

# **A tool to assess cumulative effects of development on biodiversity**

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Cumulative effects assessment is an increasingly important aspect of sustainable resource management in Alberta. These assessments are done to ensure that incremental environmental effects resulting from multiple developments are understood, and where possible, avoided or mitigated (Hegmann et al. 1999). However, current approaches to cumulative effects assessment lack the required standardized quantitative framework to assess the cumulative effects of both individual projects and of all projects together (Hegmann et al. 1999, MacDonald 2000). Rather, current assessments are based on predicting impacts on key indicator resources or valued ecosystem components that may or may not be indicative of biodiversity. Even more critical is that such assessments are not consistent across projects and are often qualitative (e.g., based on expert opinion rather than empirical data), making it difficult to evaluate cumulative effects at regional scales or compare the predicted

contributions of different projects to cumulative effects.

**Policy Issue**

Biodiversity: Cumulative effects

**Knowledge Gap**

Cumulative effects on birds and ungulates

Report

2012 Presentation

2013 Presentation