



American Ginseng

(*Panax quinquefolius*) in Ontario

Ontario Recovery Strategy Series

2019

About the Ontario Recovery Strategy Series

This series presents the collection of recovery strategies that are prepared or adopted as advice to the Province of Ontario on the recommended approach to recover species at risk. The Province ensures the preparation of recovery strategies to meet its commitments to recover species at risk under the *Endangered Species Act 2007* (ESA) and the Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk in Canada.

What is recovery?

Recovery of species at risk is the process by which the decline of an endangered, threatened, or extirpated species is arrested or reversed, and threats are removed or reduced to improve the likelihood of a species' persistence in the wild.

What is a recovery strategy?

Under the ESA a recovery strategy provides the best available scientific knowledge on what is required to achieve recovery of a species. A recovery strategy outlines the habitat needs and the threats to the survival and recovery of the species. It also makes recommendations on the objectives for protection and recovery, the approaches to achieve those objectives, and the area that should be considered in the development of a habitat regulation. Sections 11 to 15 of the ESA outline the required content and timelines for developing recovery strategies published in this series.

Recovery strategies are required to be prepared for endangered and threatened species within one or two years respectively of the species being added to the Species at Risk in Ontario list. Recovery strategies are required to be prepared for extirpated species only if reintroduction is considered feasible.

What's next?

Nine months after the completion of a recovery strategy a government response statement will be published which summarizes the actions that the Government of Ontario intends to take in response to the strategy. The implementation of recovery strategies depends on the continued cooperation and actions of government agencies, individuals, communities, land users, and conservationists.

For more information

To learn more about species at risk recovery in Ontario, please visit the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks Species at Risk webpage at: www.ontario.ca/speciesatrisk

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Declaration

The recovery strategy for the American Ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) in Ontario was developed in accordance with the requirements of the *Endangered Species Act, 2007* (ESA). This recovery strategy has been prepared as advice to the Government of Ontario, other responsible jurisdictions and the many different constituencies that may be involved in recovering the species.

The recovery strategy does not necessarily represent the views of all individuals who provided advice or contributed to its preparation, or the official positions of the organizations with which the individuals are associated.

The recommended goals, objectives and recovery approaches identified in the strategy are based on the best available knowledge and are subject to revision as new information becomes available. Implementation of this strategy is subject to appropriations, priorities and budgetary constraints of the participating jurisdictions and organizations.

Success in the recovery of this species depends on the commitment and cooperation of many different constituencies that will be involved in implementing the directions set out in this strategy.

Responsible jurisdictions

Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks
Environment and Climate Change Canada – Canadian Wildlife Service, Ontario
Parks Canada Agency

Executive summary

The *Endangered Species Act, 2007* (ESA) requires the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks to ensure recovery strategies are prepared for all species listed as endangered or threatened on the Species at Risk in Ontario (SARO) List. Under the ESA, a recovery strategy may incorporate all or part of an existing plan that relates to the species.

The American Ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) is listed as endangered on the SARO List. The species is also listed as endangered under the federal *Species at Risk Act* (SARA). Environment and Climate Change Canada prepared the Recovery Strategy for the American Ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) in Canada in 2018 to meet its requirements under the SARA. This recovery strategy is hereby adopted under the ESA. With the additions indicated below, the enclosed strategy meets all of the content requirements outlined in the ESA.

Updated information is provided on the habitat needs of American Ginseng, including information on Ontario ecosites that Ginseng is known to occupy in the province. Newly initiated research, monitoring and recovery actions are also described.

The Critical Habitat section of the federal recovery strategy provides an identification of critical habitat (as defined under the SARA). Identification of critical habitat is not a component of a recovery strategy prepared under the ESA. However, it is recommended that the approaches used to identify general habitat under the ESA in MNR (2013) and critical habitat in the federal recovery strategy be considered, along with scientific information pertaining to American Ginseng and the communities in which it occurs, when developing a habitat regulation under the ESA.

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1.0 Adoption of federal recovery strategy

The *Endangered Species Act, 2007* (ESA) requires the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks to ensure recovery strategies are prepared for all species listed as endangered or threatened on the Species at Risk in Ontario (SARO) List. Under the ESA, a recovery strategy may incorporate all or part of an existing plan that relates to the species.

The American Ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) is listed as endangered on the SARO List. The species is also listed as endangered under the federal *Species at Risk Act* (SARA). Environment and Climate Change Canada prepared the Recovery Strategy for the American Ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) in Canada in 2018 to meet its requirements under the SARA. This recovery strategy is hereby adopted under the ESA. With the additions indicated below, the enclosed strategy meets all of the content requirements outlined in the ESA.

1.1 Species assessment and classification

The following list is assessment and classification information for the American Ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*). Note: The glossary provides definitions for abbreviations and technical terms in this document.

- SARO List Classification: Endangered
- SARO List History: Endangered (2008), Endangered (1999), Endangered (1996)
- COSEWIC Assessment History: Endangered (2000), Endangered (1999), Threatened (1988)
- SARA Schedule 1: Endangered
- Conservation Status Rankings: G-rank: G3G4; N-rank: N2N3; S-rank: S2

1.2 Habitat needs

In the federal recovery strategy, Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) (2018) characterizes the habitat of American Ginseng by describing associated trees within the forest overstory, and both light and soil conditions which are believed to make forest communities habitable by American Ginseng. Further details regarding the attributes of sites occupied by American Ginseng in Ontario are provided here. These details are updated from Nault et al. (1998) with citations provided for information from other sources.

Soil conditions: Soil is typically deep or shallow till over limestone bedrock, or, on the Precambrian Shield, shallow till over marble bedrock (Nault et al. 2000, S. Thompson, pers. comm., 2018, White 1988). In populations near cliff faces plants may grow in pockets of shallow soils on broken bedrock plateaus and talus slopes. Soil is generally

rich in nutrients with a pH of moderately acid to neutral. Soil texture is almost always a sandy loam, but varies from sandy loam to clay loam (White 1988).

Hydrology and hydrogeology: American Ginseng sites are usually well-drained but moderately moist (Nault and Gagnon 2001, White 1988). Plants are often found near seepage areas or within floodplains of first-order or intermittent streams (D. Coulson, pers. comm., 2018, White 1988). They do not tolerate flooding or regular drought.

Light levels: American Ginseng is an obligate understory species. Plants are typically found under an overstory (canopy, subcanopy and shrub layer) providing approximately 75 percent shade (Nault and Gagnon 2001, White 1988). Overstory gap formation and maintenance, including gap size and height, appear to be determinants of population growth rate due to associated light exposure (Chandler and McGraw 2017). Light required for optimal American Ginseng growth depends on site conditions and the developmental stage, size and health of American Ginseng plants (Proctor and Palmer 2017).

Floristics: Across its Ontario distribution, American Ginseng most often grows in the herb layer of rich, mature deciduous forests, but also occurs in mixed forests and coniferous or mixed swamps. In general, few shrubs are present in the understory, which instead contains a high number and diversity of herbaceous perennials.

Completed ecological land classifications at sites occupied by American Ginseng do not cover all the regional variation reported in Ontario. Nonetheless, a preliminary list of ecosites and vegetation types is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Documented communities (ecosites and vegetation types) that support American Ginseng in Ontario.

Community Code	Community Name
FODM6-1 ^A	<i>Fresh-Moist Sugar Maple – Ash Deciduous Forest</i>
FODM6-5 ^A	<i>Fresh-Moist Sugar Maple – Hardwood Deciduous Forest</i>
FODM10-1 ^A	<i>Fresh-Moist Sugar Maple – Beech Carolinian Deciduous Forest</i>
FOD5 ^B	<i>Dry-Fresh Sugar Maple Deciduous Forest</i>
FOD5-2 ^B	<i>Dry-Fresh Sugar Maple – Beech Deciduous Forest</i>
FOD5-3 ^B	<i>Dry-Fresh Sugar Maple – Oak Deciduous Forest</i>
FOD5-7 ^B	<i>Dry-Fresh Sugar Maple – Black Cherry Deciduous Forest</i>
FOD5-9 ^B	<i>Dry-Fresh Sugar Maple – Red Maple Deciduous Forest</i>
FOD6 ^B	<i>Fresh-Moist Sugar Maple Deciduous Forest</i>
FOM7-1 ^B	<i>Fresh-Moist White Cedar – Sugar Maple Mixed Forest</i>
SWC1 ^B	<i>White Cedar Mineral Coniferous Swamp</i>
SWM1 ^B	<i>White Cedar Mineral Mixed Swamp</i>
SWM4-1 ^B	<i>White Cedar – Hardwood Organic Mixed Swamp</i>
ES26.1 ^C	<i>Sugar Maple – Basswood Dry-Moderately Fresh</i>
ES26.2 ^C	<i>Sugar Maple – Basswood Fresh-Moist</i>
ES28.1 ^C	<i>Sugar Maple – Hemlock – Yellow Birch Dry-Moderately Fresh</i>
ES28.2 ^C	<i>Sugar Maple – Hemlock – Yellow Birch Fresh-Moist</i>

^A Lee (2005); ^B Lee *et al.* (1998); ^C Chambers *et al.* (1997)

1.3 Recovery actions completed or underway

In partnership with Dr. Andrée Nault of the Biodôme de Montréal, Ontario Nature has initiated a two-year project to advance American Ginseng recovery in Ontario. The project is designed to address priority recovery actions for American Ginseng including the establishment of an Ontario network of experts in American Ginseng conservation, the adaptation of standardized conservation protocols developed in Québec for use in Ontario, the provision of training that promotes ginseng conservation techniques, and the implementation of a communications plan aimed at reducing threats to ginseng (T. Pulfer, pers. comm., 2018). This project is being supported by Ontario's Species at Risk Stewardship Fund.

In 2018, the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) completed demographic monitoring and threat monitoring of American Ginseng populations. NCC documented evidence of illegal harvesting and of impacts by Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), an invasive species (NCC, pers. comm., 2019).

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry's (MNRF) Ontario Forest Research Institute has initiated a research project to study the effects of forest harvest, i.e., canopy disturbance, on American Ginseng in Ontario (T. Jones, pers. comm., 2018).

MNRF undertook extensive surveys for American Ginseng during the 2018 growing season, principally on Crown Land in central Ontario (ecoregion 5E) (G. Cameron, pers. comm., 2018).

In southern Ontario (ecoregions 6E and 7E), the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks has been conducting long-term demographic monitoring and surveys that have resulted in the discovery of previously undocumented populations. It has also been engaging in stewardship actions to manage populations and address threats in protected areas, and has increased staff training for this purpose. Stewardship actions include re-routing trails to reduce the risk of illegal ginseng harvest. They also include the collection and stratification of seed, and the planting of seeds or seedlings, to either reduce the risk of illegal harvest or compensate for its effects on populations that have been subject to poaching. A root dye program has been initiated at many sites to make plants less valuable to illegal harvesters (C. Brdar and R. Gould, pers. comm., 2019).

1.4 Area for consideration in developing a habitat regulation

Under the ESA, a recovery strategy must include a recommendation to the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks on the area that should be considered in developing a habitat regulation. A habitat regulation is a legal instrument that prescribes an area that will be protected as the habitat of the species. The recommendation provided below will be one of many sources considered by the Minister, including information that may become newly available following completion of the recovery strategy, when developing the habitat regulation for this species.

The Critical Habitat section of the federal recovery strategy provides an identification of critical habitat (as defined under the SARA). Identification of critical habitat is not a component of a recovery strategy prepared under the ESA. However, it is recommended that the approaches used to identify general habitat under the ESA in MNR (2013) and critical habitat in the federal recovery strategy be considered, along with scientific information on American Ginseng and the communities in which it occurs when developing a habitat regulation under the ESA.

Glossary

Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC): The committee established under section 14 of the Species at Risk Act that is responsible for assessing and classifying species at risk in Canada.

Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario (COSSARO): The committee established under section 3 of the *Endangered Species Act, 2007* that is responsible for assessing and classifying species at risk in Ontario.

Conservation status rank: A rank assigned to a species or ecological community that primarily conveys the degree of rarity of the species or community at the global (G), national (N) or subnational (S) level. These ranks, termed G-rank, N-rank and S-rank, are not legal designations. Ranks are determined by NatureServe and, in the case of Ontario's S-rank, by Ontario's Natural Heritage Information Centre. The conservation status of a species or ecosystem is designated by a number from 1 to 5, preceded by the letter G, N or S reflecting the appropriate geographic scale of the assessment. The numbers mean the following:

- 1 = critically imperilled
- 2 = imperilled
- 3 = vulnerable
- 4 = apparently secure
- 5 = secure
- NR = not yet ranked

Endangered Species Act, 2007 (ESA): The provincial legislation that provides protection to species at risk in Ontario.

Species at Risk Act (SARA): The federal legislation that provides protection to species at risk in Canada. This act establishes Schedule 1 as the legal list of wildlife species at risk. Schedules 2 and 3 contain lists of species that at the time the Act came into force needed to be reassessed. After species on Schedule 2 and 3 are reassessed and found to be at risk, they undergo the SARA listing process to be included in Schedule 1.

Species at Risk in Ontario (SARO) List: The regulation made under section 7 of the *Endangered Species Act, 2007* that provides the official status classification of species at risk in Ontario. This list was first published in 2004 as a policy and became a regulation in 2008.

List of abbreviations

COSEWIC: Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada
COSSARO: Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario
ECCC: Environment and Climate Change Canada

ESA: Ontario's *Endangered Species Act, 2007*

ISBN: International Standard Book Number

MECP: Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

MNR: Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry

SARA: Canada's *Species at Risk Act*

SARO List: Species at Risk in Ontario List

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Coulson, D. 2018. Email correspondence to E. Snyder. March 2018. Management Biologist, Pembroke District, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, Peterborough, Ontario.

Jones, T. 2018. Email correspondence to E. Snyder. January 2018. Hardwood Ecosystem Research Scientist, Ontario Forest Research Institute, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, Peterborough, Ontario.

NCC. Email correspondence to E. Snyder. April 2019. Nature Conservancy of Canada.

Thompson, S. 2018. Email correspondence to E. Snyder. May 2018. Ecological consultant and former District Ecologist, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, Peterborough, Ontario.

Appendix 1. Recovery strategy for the American Ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) in Canada

Recovery Strategy for the American Ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) in Canada

American Ginseng



2018



Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada

Canada

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For copies of the recovery strategy, or for additional information on species at risk, including the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) Status Reports, residence descriptions, action plans, and other related recovery documents, please visit the [Species at Risk \(SAR\) Public Registry](http://sararegistry.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=24F7211B-1)¹.

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¹ <http://sararegistry.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=24F7211B-1>

Preface

The federal, provincial, and territorial government signatories under the [Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk \(1996\)](#)² agreed to establish complementary legislation and programs that provide for effective protection of species at risk throughout Canada. Under the *Species at Risk Act* (S.C. 2002, c. 29) (SARA), the federal competent ministers are responsible for the preparation of recovery strategies for listed Extirpated, Endangered, and Threatened species and are required to report on progress within five years after the publication of the final document on the SAR Public Registry.

The Minister of Environment and Climate Change and Minister responsible for the Parks Canada Agency is the competent minister under SARA for the American Ginseng and has prepared this recovery strategy, as per section 37 of SARA. To the extent possible, it has been prepared in cooperation with the Governments of Ontario (Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry) and Quebec (Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques) as per section 39(1) of SARA.

Success in the recovery of this species depends on the commitment and cooperation of many different constituencies that will be involved in implementing the directions set out in this strategy and will not be achieved by Environment and Climate Change Canada and the Parks Canada Agency, or any other jurisdiction, alone. All Canadians are invited to join in supporting and implementing this strategy for the benefit of American Ginseng and Canadian society as a whole.

This recovery strategy will be followed by one or more action plans that will provide information on recovery measures to be taken by Environment and Climate Change Canada and the Parks Canada Agency and other jurisdictions and/or organizations involved in the conservation of the species. Implementation of this strategy is subject to appropriations, priorities, and budgetary constraints of the participating jurisdictions and organizations.

The recovery strategy sets the strategic direction to arrest or reverse the decline of the species, including identification of critical habitat to the extent possible. It provides all Canadians with information to help take action on species conservation. When critical habitat is identified, either in a recovery strategy or an action plan, SARA requires that critical habitat then be protected.

In the case of critical habitat identified for terrestrial species including migratory birds SARA requires that critical habitat identified in a federally protected area³ be described in the *Canada Gazette* within 90 days after the recovery strategy or action plan that

² www.sararegistry.gc.ca/approach/strategy/default_e.cfm

³ These federally protected areas are: a national park of Canada named and described in Schedule 1 to the *Canada National Parks Act*, The Rouge National Park established by the *Rouge National Urban Park Act*, a marine protected area under the *Oceans Act*, a migratory bird sanctuary under the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994* or a national wildlife area under the *Canada Wildlife Act* see ss. 58(2) of SARA.

identified the critical habitat is included in the public registry. A prohibition against destruction of critical habitat under ss. 58(1) will apply 90 days after the description of the critical habitat is published in the *Canada Gazette*.

For critical habitat located on other federal lands, the competent minister must either make a statement on existing legal protection or make an order so that the prohibition against destruction of critical habitat applies.

If the critical habitat for a migratory bird is not within a federal protected area and is not on federal land, within the exclusive economic zone or on the continental shelf of Canada, the prohibition against destruction can only apply to those portions of the critical habitat that are habitat to which the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994* applies as per SARA ss. 58(5.1) and ss. 58(5.2).

For any part of critical habitat located on non-federal lands, if the competent minister forms the opinion that any portion of critical habitat is not protected by provisions in or measures under SARA or other Acts of Parliament, or the laws of the province or territory, SARA requires that the Minister recommend that the Governor in Council make an order to prohibit destruction of critical habitat. The discretion to protect critical habitat on non-federal lands that is not otherwise protected rests with the Governor in Council.

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This recovery strategy was developed by Vincent Carignan and Alain Branchaud (Environment and Climate Change Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service [EC-CWS] – Quebec Region) based on a draft by Andrée Nault (Montreal Biodome) and in collaboration with:

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⁴ Formerly with EC-CWS – Quebec Region

Executive Summary

American Ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) is a long-lived perennial plant associated with mature forests. The species was designated as Endangered by the Committee for the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) in 2000 and has been listed with the same status under Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) since 2003.

Less than 1% of the global population of American Ginseng occurs in Canada. Although there is a consensus that the species is severely declining, lack of information relating to the number of extant populations as well as the absence of abundance data for many of them precludes population trend analyses.

The main threats to the American Ginseng are illegal root harvest, deforestation (industrial, urban and agricultural expansion); browsing, predation and diseases (mortality); introduced and invasive species; forest harvesting; commercial cultivation; as well as climate change. Small population size, a long time to reach maturity and climatic constraints are considered limiting factors.

There are unknowns regarding the feasibility of recovery of the American Ginseng. Nevertheless, in keeping with the precautionary principle, a recovery strategy has been prepared as per section 41(1) of SARA as would be done when recovery is determined to be feasible.

The population and distribution objectives for the American Ginseng in Canada are:

- Over the short term (2018-2028): Maintain or increase the abundance of American Ginseng plants and the area of occupied suitable habitats at each extant occurrence;
- Over the long term (2018-2038): Ensure the viability of all extant occurrences and, where technically and biologically feasible, restore historical or extirpated occurrences.

Broad recovery strategies and approaches to achieve these objectives are presented in the Strategic Direction for Recovery section.

Critical habitat for the American Ginseng is partially identified in this recovery strategy. It corresponds to the areas of suitable habitat within a 150 m critical function zone around each American Ginseng record. A total of 455 critical habitat units containing 8,268 ha within the critical habitat zone are identified in Canada: including 334 in Ontario (3,635 ha) and 121 in Quebec (4633 ha). Due to the sensitivities of the species (e.g., to illegal harvest), the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, on the advice of COSEWIC, has restricted the release of information that relates to the location of American Ginseng or its habitat (SARA s. 124). A schedule of studies outlines key activities to complete the identification of critical habitat.

One or more action plans will be posted on the Species at Risk Public Registry before the end of 2023.

Recovery Feasibility Summary

Based on the following four criteria that Environment and Climate Change Canada uses to establish recovery feasibility, there are unknowns regarding the feasibility of recovery of the American Ginseng. In keeping with the precautionary principle, this recovery strategy has been prepared as per section 41(1) of SARA as would be done when recovery is determined to be technically and biologically feasible. This recovery strategy addresses the unknowns surrounding the feasibility of recovery.

1. Individuals of the wildlife species that are capable of reproduction are available now or in the foreseeable future to sustain the population or improve its abundance.

Yes. Mature individuals remain in many parts of the species' range, including within viable populations. However, the species is rare or uncommon, even in the United States where it is more widely distributed. Accordingly, a rescue effect from populations in the United States is considered to have a low probability. *Ex situ*⁵ individuals grown from seeds could be used to increase depleted populations or for reintroduction purposes.

2. Sufficient suitable habitat is available to support the species or could be made available through habitat management or restoration.

Yes. Mature forests with suitable attributes exist throughout the range and populations of American Ginseng have been newly discovered within those habitats in recent surveys. Forest management as well as restoration will likely be necessary for many American Ginseng populations that are in a depleted state.

3. The primary threats to the species or its habitat (including threats outside Canada) can be avoided or mitigated.

Unknown. Most of the threats (e.g., deforestation, plant and seed mortality) can be mitigated through stewardship efforts and adaptive forest management. Mitigating illegal harvest will likely remain the main challenge and will require close collaboration between the various stakeholders to efficiently enforce existing laws and regulations.

4. Recovery techniques exist to achieve the population and distribution objectives or can be expected to be developed within a reasonable timeframe.

Unknown. A high level of effort will be required to fully recover this species because it is unlikely that the main threats will ever be completely eliminated. It is anticipated that active management and law enforcement measures will always be required to counteract illegal harvest of wild roots and to counteract the constant pressure for development and forest harvesting in natural habitats. However, recovery efforts could

⁵ Off-site

be supported with relatively simple and low cost techniques such as supplemental seeding and transplantation (preferably from individuals from the same site).

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1. COSEWIC* Species Assessment Information

Date of Assessment: May 2000

Common Name: American Ginseng

Scientific Name: *Panax quinquefolius*

COSEWIC Status: Endangered

Reason for Designation: In spite of restrictions on international trade, high rates of collection continue and there have been significant losses of populations over the last decade.

Canadian Occurrence: Ontario and Quebec

COSEWIC Status History: Designated Threatened in April 1988. Status re-examined and designated Endangered in April 1999. Status re-examined and confirmed in May 2000.

* COSEWIC: Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. An updated status report has been drafted but has yet to be published (COSEWIC 2011- unpublished).

2. Species Status Information

Less than 1% of the global population of American Ginseng is found in Canada. In 2003, the species was listed as Endangered in Schedule 1 of the federal *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) (S.C. 2002, ch. 29). In Ontario, American Ginseng has been listed as Endangered under the provincial *Endangered Species Act, 2007* (S.O. 2007, ch. 6) (ESA) since 2008. In Quebec, the species has been listed as Threatened⁶ under the *Act Respecting Threatened or Vulnerable Species* (R.S.Q., c. E-12.01) (ARTVS) since 2001. Both acts prohibit the harvesting, possession and export of wild American Ginseng.

NatureServe (2017) attributed a global status of G3G4 (vulnerable/apparently secure – last reviewed in 2005) to the American Ginseng and a national status of N2N3 (imperiled/vulnerable – last reviewed in 2011) in Canada and N3N4 (vulnerable/apparently secure) in the United States. The species has a status of S2 (imperilled) in Quebec and Ontario⁷.

⁶ The status of Endangered (Ontario) and Threatened (Quebec) are similar and refer to a species facing imminent extinction or extirpation.

⁷ Consult <http://explorer.natureserve.org/servlet/NatureServe?searchName=Panax+quinquefolius> for subnational (State) statutes in the United States.

American Ginseng has also been included in Appendix II⁸ of the *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species* (CITES) since 1973. In Canada, the *Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act* (S.C. 1992, c. 52) and the *Wild Animal and Plant Trade Regulations* implement CITES by regulating American Ginseng import and export.

3. Species Information

3.1 Species Description

The content of this section has been simplified in order to limit the release of sensitive information.

White (1988) describes the American Ginseng as a shade-tolerant, forest perennial herb. Individuals have an elongated taproot⁹ bearing a thin rhizome and an aerial stem ending in a whorl of palmately-compound leaves (one to four—rarely up to seven). They can live for more than 50 years (Charron, 1989) and reach a height of 20 to 70 cm¹⁰. The inflorescence¹¹ is located at the tip of the stem, centred between the compound leaves, and may have multiple flowers.

3.2 Species Population and Distribution

American Ginseng is restricted to North America where it occurs over a large portion of the eastern United States, from New England and Minnesota south to Louisiana and Georgia (Argus and White 1984; Figure 1). In Canada, it occurs in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec. It is considered to be rare or uncommon in most of its range (White 1988; Nault 1998; McGraw et al. 2003).

The abundance of the American Ginseng in Canadian populations would represent less than 1% relatively to the “many millions if not billions” of individuals in North America (NatureServe 2014). In Ontario, the Natural Heritage Information Centre (NHIC, 2014) reports 287 occurrences¹², including 89 historical (the most recent observation dates

⁸ Appendix II includes species that, although currently not threatened with extinction (globally), may become so without trade controls. It also includes species that resemble other listed species and need to be regulated in order to effectively control the trade in those other listed species.

⁹ Taproot: an enlarged, somewhat straight to tapering plant root that grows vertically downward. It forms a center from which other roots sprout laterally.

¹⁰ The vigour of individuals can be somewhat stunted in parts of Ontario, some reaching only 10 cm in height (C. Brdar, unpublished data).

¹¹ Inflorescence: the flowering part of a plant or arrangement of flowers on a stalk.

¹² An area (point, line or map polygon) in which American Ginseng is, or was, present (NatureServe 2002). The occurrence generally corresponds to the habitat occupied by a local population of the species.

back 20 years or more) and 38 considered extirpated¹³. No abundance estimate is available for this province. In Quebec, the Centre de données sur le patrimoine naturel du Québec (CDPNQ 2014) reports over 35,000 American Ginseng plants distributed in 168 occurrences, including 14 historical and 11 extirpated. Because abundance estimates are not available for most extant occurrences in Ontario, population trends are not currently available. However, American Ginseng specialists in Canada report severe declines in most areas.

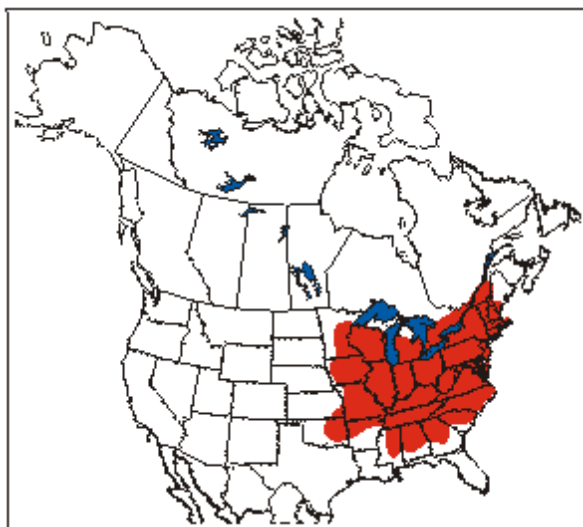


Figure 1. Global distribution of the American Ginseng (Argus and White 1984)

Minimum viable population size has been studied in North America. In Quebec, Nantel et al. (1996)¹⁴ found that viable populations contain at least 172 individuals, show good annual recruitment (seeds survive to produce the next generation) and have a good proportion of mature plants (i.e. at least 100 plants with 3 or 4 leaves). Using this threshold, only 9 populations in Ontario and 54 in Quebec would be considered viable (CDPNQ 2014, NHIC 2014). However, in central Appalachia (United States), viable populations were estimated to have 780 to 820 plants or more (McGraw and Furedi 2005). The impacts of threats such as browsing may explain these vastly different figures and suggest that no single threshold in population viability may exist for American Ginseng.

¹³ These figures were provided in April, 2014 by the NHIC, and the 20 year threshold at the time of analysis was 1994. Occurrence numbers are likely to be higher than 287 due to new data that is regularly received, but that has not been fully evaluated by the NHIC at the time of writing the recovery strategy. EC-CWS used information from the NHIC and other available data sources to inform the critical habitat identification and elaborate recovery strategies and approaches.

¹⁴ Given the typically wide confidence intervals of extinction probabilities used in mathematical models, minimum viable population could be anywhere between 50 and 300 plants (P. Nantel, personal communication).

3.3 Needs of the American Ginseng

The content of this section has been simplified in order to limit the release of sensitive information.

The American Ginseng is a shade-tolerant species that typically requires large and relatively undisturbed mature forests for optimal growth conditions (Charron and Gagnon 1991, Nault et al. 1998). As such, it is considered sensitive to edge effects¹⁵ which have been shown to influence the structure and composition of mature eastern North American forests up to approximately 90 m¹⁶ (Harper et al. 2005; Dupont-Hébert 2017). In particular, changes to light levels (and associated soil temperatures) near edges can affect American Ginseng plants as the species is physiologically adapted to low light conditions (10 to 30%; Proctor 1980, Westerveld 2010). Above these levels, plants show signs of leaf chlorosis (yellowing of leaf tissue due to a lack of chlorophyll), early senescence¹⁷, and depressed growth (Gagnon 1999; Jochum et al. 2007).

The canopy of forests occupied by the American Ginseng is usually composed of Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*), White Ash (*Fraxinus americana*), Bitternut Hickory (*Carya cordiformis*), Basswood (*Tilia americana*), Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*) and Butternut (*Juglans cinerea*), although some occurrences are found in forests or even swamps with a substantial component of White Cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*) and Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) (Parks Canada Agency, personal communication). Typically, shrubs are sparse, but understory plants are diverse (White 1988; Burkhart 2013).

American Ginseng grows on thick (50-100 cm), well drained soils of glaciary origin that have a relatively neutral pH (6.5-7.5) (White 1988; Couillard et al. 2012).

There are two known pollinators for the American Ginseng, halictid bees and syrphid flies, both of which are generalists (Duke 1980). Once the seeds are produced, their dispersal mainly depends on gravity (Lewis and Zenger 1982; van der Voort 2005), but birds, and in particular thrushes, appear to play an important role in dispersing seeds over a longer distance (Hruska et al. 2014).

Limiting Factors

Limiting factors influence a species' survival and reproduction, and play a major role in the capacity to attain certain population levels (rebound following population declines). For the American Ginseng, they include:

- Long period before plants reach maturity and can produce seeds (7-10 years; White 1988).

¹⁵ Edge effects refer to the changes in population or community structures that occur at the boundary of two habitats (Levine 2009).

¹⁶ This figure was obtained for hard edges (contrasting adjacent habitats).

¹⁷ Senescence: the growth phase in a plant or plant part (as a leaf) from full maturity to death.

- In northern populations, seed production is usually lower (Charron and Gagnon 1991) and germination requires that they remain dormant for a period of at least 18 months (Lewis and Zenger 1982).
- Seedling mortality, namely through drought and predation, is high and can reach 70-90% (Charron and Gagnon 1991, Nault 1998). Seed mortality also reduces the natural recruitment potential of American Ginseng.
- In small populations, rates of self-fertilization may be higher, which produces offspring with lower fitness than in populations with high rates of cross-fertilization (Mooney and McGraw 2007b).
- Allee effect (i.e., problems associated with being in small isolated populations; Hackney and McGraw 2001).
- Most bird species of the Thrush family that play a role in longer distance seed dispersal have been in decline since the late 1960's, with the Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*) recently assessed as Threatened by COSEWIC (2012).

4. Threats

4.1 Threat Assessment

Table 1. Threat Assessment Table

Threat	Level of Concern ^a	Extent	Occurrence	Frequency	Severity ^b	Causal Certainty ^c
Utilization of biological resources						
Illegal root harvest	High	Widespread	Current	Recurrent	High	High
Commercial cultivation of American Ginseng	Medium	Localized	Current	Recurrent	Unknown	Unknown
Changes in ecological dynamics or natural processes						
Browsing, predation and diseases (mortality)	High	Widespread	Current	Seasonal	High	Moderate/High
Introduced and invasive species	High	Unknown	Current	Recurrent	Moderate/High	Moderate/High
Habitat loss and degradation						
Deforestation (industrial, urban and agricultural expansion)	High	Widespread	Current	Recurrent	Moderate/High	High
Forest harvesting	Medium/High	Widespread	Current	Recurrent	Moderate/High	Moderate/ High
Climate and natural disasters						
Climate change	Low	Localized	Anticipated	Unknown	Medium	Medium

^a Level of Concern: signifies that managing the threat is of (high, medium or low) concern for the recovery of the species, consistent with the population and distribution objectives. This criterion considers the assessment of all the information in the table.

^b Severity: reflects the population-level effect (high: very large population-level effect, moderate, low, unknown).

^c Causal certainty: reflects the degree of evidence that is known for the threat (high: available evidence strongly links the threat to stresses on population viability; medium: there is a correlation between the threat and population viability e.g. expert opinion; low: the threat is assumed or plausible).

4.2 Description of Threats

The threats described below are presented in order of decreasing level of concern.

Illegal Root Harvest

The medicinal value of Ginseng roots, including American Ginseng, has been recognised in Asia for more than 2000 years (Small et al. 1994). Despite the bans on harvest, possession and export of wild American Ginseng from Quebec (via ARTVS; 2001), Ontario (via ESA; 2008) and from all federal lands where it occurs (via SARA; 2003), COSEWIC (2011 – unpublished report) suggest that more than 50% of surveyed populations in Ontario and 15% of populations in Quebec, including many located in protected areas (see Nault et al. 1998, 2002), show signs of illegal harvest.

Although all illegal harvesting is detrimental to the species through reduced abundance, reproductive potential, genetic diversity and viability (Nault and Tanguay 2011), some practices are more destructive than others. Size of harvested plants and the timing of the harvest season (allowing individuals to produce their seeds) are the two main aspects that determine the impact and lasting effects (McGraw and Ferudi 2005; van der Voort and McGraw 2006; McGraw et al. 2010). There is evidence that American Ginseng plants are smaller than they used to be (McGraw 2001). This may be the result of artificial selection imposed by harvest targeting the biggest plants, leading to reduced fitness of remaining plants as well as reduced seed production within wild populations (Charron and Gagnon 1991; McGraw 2001; Cruse-Sanders and Hamrick 2004; Mooney and McGraw 2007a, 2009). Because the American Ginseng is slow to reach maturity, a 5% annual root harvest is sufficient to bring a viable population to the brink of extirpation (Nantel et al. 1996; McGraw et al. 2013).

Deforestation (Industrial, Urban and Agricultural Expansion)

American Ginseng occurs in the southern parts of Ontario and Quebec where industrial (e.g., resource extraction, energy transportation), urban and agricultural activities have resulted in high levels of habitat loss and continue to put pressure on the mature forests that remain in the landscape. Although agricultural expansion appears to have stabilized over much of the American Ginseng range, and even receded in areas on lower quality soils (e.g., Jobin et al. 2014), urban development has accelerated to the point where it is now considered the leading cause of deforestation in North America (Radeloff et al. 2005; Masek et al. 2011), and a major contributing factor in Canada (Elliott 1998; Jobin et al. 2014).

Exploitation of energy sources (e.g., oil, gas) and minerals (including aggregates) and their transportation (e.g., pipelines, transmission lines, roads) continue to generate habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation throughout the American Ginseng range (Drummond and Loveland 2010; Masek et al. 2011).

Aside from habitat loss, recreational facilities and infrastructures (e.g., trails for hiking and all-terrain vehicles, ski slopes, golf courses) lead to habitat degradation (e.g., soil erosion and compaction, fragmentation, vectors for invasive species, edge effects such as increased density of adjacent vegetation that attracts browsing White-tailed Deer). They have also been found to substantially increase the likelihood of illegal harvest—harvesters have been found to utilize trail networks for species scouting and harvest activities and related harvest impacts have been found to be heavier along trails in provincial nature reserves compared to less-accessible off-trail populations (Young et al. 2011).

Browsing, predation and diseases (mortality)

In Canada and the United States, browsing by White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) has been documented to cause major impacts on American Ginseng population survival, namely through reduced plant vigour (browsed leaves and flowers are not replaced during the growing season) and significantly reduced seed production (Brdar 2003; Furedi and McGraw 2004; McGraw and Furedi 2005; McGraw et al. 2013; Nault 2013). Prohibitions on hunting in many protected areas have led to deer populations that are unsustainable relative to plant conservation efforts (Nugent et al. 2011). Forest harvesting activities also result in higher deer densities through an increase in understory vegetation used for browsing (Côté et al. 2004). Although the American Ginseng has the capacity to recover from browsing, repeated browsing can lead to substantial changes to the forest understory vegetation which may prove to be difficult or impossible to reverse (Stromayer and Warren 1997).

American Ginseng fruits and seeds are also eaten by small rodents, as empty shells are often found at the base of plants (Nault and Tanguay 2011; McGraw et al. 2013). The overall impact of these predators on the species remains to be clarified but has been shown to be important in many populations in Quebec where the entire annual seed production was removed (A. Nault, personal communication).

Root and foliage diseases caused by fungal pathogens naturally found in the plants' environment are also common (Westerveld 2010).

Introduced and Invasive Species

Invasive species represent one of the five main causes of declines in biodiversity (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2005). Invasive slugs (e.g., *Arion rufus*, *A. fasciatus*, *A. fuscus*) are increasingly being found at American Ginseng occurrences across North America and they pose the greatest threat to individual plants by feeding on them as they emerge early in spring (Nadeau 2002; Westerveld 2010; McGraw et al. 2013; Nault 2013, 2014; Marineau et al. 2014). Plants that are affected at this early stage are unable to produce leaves or seeds during the growing season and can't accumulate energy within their roots, therefore declining in fitness and decreasing survivorship. Invasive earthworms are also a growing concern due to their capacity to

change the forest floor (Addison 2009), and facilitate invasion by exotic plants (Nuzzo et al. 2009).

Invasive plant species (e.g., Multiflora Rose *Rosa multiflora*, Japanese Barberry *Berberis thunbergii*, Garlic Mustard *Alliaria petiolata*, European Buckthorn *Rhamnus cathartica*; Dog-strangling Vine *Cynanchum rossicum*) are also problematic because they are fierce competitors for resources but also because they can produce chemicals that harm other plants directly (Wixted and McGraw 2009, 2010; Klionsky et al. 2011). They invade after logging or other disturbances (construction, quarry, recreational use, etc.) within or adjacent to occupied forests and quickly become the dominant species, changing the habitat suitability for American Ginseng.

The progression of the Emerald Ash Borer (*Agrilus planipennis*), an invasive insect that attacks ashes, and of the Butternut canker (*Sirococcus clavigignenti-juglandacearum*), an introduced fungus that attacks the Butternut, could represent a significant factor in forests where these species represent an important component. As trees die and the canopy becomes more open, growing conditions may become unsuitable for the American Ginseng because of greater light penetration and increased competition from shrubs and herbaceous vegetation.

Forest Harvesting

American Ginseng is considered to be intolerant to larger openings in the canopy (McConnell and Bjorgan 2004; Couillard et al. 2012; Dupont-Hébert 2017). As such, forest harvesting activities where higher volumes of timber are extracted (e.g., clear-cutting, strip-cutting) directly impact the ecological parameters of a site through increased light penetration at the ground level (opening of the canopy), reduced soil moisture, higher daily temperature fluctuations of the forest floor and increased competition from tree saplings, seedlings as well as shrubs and herbs (White 1988; Nault et al. 1998). Machinery can also create soil erosion and compaction, as well as uproot or crush individuals. In more remote areas, the construction of access roads could facilitate access to poachers.

Harvesting activities where low volumes of timber are extracted to promote the growth of shade-tolerant species may be compatible with the maintenance of American Ginseng (Chamberlain et al. 2013; McGraw et al. 2013; Dupont-Hébert 2017). However, forest stands exploited for maple-syrup production may lead to an oversimplification of the vegetation structure and composition, particularly in the shrub and ground layers.

Commercial Cultivation of American Ginseng

The commercial cultivation of American Ginseng (in woodlots or in agricultural fields) is a growing industry in Canada, with an increase of 4.7% in exportations over the 2007-2011 period¹⁸ (AAFC 2011). Woodland cultivation can affect wild American Ginseng populations through disturbances associated with site preparation (understory

¹⁸ www.marquecanadabrand.agr.gc.ca/fact-fiche/pdf/5270-eng.pdf

clearing) and maintenance (i.e. fertilizers and fungicides), the introduction of pathogens (Reeleder and Fisher 1995) and the introduction of foreign genes by planting seeds from unknown sources (Nault 1998; Grubbs and Case 2004; McGraw et al. 2013). The effects of this threat have received little attention (but see Mooney and McGraw 2007b), particularly in northern populations where individuals may have adaptations for colder weather and other environmental variables (see Souther and McGraw 2011a).

Climate Change

Effects of climate change include the increase in the number of severe weather events such as cold snaps, hurricanes and wind storms (Huber and Gulledege 2011; Kirtman et al. 2013) that have been shown to impact American Ginseng individuals and populations over multiple years (Souther and McGraw 2011b; Souther and McGraw 2014), including long-lasting effects when habitat components are affected. In the eastern Ontario and Quebec portion of the American Ginseng range, a severe ice storm in January of 1998 caused major damage to the forest canopy that has been compared to those observed following heavy selective logging (COSEWIC 2000). Following that event, the third largest population in Quebec (more than 1000 individuals) was reduced to around 300 individuals.

5. Population And Distribution Objectives

The population and distribution objectives for the American Ginseng in Canada are:

- Over the short term (2018-2028): Maintain or increase the abundance of American Ginseng plants and the area of occupied suitable habitat at each extant¹⁹ occurrence²⁰.
- Over the long term (2018-2038): Ensure the viability of all extant occurrences and, where technically and biologically feasible, restore historical or extirpated occurrences.

These objectives address the species' long-term decline, which was the reason for its designation as Endangered (COSEWIC 2000). The 10-year time frame for the short term objective corresponds to the period between successive COSEWIC assessments of a species' status and is considered reasonable given the challenge working on a high number of extant occurrences.

¹⁹ The term "extant" in the current recovery program refers to the presence of a minimum of one plant within the last 20 years (at the time of development, this threshold was 1994). Historical (H) and extirpated (X) occurrences are not considered.

²⁰ An occurrence designates an area (point, line or map polygon) in which at least one American Ginseng plant is, or was, present. The term "occurrence" is used here in the broad sense and also comprises known locations that have not yet been included in the conservation data centres even though they come from reliable sources and have been verified by experts.

As for the long-term objective, ensuring that all extant occurrences have viable, self-sustaining populations is necessary given the intense pressure affecting the species and its habitats. At the moment, it is not possible to quantify one single viability threshold with certainty as it likely differs in the various parts of the distribution according to local threats and their intensity, but it would likely fall between 172 and 800 plants.

Finally, many known occurrences of American Ginseng are now considered extirpated or historical. The possibility of restoring these occurrences or reintroducing the species at these locations should be evaluated to support recovery of the species.

These objectives may be reviewed during the development of the report required five years after this strategy is posted to assess the implementation of the strategy and the progress towards meeting its objectives (SARA s. 46).

6. Broad Strategies and General Approaches to Meet Objectives

6.1 Actions Already Completed or Currently Underway

- Many occurrences found in protected areas (provincial, federal, private) or on sites where important American Ginseng populations occur are being managed to ensure their viability (e.g., conservation plans; Nault et al. 2002; Nault 2013, 2014) through partnerships between private landowners, conservation organizations (e.g., Appalachian Corridor, Nature Conservancy Canada) and federal partners.
- Enforcement efforts to protect populations from illegal harvest, including dye-marking roots to increase traceability and reduce marketability within the illegal trade network; and training of enforcement officers (provincial and federal) for search, seizure and investigation techniques to combat illegal harvesting of wild Ginseng.

In Quebec

- A recovery implementation group has been created by the Government of Quebec.
- The Government of Quebec drafted a conservation plan (*Plan de conservation du ginseng à cinq folioles*; Désilets et al. unpublished) that seeks to protect all extant occurrences with a quality rank of Excellent (A) or Good (B); to protect at least one occurrence in each of the physiographic regions (~1000 km² units)²¹ currently occupied by the species; to protect at least one occurrence in each habitat type occupied; and reintroduce the species in physiographic regions where it is historical or extirpated. The Government of Quebec promotes the

²¹ Physiographic regions constitute the territorial unit used by the Government of Quebec for protected areas planning and species at risk recovery (Li et al. 1994).

conservation and recovery of plants at risk in sectors where forestry operations take place by establishing boundaries based on the land-use classification units²² within which occurrences are found rather than the boundaries of the areas occupied by individuals at each occurrence (Couillard et al. 2012).

- Since 1994, the Montreal Biodome has led a conservation program that aims to: 1) characterize and monitor occurrences; 2) train and provide scientific and technical support for partners that manage priority occurrences, and 3) restore historical or extirpated occurrences.
- Since 2002, permanent plots with deer exclosures have been set up to quantify the impact of deer on one large protected population. Invasive slug exclosures with copper bands are also under experimentation.

In Ontario

- Since 2001, monitoring of a number of occurrences has been undertaken and some historical occurrences have been revisited.
- In 2000-2001, deer exclosures were used in some areas to monitor the impact of deer browsing on vegetation.
- From 2002 to 2010, a group of biologists from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources²³ formed the American Ginseng Recovery Implementation Group. Annual efforts included collecting and planting seeds, removing seeds from visible individuals, monitoring existing populations, finding new populations, educating key staff, and creating visual screening of visible populations.
- In 2010, OMNR published its *Forest Management Guide for Conserving Biodiversity at the Stand and Site Scales* (OMNR 2010) which is to be used by forest managers when planning and implementing forestry operations on Crown land. This document outlines the operational prescription for areas with American Ginseng in order to protect the species from negative impacts from the forestry operations and is based on the directives developed by McConnell and Bjorgan (2004).
- As of 2013, the general habitat for the American Ginseng has been described (http://files.ontario.ca/environment-and-energy/species-at-risk/mnr_sar_ghd_amr_gnsg_en.pdf) (OMNR 2013) and is protected under Ontario's *Endangered Species Act*, 2007

²² This system is used for land-use planning and particularly for forestry operations in Quebec, making it easier to incorporate the protection of species at risk as part of regular planning efforts that take place over much larger landscapes. Furthermore, by incorporating areas of suitable habitat larger than those that may be currently colonized, an increase in abundance is possible and edge effects are reduced.

²³ In July, 2014, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) became the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF).

6.2 Strategic Direction for Recovery

Table 2. Recovery Planning Table.

Threat or Limitation	Broad Strategy to Recovery	Priority ^a	General Description of Research and Management Approaches
All	Stewardship and management of the species and its suitable habitat	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide legal protection or binding stewardship status to areas of significance for the species • Implement beneficial management practices (BMP) at the local and landscape levels in order to mitigate threats, with an emphasis on illegal harvest as well as plant and seed mortality • Restore habitats and reintroduce the species within historical and extirpated occurrences
Knowledge gaps	Monitoring and Research	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct demographic and genetic studies to clarify how American Ginseng populations respond to various threats • Study aspects related to the propagation of individuals (e.g., pollinators; <i>ex situ</i> cultivation for transplantation and reintroduction purposes; short and long distance dispersal pathways)
		Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement standardized protocols to monitor the species' populations, habitat characteristics and threats • Develop, validate or improve models (e.g. detectability, habitat suitability, population viability) • Survey and monitor current extant occurrences as well as surveying new occurrences and encourage reporting to CDCs to update occurrences current data.
All	Communication and Outreach	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish partnerships with governmental departments and agencies, conservation organizations, Indigenous communities, private landowners and the commercial cultivation industry in order to implement a training/outreach/restoration/reintroduction program • Consider the creation of a North American working group • Improve the communication and data management for species with sensitive data (e.g., educate the media, secure data storage and exchange)

All threats	Law and Policy	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote and verify the compliance with existing environmental laws, regulations and policies to prevent breaches and offenses for all types of activities on all types of land tenures• Develop new policies and programs where gaps exist
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^a *“Priority” reflects the degree to which the broad strategy contributes directly to the recovery of the species or is an essential precursor to an approach that contributes to the recovery of the species.*

7. Critical Habitat

7.1 Identification of the Species' Critical Habitat

Section 41(1)(c) of SARA requires that recovery strategies include an identification of the species' critical habitat, to the extent possible, as well as examples of activities that are likely to result in its destruction. Under section 2(1) of SARA, critical habitat is "the 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".

This recovery strategy partially identifies critical habitat, based on the best available information for the American Ginseng as of October 2014. The Schedule of Studies (section 7.2) outlines the activities required to complete the identification of the critical habitat necessary to meet the population and distribution objectives. As new information becomes available, boundaries may be modified and additional critical habitat may be identified.

The identification of critical habitat for the American Ginseng is based on two criteria: habitat occupancy and habitat suitability.

7.1.1 Habitat Occupancy

Habitat occupancy by the species is established from existing occurrence records²⁴ (quality ranks A, B, C, D or E²⁵) based on the data available (at the time of analysis) from conservation data centres (CDPNQ, NHIC). The records associated with imprecise²⁶, historical (H)²⁷ and extirpated (X) occurrences are excluded. Only data from 1994 to 2013 (inclusive) corresponding to wild plants²⁸ are considered. Records

²⁴ A record corresponds to a location of a biodiversity element georeferenced during a field survey. It does not necessarily correspond to a plant; it may be the centroid of a subpopulation that has several plants.

²⁵ The CDPNQ and NHIC rank the quality of occurrences using the NatureServe (2002) methodology that considers the number of individuals (abundance) and/or the integrity of the habitat they occupy: A: Excellent (>500 individuals); B: Good (>500 individuals and presence of threats or 176-500 individuals); C: Medium (176-500 individuals and presence of threats or 51-175 individuals); D: Low (51-175 individuals and the presence of threats or < 51 individuals); E: Recent (not ranked); H: Historical; X: Extirpated.

²⁶ Occurrences and observations points with a degree of imprecision greater than 150 m.

²⁷ Twenty years is the threshold set by the conservation data centres on the basis of which an occurrence is considered to be historical. The 20 year threshold was 1994 at the initiation of this recovery strategy, and it will be considered the threshold for critical habitat at this time until or if the critical habitat criteria are revised in the future.

²⁸ Plants grown from non-native American Ginseng plants for commercial harvesting purposes are excluded. Plants grown from Wild American Ginseng seeds for restoration or reintroduction are considered.

from other sources that may be awaiting integration into an existing occurrence or the assignment of an occurrence number are included.

7.1.2 Habitat Suitability

Habitat suitability refers to areas possessing a specific set of biophysical attributes that can support individuals of the species carrying out essential aspects of their life cycle. The biophysical attributes for American Ginseng suitable habitat in Canada are provided in Table 3 (refer to section 3.3 Needs of the species for references).

Suitable habitat for American Ginseng is described using a critical function zone of up to 150 m around each plant. The first 100 m serves to maintain the biophysical attributes necessary to support the complete life cycle, facilitate short distance seed dispersal and reduce edge effects (see “suitable growth habitat” in Table 3). An additional 50 m can extend into other types of forests or treed swamps, that although they may not meet all the required biophysical attributes for American Ginseng plants to grow, will contribute to maintaining suitable habitat conditions (e.g., moisture, reduced light penetration) in adjacent suitable growth habitat, as well as facilitate long distance seed dispersal and limit the potential invasion by exotic species (Harper et al. 2005). The distance of 150 m is confirmed by a recent study conducted for the Government of Quebec (Dupont-Hébert 2017), which demonstrated that the majority of the observation points are found more than 150 m from disturbed open habitats, such as fields and roads. Suitable habitat thus excludes this type of habitat. This definition of suitable habitat is consistent with the *General Habitat Description for American Ginseng* (OMNR 2013) protected by the Government of Ontario under the provincial *Endangered Species Act, 2007*.

Table 3. Description of the Biophysical Attributes of Suitable Habitat for the American Ginseng.

Components of suitable habitat	Biophysical Attributes
Suitable growth habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure is typical of mature forests (e.g., more than 90 years old) or older secondary forests with few recent disturbances (e.g., large trees, closed-canopy) • Composition of trees is deciduous or mixed with species such as Sugar Maple, White Ash, Bitternut Hickory, Basswood, Red Oak, and Butternut; although some populations are found in White Cedar or Hemlock forests/swamps • Shrub cover is relatively sparse (<25%) and understory companion plant species are generally diverse • Soils are usually of glaciary origin, thick (50 to 100 cm), well drained (drainage classes of 20-well or 30-moderate) and have a relatively neutral pH; although some populations are found on very shallow, rocky soils, sometimes growing directly in small crevices in dolomitic limestone • Light penetration at ground level is low (under 30%; typical of closed-canopy forests) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Applies within a maximum radius of 100 m surrounding each plant
Habitats that maintain the attributes of suitable growth habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other forest habitats and treed swamps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Applies within a maximum radius of 50 m over and above that associated with habitats suitable for growth around each plant

7.1.3 Application of the Critical Habitat Criteria

Critical habitat for the American Ginseng is partially identified in this recovery strategy. It corresponds to the areas of suitable habitat within a 150 m critical function zone around existing occurrence records of American Ginseng.

The identification of critical habitat is considered partial as most of the known occurrences or sites are not currently considered viable and the exact locations of some of the occurrences are not known. Furthermore, some occurrences have limited attribute information on individual plant locations, abundance, area of occupancy or viability of the occurrence.

Finally, some of the historical or extirpated occurrences that may be necessary to reach the long term population and distribution objectives are not included in the critical habitat. This species is highly under-surveyed and under-reported to provincial CDCs, and as a result any of the critical habitat identification is limited to available information. The schedule of studies in the following section will make up for these shortcomings.

Following the application of these criteria, 455 critical habitat units containing 8268 ha within the critical habitat zone are identified in Canada, including 334 in Ontario (3,635 ha) and 121 in Quebec (4633 ha). Due to the sensitivities of the species (e.g. illegal harvest), the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, on the advice of COSEWIC, has restricted the release of information that relates to the location of American Ginseng or its habitat (SARA s. 124). Accordingly, Appendix A (Tables A-1 and A-2) presents the general locations of critical habitat using a 100 x 100 km standardized national UTM grid system. More detailed information on the location of critical habitat to support protection of the species and its habitat may be requested, on a need-to-know basis, by contacting Environment and Climate Change Canada's Recovery Planning section at: ec.planificationduretablissement-recoveryplanning.ec@canada.ca.

Any areas within the critical habitat units that do not possess the biophysical attributes of critical habitat (e.g., houses, roads and trails, paved surfaces, military ranges, agricultural fields, golf courses) are not identified as critical habitat.

7.2 Schedule of Studies to Identify Critical Habitat

Table 4. Schedule of Studies to Identify Critical Habitat.

Description of Activity	Rationale	Timeline
Confirm location, obtain population information and assess habitat suitability of historical occurrences and occurrences considered extant that are under-surveyed, under-reported or have insufficient spatial accuracy. In addition, use this information to review, update and/or refine existing observations and American Ginseng occurrences as per NatureServe protocols.	Necessary to reach the short-term and long-term population and distribution objectives	2018-2020
Proceed with an assessment of historical occurrences to determine if individuals or suitable habitat are still present. If assessment is positive, proceed with identification as critical habitat.	Necessary to reach the long-term population and distribution objective	2018-2028
Proceed with an assessment of extirpated occurrences to determine if habitat restoration and American Ginseng reintroduction is technically and biologically feasible. If assessment is positive, proceed with identification as critical habitat.	Necessary to reach the long-term population and distribution objective	2018-2038

7.3 Activities Likely to Result in the Destruction of Critical Habitat

Understanding what constitutes destruction of critical habitat is necessary for the protection and management of critical habitat. Destruction is determined on a case by case basis. Destruction would result if part of the critical habitat were degraded, either permanently or temporarily, such that it would not serve its function when needed by the species. Destruction may result from a single or multiple activities at one point in time or from the cumulative effects of one or more activities over time (Government of Canada 2009). Activities described in Table 5 include those likely to cause destruction of critical habitat for the species; however, destructive activities are not limited to those listed.

Table 5. Examples of Activities Likely to Result in the Destruction of Critical Habitat for the American Ginseng.

Description of Activity	Description of Effect	Details of Effect
<p>Construction and maintenance (e.g., mowing, use of pesticides) of linear infrastructures (e.g., roads, highways, trails, energy corridors, pipelines).^a</p> <p>All-terrain vehicle use and high foot traffic.^a</p>	<p>Loss and/or degradation of suitable habitat including :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - vegetation removal (e.g., forest cover) resulting in over 30% light penetration - the soil is covered permanently - drainage conditions are modified (e.g. results in poorly-drained soils) - any soil disturbance that would change the vegetation and soil parameters identified in Table 3 (e.g., all-terrain vehicles introducing and/or providing disturbed sites for invasive and introduced species that modify the structure and composition of vegetation and compete for resources) - edge effects into the adjacent forest (e.g., increased light penetration, moisture conditions, ground temperatures; denser shrub and ground layers attract deer who modify vegetation structure and composition through browsing) 	<p>Constitutes destruction if the biophysical characteristics in the critical function zone corresponding to suitable habitat for American Ginseng no longer allow for maintenance of the species at the site (zone may extend up to 100 m around plants)</p>
Industrial expansion (e.g., mineral extraction, aggregates, industrial areas)		
Urban expansion (e.g., houses, recreational areas and structures)		
Agricultural expansion		
<p>Forest harvesting where higher volumes of timber are harvested (e.g., clear-cutting, strip-cutting)</p>	<p>Loss and degradation of suitable habitat including :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cutting trees to a level that increases light penetration (exceeding 30%), reduces moisture and favours denser shrub and ground layers that attract deer who modify vegetation structure and composition through browsing - Machines damage the forest floor by destroying vegetation and contributing to soil erosion, compaction and leading to changes to drainage - Access roads are built, destroying, fragmenting, creating edge effects and facilitating access to illegal harvesters, invasive species and White-tailed Deer - Change to forest structure and composition due to selection of species to be harvested and by recruitment of opportunistic or invasive species 	<p>Constitutes destruction if the activities carried out in the critical function zone corresponding to habitat that maintains the attributes of suitable growth habitat for American ginseng no longer allow for maintenance of the species at the site (zone may extend up to 50 m from the zone mentioned above)</p>

Commercial cultivation of ginseng in woodlots (e.g. site preparation)	Can result in direct or indirect degradation of the vegetation structure and composition ^b	Could constitute destruction if the biophysical characteristics in the area corresponding to suitable habitat for American Ginseng no longer allow for the maintenance of the species at the site (zone may extend up to 100 m around plants)
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^a Some of these activities may not constitute habitat destruction if they are conducted outside of the growing season (early May to end of September) and do not result in the modification of conditions for future growing seasons.

^b This activity can lead to the introduction of foreign genetic material as well as diseases that may affect plant vigour and seed production (these aspects are not related to critical habitat).

8. Measuring Progress

The performance indicators presented below provide a way to define and measure progress toward achieving the population and distribution objectives.

- Over the short term (2018-2028), the abundance of American Ginseng plants and the area of occupied suitable habitat at each extant occurrence has been maintained or increased;
- Over the long term (2018-2038), the viability of all extant occurrences has been reached and, where biologically and technically feasible, historical and extirpated occurrences have been restored.

9. Statement On Action Plans

One or more action plans for the American Ginseng will be posted on the Species at Risk Public Registry by the end of 2023.

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Appendix A: Critical Habitat for the American Ginseng in Canada

The content of this section has been simplified in order to limit the release of sensitive information. For example, land tenure within each square is not provided.

Table A-1. Critical Habitat for the American Ginseng in Ontario occurs within these 100 x 100 km Standardized UTM grid Squares where Criteria Described in Section 7 are met.

100 x 100 km Grid Square ID ^a	UTM Grid Square Coordinates ^b	
	Easting	Northing
17TMG	400000	4600000
17TMH	400000	4700000
17TMJ	400000	4800000
17TMK	400000	4900000
17TNH	500000	4700000
17TNJ	500000	4800000
17TNK	500000	4900000
17TPH	600000	4700000
17TPJ	600000	4800000
17TPK	600000	4900000
17TPL	600000	5000000
18TTP ^c	256723	4800000
18TTQ	260346	4900000
18TUR	300000	5000000
18TVQ	400000	4900000
18TVR	400000	5000000
18TWQ	500000	5000000
18TWR	500000	5000000

^a Based on the standard UTM Military Grid Reference System (see <http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/earth-sciences/geography/topographic-information/maps/9789>), where the first 2 digits and letter represent the UTM Zone, the following 2 letters indicate the 100 x 100 km standardized UTM grid. This unique alphanumeric code is based on the methodology produced from the Breeding Bird Atlases of Canada (See <http://www.bsc-eoc.org/> for more information on breeding bird atlases).

^b The listed coordinates are a cartographic representation of where critical habitat can be found, presented as the southwest corner of the 100 x 100 km standardized UTM grid square containing all or a portion of the critical habitat unit. The coordinates may not fall within critical habitat and are provided as a general location only.

^c Due to their significantly smaller area, UTM squares falling at the intersection of UTM zones as well as UTM squares with less than 50% situated within Canada are merged with the closest complete UTM square or merged to form a square/rectangle with an area close to 100 x 100 km. This method is applied even if constituent squares do not all contain critical habitat in order to prevent the release of sensitive information. The listed coordinates correspond to those of the southwest corner of the resulting merged square/rectangle.

Table A-2. Critical Habitat for the American Ginseng in Quebec occurs within these 100 x 100 km Standardized UTM grid Squares where Criteria Described in Section 7 are met.

100 x 100 km Grid Square ID ^a	UTM Grid Square Coordinates ^b	
	Easting	Northing
18TWQ	500000	4900000
18TXQ	600000	4900000
18TYQ	700000	4900000
18TUR	300000	5000000
18TVR	400000	5000000
18TWR	500000	5000000
18TXR	600000	5000000
18TYR	700000	5000000
18TVS	400000	5100000
19TBL ^c	264028	5000000
19TBM	267767	5100000

^a Based on the standard UTM Military Grid Reference System (see <http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/earth-sciences/geography/topographic-information/maps/9789>), where the first 2 digits and letter represent the UTM Zone, the following 2 letters indicate the 100 x 100 km standardized UTM grid. This unique alphanumeric code is based on the methodology produced from the Breeding Bird Atlases of Canada (See <http://www.bsc-eoc.org/> for more information on breeding bird atlases).

^b The listed coordinates are a cartographic representation of where critical habitat can be found, presented as the southwest corner of the 100 x 100 km standardized UTM grid square containing all or a portion of the critical habitat unit. The coordinates may not fall within critical habitat and are provided as a general location only.

^c Due to their significantly smaller area, UTM squares falling at the intersection of UTM zones as well as UTM squares with less than 50% situated within Canada are merged with the closest complete UTM square or merged to form a square/rectangle with an area close to 100 x 100 km. This method is applied even if constituent squares do not all contain critical habitat in order to prevent the release of sensitive information. The listed coordinates correspond to those of the southwest corner of the resulting merged square/rectangle.

Appendix B: Effects on the Environment and Other Species

The content of this section has been simplified in order to limit the release of sensitive information.

A strategic environmental assessment (SEA) is conducted on all SARA recovery planning documents, in accordance with the [Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals](#)²⁹. The purpose of a SEA is to incorporate environmental considerations into the development of public policies, plans, and program proposals to support environmentally sound decision-making and to evaluate whether the outcomes of a recovery planning document could affect any component of the environment or any of the [Federal Sustainable Development Strategy](#)'s³⁰ (FSDS) goals and targets.

Recovery planning is intended to benefit species at risk and biodiversity in general. However, it is recognized that strategies may also inadvertently lead to environmental effects beyond the intended benefits. The planning process based on national guidelines directly incorporates consideration of all environmental effects, with a particular focus on possible impacts on non-target species or habitats. The results of the SEA are incorporated directly into the strategy itself, but are also summarized below in this statement.

This federal recovery strategy will clearly benefit the environment by promoting the recovery of American Ginseng. The potential for the strategy to inadvertently lead to adverse effects on other species was considered. The SEA concluded that this strategy will clearly benefit the environment and will not result in any significant adverse effects.

The majority of recovery approaches suggested in this document should have limited or positive effects on non-target species, natural communities or ecological processes. All actions related to further habitat protection would bring direct benefits to the numerous species sharing the American Ginseng's habitat, including other federally-listed species.

²⁹ www.ceaa.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=B3186435-1

³⁰ www.ec.gc.ca/dd-sd/default.asp?lang=En&n=F93CD795-1