



## INFORMATION SUMMARY ON THE PROPOSED LISTING OF DOLLY VARDEN (NORTHERN FORM) AS “SPECIAL CONCERN” UNDER THE SPECIES AT RISK ACT

### The Species at Risk Act

Canada proclaimed the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) in 2003 as part of a strategy to provide for the legal protection of wildlife species and the conservation of biological diversity.

The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), made up of an independent committee of experts, conducts assessments on the status of wildlife species and categorizes them according to their level of risk for extinction (extinct, extirpated, endangered, threatened or special concern).

The Government of Canada considers COSEWIC’s assessment, in addition to potential socio-economic impacts and feedback received from Canadians before deciding whether or not to include the species on the List of Wildlife Species at Risk under SARA.

Once listed, recovery strategies are prepared for extirpated, endangered, and threatened species. Management Plans are prepared for species of special concern. Species of special concern are not subject to automatic prohibitions.



### Purpose of the summary

The Government of Canada would like to hear your comments on the potential impacts of listing of the Dolly Varden (northern form) (*Salvelinus malma*), as “special concern” under the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA). Fisheries and Oceans Canada has prepared this summary to provide information on the status of this species in Canada.

### About Dolly Varden

The Dolly Varden (*Salvelinus malma*) belongs to the salmon and trout family (*Salmonidae*), with members that may be anadromous (use both seawater and freshwater during their lifecycle) or non-anadromous (freshwater only). There are two subspecies

recognized in Canada - the northern form (*S. malma malma*) and the southern form (*S. malma lordi*). The southern form is not considered at risk.

Several different life history types of northern form Dolly Varden exist: i) Anadromous (sea-run) types; ii) Non-anadromous (freshwater) males that live alongside anadromous fish in the fall and winter; and iii) Other non-anadromous types that are found above falls, a long distance from the sea, or in lakes.

The northern form of Dolly Varden is found in northeastern Eurasia and northwestern North America. In North America, the northern form ranges north from Bristol Bay along the north slope of Alaska and the Yukon Territory, and east to the Mackenzie River. In Canada, the northern form occurs in drainages that flow into the Beaufort Sea. Approximately five to 10 per cent of the global population exists within Canadian waters. Population sizes are largely unknown, with information limited to selected sites.

## Special Concern status

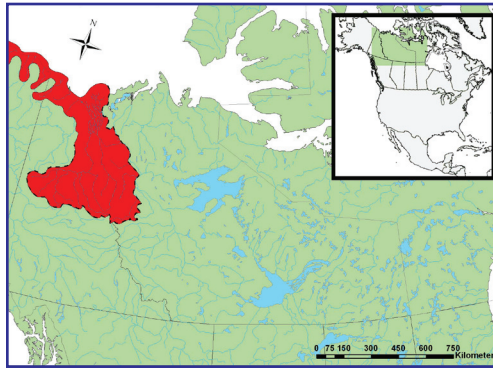
Dolly Varden (northern form) has been assessed by COSEWIC as a species of “special concern”. This is the lowest level of risk category and indicates that this species is not presently endangered, but is considered to be sensitive to human activities and natural events, due to biological factors and/or threats. If listed under SARA as “special concern”, Dolly Varden (northern form), will not be subject to prohibitions.

## Threats

Climate change, particularly the trend towards drier and warmer climates in the Western Arctic, is a key concern. Lower water levels and reduced groundwater flow may have a dramatic impact on Dolly Varden habitat, particularly for spawning and overwintering. Other threats include overfishing, offshore development that impedes the migration and movements of Dolly Varden, and land-based industrial and infrastructure developments that impact freshwater system flows and water quality.

## Protection and recovery

If Dolly Varden (northern form) is added to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk as a species of “special concern”, it will not be subject to prohibitions under SARA; however Fisheries and Oceans Canada will be required to produce a Management Plan for the species in an effort to ensure that it does not become endangered due to



Distribution map of Dolly Varden (northern form) in the Northwest Territories and Yukon

human activity. The Management Plan will include conservation measures for the species and set goals and objectives for maintaining sustainable population levels.

## Socio-economic impacts

An analysis of potential social and economic impacts of listing the Dolly Varden (northern form) will be conducted.

## Management measures

If Dolly Varden (northern form) is listed under SARA, Fisheries and Oceans Canada will, in collaboration and consultation with stakeholders and partners, use the best available information to develop a Management Plan to address threats and help identify gaps in our knowledge of the species, so that necessary research can be undertaken to better inform future management decisions.

## Your feedback is important

The Government of Canada would like your opinion on listing Dolly Varden (northern form) as “special concern” under SARA, and on the impacts that listing would have on you, your industry, and/or the ecosystem. Your answers will be used to help decide whether or not to list the species under SARA:

1. How would your activities be affected if Dolly Varden was listed as “special concern” ?
2. What are the environmental, social, cultural, and economic impacts of listing this species ?
3. Do you support listing Dolly Varden as “special concern” ? Why or why not?
4. Do you represent an industry, community, Aboriginal community or organization, or other group? If so, which one?

To submit your responses or to receive further information, please contact:

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**Illustrations - Dolly Varden (page 1)**  
Female & spawning male © J.R. Tomelleri