

November 16, 2020

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Ms. Leanne Jennings
Species at Risk Branch
Species at Risk Recovery Section
Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
300 Water Street
North Tower, 5th Floor
Peterborough, ON K9J 3C7

Dear Ms. Jennings,

RE: ERO 019-2402 Draft government response statement under the *Endangered Species Act, 2007* for Yellow-breasted Chat

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) proudly represents more than 38,000 farm family members across the province, supporting our members and the agri-food industry on issues, legislation and regulations governed by all levels of government. OFA works to ensure the agri-food sector and our rural communities are included, consulted and considered in any new and changing legislation that impacts the sustainability of our farm businesses. We are the leading agricultural advocate for Ontario farmers, their businesses and their communities.

OFA agrees with the proposed recovery actions in the draft government response statement under the *Endangered Species Act, 2007* for Yellow-breasted Chat. The draft government response statement notes that the Yellow-breasted Chat is only found on Pelee Island and in Point Pelee National Park, most habitat on protected lands or managed long-term natural areas.

We would suggest that actions that focus on the identified threats to the Yellow-breasted Chat, namely the suppression of natural disturbances, invasive species and predation be the government's primary actions. We do note that in lines 252-253 that "most habitat on protected lands or managed long-term natural areas" with most potential habitat located on nearby private lands. Ontario's agricultural lands are a finite and shrinking resource; the resource we rely upon for its ability to produce food, fibre and fuel for Ontarians, Canadians and beyond. OFA does not support the conversion of agricultural lands to non-farm uses unless the conversion is undertaken willingly.

Sincerely,



Keith Currie
President

cc: The Honourable Jeff Yurek, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
The Honourable Ernie Hardeman, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
OFA Board of Directors