to direct conversation and get progressively more in-depth on the topic within the 30 minute allotted timeframe. Additional questions were planned in the event that conversation moved quickly between topics. The questions started at a high-level and involved species that were unlikely to be contentious on farms (i.e. turtles) and moved toward more in-depth scenarios and involved species that participants would be more likely to encounter and have potential concerns on their farm property (i.e. Bobolink or Eastern Meadowlark). The list of questions used for the focus group can be found in Appendix A.

The focus group discussion was recorded (with permission from participants) for ease of transcription, and discussion points were recorded during the focus group on chart paper for all focus group participants to clearly see. Recording discussion points on a medium easily visible by the participants was important to support discussion, provide a sense of merit to the talking points, and to provide a record of key comments of discussion. Questions were provided to the participants on paper as well to make it easier to follow the discussion question to accommodate various comprehension styles, and to aid in keeping discussions focused.

3.2 Survey Design

The survey was developed to gain an understanding of (1) farmer knowledge of SAR and related protective policies, (2) their opinions on SAR and experience with them, and (3) to evaluate the SARFIP program. The survey on farmer attitudes toward SAR was comprised of 32 informational questions (27 close-ended questions and 5 open-ended questions) and 6 demographic questions. 8 of the close-ended questions also included an option to provide comment when it was anticipated that survey participants may have more they would to share on the topic and/or when we were interested in hearing more expressed on the question subject. Survey questions were related to focus group goals and were informed by the discussion that took place during the focus group. An additional survey component to evaluate SARFIP comprised of 21 questions. Clear language was used throughout the survey. The survey questions can be found in Appendix B.

The survey was sent on March 25, 2014 via Survey Monkey. Survey Monkey is a free online survey platform that provides the flexibility to create different types of survey questions (open-ended, drop down, multiple choice etc.) and can be distributed via email. The emailed letter provides a link which the user follows to a website. This is a safe way of storing pertinent and confidential information.

Surveys with the SARFIP evaluation component were distributed first via email to all SARFIP 2013-2014 participants. These individuals were instructed to respond only to the survey with the SARFIP evaluation component, and were informed that they were likely to receive another survey invitation the following day from the full OSCIA email ListServe but to disregard it in favour of the survey with the SARFIP evaluation. To ensure that all responses were in fact from farmers, any response file which did not identify a farm commodity, in the demographics section, was deleted based on the assumption that the responses were from someone outside of the farm community. In the future, the intended audience should be made clear in the introductory statement to forestall anyone participating in the survey who should not be.

A reminder was sent to the email ListServe one day before the survey closed to encourage participation. Prizes were also offered to try to increase rates of survey return. Five prizes of various values for Canadian Tire gift cards were offered through a random draw (1 gift card of \$300, 1 gift card of \$150, and 3 gift cards of \$50). It should be noted that respondents were not required to respond to every question and that there was no way of monitoring whether an individual responded to the survey multiple times. There may also have been a response bias in survey responses, where only individuals who feel strongly one way or another were more likely to respond. Further, as the surveys were only emailed to participants, any Ontario farmer who does not have internet access or is not familiar with how an online survey works would be excluded from participation. It was assumed that the respondents represented an equal diversity of Ontario farmers, and that the responses provided represent the full range of likely attitudes.

4.0 Results

Results are presented in two sections, with a review of the focus group discussion including key themes and the results of the survey.

4.1 Focus Group

When asked what they would do if they saw a turtle crossing the road, all focus group participants agreed that they would help it safely cross or drive around it. There was no change in response whether the turtle was a species at risk or not. Little conversation was generated with this scenario question; participants expressed that the at-risk designation of the turtle was irrelevant to their decision-making or behavior in this case. However, focus group participants expressed a range of feelings related to finding Bobolink or Eastern Meadowlark on their property. Participants stated that they would feel surprised and happy; one stated that s/he regularly sees Bobolink and is not concerned about their scarcity as species at risk. Participants stated that they would be pleased to find Bobolink on their land but would be afraid of anyone else knowing. Given the restrictions Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark may present on farms, some participants shared that the species may be a candidate for “shoot, shovel and shut up”, indicating a belief shared by some producers that it would be better to remove a SAR or its habitat on their property than be limited regarding land use and farm operations. This idea was expressed again as participants shared that they were fearful of not only what was known to them regarding SAR regulations and associated restrictions, but also what they suspected or did not know. Without knowing the ramifications of SAR presence, it seemed preferable to some to simply remove the potential threat from their land.

When asked to imagine that they were informed that there may be a species at risk plant on their land, participants expressed concern and an initial sense of dread. The impact of the species would depend highly on its location on the farm, and its required habitat and protections. If found on land that is farmed, a general consensus was that there would be concern that the presence of the SAR would restrict farm operations or land use.

In the same scenario, participants were asked if the source of the information regarding potential SAR presence on their land would have any bearing on their response. Focus group participants said they would prefer to hear from official sources as they would be more reputable, but also that information from more official sources such as government or Conservation Authorities would also be more concerning. Opinions were mixed on whether participants would allow researchers access to their land to confirm the presence of SAR; some participants expressed a firm no, while others said it would depend on the objective of the group. One participant said s/he would be suspicious of the motivations of any group asking for permission to access private land.

Focus group participants expressed interest in having diverse wildlife on their property, but no interest in identifying them as SAR, due to the potential restrictions. There is concern for the presence of SAR on farm land even when the land owner does not intend to report the SAR or share its location information – “too many people out there looking for them”. There seemed to be some resentment of the general public voicing an opinion on SAR protection that would affect farm land without bearing any of the burden of protection themselves.

The potential financial burden of restricting farm operations due to SAR presence was a concern expressed in the focus group. They identified pressure from the public to protect SAR, but also pressure from the farm community not to take good productive land out to protect or create habitat. Participants consistently identified funding as a key to SAR and SAR habitat protection: “easier if you can justify it economically”. Finite compensation, ex. one-time funding for a project, was identified as less incentive to protect SAR habitat compared with ongoing funding. Opportunities for restoring degraded farm lands were identified as being beneficial for both SAR and producers.

Participants expressed the idea that they would be happy to help a species that was “truly at risk”, indicating skepticism for the current methods of identifying declining populations. Participants also voiced the opinion that certain official organizations such as Conservation Authorities have too much authority for their limited knowledge. A theme in this discussion was that participants felt farmers have a good awareness of the plants and animals were on their land, often more so than official organizations or researchers.

All focus group members agreed that creating habitat for species at risk and having diverse wildlife made them feel good. Most focus group participants expressed the idea that they would be proud to provide good quality habitat to wildlife. The participating farmers expressed a strong connection to their lands and homes, and a desire to keep them nice: “it’s my farm and my home and I want to keep it nice”. A key theme from the focus group was that farmers are proud to maintain lands that support a diversity of plants and animals and are interested in restoration work that benefits both the land and SAR. However, it was also apparent that species at risk were considered a threat to their freedom as land managers and a threat to their income.

4.2 Survey Results

A total of 96 individuals were sent the survey with the SARFIP evaluation, and over 3000 farm businesses were sent the farmer attitudes toward SAR survey; there were 26 and 225 respondents, respectively. Survey responses were pooled from the two surveys administered to previous SARFIP participants and to the general OSCIA ListServe. All data presented is from pooled data unless otherwise specified. Survey responses from the general OSCIA ListServe will be referred to as the Risk or Reward survey respondents and survey responses from the SARFIP evaluation survey will be referred to as SARFIP participant survey respondents for comparisons. For open-ended questions, only responses that directly answered the question being asked are presented in tables; complete comments provided are included in Appendix C.

4.2.1 Knowledge of Species at Risk

The majority of survey respondents (79%) considered themselves ‘somewhat knowledgeable’ about species at risk. Of all the respondents, however, only 32% thought that there were over 150 species at risk in Ontario, when there are in fact over 200 species at risk in Ontario. The majority of respondents (69%) also indicated that they were able to identify fewer than 10 species at risk, with 26% able to identify 10-30 and only 5% of respondents able to identify over 30 species at risk. This is further supported by the responses to question 4, which asked respondents to name three species at risk. Bobolink was the most common answer (n=29) followed by Eastern Meadowlark (n=8). These two species are often associated with farm habitats, as they both rely on grasslands for breeding, so it is unsurprising that they were the most well known SAR to farmers in Ontario.

Table 1. Responses to question 4, asking respondents to name three species at risk.

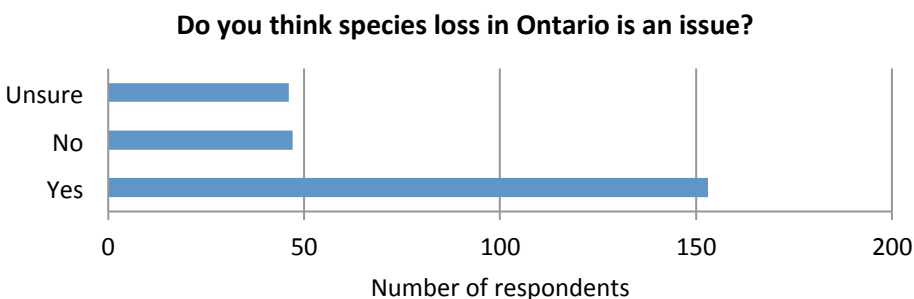
Species at Risk	Number of responses
Bobolink	29
American chestnut	2
Badger	10
Bald Eagle	12
Barn owl	8
Barn swallow	4
Blanding’s turtle	3
Blue ash	1
Blue racer snake	1
Bluebird	1
Bob white quail	1
Butternut tree	4
Cougar	1
Eastern hognose snake	1
Eastern wolf	2
Fox snake	2
Garter snake	1
Ginseng	1
Golden eagle	1
Goldenseal	1
Grass pickerel	1
Green dragon plant	1
Grey Fox	1
Jefferson salamander	1
Kentucky coffee tree	1
Lake sturgeon	1
Meadowlark	8
Milksnake	1
Monarch	3
Queen snake	1
Rat snake	2
Rattlesnake	1
Redside dace	1
Rusty patch bumblebee	1
Shumard oak	1
Snapping turtle	6
Spiny soft-shelled turtles	3
Whip-poor-will	2
Wood turtle	2

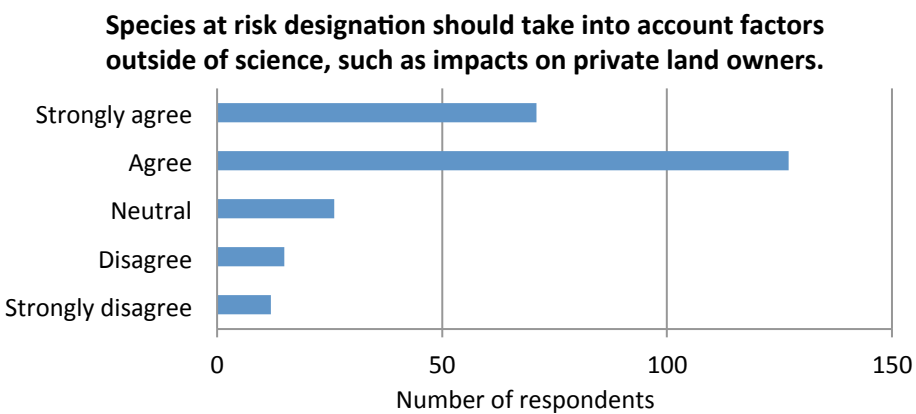
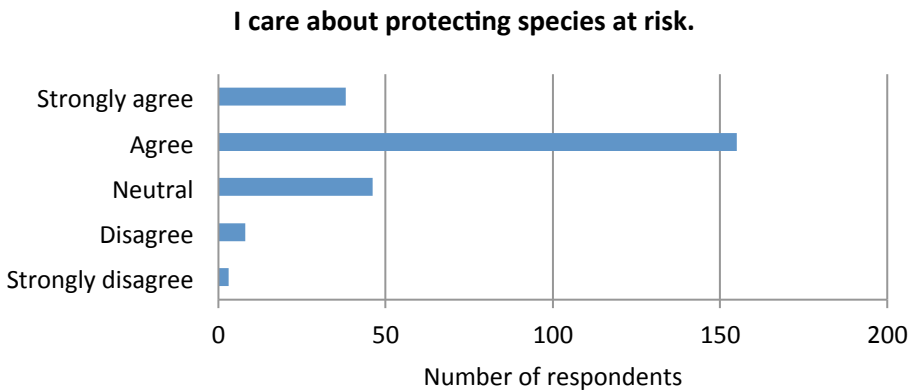
When asked to name three species at risk, many respondents provided general answers such as frogs (n=4), turtles (n=6), birds (n=3), fish (n=1), mussels (n=1), eagles (n=1), salamanders (n=2), mammals (n=2) and snakes (n=4). Others provided answers that were similar to a species at risk name, giving the impression that they were aware of the species but had misunderstood the name, such as green darter fish, banded turtle (likely Blanding’s turtle), brown spotted toad (perhaps Fowler’s toad), red fox snake (likely eastern fox snake), mud turtle (a name sometimes used for snapping turtle), and falcon (likely peregrine falcon). A number of wildlife were incorrectly identified as species at risk, including bees, elm trees, green frogs, tree swallow, red-winged blackbird, jack rabbit, earthworms, and orioles. Often just a genera or type of wildlife was identified, indicating that the individual had an understanding that there was a SAR of this type but unsure of the exact species (ex. shrike, wolf, ash trees, dogwood, milkweed). The majority of the SAR identified are unique to the Carolinian region in the farthest southern portions of Ontario. This is consistent with the responses in the demographics section which identified the highest proportion of respondents as from south western Ontario. There were no substantial differences in SAR knowledge between responses from the Risk or Reward survey respondents and the SARFIP evaluation survey

respondents. This displays that, on the whole, the respondents are unable to identify specific SAR and thus more efforts are needed to build awareness of currently listed SAR among the farm community.

On the whole, survey respondents identified themselves as valuing SAR and high environmental health. 62% believed that SAR loss in Ontario is an issue. Risk or reward survey respondents were less likely to consider species at risk loss an issue compared with SARFIP participant survey respondents (20% and 8%, respectively). Opinions were split as to whether the presence of SAR indicated a healthy environment: 12% strongly disagreed, while 28% disagreed, 29% were neutral, 22% agreed, 3% strongly agreed, and 5% were unsure. This question may have been confused with the concept that the absence of species at risk therefore makes an environment unhealthy, which was not the intent of the question. 4% of respondents indicated that they do not care about protecting species at risk while a strong majority (77%) indicated the opposite (62% agree; 15% strongly agree). A greater proportion of Risk or Reward survey respondents indicated that they were neutral on the presence of SAR indicating a healthy environment compared with SARFIP participant survey respondents (31% and 15%, respectively). Conversely, a greater proportion of SARFIP participant survey respondents indicated that they strongly agreed (15%) or were unsure (15%) regarding the presence of SAR indicating a healthy environment compared with Risk or Reward survey respondents (2% strongly agree, 4% unsure).

Half of all respondents indicated they felt they cared about protecting species at risk about average compared with an average person in Ontario, while 34% felt they cared more and 8% felt they cared less. 77% of all survey respondents indicated that they cared about protecting SAR (62% agree, 15% strongly agree), though SARFIP participant survey respondents were more likely to agree (54% agree, 42% strongly agree) than Risk or Reward survey respondents (63% agree, 12% strongly agree). No respondents from the SARFIP participant survey indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed that they cared about protecting SAR.





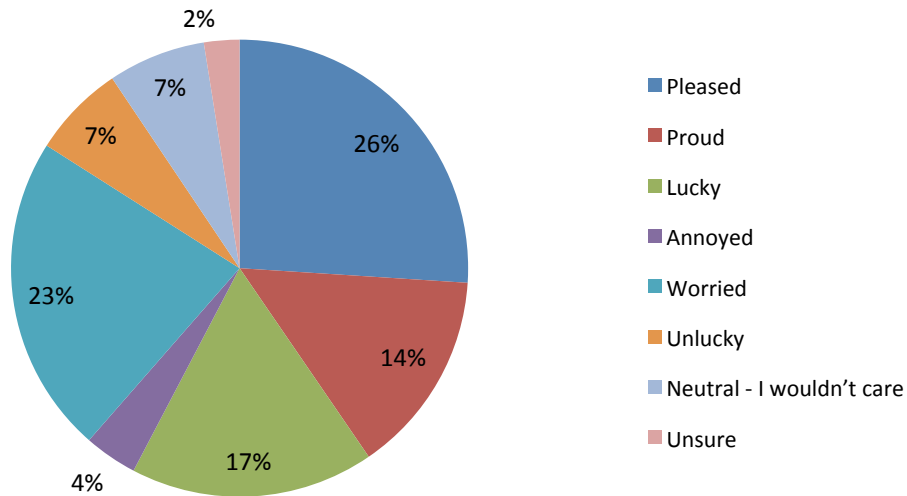
73% of respondents felt that the science used to determine species at risk population trends was okay, with 17% identifying it as way off the mark. 79% of respondent felt that species at risk designation should take into account factors outside of science, such as impacts on private land owners (51% agree, 28% strongly agree). SARFIP participant survey respondents were more likely to feel that the science used to determine SAR designation was very accurate (21%) compared with Risk or Reward survey respondents (10%). None of the SARFIP participant survey respondents indicated that they felt the science was way off the mark, while 19% of Risk or Reward survey respondents did.

Table 2. Comments received in response to question 8, on the science used to determine species at risk designation.

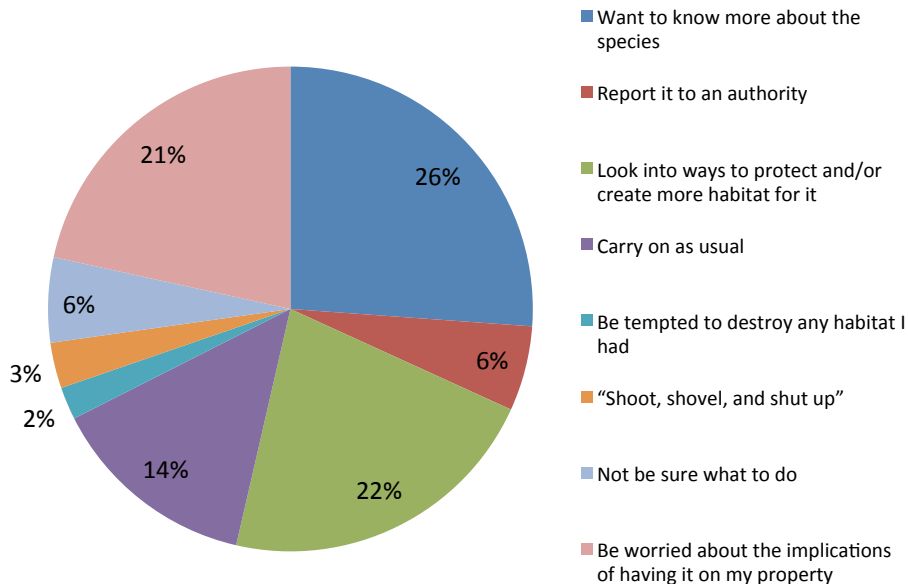
A species at risk in one area may be prevalent within its range – should it be considered at risk? <i>(This comment was expressed by 3 respondents)</i>
COSSARO lacks government oversight
Designation is influenced by special interest groups, the media, politicians and personal agendas
Information source matters
Narrow focus
Poor science and anecdotal reports too often being utilized to determine species status
Science may be valid but the message is manipulated by "environmentalists"
Should be verifiable and transparent... research fully posted and available for all to review
Some SAR habitat is reliant on farming and human practices

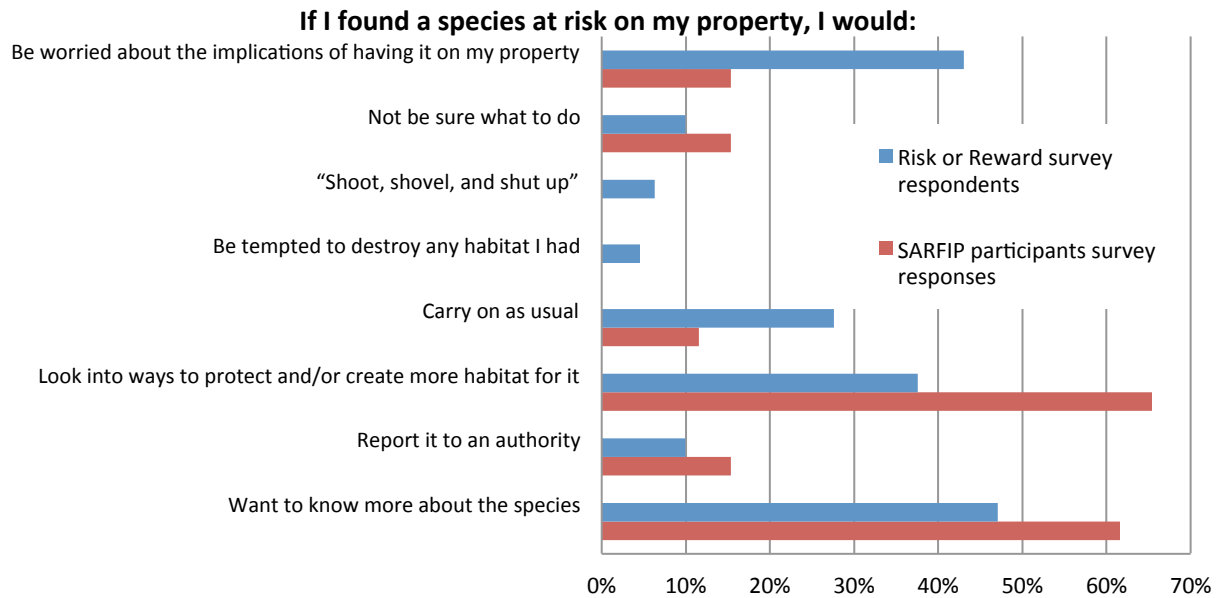
When asked how they would feel if they discovered a SAR on their property, responses were generally favourable: 26% said pleased, 14% proud, 17% lucky, 4% annoyed, 23% worried, 7% unlucky, 7% neutral, and 2% were unsure. Multiple responses were possible for this question and respondents were directed to select all that applied. SARFIP participant survey respondents were more likely to feel pleased (62%) and proud (31%) compared with Risk or Reward survey respondents (31% pleased, 17% proud), though Risk or Reward survey respondents were more likely to feel worried (32% compared with SARFIP participants 12%).

If I found a species at risk on my property, I would feel:



If I found a species at risk on my property, I would:





Over half of respondents (55%) had not had experience with SAR on their land, while 29% (n=69) had experience with SAR and 16% were unsure. Unsurprisingly, SARFIP participant respondents had more direct experiences with SAR (65% yes) than Risk or Reward survey respondents (23% yes). However, a greater proportion of SARFIP participant survey respondents were unsure if they had direct experience with SAR on their land (27%) compared with Risk or Reward survey respondents (14%). When asked what they would do if they found a SAR on their property, respondents were given multiple options for responses and were directed to select all responses applicable, meaning more than one response was possible. The majority of respondents indicated they would want to know more about the species (26%), look into ways to protect and/or create more habitat for it (22%), and worry about the implications of finding it on their property (22%). A greater proportion of Risk or Reward survey respondents indicated they would be worried about finding a SAR and/or would carry on as usual compared with SARFIP survey respondents, while SARFIP survey respondents were more likely to want to know more about the species and/or look into protections for the SAR.

Table 3. Summary responses to question 10: If I found a species at risk on my property, I would feel (multiple selections in the responses were possible):

Angry	1
Concerned	5
Depends	5
Scared	1
Neutral	1
Pleased	3
Protective	1

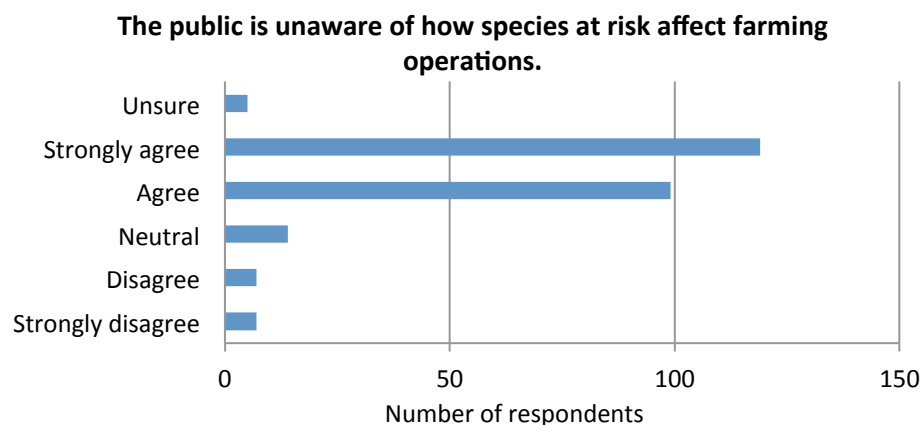
Exactly half of respondents identified themselves as feeling about the same as most farm operators to have SAR on their land, which shows a high degree of self awareness. 22% of all respondents felt they would be more excited and 15% felt they would be less excited than most to find SAR, while 13% were unsure how they would feel compared with most farm operators. Similarly, 49% of respondents identified themselves as having done about average to help species at risk compared with other private land owners, while 24% felt they have done more than average and 8% less than average. More SARFIP participant survey respondents felt they would be more excited to find SAR

on their land (46%) than Risk or Reward survey respondents (20%) and that they have done more than average to help SAR (52%) compared with Risk or Reward survey respondents (21%).

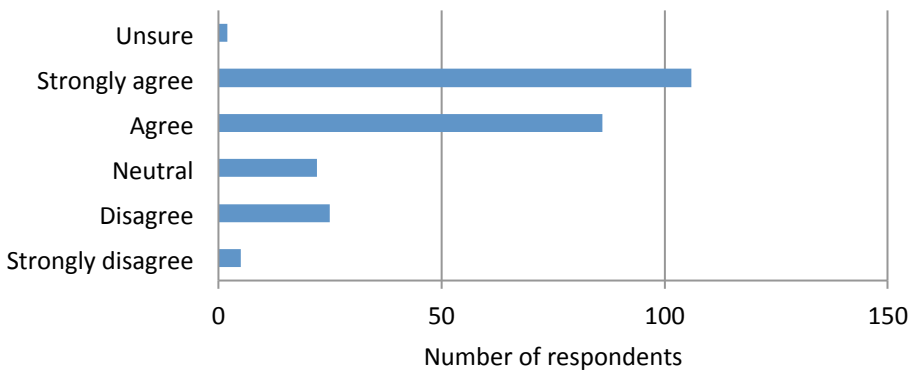
The majority of respondents felt that the public is unaware of how species at risk affect farming operations (39% agree and 47% strongly agree), and that farmers bear more of the burden for protecting SAR than other private land owners (35% agree and 43% strongly agree). However, opinions were more diverse on whether the government should protect SAR on public land only: 28% indicated agreement (16% agree and 12% strongly agree) while 46% indicated disagreement (35% disagree and 11% strongly disagree). This question generated 34 comments, which was surprising given that it was written as a closed-ended question with option to comment. The most common comment was to suggest compensation for habitat and/or SAR protection. This was also a suggestion that came up in the focus group discussion. A greater proportion of Risk or Reward survey respondents agreed (35%) or strongly agreed (45%) that farmers bear more of the burden for protecting SAR than other private land owners compared with SARFIP participant survey respondents (35% agree, 27% strongly agree). Risk or reward survey respondents were also more likely to agree or strongly agree (32%) that the government should only protect SAR on public land compared with SARFIP participant survey respondents (4% agree or strongly agree); 43% of Risk or Reward survey respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed while 53% of SARFIP participant survey respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Table 4. Summary responses to question 18: The Ontario government should only protect species at risk on public land, not on private land.

SAR should be protected on all lands	3
The government should have no jurisdiction on private land	3
If government wants to manage land they should own it	4
Farmers should be educated about and encouraged to protect SAR	1
Land owners should be compensated for SAR protection	8
Government should use land owner incentives to protect SAR	4
Depends	2
Less regulation should be used and nature allowed to run its course	1
There needs to be a balance	1
Protecting SAR on private land should be narrowed down to habitat, not broad or general areas	1



I believe that farmers bear more of the burden for protecting SAR than other private land owners.



4.2.2. Policy and Legislation

Many respondents were not confident in their knowledge and familiarity with SAR and environment-related legislation. For example, 43% of respondents were unsure if the Species at Risk Act impacted them, while 39% indicated that the Species at Risk Act did, in fact, impact them. Some respondents indicated that there was "some way" they were affected by the Species at Risk Act, but were unclear in relating how they were affected when asked in the survey. For example, one respondent wrote: "While I am not currently aware of direct effects to my farm business, I anticipate it could someday." It would appear that even when there is no sure knowledge of SAR on one's property, or of the specifics of SAR protection policies, respondents felt they may be impacted by SAR policies; the potential to be affected is enough for farmers to relate it as experience with being affected by the Endangered Species Act.

Respondents were given a list of various environmental and farming policies and legislation, and were asked to indicate their familiarity with each. The Nutrient Management Act was the policy respondents were most familiar with (51% very familiar) followed by the Drainage Act (27% very familiar). The policies that were least familiar to respondents were the Provincial Policy Statement (70% not at all familiar), the Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act (64% not at all familiar) and the Migratory Birds Act (53% not at all familiar). The majority (56%) were somewhat familiar with the Species at Risk Act, followed by not at all familiar (33%) and very familiar (11%). Opinions were split on whether current policies to protect SAR provided a benefit to society: 25% agreed, 19% disagreed, 38% felt the policies are somewhat effective and 18% were unsure. Interestingly, there was little difference in respondents familiarity with the Endangered Species Act between Risk or Reward survey respondents and SARFIP participant survey respondents, though a greater proportion of SARFIP participants indicated they were very familiar (20%) or somewhat familiar (72%) with the Species at Risk Act compared with Risk or Reward survey respondents (10% very familiar, 54% somewhat familiar). A greater proportion of Risk or Reward survey respondents felt that the Species at Risk Act did not affect them (19%) compared with SARFIP participant survey respondents (4%), though in both cases the greatest proportion of responses were unsure. SARFIP participant survey respondents were more likely to think that current policies to protect SAR provide a benefit to society (62%) compared with Risk or Reward survey respondents (21%). 60 comments were received for question 21 asking how policies to protect SAR could be improved. Some respondents identified that they did not have a strong enough knowledge of policies to provide meaningful suggestions for improvement (n=7).

Does the Species at Risk Act affect you?

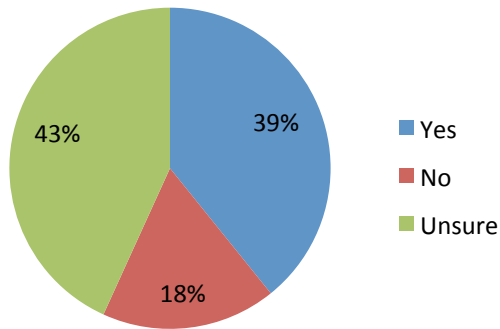


Table 5. Survey responses to question 19: There are many pieces of legislation related to farming and environmental protection. Which of the following policies do you have a strong understanding of? Please check your level of familiarity with the policy.

	Very familiar	Somewhat familiar	Not at all familiar
Drainage Act	67	152	31
	27%	61%	12%
Endangered Species Act	18	153	78
	7%	61%	31%
Environmental Assessment Act	22	144	82
	9%	58%	33%
Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act	24	127	97
	10%	51%	39%
Invasive Species Act	18	132	96
	7%	54%	39%
Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act	10	78	155
	4%	32%	64%
Migratory Birds Act	16	99	129
	7%	41%	53%
Nutrient Management Act	126	103	20
	51%	41%	8%
Provincial Policy Statement	16	57	169
	7%	24%	70%
Species at Risk Act	28	139	82
	11%	56%	33%
Water Resources Act	21	136	88
	9%	56%	36%
Weed Control Act	74	137	31
	31%	57%	13%

Table 6. Summary responses to question 21: How would you improve policies to protect species at risk?

Offer compensation for SAR protection	10
Improved education/awareness	10
Use unbiased science	4
Ask for farmer input	4
Consider economic impact in policy development	2
Decrease bureaucracy and regulations for SAR protection	4
Encourage protection through incentives	2
Encourage protection through incentives	2
Consider land owner perspective in developing policy	1
Encourage conservation in parks and public lands	1
Get rid of the Green Energy Act	1
Improve habitat on public lands	1
Improved policing	1
Improved publicity	2
Increase incentives and decrease fines	2
Invest more money in SAR protection	1
More flexibility in policies to allow land owners more control over private land	1
Provide more funding for habitat protection	1
Recognize that some species populations are declining regardless of protection	1
Relocate species at risk away from farms	1
Require protected areas within new developments	1
Revise the Species at Risk Act	1
Streamline many Acts into fewer, more easily understood Acts	1
Make habitat protection/creation a farm commodity	1
More outreach and cost share programs for landowners willing to help with SAR projects	1

112 comments were submitted expressing how the Species at Risk Act affected producers. Some indicated that there was "some way" they were affected by the Species at Risk Act, but were unclear in expressing how. For example, one respondent wrote: "Of course the fact that species are at risk affects me but I really don't know how the Act itself affects me." A selection of comments expressing a range of opinions are:

- "It has helped us by providing funding for fencing, alternate water source and tree planting. The website is also very informative. We are trying very hard to provide a good environment for species at risk. It is very satisfying to know that we have Bobolinks, Eastern Meadowlark, Barn Swallows and Snapping Turtles. We must be doing something right."
- "As a dairy farmer, timely harvesting of crops especially hay is of the utmost importance. If we would have to delay harvest in order to accommodate nesting birds, we would lose quality and reduce milk production and suffer financially. There is currently no legislation requiring compensation for such losses. If society feels it wants to protect species then society must be prepared to pay those who shall bear that burden."
- "Every time you want to make a change on the farm, build a new building, tile some land clear some bush (burn the left over brush) or fence lines you have to get a permit of some type which usually involves money and a bunch of stupid time consuming paper work and usually from more than one office. For example from township and or counties, conservation authorities provincial or federal offices etc. by the time you look into it you start to second

guess the project or idea, even if it is a project that will improve the environment and say the hell with it and forget about doing the project.”

- “If you farm today, the Act affects you! In all that we do, we must be working to protect the think that sustains us. Our Environment! There would be no farming if we were not aware of the environment around us--including SRA and make efforts to protect.”
- “It 'could' impact me - but I take steps to make sure that it doesn't.”
- “It makes us feel somewhat dishonest. That is when/if we find a SAR we will not report it. We will protect it and enjoy the presence but we will not share the information.”
- “Just a suspicion of a protected species on our property will cause problems. The best hay is in early June ...we may not be able to cut it if there might be a Bobolink in the area. A blocked ditch will create a wet area. Some 'official' may deem this a wetland habitat. Cleaning ditches is a must for cropping. Property owners MUST be FAIRLY compensated for [the] current year and future years lost use of any land. Private citizens/farmers cannot continually pay for the public policies”

Table 7. Summary responses to question 23: If you feel the Species at Risk Act affects you, please describe in what way it affects you.

May result in change in farming practice	6
Timing of farming operations may be affected (e.g. haying if Bobolink present, cleaning ditches)	9
Limits what I can do on my land	15
May decrease quality of product	4
Farmers may lose income to protect SAR	2
May affect my farm operations	3
Restricts my farming practices	3
Tells me what I can and cannot do on my property	3
Forced to protect butternut trees	1
I could become a criminal for haying	1
I feel guilty cutting hay	1
Makes me feel like I'm looking over my shoulder when farming	1
May impact my property value	1
Provides benefit through ecological balance	1
Removed potential SAR plant before I'm told what I can do on my land	1
Required permits are costly and time consuming	1
Requires me to think about broader impact of any activity	3
SAR presence may affect neighbouring land owners	1
Threatens my livelihood	1
Unjust feeling of obligation	1

Table 8. Summary responses to question 25: Describe how you think current policies to protect species at risk provide a benefit to society, or why they do not.

Act can't be enforced well enough to make a difference	1
Delivery of policy through regulation is ineffective; should instead work with farmers and try to get buy-in	1
Discourages species reporting if the result is habitat protection and no compensation on farm land	1
Encourages land owners to "shoot, shovel and shut up"	6
It is difficult to determine if we have SAR on our property	1
Lacks financial assistance to encourage policy adoption	1
Negatively impact economic viability of agricultural business	1
Policies are ignored by public and government	1
Policies are too broad	1
Policies are unreasonable	1
Policies improve SAR habitat	2
Policies promote awareness of SAR	9
Promotes biodiversity	12
Too much red tape and paperwork, fees and costs that are deterrents	2
Greater awareness required for improved effectiveness	1

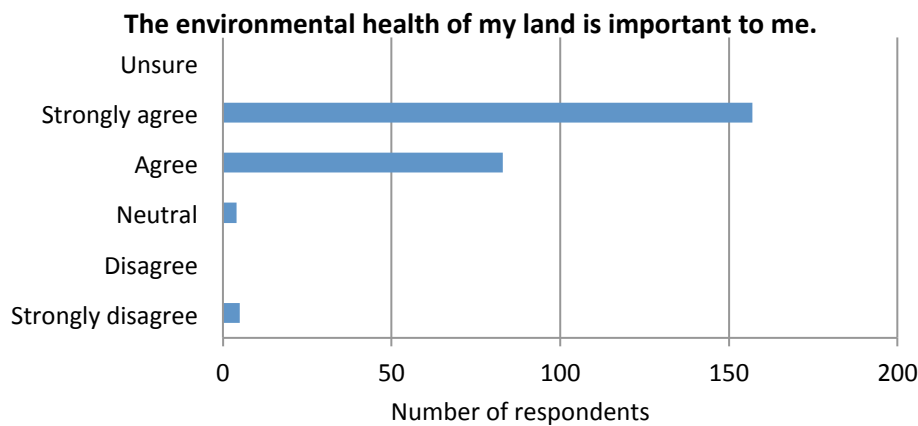
Question 25 asked how current policies to protect SAR benefit society or do not, and asked for a justification of that opinion. This question generated the highest number of comments in the survey. 157 comments were received, the majority of which expressed general opinions on SAR and critiques of the present system of protection. For example, comments that were unrelated to the question but expressed strong values include the following:

- “Protection of all species whether at risk or not is a social responsibility of everyone. Restriction of any activity responsible for undue degradation seems to fall very heavily on the individuals who care but allow larger businesses avoid the bigger implications due to their strong influence on government decisions.”
- “I think this program [SARFIP] is a good start, but I find the structure is overly geared to traditional, chemical farming. Admittedly, these types of private farms constitute the vast majority of private land; however, if the goal is to truly protect species at risk, other management styles that are also trying to protect these species should be not only accommodated, but encouraged.”
- “Current laws achieve the opposite of what they are intended to protect. Before any hiho operator cleaning a ditch upon seeing a turtle would just put it on the side and continue on his way chances were the turtle survived. Now they did [sic] a deep hole and bury the thing. Takes 1 min and no paperwork. Before farmers left some trees. Now farmers are afraid a species at risk might take up habitat making land around it useless for farming purposes. So they make sure to cut everything down, eliminating any potential habitat.”
- “Dinosaurs are gone and the world keeps turning! Save the money and hassle!”
- “Not sure how involved all stakeholders have been or are in the process of developing such policies. It has been my observation that special interest groups have been drivers with uncertain involvement of other stakeholders in the process.”
- “The average person doesn't know what species are at risk, nor do they know what the gov'n is doing to protect them.”
- “The opinion in the farming community is that if you find a species at risk, the government will take your land. How does that protect the species? Offer reasonable financial compensation for species at risk and you'll save a lot more.”

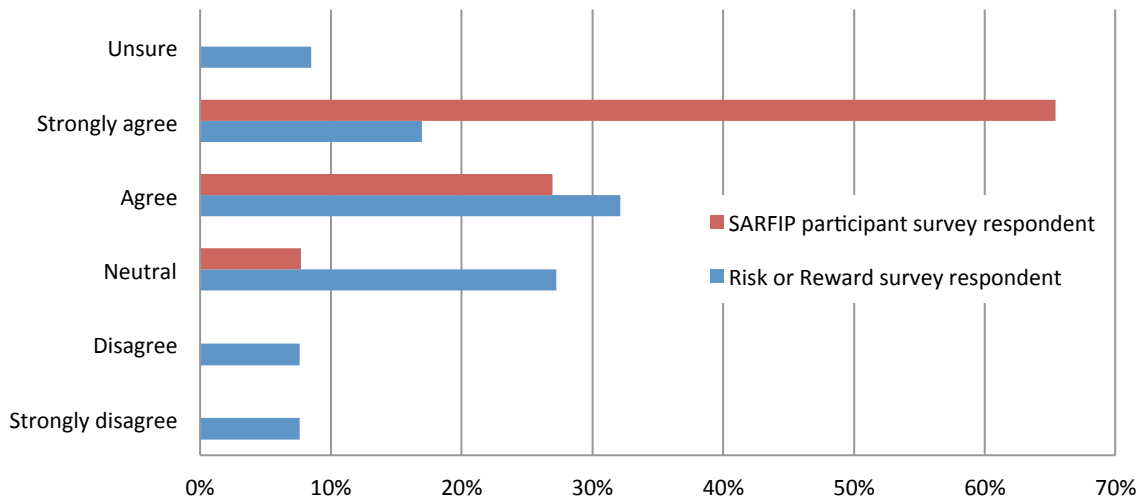
4.2.3 Environmental Land Values and Interest

When asked how important the environmental health of their land was, 96% of respondents responded positively (33% agree, 63% strongly agree) while 2% were neutral and 2% strongly disagreed. Similarly, the majority (86%) indicated that they were always looking for ways to improve the environmental health of their land (45% agree, 41% strongly agree), and the majority (54%) indicated that they were interested in environmental incentive programs to assist in developing habitat on their farm property (32% agree, 22% strongly agree). A total of 14% disagreed that they were interested in environmental incentive programs while 25% were neutral. This indicates a need to promote the availability and benefits of environmental incentive programs.

Only 8% of respondents indicated that there is enough support available for on-farm habitat based projects. 20% of respondents felt programs currently available provided some support for habitat projects, 29% felt there was not enough support, and the greatest number of respondents were unsure (43%). This indicates that awareness of available funding could be better in the farm community. 35% of SARFIP respondents felt that funding programs were sufficient while only 4% of Risk or Reward survey respondents felt the same way. A greater proportion of Risk or Reward survey respondents were unsure (46%) of available funding programs compared with SARFIP participants (15%). SARFIP participant survey respondents were much more likely to indicate an interest in environmental incentive programs to assist in developing habitat (27% agree, 65% strongly agree) compared with Risk or Reward survey respondents (32% agree, 17% strongly agree). Both groups of survey respondents indicated roughly the same interest in learning more about how they could better support species at risk on their land: overall, 43% agreed and 16% strongly agreed.



I am interested in environmental incentive programs to assist in developing habitat on my farm property.



Given the overall positive response to environmental programs and species at risk concerns, it was unsurprising that the majority of respondents (59%) indicated interest in learning more about how they could better support SAR on their land (43% agree, 16% strongly agree). 23% were neutral, which indicates an opportunity for “attitude conversion” related to this area and a need for more awareness perhaps. A better understanding of the respondents who were neutral about environmental incentive programs may help target areas of greatest need for advertising in the farm community.

In general, comments from SARFIP participants were more positive regarding the presence of SAR compared with Risk or Reward survey respondents. However, there may have been some SARFIP participants who responded to the general survey, as 4 individuals identified in question 26 that they had participated previously in a SARFIP program.

52 respondents identified the name of a program from which they had received funding for environmental work. Environmental Farm Plan was the most common followed by the Species at Risk Farm Incentive Program. The types of projects funded were primarily fencing (n=11, 13%) and tree planting (n=11, 13%) followed by livestock exclusion fencing (n=9, 10%). Two respondents commented that they were not interested in funding programs due to concerns related to land use restrictions.

OSCIA was the organization most respondents had worked with (28%), followed by Conservation Authorities (25%). Government had the fewest respondents willing to work with them (8%) followed by a Conservation Authority (11%) and Field Naturalists (11%). Respondents would be most likely to work with OSCIA (19%), OFAH (17%) or university researchers (16%).

Select comments:

- “I think I would work with some of the organizations listed above for a specific project, but it would depend on the project, and what I would have to give up.”
- “more likely with municipal government than other levels”

- “While we might be willing to commit a part of the farm we would need assurances that the balance remain unrestricted”

Table 9. Funding programs that respondents identified as having participated in:

Environmental Farm Plan (COFSP)	22
Species at Risk Farm Incentive Program	10
Alternative Land Use Services funding	2
Community Fisheries and Wildlife Improvement Program	2
Conservation Authority grants	2
Land Stewardship Program	2
Rural Water Quality Program	2
12 Mile Creek Watershed funding	1
Ducks Unlimited grant	1
Grassland Habitat Farm Incentive Program	3
Huron Clean Water Program	1
Land tax reductions	1
Middlesex Clean Water	1
Other	2

Table 10. Responses to question 28: Have you or would you ever work with any of the following organizations for species at risk research on your property? For example, monitoring surveys or habitat creation.

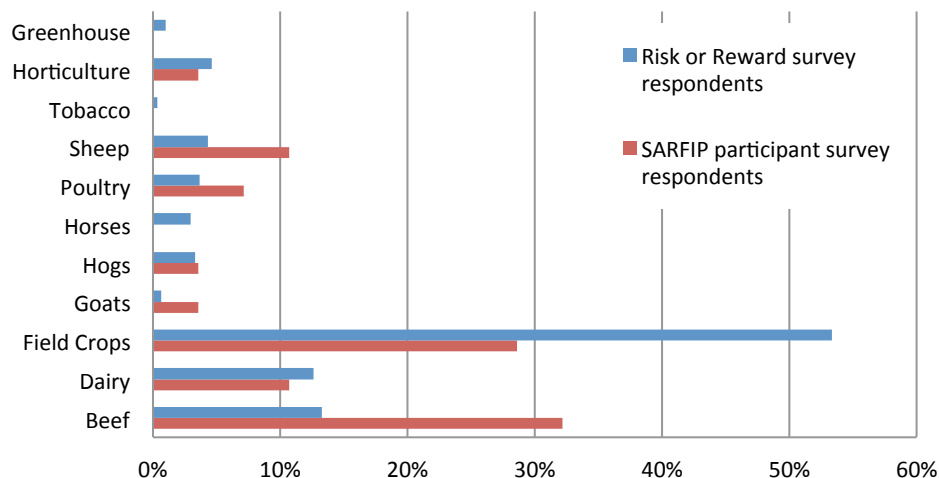
	I have	I would	Unsure
Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association	50	135	56
	28%	19%	8%
Government	29	60	144
	16%	8%	19%
Conservation Authority	45	77	116
	25%	11%	16%
University researcher	21	118	95
	12%	16%	13%
Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters	4	122	105
	2%	17%	14%
Farm representative	20	128	85
	11%	18%	12%
Field Naturalists	12	79	138
	7%	11%	19%

4.2.4 Demographics

The majority of respondents (82%) were male and over 55 years of age (39% were 55 to 64 years and 13% were 65 years and above). There was no substantive difference in the age of respondents between Risk or Reward survey respondents and SARFIP participant survey respondents, though a

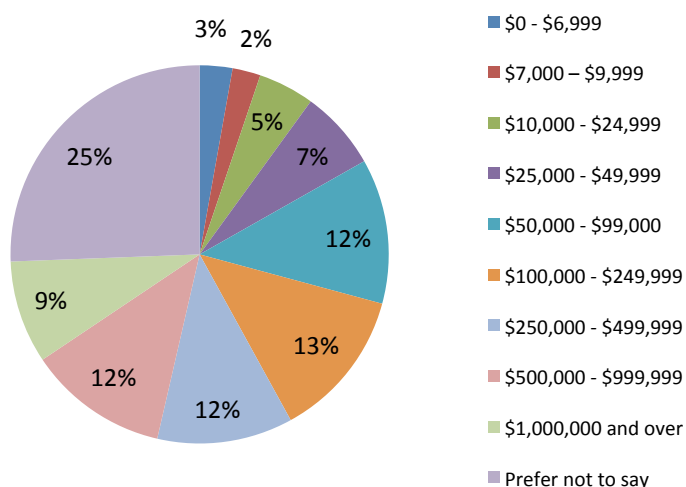
greater proportion of respondents were female who participated in SARFIP (38%) compared with Risk or Reward survey respondents (13%). Just over half (51%) identified field crops as their primary commodity followed by beef (15%) and dairy (12%). All other commodity groups were represented by 5% or fewer respondents. The greatest difference between survey groups was in the primary commodity of the farm business. A substantially greater proportion of Risk or Reward survey respondents work in field crops (53%) compared with SARFIP survey respondents (29%). A greater proportion of SARFIP participant survey respondents have beef or sheep farm businesses (43% combined) compared with Risk or Reward survey respondents (17%).

What is the primary commodity of your farm business?



The majority of respondents (n=137, 55%) were from south-western Ontario, followed by central Ontario (n=51, 20%) and southeastern Ontario (n=36, 14%). Over 26% of respondents preferred not to identify their income, but of those that did report their income the most common responses were between \$50,000 and \$999,999 gross farming income (77%). Field was the most common land cover type, reported as comprising between 50% and 90% of farm lands. Wetlands were 10% of the land cover on 82% of respondent farms.

Please indicate your gross farming income.



4.2.5 Species at Risk Farm Incentive Program Evaluation

The Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA) delivers the Species at Risk Farm Incentive Program (SARFIP) to encourage the establishment of selected Best Management Practices on farms across Ontario using a cost-share funding structure. Best Management Practices may be applied to croplands, grasslands, riparian areas, wetlands or even woodlands.

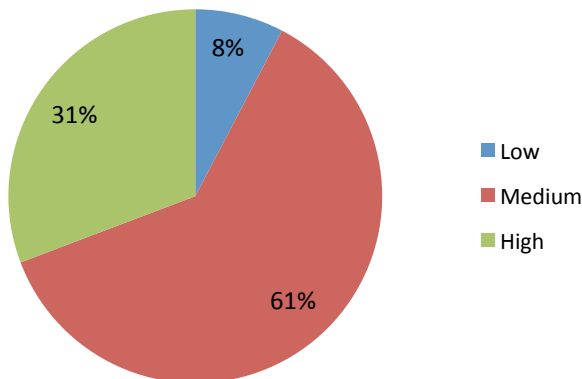
The most common type of SARFIP project, based on the sample respondents, was tree planting (30%) and fencing (26%). The median cost-share was 50%. SARFIP program respondents identified species at risk concerns as a medium priority (61%) among all environmental considerations; more considered SAR protection high priority (31%) than low (8%).

Table 11. Respondents identification of SARFIP project.

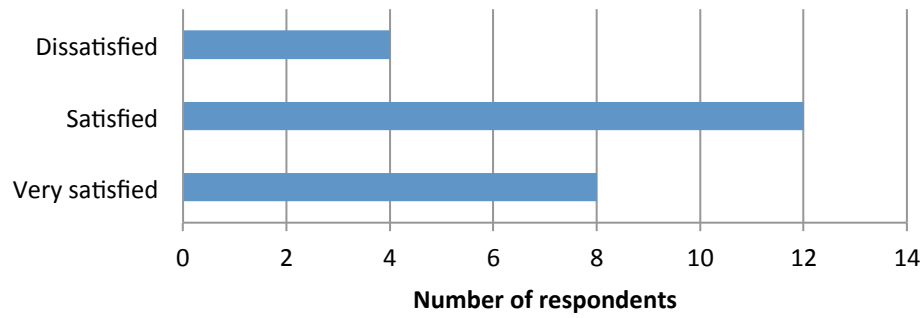
Best Management Practice	Project	Number of projects	
Habitat Protection in Livestock Systems	Culvert replacement	1	9
	Fencing	6	
	Solar watering system	1	
	Stream crossing	1	
Habitat Development	Grass planting	4	12
	Tree planting	7	
Restoration of Degraded Areas	Invasive species control	2	2
Planning for Action	Streambank stabilization	1	1

OSCIA workshops were the most common way of informing participants of the SARFIP program (45.8%), followed by the OSCIA website (20.8%) and word of mouth (16.7%). Together, these three methods of communication accounted for over 80% of the identified methods of hearing about the SARFIP program. No respondents identified the email listserv, the commodity group newsletter, social media or industry meetings as means of finding out about the SARFIP program.

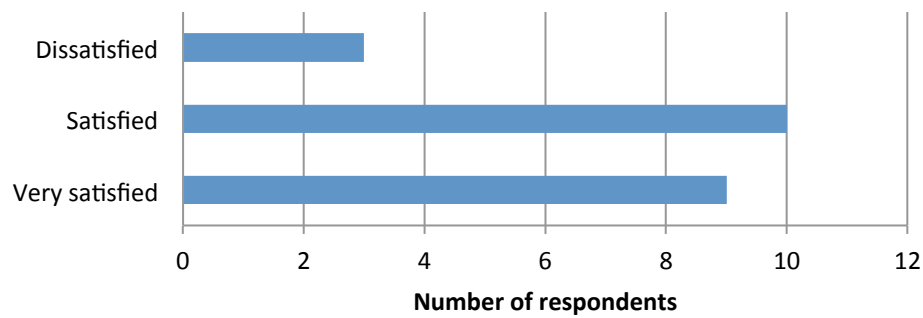
Considering all environmental priorities on your farm, how do you prioritize species at risk projects?



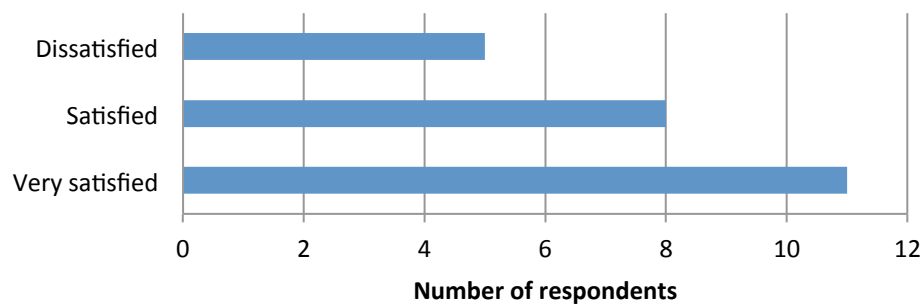
How satisfied were you with the application process?



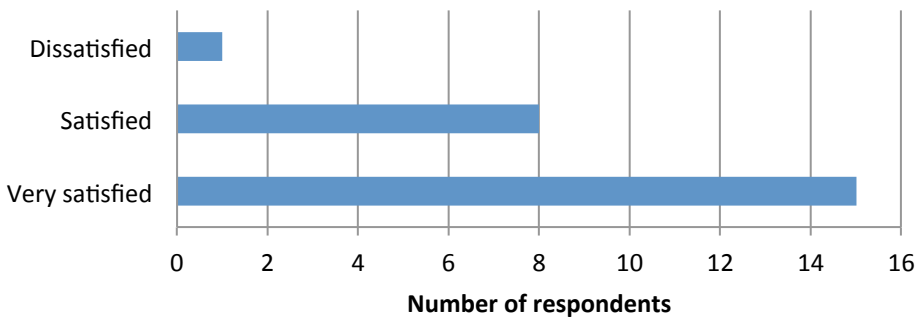
How satisfied were you with the claim process?



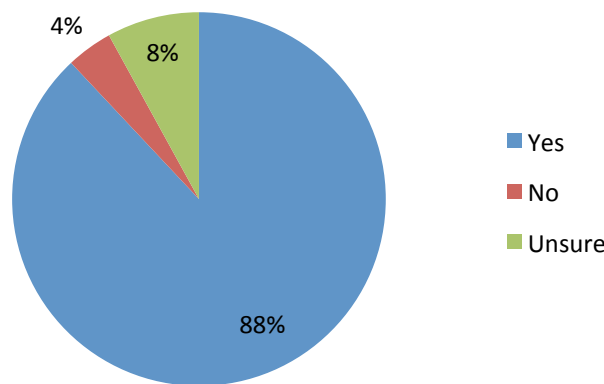
What was your level of satisfaction with the communications between Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association and yourself?



What is your overall level of satisfaction with the project(s) that you implemented?



Would you participate in this program, or a similar program again?



It took the greatest number of respondents (42%) over 3 hours to fill out the SARFIP application; the least number of respondents (15%) took less than one hour to complete the application. The majority of respondents (64%) felt they had enough information to understand the application process. Many stated that they contacted an OSCIA representative to aid in understanding the application.

The majority of respondents (80%) felt that the level of cost-share allocated to their SARFIP projects was successful in focusing efforts on SAR. No respondents felt that the requirement for the various cost-share levels were very difficult to understand. The majority (60%) found the requirements for each level somewhat clear (32%) or very clear (28%). However, only 8% of respondents felt they had enough information to determine the level their project fit into; 65% were confident after reading the literature and 27% felt it was unclear what level of cost-share their project fit. Overall, 83.3% of respondents were satisfied (50%) or very satisfied (33%) with the SARFIP application process.

Over 80% of respondents contacted a SAR specialist for assistance with the project. Those who did not seek assistance from a SAR specialist did research on their own or relied on their own knowledge.

Table 12. Number of SARFIP program survey respondents who contacted organization to support their SARFIP application.

Organization	Number of respondents
Conservation Authority	7
Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters	1
Ontario Badgers	1
Stewardship Council	1

The length of time required to complete the claim form varied from less than one hour to more than 3 hours, with a relatively even distribution of respondents identifying time within that range. 86% of respondents were satisfied (45%) or very satisfied (41%) with the claim process. 79% of respondents were satisfied (33%) or very satisfied (46%) with the communication with OSCIA. Several respondents commented that OSCIA staff were difficult to get on the phone; however, this may have been in part due to some technical issues with the phone system giving out incorrect extension information.

88% of respondents said they would participate in the SARFIP program, or other similar programs, again. Overall, 96% of respondents were satisfied (33.3%) or very satisfied (62.5%) with their SARFIP project. One individual (4%) was dissatisfied with the project. All but one respondent felt that the project provided an overall benefit to society (96%). The same number were satisfied (48%) or very satisfied (48%) with the SARFIP program. 88% of respondents would recommend the program to other producers. Most respondents (61%) prefer to be notified via email of environmental cost-share programs such as SARFIP.

Select comments and suggestions related to the SARFIP program:

- “I needed my OSCIA rep to translate the jargon”
- “Very short application period out of step with season to do work, no help in finding specialists with credentials (Ex. BMP D3)”
- “More money needed”
- “Notification of upcoming programs would be better at the start of the work season, instead of near the end”
- “Timing should reflect the project and season, and not fiscal year”
- “Have the application process open for submissions long before the seasonal work has to be done. (Example..no way to have 3rd party verification of bird species presence in late fall)”
- “an example of a application form would be good showing how much detail should be included”
- “The time line was crazy. I did not find out about the [availability] of the funds until over 6 months after I had already done the work and spent the money on trees. Coming up with the proper receipts, etc was difficult because of the reverse timeline. I even had to pretend on the application that I was applying to do in the future something that had already been done. Being able to plan ahead is much more logical- but I understand OSIA often works this way. I [suggest] you fix that.”
- “very hard to get somebody on phone at oscia”
- “there are too many times when requests for info are not stated in advance”
- “They [OSCIA] were very helpful.”
- “Information provided for the program could be more precise and clear”
- “Less paperwork”
- “time frame given even with the extension still wasn't enough time with the weather”
- “It takes years to see the full benefit of planting a forest habitat, but the process is well begun. Already there are more birds, insects, earthworms, etc”

- “For the most recent application (Tree Planting), I have to admit I didn't realize we would be eligible. We had already initiated the project [through] the 50 million tree program and paid for it. It wasn't until I saw an ad/article in a newspaper that indicated tree planting was part of SARFIP. So I decided to apply and we are very happy it was successful. Thank you for placing the ad.”
- “I don't know if this is the correct place for this comment but - it seems to me from communication with friends that although they care about the environment what often keeps people from participating in this program and criticized for their current practices.”
- “I am very aware that many farmers view SAR Act with suspicion, however I view having SAR on farm as a plus”
- “We were very pleased with the overall process. It was very straight forward and everyone working with SARFIP that we spoke to was very nice and helpful! We were impressed at how quick they were to respond to emails, etc, and seemed very professional”
- “Is only program directly related to SAR so thankful for any help”
- “I am grateful for any funding to help expand the healthy wildlife habitats “on my farm, even if it means pulling my hair out dealing with difficult forms, lots of jargon and unreasonable timelines.”
- “I think it's a great program that helps farmers who are [willing] to make improvements to the environment. It helps with the image of farming to the general public as well.”
- “Stick around, it's a good program but it needs to be active for many years to have a big picture affect.”
- “Please keep the program - society and farmers need it.”

5.0 Summary and Recommendations

Several common themes were identified in the focus group and survey results. Farmers are concerned about the impacts of the presence of SAR on farm land, even when it is unclear to them what those impacts may be. The idea that it may be preferable to remove species at risk and/or their habitat to avoid potential land use or farmer operations restrictions came up in the focus group and survey. It was also a common theme that farmers have a strong connection to their land and care about the environmental health of their property. Focus group and survey participants in particular expressed that they are opposed to being told what to do on their land, in particular when there are economic implications. The farmer experience with SAR is a diverse one, and it was reflected by a broad range of opinions on the value of protecting species at risk. The concept of compensation for SAR protection and for incentives rather than regulations and restrictions was frequently expressed in the survey and focus group.

Few survey participants had a strong knowledge of SAR regulations and focus group participants also expressed there was some fear of the unknown related to what it would mean to find a SAR on their land. It may be beneficial to design and deliver an aggressive education campaign targeting farmers to make it clearer what the Endangered Species Act entails and how it might affect them or their work, especially given the 2013 modernizations to the Act.

Key recommendations from the SARFIP evaluation survey include:

- Timing for applications should reflect the project and season, and not fiscal year
- Extend the application period
- Information provided on the program could be more concise and clear
- Provide an example application form
- Provide a better description of subject matter specialists
- Continue to run workshops to promote cost-share programs such as SARFIP and advertise them on the website
- Continue to make OSCIA staff available to answer phone calls and aid in the application process

- Continue to offer cost-share based on the degree to which the project directly helps SAR

6.0 Conclusion

The Endangered Species Act is intended to protect species at risk whose populations are declining. The Species at Risk Farm Incentive Program, delivered by the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association, provides financial incentives for farmers to aid in SAR habitat improvement. The goal of this study was to determine how species at risk are perceived by Ontario farmers; gain an understanding of farmer awareness of SAR and SAR protection policies; and to evaluate the SARFIP program. Overall, the farm community values a healthy environment and believes that SAR are important, but they worry about the implications SAR presence may have on their businesses through regulations restricting land use and leading to reduced income. Many (60%) of the respondents stated that they care about protecting SAR (77%), that they would like to learn more about SAR (60%) and that they feel that current SAR policies provide a benefit to society (62%). This shows that although there is some reluctance to having SAR on private land, there is also a willingness to learn more about SAR and a common view that protecting SAR is important. SARFIP participants largely supported the program, feeling that it has value in helping SAR, and would recommend it to others. There are many opportunities for agricultural land uses to work in tandem with SAR protection goals and, in doing so, help develop a better understanding of SAR and SAR policy within the Ontario farm community.

APPENDIX A

Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association - Species at Risk Focus Group Questions

Thank you for participating in the focus group to help us better understand the farmer perspective on species at risk. Please read the following questions and write down your answers on the page or email your thoughts to Christine Schmalz at christine.schmalz@ontariosoilcrop.org.

1. If you saw a turtle crossing the road, what would you do?
Why? Would it make a difference if it was an endangered species?

2. How would you feel if you found a Bobolink or a meadowlark on your property?
Why? What would you do about it?

3. Imagine you receive a letter in the mail telling you that a species at risk shrub has been found in the area and it is likely also growing on your property. How would you feel?
Would you want to know more?
If so, what? If not, why not?
Would it make a difference if it was a different kind of species?

4. Do you feel like your farm has good habitat for wildlife ?If so, for which species?

5. Are you interested in having a diverse range of species on your property? Why or why not?

6. Would you be interested in a program to improve habitat on your farm? For example, funding for habitat restoration.
Why or why not?
What kind of program would interest you?

Thanks for taking the time to answer these questions.

APPENDIX B
Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association Survey to Discover Farmer Perceptions of Species at Risk and Evaluate the SARFIP Program

Survey Questions

Section 1 – Opinions about and knowledge of Species At Risk

1. I would describe my knowledge of species at risk as:

Very knowledgeable (I know all about SAR)

Somewhat knowledgeable (I've heard about SAR)

Not knowledgeable at all (What's a SAR?)

2. Approximately how many species do you think are considered 'at risk' in Ontario?

Fewer than 50

50-150

150-250

250 or more

3. Approximately how many species at risk do you think you would recognize?

Fewer than 10

10-30

30 or more

4. List three species at risk that come to mind:

5. Do you think species loss in Ontario is an issue?

Yes

No

Unsure

6. The presence of species at risk is a sign that the environment is healthy.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly agree

Unsure

7. I care about protecting species at risk.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly agree

8. I feel the science used to determine which species should be considered at risk is:

Very accurate in identifying population trends

Okay at determining population trends

Way off the mark

Other (please specify):

9. Species at risk designation should take into account factors outside of science, such as impacts on private land owners.

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly agree

10. If I found a species at risk on my property, I would feel:

Pleased
Proud
Lucky
Annoyed
Worried
Unlucky
Neutral - I wouldn't care
Unsure

11. Have you had any direct experiences with SAR on your land?

Yes
No
Unsure
Prefer not to say

12. If I found a species at risk on my property, I would:

Want to know more about the species
Report it to an authority
Look into ways to protect and/or create more habitat for it
Carry on as usual
Be tempted to destroy any habitat I had
"Shoot, shovel, and shut up"
Not be sure what to do
Be worried about the implications of having it on my property
Other (please specify)

13. Compared with most farm operators, I would feel ___ to have species at risk on my land.

More excited
About the same as most
Less excited
Not sure

14. Compared with other private land owners, I have done ____ to help species at risk.

More than average
About average
Less than average
Unsure

15. Compared with an average person in Ontario, I think I care about protecting species at risk:

More than average
About average
Less than average
Unsure

16. The public is unaware of how species at risk affect farming operations.

Strongly disagree

Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly agree
Unsure

17. I believe that farmers bear more of the burden for protecting SAR than other private land owners.

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly agree
Unsure

18. The Ontario government should only protect species at risk on public land, not on private land.

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly agree
Unsure
Comment:

19. There are many pieces of legislation related to farming and environmental protection. Which of the following policies do you have a strong understanding of? Please check your level of familiarity with the policy, and also indicate on a scale of 1-5 how important you believe the policy is to your farming operation, with 1 being VERY IMPORTANT and 5 being NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT.

	Very familiar	Somewhat familiar	Not at all
Drainage Act			
Endangered Species Act			
Environmental Assessment Act			
Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act			
Invasive Species Act			
Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act			
Migratory Birds Act			
Nutrient Management Act			
Provincial Policy Statement			
Species at Risk Act			
Water Resources Act			
Weed Control Act			
Other:			

20. How would you improve policies to protect species at risk?

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not at all important	I don't know
Drainage Act				
Endangered Species Act				
Environmental Assessment Act				
Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act				
Invasive Species Act				
Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act				
Migratory Birds Act				
Nutrient Management Act				

Provincial Policy Statement
Species at Risk Act
Water Resources Act
Weed Control Act
Other:

21. How would you improve policies to protect species at risk?

22. Does the Species at Risk Act impact you?

Yes
No
Unsure

23. If you feel the Species at Risk Act affects you, please describe in what way it affects you.

24. Overall, do you think current policies to protect species at risk provide a benefit to society?

Yes
No
Somewhat
Unsure

25. Describe how you think current policies to protect species at risk provide a benefit to society, or why they do not.

26. If you have ever received funding for SAR or other environmental work, please briefly state the program and what the funding was for.

27. Do the funding programs currently available provide enough support for the habitat projects you may be interested in completing on your property?

Yes
Somewhat
No
Unsure
Other (please specify)

28. Have you or would you ever work with any of the following organizations for species at risk research on your property? For example, monitoring surveys or habitat creation.

I have I would Unsure

Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association
Government
Conservation Authority
University researcher
Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters
Farm representative
Field Naturalists
Other (please specify)

29. The environmental health of my land is important to me.

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly agree
Unsure

30. I am always looking for ways to improve the environmental health of my land.
Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly agree
Unsure

31. I am interested in environmental incentive programs to assist in developing habitat on my farm property.
Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly agree
Unsure

32. I would be interested in learning more about how I could better support species at risk on my land.
Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly agree
Unsure

Section 2 – Demographics

1. What is the primary commodity of your farm business?
Beef - cow calf Beef - feeder
Dairy Field Crops - grains and oilseeds
Goats Hogs
Horses Poultry
Sheep Tobacco
Horticulture Greenhouse
Other (please specify)

2. I am:
Male
Female
Prefer not to say

3. Please indicate your age category
18 to 34 years
35 to 44 years
45 to 54 years
55 to 64 years
65 years and above
Prefer not to say

4. By percentage, I estimate my land cover to be:
10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
Forest
Field
Urban (buildings, roads)

Aggregates
Wetlands
Open water (ponds, streams)

5. Where is your farm located?

South-western Ontario
Central Ontario
Southeastern Ontario
Northeastern Ontario
Northwestern Ontario
Prefer not to say

6. Please indicate your gross farming income.

\$0 - \$6,999
\$7,000 – \$9,999
\$10,000 - \$24,999
\$25,000 - \$49,999
\$50,000 - \$99,000
\$100,000 - \$249,999
\$250,000 - \$499,999
\$500,000 - \$999,999
\$1,000,000 and over
Prefer not to say

Survey Questions for SARFIP Participants

SARFIP

1. Please indicate the type(s) of project(s) that you implemented and the level of cost-share that you received through the Farming Power program.

Type of project
Cost-share level

2. Considering all environmental priorities on your farm, how do you prioritize species at risk protection projects?

Low
Medium
High

3. How did you hear about the SARFIP program?

Email ListServ
Word of mouth
Ontario Farmer
Other Farm Publication
OSCIA Website
Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation Website
Commodity Group Newsletter
Conference/Trade Show
Social Media (i.e. Facebook or Twitter)
Postcard via Mail
Workshop run by OSCIA
Industry Meeting
Other (please specify)

4. How much time did it take you to complete the application, from start to finish?

Less than 1 hour
1-2 hours
2-3 hours
Over 3 hours

5. Did you feel you had enough information to understand the application process?

Yes

No

If not, what information would have been helpful?

6. The level of cost-share (i.e. 30%, 50% or 80%) allocated to each SARFIP project was based on the benefit to species at risk protection. Do you feel that the effort required to complete the application was worthwhile given the benefits of the SARFIP program?

Yes

No

Please explain.

7. Do you feel you had enough information to determine which level your project fit into?

Yes, I knew right away

Yes, after reading some of the literature I was confident

Not, it was unclear

Other (please specify)

8. Do you feel the requirements for each level were clearly stated?

Very clear

Somewhat clear

Neutral

Slightly confusing

Very difficult to understand

9. Did you contact any SAR specialists for assistance with your project, or to provide a letter of support?

Yes – please state who

I tried but was unsuccessful – please explain

No – please explain why not

10. How satisfied were you with the application process?

Very satisfied

Satisfied

Dissatisfied

How can we improve the application process?

11. How much time did it take you to complete the claim form?

Less than 1 hour

1-2 hours

2-3 hours

More than 3 hours

12. How satisfied were you with the claim process?

Very satisfied

Satisfied

Dissatisfied

How can we improve the claim process?

13. What was your level of satisfaction with the communications between Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement and yourself?

Very satisfied
Satisfied
Dissatisfied

14. Would you participate in this program, or a similar program again?

Yes
No
Unsure

15. What is your overall level of satisfaction with the project(s) that you implemented?

Very satisfied
Satisfied
Dissatisfied
Please explain.

16. What were your primary motivations for participating in the SARFIP program?

17. Do you feel that your SARFIP project(s) provides a benefit to society?

Yes
No
Unsure

18. What is your overall level of satisfaction with the SARFIP program?

Very satisfied
Satisfied
Dissatisfied

19. Would you recommend this program to other agricultural producers?

Yes
No
Unsure
Comment:

20. Do you have any comments, recommendations or feedback on the SARFIP program overall?

21. How do you prefer to be notified of environmental cost-share programs?

Email (Newsletters or Listserves)
Industry Associations/Organizations
Postcards via Mail
Workshops
OSCIA Website
Other Websites
Newsletters
Tradeshows or Conferences
Social Media (i.e. Facebook or Twitter)

APPENDIX C. All comments received from open-ended survey questions.

8. I feel the science used to determine which species should be considered at risk is:
sometimes narrow focus
dont really know anything about the science used
Im not sure of the science method used or what the proper way would be?
Very poor at understanding the reasons and therefore the aproprate response
don't know
Driven significantly by special interest groups and the media.....not a good driver of awareness
Ther are too many self-identified experts with their own personal/private agendas and priorities. Too much emotion.
this problem is a sign of too much urban growth
Don't know
if the species is on the fringe of their normal habitat should they be considered at risk? (abundant further south)
superficial and heavily influenced by bureaucrats having a political agenda
I am not familiar with specifically what science is used to determine species at risk - therefore I don't know.
the science may be valid, but many times the message is manipulated by "environmentalists"
it is okay, but the farmers eye...can determine a lot also.
species are sometimes put on the list when they are short in a localized area and plentiful in other areas
as long as its aproved methods
no idea
don't know
don't know
matters where the info comes from
some of the species that are at risk only became popular because of farming and human practises
Not sure
There have been millions of species disappear. Darwin even came up with a theory.
not sure
I'm a species too,maybe we need to spend our time on that
not sure
COSSARO lacks government oversight
I'm not familiar with the science used to determine which species should be considered at risk.
I don't know
Can be good, but can be way off. Ontario is a big place and the range of environments dictate populations can be segregated and distant so a species at risk in one area may be very prevalent somewhere else. With some species this is easy to track, others almost impossible.
Poor science and anecdotal reports too often being utilized to determine species status
eveiution,some live,others appear
should be verifiable and transparent... research fully posted and available for all to review
I'm not aware what kind of science is used to determine which species should be considered at risk.
but miss the mark on some species

10. If I found a species at risk on my property, I would feel: (check all that apply)
it means I do some thing wright and should not change what I do!
Angry that my property rights would be at risk
concerned - mostly depending on location - if in or close to worked field area
concerned, how will this affect my activities?
Depends on how it impacts my business
depends on potenal impact of that species - i.e.dangerous to people or livestock
depends on what it is and where
depends on what species it is
depends what it is and does
Educate myself on it.
extremely scared
I am concerned about too much bureaucratic control from afar.
i am neutral - i will comune with nature and protect what is on my property
No species at risk will be found in this area
obligated to keep my mouth shut
Pleased but concerned with property rights impact
positive for the species, negative cause of potential land use restrictions.
protective except we have been targetted already with a "historical" sighting which has been attached to our property in perpetuity.
would not tell anyone
I am not sure if there is a reporting process to keep track of species at risk but I would be glad to report any I see if I knew where to report

12. If I found a species at risk on my property, I would: (check all that apply)
Shoot, Shove and shut up only if some one tells me I have done wrong but the species still finds it a good habitate. two wrongs maight make a right?
if there was no species at risk act, I would do all the right things to the best of my abilities
Depends on its potential economic impact. Regardless of Bobolink I would still need to cut hay but could tolerate jefferson salamander in wet woodland.
depends on species and issues
I would find it interesting and quietly, secretly protect the species but not tell anyone. This is due to SAR Act and the implications to our farm.
Would depend on the species & how it impacts my livelihood! Happy to live and let live, burocrat threatens me though with penalties and loss of use of my property, would consider shoot, shovel & shut up
Depends on who you mean as an authority.
feel good that the habitat i provide is suitable
look into ways to protect in my own way
google it

18. The Ontario government should only protect species at risk on public land, not on private land.
if the government is supporting the Farmer having species at risk and reconizing it, rather than punish
They should have no jurisdiction on private land, if they want it then they should buy the land
should protect on all land
i do think that farmers should be educated about SAR and encouraged to protect SAR on their lands

Farmers have enough trouble earning a living, without outside regulations about land use.
if protection means income loss or property devaluation, the landowner should be compensated
Government should only encourage and give incentives to land owners who have habitat for species at risk and only with permission of land owner.
They should be buying necessary habitat or compensating land owners faced with restrictions
There should be fair compensation for private land owners.
The only thing government electees know how to protect is the bulge in their back pockets
If one could be sure that special interest groups' mandates did not drive government policy, it would be better
There should be high incentives to protect SAR on private property
again depends on so many things
We own our land, pay taxes and make improvements such as planting trees, use No-Till and enjoy/respect nature etc. Maybe we can be educated on all the SAR and what we as farmers can do to help SAR, but we don't need "big brother" dictating what we can and can't do!
burden of protecting species is for all of us to enjoy.
in a lot of cases if the government would leave things like this up to Mother Nature she would balance everything out.
How do you define protect? Fine and threaten...NO, put some resources to assist voluntary assistance by landowners, I would help under the proper circumstances.
This is a loaded question!
if society feels that species at risk are important than they may need to purchase property. the government can make suggestions but should not enforce until they purchase
The idea of protecting habitat in "in areas where these species are known to occur" is far too broad. This 'area' could include a whole farm!!
If society wants preservation, society must pay for land preserves.
Costs to protect species at risk should be covered by public funds and not land owners.
Depends on fair compensation to farmer. If u want to pay me enough to grass my whole farm down that's great
As a member of Haldimand Stewardship Council, I have committed to assisting our environment, but government interference without full compensation should be illegal. Who knows what further restrictions these environments will come up with!?!?
depends on what methods they use
No comment.
Will our LIB gov't pay farmers to protect SAR on private lands?????
It is definitely a consideration of land and environment management. A responsibility that is intrinsic in buying land. However business must continue and be profitable as well. There needs to be a balance between both.
This is a ridiculous suggestion
compensation should be given
-as long as cities keep spreading without control onto farm land
It doesn't work if the effort is too fragmented. Either it is important to us as a society or it isn't. Choose.
How is public land defined? Only provincial and federal crown land or does it also include municipal lands, etc.
we all have a responsibility
protect SAR on private land through incentive, not with burdensome legislation, carrots not sticks

19. There are many pieces of legislation related to farming and environmental protection. Which

of the following policies do you have a strong understanding of? Please check your level of familiarity with the policy.
Planning Act, NEPDA, Greenbelt Act
NEC act Greenbelt act
There are far too many Acts. It is very difficult to keep abreast of them all. People run into trouble when they contravene an Act they didn't even know existed.
If you want farmers to be familiar with these acts, provide seminars
Ontario Gov't constantly breaks weed control act.
I am mainly aware of most of these acts, but am not knowledge of specific details within them.

20. How important do you think these policies are for protecting species at risk?
there over rated on what I know
If we as a society are going to protect, then we need to address the financial and economic impacts first before deciding on the regulatory
legislation is a tool to achieve some outcome, if everyone is on board to do the right thing legislation would not be required, how the legislation is used will determine whether the SAR are protected or not.
Nobody even cares about these acts, quite frankly.
The question should say "effective" rather than "important". I choose not to answer this.

21. How would you improve policies to protect species at risk?
encourage rather than discourage in management and to be more realistic. Some species will lower its population for some other reasons than influenced by humans and if influence by humans will adapted.
aas for farmer input
Awareness, I don't know much about the specific species.
begin with surveys, then talk with farmers
Compensate farmers and landowners. Help them protect them
Compensate for people doing something to protect and save.
Compensate landowners for any costs in protecting SAR's
cut the red tape, cut the bureaucrats and put the money from there to work on the ground to protect the SAR
Define improve....As a farmer landowner I suggest the focus is changed from regulatory only to a complete policy including compensation. We will have a good policy when most landowners want to find or can at least tolerate a SAR on their property.
Do not know.
Don't care
Dont know
Don't place the majority of the species at risk burden onto farmers backs. Help to relocate species instead of freezing farmers fields.
educate the farmer. educate the public
Educate the policy makers, with unbiased science. Tighten the registration process for approving chemical products, so that the risk is actually assessed before they are released for public use.
Encourager the landowner to protect species at risk by compensating for los of use.
Ensure complete awareness and involvement of all stakeholders in the process.
Focus on education and compensation for protecting endangered species where this impacts a farmer's ability to farm
Force new development to address the problems with sar headon ie parks, green spaces and protected areas within developments. Make the public support these needs with their wallets not just their words.
Get rid of red tape and bureaucracy. Too many rules and regulations make us want to avoid all of them.
grants for land owners who create habitat

I don't know, but more education/information might help. However, people are already inundated with too much to read and absorb, and so it should be made interesting and not very time consuming--not easy!
i feel i do not know enough about the acts to answer this question, so i need to familiarize myself with the policies and acts.
I would scrap the green energy act.
If the public wants it, let the public pay.
Improve financing to assist with rehabilitation once species have been identified
improve habitat on public lands at public expence
Include compensation for thr farmer.
Include landowners perspective
Insist that a full broad-scope socio-economic impact assessment carried out by neutral experts for each specific policy to avoid "feel good" or bureaucratic agrandizement policies.
Landowners should be compensated for costs incurred to protect species at risk.
Leave some flexibility so that farmers have some control over the use of their own land
Leave things as they are....the fittest will survive
Make population more aware they exist
Make sure economic impact is part of the equation.
make taxpayers pay the full cost
More policing
More publicity
NA
not sure
not sure
Provide better evidence that they are at risk;clarify their role in the ecosystem
Put more farmers on these boards, and be more consultative and practical when implementing more restrictions.
Revise the species at risk act. Taking out anything that negatively implicates land owners and land use. Instead promote land owners and other implicated operators (ditch cleaning) for doing the right thing. As long as there are fines and restrictions and paperwork involved, more operators and landowners will just destroy the problem (in this case species at risk) instead of taking care of it in the proper way. eg it takes one minute to bury a turtle . It would take half a minute to put the turtle out of harms way giving it a chance at life but if any one finds the turtle the operator of the ditch cleaning service has many headaches to deal with due to regulations.
science based policies. targeted sites-compensation -in some cases
Spend all resources on promoting voluntary Habitat creation by private land owners and nurture conservation in parks and public lands. This should more that offset any habitat destruction during development. If this doesn't work then i would infer that there is really no democratic will of the people to conserve the species.
stream line them into a couple of easily understandable acts rather than the dozen plus there are now. as well as take into account financial burden cosequences on private landowners
the protection of SAR is for the province as a whole, individuals should be compensated for the protection of SAR
Through education and monetary incentives.
with farm groups education, school education
USE A LSESS heavy handed approach
I dont know the policies so education to me would be the most important
Improve enablers that farmers would actively want to pursue to protect species they know they could affect through ongoing versus one off incentives.
I do not have strong understanding of the policies to protect species at risk. I do not think I am alone in the agricultural community regarding this - so I think that education would be a good thing. (I understand this is not a policy improvement)
Have average citizen made aware for value of having SAR and efforts required to coexist
Public Information and continue to support farms affected by the policies. Demonstrate the importance of protecting our species. What most people don't seem to understand is that if one cog in the wheel is broken it will affect the balance. What we decide to do or not do can have dire consequences. Sometimes the wait and see attitude takes

too long and the damage is done. For instance I strongly feel that if we don't act now and ban neonics our native pollinator population (as well as the honey bees) will be in severe trouble, which will affect any crop needing pollination.
compensate land owners for lost use of land
Input from farmers/land owners and listening to how it will affect them - not making some broad based decisions at government level - people that are not affected by the policy. Need to listen.
make habitat protection/creation a farm commodity
Make it easier. Less paper work
More outreach and cost share programs for landowners willing to help with SAR projects
I would encourage organic farming and especially permaculture, which is a system of growing food which works with nature, rather than trying to dominate her. The health of nature as a whole must be protected. Without this, vulnerable species will always be at risk, Chemical fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides destroy the micro species living in the soil, poison our air and water and damage many macro species, including humans. They should be phased out and ultimately eliminated. All species are at risk until this is done.

23. If you feel the Species at Risk Act affects you, please describe in what way it affects you.
I planted several thousand's trees over the last 20 year as wind brakes. I think I have improved habitats this way. (I also cleaned up garbage piles (might be negative action?))
As a dairy farmer, timely harvesting of crops especially hay is of the utmost importance. If we would have to delay harvest in order to accommodate nesting birds, we would lose quality and reduce milk production and suffer financially. There is currently no legislation requiring compensation for such losses. If society feels it wants to protect species then society must be prepared to pay those who shall bear that burden.
as a land owner, im sure some way
As a landowner and active farmer it affects my land, forests and drains. because they are or potentially are habitat
Being forced to protect Butternut trees
Biodiversity is important for our health
Can end up with land I bought but can not farm
Canary in the coal mine analagy
change in farming practices
Could impact my farming operation
Could limit my ability to reclaim crop and pasture lands.
COULD STOP ME FROM FARMING 100 % OF LAND IS UNDER ONE ACT OR ANOTHER.. IT IS SOCIETYS RESPONSABILITY AND NOT SOLEY THE LANDOWNERS TO BEAR THE COST OF FOOLISH @wE WILL SAVE YOU2 legislation
crop and farm management
Crop managemment streambank erosion Livestock exclusion maintaining fence line trees
d
danger of delayed haying to p[rotect the Bobolink.
Dogwood plant in our Woodlot. I will remove it before I'm told what I can and cannot do there
drainage and crop
Endangered species located in this area, dictating when hay can be cut
every act affects everyone
every time you want to make a change on the farm, build a new building, tile some land clear some bush (burn the left over brush) or fence lines you have to get a permit of some type which usually involves money and a bunch of stupid time consuming paper work and usually from more then one office. For example from township and or counties, conservation authorities provincial or federal offices etc. by the time you look into it you start to second guess the project or idea, even if it is a project that will improve the environment and say the hell with it and forget about doing the project.
farm drainage expenses for municipal drains and natural watercourses
feeding ground
First of all aSAR lost is a loss to all. Farmers are impacted because they will lose income to protect a SAR in some

cases.
Has encumbered our family farm for the future.
Has potential to drastically change my normal farm practices with no compensation and an unjust feeling of obligation.
Have it based on fact, to add some credibility to it.
Have several SAR on my property including barn swallow, Bobolink, and butternut. The presense of thee species limits what I can do on my property
having these species on my property I would try my best to keep them there
How you manage hay and pasture grounds
I am a farmer and they try to tell us what to do [like when to cut our hay]
I am a landowner and a producer. While I am not currently aware of direct affects to my farm business, I anticipate it could someday.
I avoid learning about it. Ignorance is bliss.
I farm on the Oak Ridges Morrain and Greenbelt. I feel I have a responisbilty to do what I can to be a part of a positivie solution. Often that takes money to help with. We farm in a competitive environment so I can't afford to bare the cost of intitatives by myself
I feel guilty cutting hay, if I see a Bobolink fly out of the field. I should be able to cut hay when I need to.
I have many acres of hay where SAR nest.
I have reintroduced a species at risk
I think the Act affects my drainage options, and maybe my woodlot options.
I'd like to develop more acreage as wildlife habitat but I don't feel is sufficient monetary incentive for me to do so.
If a home owner would a species at risk 9 out of 10 would get rid of it. But the same 9 would like to see it protected if it's on someone else property.My example is erca if it's a building lot they can do what they want. But if it's farm land you can't. Like the old story it's not what you know,Who you know.
If Bobolinks are found on our farm, a large acreage surrounding its sighting could be frozen or controlled. Also applicable to other species as well.
if I want to clean a ditch, drain farm land, fencerow removal, Basically if I want to be better at farming, all these acts could interfere
If my hay is out ready to be bailed and a boblink is present, I become a public criminal for bailing my livelihood and taking the darling bird's home away. Me left alone holding the bag which is unjust and unfair and governments have been overthrown or in our case voted out over it.
If species exist on my property I am. Responsible for them
If they find something they will tell me and poss neighbors what I can or cannot do on my own land
If you farm today, the Act affects you! In all that we do, we must be working to protect the think that sustains us. Our Environment! There would be no farming if we were not aware of the environment around us--including SRA and make efforts to protect.
In choosing times or time periods to complete farm work, ie, drainage maitenance, cutting of hay.
it affects everyone living here
it affects everyone that own property. always potential of an endangered species being found on it
It benefits everyone in providing ecological balance
It can change how i manage my grasslands, which means i might not be able to produce the best quality forage for my livestock.
it could affect my crop quality
It 'could' impact me - but I take steps to make sure that it doesn't
It makes us feel somewhat dishonest. That is when/if we find a SAR we will not report it. We will protect it and enjoy the presence but we will not share the information.
It may affect human health as well, due to the fact that species may be going extinct due to environmental issues.
It may restrict crop management
It needlesslyimpacts what I can and cannot do on my farm.
It threatens land use liberty which is the mainstay of my revenue, and the basis of centuries-old pursuit of equity-in-property, and consequentially, our financial security.

it threatens my livelihood
It will be interpreted by someone who has no skin in the game as far as what impact it will have on my operation. Also likely no practical solutions as to how to implement mitigation measures.
Just a suspicion of a protected species on our property will cause problems. The best hay is in early June ...we may not be able to cut it if there might be a Bobolink in the area. A blocked ditch will create a wet area. Some 'official' may deem this a wetland habitat. Cleaning ditches is a must for cropping. Property owners MUST be FAIRLY compensated for current year and future years lost use of any land. Private citizens/farmers cannot continually pay for the public policies
know ing how every one can understand is the key to the unknown
Lack of measurement showing the effect/financial burden of farmland
limits what we can do
looking over my shoulder
making me a surf on my own land
May have to change the timing or type of farming practices used in the future.
may limit my activities or timing of activities
Meadow lark I donate enough river land to the bird for free. I can't afford and farm land and remain viable. I'm doing my part
More red tape , more regulations . Some one else who thinks they can tell me what I can do on my farm . Also is a cost I bare to help society
My farm contains habitat that could well favour species at risk.Some of it fits with my farming methods but using my land primarily for bird or other species habitat as the most important use, followed by me using it for hay or pasture would cost me money and lost production. If society values species at risk, they should pay us for providing that use.
n/a?
nature put these species here for a reason to balance everything out; throw one out of whack and you throw everything out of whack.
need more understanding of the matter before farm practice have to change
Need to think about the broader impact of any activity
Not affecting me yet.
Not being able to clean drainage ditches out during summer months
Not familiar with the Act.
not sure
Not very significantly
on rented land cannot grow hay as Bobolinks could be fond and this would slow down prossess of building houses
one area is that screening is required for Drainage Act projects
One day away from having government on my farm
Only if a species at risk is found on my property. And my neighbors don't like my trees around my farm. species at risk could set up a nest restricting land use around.
Pasture and hay crops with boblink
Places restrictions on my farming practices
Potential for land usage changes that affect my farm operations and property values.
protecting nesting site
Restricted maintenance of agricultural drains to "dry season" maintenance to protect breeding habitat
some land in Bobolink breeding area
species on my land
Tells me what I can or cannot do on my property
The Bobolink moratorium is running out and nothing has changed.
The risk of infringing on our farming operation. We have a business to run and our lively hood to consider.
THROUGH THE DRAINAGE ACT
Ultimately, it affects each and everyone of us. We depend on each other, humans and all species must co-habit in

harmony. Everyone is allowed a piece on this planet.
we seem to have to be more careful with the kind of sprays for crops that we use, and lately seed treatment ex:: honey bees in corn seed treatment
When we can clean farm drains where we could in past and it didn't affet those species
Worried about dictation of bad farming practices to protect the species.
Yes it affects me, because I want to continue to be a responsible land owner.
Species at risk surround our property and our farming operation, we need to be aware in most everything we do everyday. We need to help reserve the environment to grow not take things away.
required to help protect
Modification of timing of current activities. Could impact level of net farm income.
protection of species
Of course the fact that species are at risk affects me but I really don't know how the Act itself affects me
Makes me aware of the fragility of the few relatively intact ecosystems remaining in Ontario
We own land and have species at risk on our land. This does not affect us in a negative way, but we do keep them in mind regarding what we do with our land
It has helped us by providing funding for fencing, alternate water source and tree planting. The website is also very informative. We are trying very hard to provide a good environment for species at risk. It is very satisfying to know that we have Bobolinks, Eastern Meadowlark, Barn Swallows and Snapping Turtles. We must be doing something right.
I farm fulltime ,and manage 140 acres of hardwoods and have 3 creeks on my property . I have species at risk on my property now and am also aware what my actions may affect them
i assume it was used as a starting point for SARFIP which i turn has affected me and the wildlife on my farm
because we farm next to a river we will have species at risk near us
Lands set aside for Bobolink
It will hopefully provide me with a small amount of funding so that I can further the establishment of a variety of healthy, self sustaining habitats on my farm. I will use the money to buy more trees and seeds and to care for them while they are becoming established. Hopefully many species at risk will find homes near my home.

25. Describe how you think current policies to protect species at risk provide a benefit to society, or why they do not.
Any thing I encountered it was discouraging and unreasonable.
90% of society doesn't care. If they did care they would help financial. Many only yak a good story until they are asked for money.
95 % of the population do not live on active farms, they have a view of ag in a "olden Days" fasion which gives a positive aspect to our products, Many enjoy the diverse nature of our land and water, so social, tourisam etc...
A lot of effort is wasted to create an act that can't be enforced well enough to make a differences.
affects the food chain which in turn affects the human race
agriculture and residential has taken over there habitat.How do you get the habitat back without getting rid of the agriculture or residential areas
All society want to be great envionmentalists ,but are not willing ti pay.
Allow politicians to charge license fees and permit fees to support treasury and more benefits for politicians.
anytime humanity can experience the fullness and beauty of creation we benefit
as above I can live with them and they can live and grow but developers cannot have them on there property because government would be involded to build houses
As usual society benefits and the farmer pays.
awareness
awareness
Awareness of a SAR, from the group, is a benefit It takes soooo long to get good policy that will work, t5hat it becomes almost redundant. Other countries do not care about SAR and we as farmers are seen as solely responsible for the SAR

Because society as a whole (through Government) will keep these so called SAR's at no expense to them, It will be totally on the backs of the landowners or farmers.
Beneficial to society because they factor into building projects and land changes
Benefit to society is reduced when landlords won't allow wheat/foragecrops to be grown on rented land because of SAR. Only a corn bean rotation. Landowners are writing this into new current leases. Will negatively affect biosolids land application programs in ontario if this becomes a trend, especially on lands owned by a development company or land speculators. Most of the biosolids are spread after wheat is harvested, especially on heavy ground
biodiversity
By helping to destroy the sanctity of our property rights, it undermines our economy through security of investment, and contributes to depression and insecurity among landowners.
c
Could have potential medicinal benefits unknown at the time
Creates healthy biodiversity .
Current laws achieve the opposite of what they are intended to protect. Before any hihoe operator cleaning a ditch upon seeing a turtle would just put it on the side and continue on his way chances were the turtle survived. Now they did a deep hole and bury the thing. Takes 1 min and no paperwork. Before farmers left some trees. Now farmers are afraid a species at risk might take up habitat making land around it useless for farming purposes. So they make sure to cut everything down, eliminating any potential habitat.
Current policies are ignored by the public and government.
depends on the situation
difficult question as i see it from both sides. nature adapts to changes and i would say survival of the fittest, those species who cannot survive anymore are because they cannot adapt to changes. or is it because we are taking away their environment. however it is not only the farmers who take away the environment from these species, development and humans invading their natural habitat are causing the problems, a difficult issue to fix.
Dinosaurs are gone and the world keeps turning! Save the money and hassle!
Diversity is important for all species and society in general. Human encroachment (including farming every acre) is the biggest risk to diversity
don't know
Don't know enough to say
Ecological rejuvenation
education
Ensuring we have a high level of biodiversity is important to ensuring we have a resilient ecosystem to farm in. And of course there is the aesthetic benefits of walking around your farm in the summer and hearing the Bobolink's song and watching them fly.
farmers should not take full responsibility for cost. the do gooders from the city should share the impact.
General public don't care
Having a vibrant and diverse environment is a benefit to society. The burden to maintain this environment without financial assistance is difficult to encourage, especially when it is opposed to the usual business practices.
Help with the benefits of biodiversity
I believe most policies are established to curry political favour, to benefit bureacratic empire building, or to further professional careers or the stature and importance of professions.
I believe the intent behind the policies is to benefit society.
I believe they do not benefit because the policies take it to far and unreasonable
I do not think they provide any benefit to society the way they are now.
I don't know the policies well enough to comment.
I don't think it matters in long run
I doubt most people know or care- lack of understanding why it is important to them
I guess I don't know a lot about current policies. i have use the SARFIP program and it works well. I prefer that as opposed to being told what to do.
I have never had any experience with the policies so I would not be able to accurately measure benefits.
I have no grandchildren, but notwithstanding I wish to leave future generations with the same birds in the sky, fish in the waters & creatures living in or on the soil that me & my previous generations have enjoyed.

I think its in everyones interest to preserve all of nature. For us and future generations
I think the intentions are excellent but the delivery of the ACT is poor. Work with farmers without dictating. I believe the buy-in and results would be excellent through education of the problems of SAR.
I would suggest anyone who finds E S to keep it quiet, research appropriate ways to assist, and help survival if it does not interfere with human development.
If a farmer is expected to maintain a habitat by suppying land without compensation then the odds are the species won't be identified
if certain species disappear;society in the end will also start to become unhealthy.
If people really cared about species at risk they'd stop developing all the land. It's not the farming practises that you putting these species at risk
If society was serious about this, all society would kick in compensation not legislation
If the ecosystem collapses, we are going with it. Diversity=resilience=stable bioeconomy. Every species gone is another hole in the hull of our ship.
if the farmer was put on the view that he is doing his part to be a good view part to environmental program
If they did I'm sure society doesn't know it.
I'm worried that the species at risk will be the farmer if policies are to strict.
Improving habitat for sar
in this area, the legislation is forcing any landowner with half a brain to take measures to ensure that the legislation will not impact them.
incentives to landowners to help protect. penalties for deliberate destruction of habitat. help keep bio diversity in our province which benefits all
initiate actions such a environmental review for IWT
Is important to society as a whole to protect the environment including the diversity of species.
It benefits us by making us more aware of the impact our choices have on our environment
It is extremely difficult to determine if we have species at risk on our property...if we did we would see to it that we assist in the rehabilitation/protection
It makes society realize that humans contribute to altering the landscape positively and negatively
It's a great idea We all lose when species disappear. Wild birds definitely help keep down insects on my farm ; as mentioned above, landowner/farmer needs to be compensate.
Its a start. It is a benefit to have as many species around as possible.
It's important to keep a balance of nature, and to keep in mind that we might not fully understand how the balance of nature works and so changes in it could have unexpected consequences (for society, not to mention for nature).
its more of a job creation project that a benefit to species
Keep an healthier environment
Keep genetic diversity alive. Potential barrier to agricultural production.
Likely by not losing more of the protected species so that future generations can enjoy their presents
limit what land owners can do on there own property
Maintaining that species for future generations
Majority are not interested
no ,publick don,t know much about it
no one knows definatively (sp) if losing a species has any long term impact on the world as a whole. Many species have been lost in the past and the world continues
not sure
Not sure how involved all stakeholders have been or are in the process of deveoping such policies. It has been my observation that special interest groups hve been drivers with uncertain involvement of other stakeholders in the process.
part of food chain /who or what must addapt
People at large don't know enough about the species at risk.
People occupy a very small surface of the available area of this province. Species no no boundaries and will be found in adjacent jurisdictions. Waste of government money to micromanage the environment.
People want to keep species but they don't want to pay the cost of helping save.They basically want the farmers to pay the cost or any other land owner but not themselves, But want to develop when ever they want to on lands

protected at owner cost..
policy expects someone else to take care of the problem, we will just make the rules
preserving and hopefully increasing endangered species
Presumably they contribute to survival of the species
Previously SAR species received limited attention from society. Awareness of these species and what has caused them to become SAR benefits society
Protecting species at risk by and large leads to maintaining biodiversity that in turn helps sustain our environment and thus way of life. However i am not familiar with particular policies thus i can not provide an in depth comment
Protecting species at risk must be balanced. We cannot expect a few to bear the financial burden for the many. Legislation requiring compensation be paid to affected property owners would require society to be more thoughtful in how restrictions are placed on private property. If there is no cost to society then there is no risk in simply passing laws that affect a few, but have no impact on the many that such laws are supposed to benefit.
Protects only species. Does not compensate those farmland EFFECTED.
Providing and maintaining habitat. Some compensate us for changes in management or yield reductions related to protection practices
raises awareness of specific species at risk and how fragile their habitat can be
Relative to health, education, economics, infrastructure their benefit is much less tangible
So much forest and habitat have been cleared just to prevent a SAR from being found on someones land. Insane legislation has caused the death of who knows how many plants and animals. Shoot shovel and shut up!
society as a whole has to want to protect these species and not some government official
Society at large know nothing about this it is more a political move than any thing else
Society benefits having species around, to study, to see and present in the environment.
society means everybody not dumping the cost on to a few land owners to bear for the good of all
some policies are over zealous
Sometimes there is too much red tape and paper work which usually involves fees and cost which will deter some people from making improvements that could help the environment.
Species at risk need protection
Species diversity is a sign of a healthy environment
Species have disappeared for thousands of years and new ones have formed or the species have evolved to adapt to new environments., humans being one of them.
species protection benefits everyone but impacts only a few negatively
The average person doesn't know what species are at risk, nor do they know what the gov'n is doing to protect them.
The desire is there, but the funding is lacking, but for public land management, and to incentivize private landowners to take ownership of it.
The opinion in the farming community is that if you find a species at risk, the government will take your land. How does that protect the species? Offer reasonable financial compensation for species at risk and you'll save a lot more.
The overall concept is worthwhile...no one wants to see a species become extinct. BUT current Policies are too broad, affect farmers with no plan to compensate for loss of land use. It seems like the policies are made by do gooders sitting behind a desk with absolutely no understanding of the impact of their policies on the lives and livelihood of the people they impact. This demonstrates their complete contempt for existing stewards of the land.
The risk of losing a species means we lose the benefit that species provides, those benefits may as of today may not be known .
there are no fish in these drainage ditches in the summer, therefore it is a great time to do maintenance, instead of waiting for inclement weather
There is no space for additional comments in this survey, so I have put them in here. We need to maintain a balance. A number of years ago I attended an information session for municipalities on SAR. After the session I went to the presenters and stated that if they kept going the way they were with SAR, then primary producers would become the species at risk. For instance, if you have a badger den, if I remember correctly, there is a circle with a radius of 800 metres or over 500 acres impacted by it. Similarly with Bobolinks, the hay you can harvest is better than a snowbank in the winter time, but not much. If these species are important to society, let society provide the funds!
They encourage too many to destroy endangered species habitat due to invasive regulation rather than providing a positive incentive to protect
these species are required to keep nature in balance
They are a benefit to society because they provide information on how to preserve our ecosystem.

They are all part of the Eco system. And we do not want drastic changes. To that
They are forcing discussion and raising awareness
They are part of our natural ecosystem
they are polices tied up in red tape and politics and BS
They bear none of the costs and enjoy all of the so called benefits.
they benifit onlyon a humane concern by myself as a farmer for God's other creatures
They do not benefit society because they negatively impact the economic viability of agricultural enterprises, which in turn feed society.
They do not They encourage land owners to discourage SAR. They undermine respect for the law as they do not acknowledge perceived property rights. They place a huge cost burden or prohibition on some with no balancing of the societal benefits of the project
they help keep our biodiversity
They provide a benefit to society due to people become more aware of these issues.
They provide biodiversity to our ecosystem.
this is nothing but a control problem some one wants control of my land with nothing invested
to ensure that SAR are here for future generations is a societal benefit, but are the current policies the correct way to protect these species.
To truely protect species at risk, our own species would have to be profoundly different from how it is, and has been for thousands of years. The current policies are a slim buffer against our innate shortsightedness.
Try to protect species from becoming extinct, and therefore affecting the environment.
unsure
unsure
Variety of species is healthy. Ongoing food chains are important. society should help pay the price.
wath is gone will not come back
We are all part of the world's ecosystem. When parts of the ecosystem are lost, all others are affected.
We need to look at urban push to make our rural lands more stressed. Also need to look at the amount of salt and other chemicals going into our waterways from roads and other sources (mostly homeowners and drains)
We really don't know the impotence of most species at risk. We need a better understanding of the economic value of species at risk in combination with their ecological role to make better decisions about how firm policies need to be on a species-specific basis.
We want to see species grown not disappear.
WHere else do you think that these creatures are going to live . They don't do well on pavement .
make awareness of those speicies in a particular area
we are all stewards and want our farms and the environment we are in charge of to prosper. IF WE all do our part then society will benefit.
Protection of all species whether at risk or not is a social responsibility of everyone. Restriction of any activity responsible for undue degradation seems to fall very heavily on the individuals who care but allow larger businesses avoid the bigger implications due to their strong influence on government decisions. .
Again because I don't know the current policies I am not sure - I hope they do
To be more effective SAR polices need wider awareness among general society
It makes sure species do not become extinct and next generations can enjoy them.
protecting species is having a healthy environment
They do in the sense that our environment is very important- out world is made up of many creatures that serve many important purposes
If the species at risk policies enlighten even a few people to improve or not degrade the environment it is a benefit to society.
Helping to keep diversity on landscape
offer help to persons who want to protect our natural habitats
The food chain needs to have a balance - if affects everything even us.
policies that effectively help SAR tend to also improve general biodiversity and soil health, which means healthier food from that land and cleaner air/water

awareness of cause and consequences to our actions ie. loss of habitat, less species
it makes people aware of what species are at risk
Healthier environment
Biodiversity is key to our long term sustainability. We must ensure biodiversity for future generations.
I think this program is a good start, but I find the structure is overly geared to traditional, chemical farming. Admittedly, these types of private farms constitute the vast majority of private land; however, if the goal is to truly protect species at risk, other management styles that are also trying to protect these species should be not only accommodated, but encouraged.

27. Do the funding programs currently available provide enough support for the habitat projects you may be interested in completing on your property?
not worth it. It is not the money it is about the limitations after.
"funding support" is distinct from "compensation due to injurious affection of property use and land value"
Absolutely NOT
Again, farmers must be fully compensated for any loss of income current and future for habitat protection on private property
Any landowner who gets involved with a "project" on his land deserves to lose control of it.
Applying for money costs me time and money!
Fencing cattle out of creeks who have huge benefits for the environment in general but there aren't substantial funding pots available to better encourage this practice. That needs to change.
have not looked at the current program but the funding programs are becoming increasingly complicated, is it worthwhile to bother to apply?
If I was interested in programs there is never enough funding for adequate compensation and set up.
Keep away from government assistance at all costs.
Money is wasted. Could be used elsewhere.
my farm is all workable, no habitat to protect
Not currently planning any.
not interested
Once you accept some form of funding program, you are now subject to restrictions and limitations of what you can do with your own private property. Some of these programs may also result in restrictions being levied on adjacent properties as well without that property owner ever being aware.
SAR projects should be fully supported by the province if they feel it to be a benefit to society as a whole
Some are costly. Society should help with costs.
they are fair for fencing, too low on alternative watering
Why would we apply for funding for projects which would negatively affect our farming operation and farm values.
GHFIP and SARFIP are great, hopefully they will be continued or expanded (i can always dream bigger)