



CANADA'S FAILURES ON BIODIVERSITY

While the international community is meeting in Bonn to act and protect biodiversity, the Canadian government delegation is expected to make proposals that could weaken effective biodiversity protection. Delegates should be aware of the 2008 Report published in March by the Canadian Commissioner for Environment and Sustainable Development (CESD) that illustrates Canada's general failure on the question of biodiversity. The Commissioner is independent from the government and is part of the Office of the Auditor General of Canada.

Greenpeace invites you to read the extracts of the Commissioner's 2008 report below and NOT to follow Canada's example on biodiversity and biosafety. Some of the main conclusions of the Commissioner have been underlined.

...International Environmental Agreements

- '[Canada] has made unsatisfactory progress toward providing a complete and understandable picture of the results expected from Canada's international environmental agreements. In addition, the departments do not generally make complete and understandable information available on the results the government both expected to achieve and has achieved toward fulfilling obligations under the agreements.'
- 'The government has made unsatisfactory progress in planning, monitoring, and reporting the extent to which Canada is meeting its commitments from the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002. [...] [Canada] still has no longer-term plan for ensuring that it will be in a position to report significant progress on its commitments, while taking into account the review timetable established by the UN.'

...Protected Areas for Wildlife

- 'Environment Canada has made unsatisfactory progress in responding to our recommendations on national wildlife areas and migratory bird sanctuaries. These areas are at risk.'
- 'Environment Canada has identified specific threats to each of its protected areas, but the Department has not assessed whether conditions are improving or deteriorating at the sites, nor used the information collected to address threats on a priority basis.'
- 'Environment Canada has developed a national strategy to guide the management of sites in its protected areas network, but the strategy is not being fully implemented. For example, most protected areas still lack up-to-date management plans.'
- 'Environment Canada has not established explicit performance expectations against which progress can be assessed, and does not comprehensively monitor or regularly report on the condition and management of its network of protected areas.'
- 'According to its own analyses, Environment Canada has allocated insufficient human and financial resources to address urgent needs or activities related to the maintenance of sites and enforcement of regulations in protected areas.'

...Protection of Species at Risk and Migratory Birds

- 'Environment Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada have made unsatisfactory progress in responding to our 2001 recommendation relating to the development of a comprehensive inventory of species at risk, while Parks Canada has made satisfactory progress on this recommendation.'

- '[Environment Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Parks Canada] have made unsatisfactory progress in responding to our 2001 recommendation relating to the development of recovery strategies and have not complied with specific deadline requirements established by the Species at Risk Act. As of June 2007, recovery strategies should have been completed for 228 species at risk, but recovery strategies completed at that date address only 55 of those species.'
- 'As of June 2007, no action plans were due for the 55 species for which a recovery strategy had been produced.'
- '[Canada is] also required under the Act to identify to the extent possible, critical habitat necessary for the survival or recovery of species at risk. As of June 2007, critical habitat had been identified for 16 of the 228 species at risk for which recovery strategies were due.'
- '[...] [Canada] as a whole has made unsatisfactory progress in responding to our 2001 recommendations relating to the development of a comprehensive inventory of species at risk and of recovery strategies. [...]. Ongoing improvements to data quality and data consistency are needed.'
- '[Canada] is still not in a position to sufficiently enforce its regulations pertaining to national wildlife areas and migratory bird sanctuaries.'

...Aquatic Invasive Species

- 'Fisheries and Oceans Canada has made unsatisfactory progress in implementing our 2002 recommendations. While the Department has identified some aquatic invasive species that pose major risks to Canada and put in place biological risk assessment guidelines, the rate at which new alien species are becoming established is exceeding the rate at which the Department is assessing risks. The Department has failed to assess economic and social risks, and priorities and objectives for prevention, control, or eradication of risks posed by aquatic invasive species have not been set.'
- 'In addition, Fisheries and Oceans Canada does not have plans or mechanisms in place for early detection of, or rapid response to, aquatic invasive species and is therefore unprepared to prevent, control, or eradicate potential new aquatic invasive species. It has not monitored or reported how effective its efforts have been at preventing, controlling, or eradicating the aquatic invasive species it has identified.'
- 'We found that risks posed by aquatic invasive species have not been adequately assessed or effectively managed. The federal government is not yet in a position to prevent, control, or eradicate invasive species that pose the greatest threat to Canada's aquatic ecosystems and economy. Much remains to be done to meet commitments made in the federal government's 1995 Canadian Biodiversity Strategy.'

...Listing of Species at Risk

- 'Progress is unsatisfactory., 20 species that COSEWIC [(Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada)] has assessed as at risk have not been listed due to socio-economic reasons [...]. Environment Canada has not yet finalized its guidelines for dealing with cases in which the Minister recommends not adding to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk a species assessed by COSEWIC as being at risk. Although the Department has drafted guidelines, they are not publicly available, have changed over time, and are not applied consistently or systematically'

...Genetically Engineered Fish

- 'Progress is unsatisfactory. Since the establishment of the Federal Biotechnology Regulatory Framework in 1993, Fisheries and Oceans Canada has frequently committed to developing regulations covering transgenic aquatic organisms, including genetically engineered fish. Although it has been working on this matter since 1993, Fisheries and Oceans Canada has not made satisfactory progress toward completing the regulations.

**You can read Canada's Commissioner for the Environment &
Sustainable Development 2008 report at:**

http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/aud_parl_cesd_200803_e_30125.html