



JOINT REACTION

For immediate release

After 101 months of delay, a decisive win for the copper redhorse

Montreal, May 26, 2021 – The federal Minister of Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard and the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change have signed the ministerial order enforcing the prohibition to destroy the critical habitat of the copper redhorse under the *Species at Risk Act*, as published today in the Canada Gazette.

This is a clear victory for the copper redhorse as regards measures to protect its critical habitat. The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) and the Centre québécois du droit de l'environnement (CQDE) had initiated legal action in Federal Court on January 7 to force the protection of the critical habitat of this fish. The Canadian government is 101 months behind schedule, an alarming delay for a species on the brink of extinction.

"This is a great win for the copper redhorse, an unconditional victory that calls into question the possibility of continuing at the Contrecoeur site the Port of Montréal's expansion project," says Alain Branchaud, Executive Director of CPAWS Québec. "Red flags are everywhere for the world's one and only copper redhorse population; we simply can't afford to make any mistakes concerning this species."

"We welcome the adoption of the ministerial order. However, having to go to court to force its adoption is an aberration. We'll continue to be vigilant to ensure full compliance with the *Species at Risk Act*," adds Geneviève Paul, Executive Director of the CQDE.

With protection of the critical habitat finally being enforced, the two organizations will follow with interest the Canadian government's analysis of any authorization requests that could lead to the destruction of any part of the copper redhorse's critical habitat. Particular attention will be paid to ensure conditions for issuing permits imposed by section 73 of the

Species at Risk Act are respected. Such conditions are very strict and clearly indicate that any activity authorized cannot jeopardize the survival or recovery of any species at risk.

A scientific opinion published last March concludes that the mitigation measures proposed to compensate for the possible destruction of critical habitat in the Contrecoeur sector are scientifically inappropriate and invites the government to base any future decision in this file on science and the precautionary principle.

The two organizations would like to thank their lawyers Frédéric Paquin and Anne-Julie Asselin of Trudel Johnston & Lespérance for their brilliant handling of this case.

- 30 -

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Press release: Contrecoeur Port Terminal: All Lights Are Red for the Copper Redhorse](#), March 24, 2021

[Science Advice: Impacts of the Contrecoeur Port Terminal Expansion Project on the Copper Redhorse](#), March 17, 2021 (English)

[Communiqué : Juge et partie, le gouvernement fédéral s'autorise l'expansion du Port de Montréal à Contrecoeur malgré les impacts dramatiques sur la biodiversité](#), 2 mars 2021 (French)

[Communiqué : Un pas en avant, deux pas en arrière : le gouvernement annonce la protection et la destruction de l'habitat essentiel du chevalier cuirvé](#), 19 février 2021 (French)

[Communiqué : Victoire pour le chevalier cuirvé ? Le gouvernement sommé d'assurer la protection immédiate de son habitat](#), 18 février 2021 (French)

[Communiqué : Expansion du port de Montréal à Contrecoeur : un soutien prématuré et préoccupant](#), 12 janvier 2021 (French)

[Press release : Copper Redhorse Protection: An Unreasonable Delay Triggers a Legal Remedy](#), January 7, 2021 (English)

INFORMATION

Charlène Daubenfeld
Communications manager, SNAP Québec
Cell: 514-378-3880
communications@snapquebec.org

Sophie Turri
Communications officer, CQDE
Cell: 438-979-7951
sophie.turri@cqde.org