

## Spotted Owl Population Management Team

### Terms of Reference

#### January 2008

### 1. BACKGROUND

Based on the advice of the Canadian Spotted Owl Recovery Team (CSORT)<sup>1</sup>, the BC Government announced its Northern Spotted Owl Recovery Action Plan<sup>2</sup> in the Spring of 2006. Following this announcement, government established the Spotted Owl Population Enhancement Team<sup>3</sup> (SOPET) to review CSORT's population augmentation advice, and to recommend the most effective means to increase the population size and recover the Spotted Owl. SOPET identified captive breeding of Spotted Owls as the highest priority action needed to augment the existing population and prevent extirpation. However, SOPET cautioned that this action must work in concert with improved habitat protection and, if owls were to remain in the wild, a strategy to manage problem Barred Owls.

In May 2007, the Minister of Environment and Minister of Agriculture and Lands approved a modified version of SOPET's Option B. This option included the capture of all juvenile and some single adult Spotted Owls for a captive breeding and re-introduction program, and the protection of active Spotted Owl sites by removing competing/predatory Barred Owls.

In fall 2007, an Inter-agency Northern Spotted Owl Steering Committee (INSOSC) was established to oversee the implementation of all recovery efforts for the Spotted Owl. To effectively achieve its mandate, INSOSC established two Management Teams; one to address habitat issues and the other to address the management and re-establishment of a viable owl population (see figure 1). To ensure scientific credibility, INSOSC also established an independent team of expert scientists to review and evaluate the work performed by the two Management Teams.

### 2. PURPOSE OF THE SPOTTED OWL POPULATION MANAGEMENT TEAM

Based on the recovery goals and objectives provided by INSOSC, the Population Management Team (PMT) will be responsible for implementing all population management and research activities associated with establishing a viable Spotted Owl population in the province. In particular, the PMT will oversee inventory and monitoring of the population, captive breeding

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca/virtual\\_sara/files/plans/rs%5Fspotted%5Fowl%5Fcaurina%5F1006%5Ffe%2Epdf](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca/virtual_sara/files/plans/rs%5Fspotted%5Fowl%5Fcaurina%5F1006%5Ffe%2Epdf)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news\\_releases\\_2005-2009/2006AL0012-000514.htm](http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2005-2009/2006AL0012-000514.htm)

<sup>3</sup> [http://ilmbwww.gov.bc.ca/sarco/so/files/HWGSOPET\\_Proposed\\_5year\\_Action\\_Plan-20070330.pdf](http://ilmbwww.gov.bc.ca/sarco/so/files/HWGSOPET_Proposed_5year_Action_Plan-20070330.pdf)

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and re-introduction activities, research, and other augmentation activities including the control of problem predators and competitors of Spotted Owls.

The PMT will provide advice and recommendations to INSOSC in regards to population recovery. The PMT will also provide advice and direction to working groups (e.g. Captive Breeding Working Group) established by the PMT, and will provide owl population advice and guidance to other management teams, working groups and/or advisory groups established by INSOSC.

### **3. OPERATING PRINCIPLES**

#### **3.1 Governance**

The PMT will report directly to the INSOSC (see figure 1):

- The INSOSC will provide direction and advice to the PMT on recovery goals and objectives consistent with the 2006 Spotted Owl Recovery Action Plan.
- The PMT will provide regular updates, information, and reports to the INSOSC, and will identify, and provide recommendations to resolve, any outstanding issues as they relate to recovering the owl population.
- Major decisions pertaining to Spotted Owl recovery that may impact stakeholders will be made by the INSOSC.
- Major decisions pertaining to Spotted Owl recovery that do not impact stakeholders will be made by the PMT, with advice from the Science Advisory Team as appropriate.

Where appropriate, the PMT may establish Working Groups to address key population management issues. All Working Groups established by the PMT will report directly to the PMT:

- The PMT will provide direction and advice to Working Groups on management objectives and issues, as well as deliverables for the PMT.

The PMT will collaborate with the Habitat Team to estimate the owl population that could be supported by the revised habitat plan.

The PMT will liaise with and consider advice provided by the Scientific Advisory Team:

- The PMT will document the assumptions, principles, methods, and data used in developing the population targets, and
- The PMT will incorporate advice from the SAT whenever feasible, or provide the rationale for its exclusion.

### **3.2 Membership:**

- Membership may include Provincial Government and other specialists.
- Members will endeavour to participate and share their knowledge and experiences as it relates to the Spotted Owl and population recovery, and are expected to attend all PMT meetings, whether in person or by conference call, and will identify an alternate when attendance is not possible.
- Members may specify attendance of other experts on an ad hoc basis at PMT meetings if helpful to the goals of the PMT.

### **3.3 Chair Responsibilities:**

- The Chair will schedule meetings and undertake responsibility for secretarial items, including completion and circulation of minutes and communications among members.
- The Chair will be the point of contact and spokesperson for news media, government, and public with respect to issues/general information around the activities of the CBWG.
- The Chair will be the point of contact for the INSOSC and will have membership to represent the PMT on the INSOSC.
- The Chair will be the point of contact for Working Groups established by the PMT, as well as other Management Teams, Working Groups and/or Advisory Groups.

### **3.4 Decision-making:**

- Decisions will be informed by best available science; in the absence of available science, decisions will be based on best practices or opinions of the PMT that provide an acceptable minimum level of risk to the owl population.
- Decision-making will be by consensus whenever possible or by majority vote when necessary. A quorum of at least 70% of PMT members or their alternates is required. When consensus is not achievable, differing views will be recorded in the meeting's minutes and other relevant documents.
- Where the PMT cannot reach agreement on issues, or where decisions are the responsibility of the INSOSC or higher governing body, the PMT will prepare options and recommendations to be brought forward for decision.

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## 4. DELIVERABLES

### **Inventory, Monitoring and Research:**

- Each year, the PMT will review previous years' activities and establish inventory, monitoring and research priorities with accompanying budgetary requirements for consideration by INSOSC. Note: the PMT will not be responsible for the implementation or deliverables of these priorities; however, PMT members may lead or implement these priorities where appropriate.
- During months with field work activities, the PMT will provide monthly update of efforts and results to INSOSC and other interested Management Teams, Working Groups and Advisory Groups.

### **Captive Breeding and Re-Introductions:**

By June 30, 2008 (and annually thereafter):

- In consultation with the CBWG Studbook Keeper, assess the current owl population structure (age and sex), status and distribution of individuals to determine potential candidates for inclusion into the captive breeding program, when appropriate.

By September 2008:

- Working with the Habitat Team and the Captive Breeding Working Group determine short (20 year) and long-term (50 year) population targets for re-introduction and population recovery.

By March 31, 2009:

- In consultation with the CBWG, establish a short and long-term Re-Introduction Strategy to re-populate habitats managed for Spotted Owls.

### **Barred Owl Management and other Predators:**

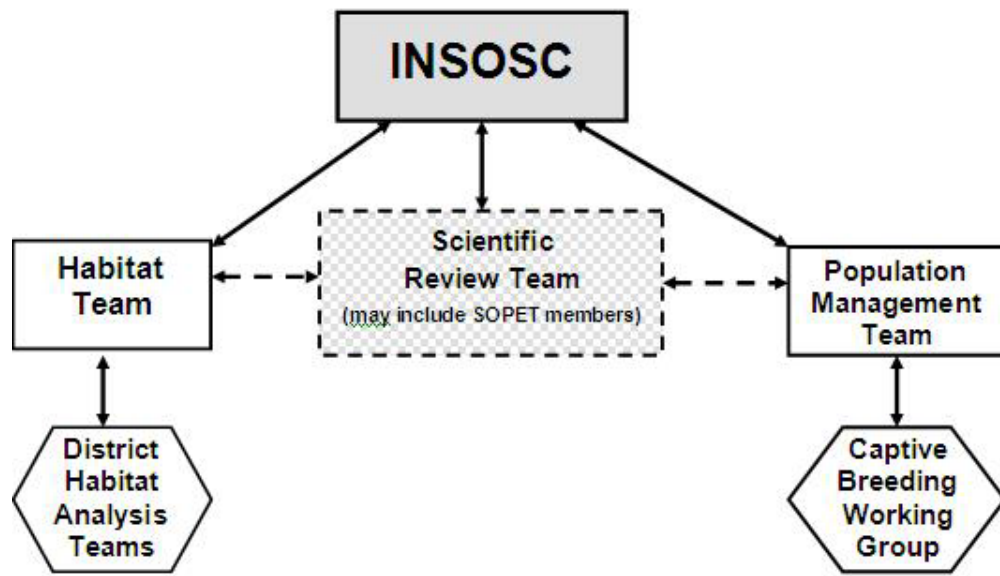
By March 31, 2008:

- Develop an interim strategy to immediately address Barred Owls and other predators within habitats managed for Spotted Owls.

By March 31, 2009:

- Develop a comprehensive long-term strategy using an adaptive management approach to address Barred Owls and other predators within habitats managed for Spotted Owls.

Figure 1. Governance Structure for Implementing the Spotted Owl Recovery Action Plan



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**Appendix 1: Membership, Northern Spotted Owl Population Management Team**

**Ministry of Environment:**

Ian Blackburn, Provincial Spotted Owl Recovery Coordinator, (Team Leader)  
Myke Chutter, Provincial Bird Specialist  
John Surgenor

**Ministry of Forests and Range**

Louise Waterhouse

**Others to be determined**

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