

SFI Species at Risk Module

May 24, 2023

Preamble

The *Sustainable Forestry Initiative* (SFI) believes conservation of forests and their diverse array of species is an integral aspect of our work, and we strive every day to make our *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard* effective and relevant. Because well-managed forests provide *habitat* for multiple species, SFI Standards take a multi-species approach, and hold *SFI-certified organizations* to the highest level of species and *habitat conservation*. These standards are guided by forest research, and work in concert with SFI's broader mission to advance not just forest management, but our diverse work to provide supply chain assurances, deliver *conservation* leadership, and support environmental education and community engagement. Sustainable forest management plays an important role in species maintenance and recovery, and as a result we continue to partner with multiple *conservation* leadership organizations and government agencies on species recovery, and *habitat conservation*.

The *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard* has 4 *performance measures* and 15 *indicators* that ensure sustainably managed forests provide, among other requirements, *habitat* for multiple species, including common species, rare species, and Species at Risk ¹. Additionally, the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard* is unique in its requirements for supporting and reporting research. The *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard* has 3 *performance measures* and 4 *indicators* that address research into topics such as *conservation of biodiversity*, forest productivity, and social, cultural, and economic benefit assessments.

Assurances that species and their habitats are being conserved and maintained on SFI-certified lands can act as effective voluntary means to assure regulators and other stakeholders that Certified Organizations are meeting the requirements of *Species at Risk* legislation and regulations at the federal and provincial level, are working to consistently apply species recovery plans, and are working to provide greater evidence of due diligence with respect to *Species at Risk* conservation. Additionally, any related legislated requirements that may benefit *Species at Risk* (e.g., provincial forestry regulations) must also be met as part of the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard* and may provide additional assurances toward management of *Species at Risk*.

SFI recognizes that forest management responsibility and authority on public lands rests with provincial and territorial governments, in co-management with Indigenous governments. This module is primarily focused on the federal Species At Risk Act (SARA), and is intended to provide assurances of well managed habitat for forest-dwelling species that 1) may be affected by forest management activities, and 2) are federally listed as species at risk under SARA. However, the requirements of this module may also apply to management of provincial or territorial species of concern. If a conservation agreement exists between provincial or territorial governments and the federal government, this module will reflect the requirements of that agreement on not supersede it.

¹ See definition 1.3.5.

Management of *Species at Risk* in the context of forest management will vary depending on the habitat occupancy and use by species, their distribution relative to forest management activities, and the direct or indirect effects of forest management activities on their habitat or ecology, whether positive, negative or neutral. *Species at Risk* may therefore be classified into at least 4 categories: those present on a forest management area but unaffected by management due to habitat occupancy or distribution, those present on a forest management area that may be negatively affected by management activities but are easily avoided through standard operating procedures and avoidance measures, those present on a forest management area that may be negatively affected by some aspects of management, and that require additional measures to mitigate those effects, and those present on a forest management area that are positively affected by management activities.

SFI, along with our community, continues to identify how individual SFI-certified organizations can better demonstrate to regulators and stakeholders how they are managing for *Species at Risk* and their habitats through the implementation of the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard*. This Module arises out of that engagement process and has two primary functions:

1. To provide more detail to SFI-certified organizations and their auditors on SFI expectations for management of all *Species at Risk* and their habitat that arise from the *objectives, performance measures and indicators* in the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard*.
2. To provide a transparent mechanism for SFI-certified organizations to publicly report on their management of specific *Species at Risk* and their *habitats* in a credible and consistent manner. Section 4 and 5 of the Module provide additional normative reporting requirements, including additional auditing requirements, for SFI-certified organizations who wish to communicate their performance in relation to specific *Species at Risk* with a greater degree of transparency.

This Module is based primarily on beneficial practices for federally listed *Species at Risk* in Canada and is for application by Canadian SFI-certified organizations. It is intended to document and provide assurances and appropriate record-keeping to regulatory agencies and other stakeholders regarding the management, conservation, and recovery of *Species at Risk*.

GENERAL

1.0 SCOPE OF THE SFI 2022 FOREST MANAGEMENT STANDARD

1.1 Scope of the *SFI Species at Risk Module*

This Module may be applied by SFI-certified organizations with forestry operations on public or private land in Canada that is included within the scope of an *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard* certificate.

1.1.1 What the *SFI Species at Risk Module* does

The *SFI Species at Risk Module* provides a mechanism for SFI-certified organizations to provide assurance to third parties that:

- the habitat needs for survival and recovery of *Species at Risk* are being met through certification of the SFI-certified organizations' forest management areas.
- Regulatory requirements related to *Species at Risk* are being met.
- Additional transparency is being provided on programs for specific *Species at Risk* with elevated levels of stakeholder interest and these programs have been audited for conformance with the *SFI Species at Risk Module*.

1.1.2 What the SFI *Species at Risk Module* Covers

The *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard* incorporates a range of indicators that address management of *Species at Risk* by SFI-certified organizations (see Appendix 1 for details). This *SFI Species at Risk Module* is an additional voluntary Module for *SFI-certified organizations* that wish to increase the level of transparency related to their *Species at Risk* programs and demonstrate how they incorporate recovery strategies developed by provincial and/or federal agencies within their *Species at Risk programs*, or how they are meeting the requirements of conservation agreements (Section 11, SARA) where they exist. *SFI-certified organizations* may use the Module both as an internal tool and as part of the third-party SFI audit.

Specifically, this Module is designed to:

- Provide additional normative and informative guidance to SFI-certified organizations in the design of *Species at Risk programs* that conform to the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard* indicators and regulatory requirements (Section 3.1). This is applicable to all SFI-certified organizations and SFI certification audits of *Species at Risk* management practices.
- Provide incremental guidance on the design of programs for specific *Species at Risk* where additional transparency on the *SFI-Certified Organization's* management approach is to be included within a public SFI audit report. Section 3.2 addresses *Species at Risk* with established recovery plans, Section 3.3 addresses *Species at Risk* without established recovery plans. Section 3.2 and 3.3 are normative for SFI-certified organizations producing a public SFI audit report under this module and informative for all other SFI-certified organizations and SFI certification audits of *Species at Risk* management practices.
- Provide a transparent framework for demonstrating that *Species at Risk* are being managed to help achieve survival and recovery in accordance with regulatory requirements by *SFI-Certified Organizations*.
- Provide and demonstrate a greater degree of specificity for auditors verifying performance in relation to species requirements under the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard*.
- Identify auditing (Section 4) and reporting (Section 5) requirements for public reporting under the *SFI Species at Risk Module*.

1.2 References

This *SFI Species at Risk Module* incorporates, by dated or undated reference provisions from other publications. These normative and informative references are cited at the appropriate places in the text and the publications are listed hereafter. For dated and undated references, the latest edition of the application applies. During the transition to new versions of standards, the normative version of the standard is consistent with the transition plan provided by the standard setter.

1.2.1 Normative References

- ISO/IEC 17021-1– Conformity Assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems.
- SFI 2022 Standards and Rules:
 - Section 2 SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard
 - Section 9 – SFI Standards development and interpretations process
 - Section 10 – SFI 2015 – 2019 Audit Procedures and Auditor Qualification and Accreditation
 - Section 11 – Communications and Public Reporting

- Section 14 – SFI Definitions
- Interpretations for the Requirements for the SFI 2015 – 2019 Standards and Rules

1.2.2 Informative References

- Section 6 – Guidance to SFI 2015 – 2019 Standards and Rules
- Section 11 – Public Inquiries and Official Complaints
- Provincially or federally developed Status Reports, Recovery Plans or Strategies (see provincial or federal websites for information on those resources).

1.3 Definitions

In addition to the definitions in Section 14 – *SFI 2015 – 2019 SFI Definitions*, the following definitions shall apply to this Module.

1.3.1 Critical habitat

Habitat that is necessary for the survival or recovery of a listed wildlife species and that is identified as the species' critical habitat in the recovery strategy or in an action plan for the species.

1.3.2 Key habitat

Habitat identified by an *SFI-Certified Organization* as the confirmed and spatially located habitat that has the biophysical attributes of critical habitat as defined in recovery strategies or peer-reviewed sources (where recovery strategies do not exist) including additional habitat with the required biophysical attributes known to the SFI-certified organizations as a result of its own inventory data. Areas confirmed as not possessing the required biophysical attributes as confirmed by inspection or using more recent and/or higher quality inventory techniques, may be excluded as "key habitat".

1.3.3 Recovery Requirements

Those elements of provincial or federally developed recovery plans or strategies for species recovery that are affected by forest management and are therefore required for SFI-certified organizations.

1.3.4 Recovery Documents

A planning document produced by the Canadian federal government or a provincial agency that identifies what needs to be done to arrest or reverse the decline of a species. It sets goals and objectives and identifies the main areas of activities to be undertaken.

1.3.5 Species at Risk

Species listed under Schedule 1 of the Canadian Species at Risk Act that may also be listed under applicable provincial laws requiring protection, not including federally species listed as extinct, not at risk, or data deficient².

2. SFI SPECIES AT RISK MODULE PRINCIPLES

SFI-certified organizations are aware that areas managed for *conservation* or timber management both have a role to play in maintaining viable populations of *Species at Risk* and that public confidence in the management of *Species at Risk* that utilize forests requires transparency in relation to the *programs* being undertaken by SFI-certified organizations.

SFI-certified organizations shall have a written policy (or policies) to implement and achieve the principles defined in *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard*:

- *Protection of Biological Diversity* - To manage forests in ways that protect and promote *biological diversity*, including animal and plant species, *wildlife habitats*, and ecological or natural community types.
- *Legal Compliance* - To comply with applicable federal, provincial, state, and local forestry and related environmental laws, statutes, and regulations.
- *Research* - To support advances in sustainable forest management through forestry research, science, and technology.
- *Training and Education* - To improve the practice of *sustainable forestry* through training and education *programs*.
- *Transparency* - To broaden the understanding of forest certification to the SFI Standards by documenting certification audits and making the findings publicly available.
- *Continual Improvement* - To continually improve the practice of forest management, and to monitor, measure and report performance in achieving the commitment to *sustainable forestry*.

3. REQUIREMENTS FOR DEMONSTRATING SPECIES AT RISK MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

3.1 Baseline requirements (all *Species at Risk*)

- 3.1.1 SFI Certified Organizations shall have implemented the elements of the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard* applicable to management of *Species at Risk* for all species that are present or expected to be present on the land managed by the Organization and within the scope of their SFI certification.
- 3.1.2 Where suitable quality data is available SFI Certified organizations shall document those Species at Risk that are unaffected by forest management operations due to the location of their critical or key habitat, or to the timing or location of operations. SFI certified organizations are encouraged to map locations of these species in a GIS layer. As these SAR are unaffected by forest management operations they are not subject to additional requirements under the Module.

² As defined in the Canadian Species at Risk Act (S.C. 2002, c. 29)

3.1.3 The scope of the indicators addressed in relation to management of Species at Risk shall include indicators covering the following topics, as defined in Appendix 1:

- Planning -landscape level
- SAR Inventory
- SAR Strategy
- Forest Health and Productivity
- Protection and Maintenance of Water Resources
- Invasive exotic plants and animals
- Research support
- Competencies
- Monitoring and Improvement

3.1.4 Guidance in Appendix 1 on the application of the SFI indicators applicable to *Species at Risk* shall be considered by SFI Certified Organizations in the development of *Species at Risk* management practices and implemented in the case of normative guidance.

3.2 Individual *Species at Risk* requirements (for each specific *Species at Risk* identified as within the audit scope and that is the subject of a Recovery Plan and for those for whom Critical Habitat has been defined)

- 3.2.1 Policies and procedures are implemented to define key *habitat* needs of Species at Risk based on critical *habitat* definitions within federal or provincial recovery documents. SFI-Certified Organization and/or other available data (SAR federal or provincial Status Reports, recovery documents, peer-reviewed literature, or indigenous knowledge) is used to support the identification of key habitat³.
- 3.2.2 Known and/or required amounts of key *habitat* are mapped, based on population recovery goals (as stipulated in published recovery documents), when available.

³ In identifying “key habitat” SFI Certified Organizations may use either the areas defined as critical habitat in applicable recovery strategies or may use existing biophysical inventory data of better quality to ground-truth critical habitat, to include additional suitable habitat, and to exclude areas that do not have the biophysical attributes associated with suitable habitat. To the extent that a company has localized habitat use data not already considered in the Recovery Plan (verified by local qualified professional with expertise in the target species or its critical habitat, or supported by the weight of published locally applicable research) such data could reasonably be used to refine the concept of critical habitat on the land base.

3.2.3 Policies or procedures are implemented to ensure that operational activities likely to negatively impact key *habitat* do not occur within key habitat boundaries. Activities undertaken shall be supported by evidence that suggests that the specific practices being conducted constitute a low risk of damage and will not destroy (permanently alter) key habitat areas.⁴

Module requirement at 3.2.3 is supported by the following requirements from the SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard:

Performance Measure 4.1 SFI-certified organizations shall conserve *biological diversity*.

1. Program to incorporate the conservation of biological diversity, including native species, wildlife habitats and ecological community types at stand and landscape levels, through the use of best scientific information including the incorporation of research results.
2. Development of criteria and implementation of practices, as guided by regionally based best scientific information, to retain *stand-level wildlife habitat* elements such as snags, stumps, mast trees, down woody debris, den trees and nest trees.
3. Program to individually and/or through cooperative efforts such as SFI Implementation Committees, support diversity of native forest cover types and age or size classes that enhance biological diversity, by incorporating the results of analysis of documented diversity at landscape and ownership/tenure levels, to ensure the contribution of the managed area to the diversity of conditions that promote biodiversity.
4. Certified Organizations shall individually and/or through cooperative efforts such as SFI Implementation Committees, participate in or incorporate the results of credible, relevant state, provincial, or regional conservation planning and priority-setting efforts to conserve biological diversity and incorporate the results of these efforts in forest management planning. Credible priority-setting efforts include state and provincial wildlife action plans, state forest action plans, relevant habitat conservation plans, provincial wildlife recovery plans, Indigenous planning processes or ecoregional plans.
5. Program to address conservation of ecologically important species and natural communities.
6. Identification and protection of *non-forested wetlands*, including bogs, fens and marshes, and *vernal pools* of ecological significance.
7. Participation in programs and demonstration of activities as appropriate to limit the introduction, spread and impact of *invasive exotic plants and animals* that directly threaten or are likely to threaten *native* plant and animal communities.
8. Consider the role of natural disturbances, including the use of prescribed or natural fire where appropriate, and *forest health* threats in relation to *biological diversity* when developing forest management plans.

⁴ This indicator extends the expectations related to “activities likely to destroy critical habitat” (Canadian Species at Risk Act, S.C. 2002) to the broader concept of key habitat defined in 3.2.1 above and mapped in 3.2.2 but does not automatically preclude specific activities. For proposed activities in key habitat, the greater the risk that the proposed activity would lead to habitat destruction, the more detailed the rationale required to support the practice would need to be, incorporating an expectation that the rationale be consistent with peer-reviewed research and/or associated regionally applicable guidelines.

(cont'd)

Performance Measure 4.2. SFI-certified organizations shall protect *threatened and endangered species*, *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Values* (FECV) and *old-growth forests*.

1. Program to protect threatened and endangered species.
2. Program to locate and protect known sites of flora and fauna associated with viable occurrences of critically imperiled and imperiled species and ecological communities, defined as *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value*. Programs for protection may be developed independently and/or through cooperative efforts involving *SFI Implementation Committees* and may include *Certified Organization* managers of *Certified Organizations*, cooperation with other *stakeholders*, or use of easements, conservation land sales, exchanges, or other *conservation* strategies.
3. Support of and participation in plans or programs for the *conservation* of *old-growth forests*

- 3.2.4 Participation in research and monitoring programs that focus effort where there are significant gaps in understanding of species presence and *habitat* needs that have the potential to undermine recovery efforts.
- 3.2.5 SFI-certified organizations shall document annually their short- and medium-term progress towards key *habitat conservation* and recovery goals for each *Species at Risk* or suite of *Species at Risk* identified as within the audit scope of the Module, as informed by conservation and recover goals within recovery plans, where they exist.

Module requirement at 3.2.4 is supported by the following requirements from the SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard:

Performance Measure 4.4 SFI-certified organizations shall apply knowledge gained through research, science, technology, and field experience to manage *wildlife habitat* and contribute to the *conservation of biological diversity*.

1. Collection of information on *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value* and other *biodiversity*-related data through forest inventory processes, mapping, or participation in external programs, such as NatureServe, state or provincial heritage *programs*, or other credible systems. Such participation may include providing non-proprietary scientific information, time, and assistance by staff, or in-kind or direct financial support.
2. A program to incorporate data collected, research results and field applications of biodiversity and ecosystem research into forest management decisions.
3. Individually or collaboratively participate in or support research that demonstrates the conservation outcomes resulting from management strategies.

3.3 Individual *Species at Risk* requirements (for each specific *Species at Risk* identified as within the audit scope and that is not the subject of a Recovery Plan or for those for whom Critical Habitat has not been defined)

- 3.3.1 Certified Organizations have policies and procedures implemented to define *habitat* needs of *Species at Risk* based on available *habitat* definitions. SFI-certified organizations and/or other best available data (Provincial or Federal *Species at Risk* Status Reports, listing documents, peer-

reviewed literature, or indigenous knowledge) is used to support the identification of key habitat⁵.

Module requirement at 3.3.1 is supported by the following requirements from the SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard:

Performance Measure 4.2 SFI-certified organizations shall protect *threatened and endangered species*, *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Values (FECV)* and *old-growth forests*.

1. *Program to protect threatened and endangered species.*
2. *Program to locate and protect known sites flora and fauna associated with viable occurrences of critically imperiled and imperiled species and communities also known as Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value. Plans for protection may be developed independently or collaboratively, and may include SFI-Certified Organization management, cooperation with other stakeholders, or use of easements, conservation land sales, exchanges, or other conservation strategies.*
3. *Support of and participation in plans or programs for the conservation of old-growth forests in the region of ownership or forest tenure.*

3.3.2 Key habitat is mapped when sufficient data is available.

Module requirement at 3.3.2 is supported by the following requirements from the SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard:

Performance Measure 4.3 SFI-certified organizations shall manage ecologically important sites in a manner that takes into account their unique qualities.

1. *Use of information such as existing NatureServe or natural heritage data or expert advice in identifying or selecting ecologically important sites for protection.*
2. *Appropriate mapping, cataloging and management of identified ecologically important sites.*

⁵ In identifying “key habitat” for Species at Risk that are not the subject of recovery strategies SFI Certified Organizations may use existing biophysical inventory data in conjunction with published research and/or regionally specific guidelines on suitable habitat.

3.3.3 Policies or procedures are implemented to ensure that operational activities undertaken within key *habitat* are supported by evidence that concludes that the specific practices being conducted constitute a low risk of damage to key *habitat*.

Module requirement at 3.3.3 is supported by the following requirements from the SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard:

Performance Measure 4.4 SFI-certified organizations shall apply knowledge gained through research, science, technology, and field experience to manage *wildlife habitat* and contribute to the *conservation of biological diversity*.

1. Collection of information on Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value and other *biodiversity*-related data through forest inventory processes, mapping, or participation in external *programs*, such as NatureServe, state or provincial heritage *programs*, or other reputable organizations. Such participation may include providing non-proprietary scientific information, time, and assistance by staff, or in-kind or direct financial support.
2. A program to incorporate data collected, research results and field applications of biodiversity and ecosystem research into forest management decisions.
3. Individually or collaboratively participate in or support research that demonstrates the conservation outcomes resulting from management strategies.

Module requirement at 3.3.4 is supported by the following requirements from the SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard:

Performance Measure 4.1. SFI-certified organizations shall conserve *biological diversity*.

Indicators:

2. Development of criteria and implementation of practices, as guided by regionally based *best scientific information*, to retain *stand-level wildlife habitat* elements such as snags, stumps, mast trees, down woody debris, den trees and nest trees.

Performance Measure 4.4. SFI-certified organizations shall apply knowledge gained through research, science, technology, and field experience to manage *wildlife habitat* and contribute to the *conservation of biological diversity*.

Indicators:

1. Collection of information on Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value and other biodiversity-related data through forest inventory processes, mapping, or participation in external programs, such as NatureServe, state or provincial heritage programs, or other reputable organizations. Such participation may include providing non-proprietary scientific information, time, and assistance by staff, or in-kind or direct financial support.
2. A program to incorporate data collected, research results and field applications of biodiversity and ecosystem research into forest management decisions.
3. Individually or collaboratively participate in or support research that demonstrates the conservation outcomes resulting from management strategies.

- 3.3.4 Participation in research and monitoring programs that focus effort to address any significant gaps in understanding of species presence and habitat needs that have the potential to undermine species recovery.
- 3.3.5 SFI-certified organizations shall document annually their short- and medium-term progress towards key habitat conservation goals within the scope of the management area for each *Species at Risk* or suite of *Species at Risk* identified as within the Module audit scope that are not subject to recovery plans.

4. REQUIREMENTS FOR AUDITORS

4.1 Audit Standards

All audits conducted in relation to the SFI *Species at Risk Module* shall be conducted in accordance with the requirements of Section 9 SFI 2022 Audit Procedures and Auditor Qualifications and Accreditation.

4.2 Audit Criteria

- 4.2.1 All audits conducted in relation to the SFI *Species at Risk Module* shall address the indicators in Section 3 of the SFI *Species at Risk Module* as follows:

Section	Status for Participants	Scope for audit purposes
3.1	Normative for all <i>Species at Risk</i>	In scope for all <i>Species at Risk</i> , including species of Special Concern
3.2	Normative for <i>Species at Risk</i> with recovery plans under this module (informative for all other <i>Species at Risk</i> with recovery plans)	In scope for <i>Species at Risk</i> with recovery plans and/or CH defined under this module
3.3	Informative for all <i>Species at Risk</i> without recovery plans Normative for <i>Species at Risk</i> without recovery plans under this module (informative for all other <i>Species at Risk</i> without recovery plans).	In scope for <i>Species at Risk</i> without recovery plans and/or CH defined under this module

- 4.2.2 No indicators shall be substituted for the purpose of an audit under the *Species at Risk Module*.

4.3 Timing and frequency of Audits

- 4.3.1 Audits may be conducted in relation to the SFI *Species at Risk Module* at the time of initial certification, annual surveillance, or re-certification.
- 4.3.2 Audits shall be conducted annually. Timing of audits may vary to allow for seasonality of key operations such as harvesting and road construction but should be conducted to be timed appropriately to accommodate seasonal behaviours of in scope *Species at Risk* (e.g., breeding season for songbirds).

- 4.3.3 SFI-certified organizations shall ensure that any action plans arising from non-conformances identified during the audit to the *Species at Risk Module* are reviewed for closure by the auditor at the next annual audit under *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard*.

4.4 Audit Scope

- 4.4.1 The audit scope shall include both the requirements of the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard* defined in Appendix 1 of this Module as well as the forest management requirements in Section 3 of this Module.
- 4.4.2 The audit scope shall include all Species at Risk in relation to the requirements for *threatened and endangered* species of the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard* and section 3.1 of this Module.
- 4.4.3 The audit scope shall include all Species at Risk listed on Schedule 1 of the Canadian Species at Risk Act (2002) and those listed under applicable provincial laws requiring protection, not including species listed as extinct, not at risk, or data deficient, within the area certified under the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard* certificate.
- 4.4.4 The geographical scope of the audit does not have to include all the ownership or management units of the program participant but shall, at a minimum, include all ownership or management units where the specific *Species at Risk* identified in 4.4.3. are present or potentially present (i.e., it is not appropriate to claim conformance with this Module for a *Species at Risk* unless all SFI-Certified Organization lands associated with the specific Species at Risk have been appropriately evaluated for species presence, or potential presence)

4.5 Audit Requirements

- 4.5.1 Audits carried out under the Module shall conform with *ISO/IEC 17021-1 – Conformity Assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems*.

4.6 Auditor Qualifications

- 4.6.1 Auditor Qualifications applicable to audits of the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard* also apply to this Species at Risk Module and are described in Section 10 *SFI 2022 Audit Procedures and Auditor Qualifications and Accreditation*.

5. REQUIREMENTS FOR PUBLIC REPORTS

5.1 Pre-conditions for public claims

- 5.1.1 SFI-certified organizations shall not make public claims regarding conformance with, or implementation of, the *SFI Species at Risk Module* unless an audit has been conducted by an accredited *certification body* within the last 18 months that in conformance with both the requirements of Section 9 *SFI 2022 Audit Procedures and Auditor Qualifications and Accreditation* and the requirements for auditors described in part 4 of this *SFI Species at Risk Module* and a public audit report has been produced by the *certification body*.
- 5.1.2 Auditors shall not produce public reports regarding conformance with or implementation of the *SFI Species at Risk Module* unless an audit has been conducted by an accredited *certification body* that is consistent with both the requirements of Section 9 *SFI 2022 Audit Procedures and Auditor Qualifications and Accreditation* and the requirements for auditors described in part 4 of this *SFI Species at Risk Module*.

5.2 Public Report Requirements

- 5.2.1 Public Reports regarding the results of audits of the SFI *Species at Risk Module* may be produced as stand-alone reports or integrated with SFI Public Reports required for *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard*.
- 5.2.2 Public Reports regarding the results of audits of the SFI *Species at Risk Module* shall meet the requirements of Section 10 Communications and Public Reporting.
- 5.2.3 Public Reports regarding the results of audits of the SFI *Species at Risk Module* shall meet these additional requirements:
- Include the SFI *Species at Risk Module* within the audit criteria.
 - Include the Species at Risk within the specific land base(s) covered by the audit a) for which there are viable occurrence(s), and b) for which there are published provincial or federal recovery documents.
 - for the purposes of section 3.2 and 3.3 of this Module.
 - Identify the specific land base(s) covered by the audit.
 - Identify the sources of evidence used to determine conformance with the SFI *Species at Risk Module* indicators.
 - Identify findings (good practices, non-conformances, and opportunities for improvement) related to the indicators.
 - Indicate for each non-conformance whether it relates to the SFI *Species at Risk Module* or both the SFI *Species at Risk Module* and the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard*.
 - Include a specific audit conclusion for conformance with the SFI *Species at Risk Module*.
 - Key habitats identified by the program participant.
 - Evidence assessed to identify areas within identified critical habitat that were assessed as lacking the biophysical attributes of critical habitat (and the evidence supporting this conclusion);
 - Evidence assessed to verify activities undertaken within critical & key habitat;
 - Evidence assessed to support a low likelihood that these activities would permanently alter critical habitat; and the results of pre- and post-monitoring surveys;
 - Evidence assessed to verify effectiveness of measures to conserve (critical/key) habitat
 - Evidence assessed to verify effectiveness of measures to address threats to the species
 - Evidence assessed to verify measures to achieve population and distribution objectives.
 - The results of monitoring measuring mid-term and long-term outcomes.
 - Identify the audit team, including any technical experts, and their credentials.