



MEDIA RELEASE—For Immediate Release—June 17, 2008

Stephane Dion speaks up for Endangered Species in Canada

At a Canadian Club luncheon in Winnipeg today, Liberal Opposition Leader Stephane Dion was asked about the federal Species at Risk Act (SARA). SARA has been roundly criticized for not being effective in protecting wildlife in Canada. Eric Reder, Campaign Director for the Wilderness Committee questioned what a federal Liberal government would do to improve the performance of SARA.

"Mr. Dion mentioned three things of importance regarding SARA today," said Reder. "He stated that the Act needs to be implemented instead of ignored, he said more money is needed for implementation, and he assured the audience that more attention would be paid to critical habitat identification by a federal government lead by him. We agree with him on these points. Critical habitat identification is paramount to SARA's future success."

The federal Species at Risk Act is a five-year-old act that requires a recovery plan for each of the 452 species listed under the Act be put in place within a specific time frame, usually three years. To date, two-thirds of the recovery plans are delayed or overdue.

Of the species listed under the Act, 84% of them are endangered because of loss of habitat. "Critical habitat" is the term used to define the habitat a species requires to recover its population. Of the 452 species listed under SARA, only 18 have recovery plans that identify critical habitat.

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