



Summary of the draft Management Plan for the

## RED-NECKED PHALAROPE

Under the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA), a management plan must be developed for each species listed as Special Concern in order to identify measures for the conservation of the species. This document highlights the key sections of the draft management plan.

### Species Conservation Status

The Red-necked Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*) has been listed as Special Concern under SARA since 2019.

### Description and Distribution

The Red-necked Phalarope is a small shorebird. Named for the bright chestnut plumage around the neck, the rest of the body is black or gray (head, back, wings) and white (underwings, chin, and belly). Females are larger and more brightly colored than the males during the breeding season. In the winter, both are white (head and breast), and gray (wings and mantle), with a black streak through and behind the eye and a dark patch on the crown.

Red-necked Phalaropes breed across the Holarctic with an estimated 74% of the North American population breeding in Canada. The species primarily breeds in the Northwest Territories, Yukon, Nunavut, coastal Newfoundland, northeastern Manitoba, northern Ontario, and northern Quebec. The Red-necked Phalarope migrates offshore along the Atlantic and Pacific coasts as well as overland in the Prairies and winters off the coast of South America in the Humboldt Current. The Bay of Fundy, New Brunswick, is a key migratory stopover.

### Habitat Needs

The Red-necked Phalarope breeds near Arctic tundra wetlands with open water and few shrubs. Unusually, females compete for mates and males provide all parental care. The species spends the entire non-breeding season on the water, either at sea, in wetlands



Female Red-necked Phalarope ©Willow English

and waterbodies, especially salt lakes, along the inland migratory route.

### Threats to the Species' Survival

- Habitat loss as climate change dries arctic ponds and allows shrubby vegetation to expand into the tundra.
- Reduced productivity as Red-necked Phalarope's fail to adjust to climate change by breeding earlier and face reduced food availability for nestlings.
- Decreased survival during the non-breeding season due to increasingly severe weather conditions offshore likely decrease food availability offshore.
- Lost food resources in salt lake as climate change induced drought and poor water management practices increase salinity.
- Increased mortality during the non-breeding season due to offshore plastic pollution.
- Increased mortality due to oil spills and chronic oil contamination.

## Management Objective

The management objectives for the Red-necked Phalarope are to:

1. Determine a reliable population estimate and trend by 2030.
2. Have stable or increasing trends measured over a period of ten years by 2040.

## Strategies to Help Meet Objectives

Broad strategies to address the threats to the survival and recovery of the species include:

- Centralizing data from past site surveys in a shared database and tracking the North American migration routes and determine the turnover and residency times at migratory stopover sites.
- Calculating a new population estimates and trends.
- Conserving water and managing watershed surrounding migratory stopover sites to maintain appropriate water levels and salinities in saline lakes.
- Identifying and protecting climate change resilient areas on the breeding grounds and migratory route.
- Working with international partners to support seabird protection within the Humboldt Current Large Marine Ecosystem on the wintering grounds.
- Considering the Red-necked Phalarope in environmental assessments for projects that increase the risk of either chronic or catastrophic oil spills in key areas for the species and ensuring that these areas has oil spill response plans which adequately consider offshore seabirds in place.
- Determining where the Red-necked Phalaropes ingest most plastics.
- Investigating changes in zooplankton abundance at key migratory stopovers (e.g., Bay of Fundy) and wintering grounds

## How You Can Help

- Learn more about the Red-necked Phalarope, the threats to its survival and its habitat needs at [www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/species-risk-public-registry.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/species-risk-public-registry.html);
- Practice voluntary stewardship activities and beneficial management practices, for example:
  - Work in cooperation with Environment and Climate Change Canada and/or local conservation groups to conserve important habitat; and
  - Avoid activities that could harm the species or its habitat.
- Submit observation data to conservation data centres (such as eBird).

