

impacts of environmental changes. Recent concern over declines in various amphibian populations i.e., a definite downward trend in numbers over a span of time appropriate to the amphibian species' life history (Vial and Saylor, 1993), led to calls for assessment of their populations across Canada.

On Prince Edward Island there are several published and unpublished studies of amphibians and reptiles (Hurst, 1944; Bleakney 1958; Cook, 1967; Morton et al, 1981; MacLean, 1992; Barrett, 1993). Scattered records giving the start of spring calling or observations of particular species in various habitats are recorded in the Island Naturalist. Excepting the studies of Morton et al (1981) in Prince Edward Island National Park and MacLean (1992) at MacPhail Park, no field studies of any of the nine native amphibian species were conducted between 1958 and 1992.

Unfortunately, these studies on the Island's amphibians do not provide the information necessary to determine the short or long term rate of population size change, i.e., increasing, decreasing, or stable. In addition, there is only anecdotal information available on the utilization of various forest covertypes by amphibians on PEI and this information is necessary to assess the impact of current silvicultural treatments on amphibian populations.

To overcome these deficiencies, we established the Prince Edward Island Amphibian Monitoring Committee (AMC) in the autumn of 1992. This committee has representatives of the Natural History Society of Prince Edward Island Ltd., Renewable Resources of Holland College, Department of Environmental Resources' Fish and Wildlife Division, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Forestry, Environmental Coalition of Prince Edward Island, and P.E.I. National Park. They met to develop a strategy to address the deficiencies and to establish goals for the series of studies, namely, to:

- o establish and implement volunteer and government sponsored herpetofaunal surveys in Prince Edward Island;
- o evaluate the gaps in both the data and the data gathering system and develop measures to improve the survey and reporting systems;
- o assess whether this information is sufficient to address the question of whether amphibian populations remain healthy, have become restricted geographically, or have declined in numbers in Prince Edward Island and, if possible, report such changes;
- o implement non-destructive salamander sampling (DeGraaf and Yamasaki, 1992) in various forest covertypes; and
- o present the initial results of this work.

This paper will provide feedback to our members and the surveyors on the initial year of surveys.

The Ontario amphibian monitoring system and the Saskatchewan modifications (Gartshore et al, 1992; Didiuk, 1993) were reviewed.