

BANK SWALLOW MONITORING PROTOCOL & STEWARDSHIP STUDY

MONITORING PROTOCOL

The listing of Bank Swallows as *Threatened* on the Species at Risk in Ontario List presents a common challenge across our industry. In 2013, the OSSGA Species at Risk Taskforce developed a Best Management Practices Factsheet for Bank Swallow; the Taskforce has followed up this factsheet by developing a monitoring protocol (attached). We are providing this protocol to assist you in complying with your legal responsibility to document and report the presence of Bank Swallow in relation to your operational activities.

In addition to providing this protocol, we are asking for your help in collecting important data. Many sites will need to Register their activities under the *Endangered Species Act, 2007* if there are operational activities with the potential to impact a Bank Swallow colony. We know that many operational activities are currently occurring in our pits and quarries nearby successful colonies. As of now, we lack the information to support the notion that operational activities can continue to occur within 50 m or less of existing colonies without impacting the nesting birds. In an effort to document the existing activities in relation to their distance from Bank Swallow colonies we are asking all our members who will be registering their sites with the MNRF to incorporate, at the very least, the following items into any monitoring protocol that you develop as part of your activity registration:

1. Describe activities & distances within 50 m (any direction) from colony (ex. haul road 10 m – 50 trucks a day, rock crushing 30 m -10 hrs a day, screening machine, loader 5 m – 10 hrs a day etc.)
2. UTM Coordinates of pit or quarry

MONITORING FREQUENCY

The frequency with which you survey the colony(ies) at your site is ultimately up to you and your consultant. We ask that you consider weekly inspections as suggested on the form we provide. This specifically aligns with a stewardship study for which Bird Studies Canada and OSSGA have requested funding, to monitor operational activities near colonies. The weekly inspections will help to:

- See if a nest fails early in the season, and whether the birds re-nest;
- determine whether there has been any impact to the birds and their nests as a result of operations;
- ensure that operational activity does not impact the birds throughout the season (i.e. placing a screening plant in the bird's flyway, which contravenes the ESA by impacting the bird's habitat requirements); and,
- record when the birds leave so that banks/stockpiles can be utilized by operations again.

Recognizing that once a week may be too frequent for some operators, at a minimum we recommend surveying each colony several times within three time frames from Late April to mid-August as follows:

- a. late April/early May, (to establish when the birds first arrive)
- b. late May – early July, (the best time to report active colonies)

- c. late July to mid-August (to establish when the birds vacate the colony)

NOTE: The monitoring form provides general guidance for your consideration. We recommend you speak with your consultant before proceeding with a mitigation plan and monitoring protocol.

STEWARDSHIP FUND STUDY

OSSGA is looking for 40 sites to commit to surveying their Bank Swallows on a weekly basis and forwarding compiled data to us for analysis and publication. If you are unable to commit to that frequency, your data would still be useful and we are interested in receiving it. If you would like to participate, but would prefer to remain anonymous, you must indicate this when you submit your data. Please note however that anonymous data, while useful for information purposes to establish the kinds of activities the Bank Swallows can live with, cannot be included in the Stewardship study. The data for known sites will be shared with Bird Studies Canada and MNRF and may be published. We need sites that are willing to be identified and encourage you to consider participating in our study as a known site. Monitoring data can be forwarded in an excel spreadsheet or an MS Word table along with photographic evidence to OSSGA by contacting Cynthia Robinson at crobinson@ossga.com

WHAT TO DO IF YOU EXPECT BANK SWALLOWS AT YOUR SITE

As a general reminder to all, if you expect Bank Swallow at your site this spring and plan to carry-out operational activities nearby, as per O.Reg. 242/08 you must:

- Register the activity and the affected species with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (before work begins);
- take immediate steps to minimize the effects to the species and habitat;
- develop a mitigation plan; and,
- monitor and report on species and activities each year.

For more details on how to register and your legal requirements under the Ontario Endangered Species Act go to the [MNRF website](#).

RESOURCES:

Natural Resources Registration Guide. Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
<http://www.ontario.ca/document/natural-resources-registration-guide>

Ontario Bank Swallow Project: Volunteer Manual. Bird Studies Canada, May 2010
http://www.bsc-eoc.org/research/speciesatrisk/bans/Bank_Swallow_Volunteer_Protocol.pdf

OSSGA Bank Swallow Factsheet. Attached.

Pits or Quarries and Endangered or Threatened Species. Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry

<http://www.ontario.ca/environment-and-energy/pits-or-quarries-and-endangered-or-threatened-species>

Species-at-Risk by Area (a desktop tool to help determine if a species is in your area)
<http://www.ontario.ca/environment-and-energy/species-risk-area>

For more information contact Cynthia Robinson, Environment & Education Manager, at crobinson@ossqa.com or call directly at 905-507-0711 ext. 6