Several valuable commercial fish species in Newfoundland and Labrador, including Atlantic cod and redfish, are being considered for threatened or endangered status.The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) has recommended Fisheries and Oceans protect select populations of Atlantic cod, American Plaice, deep water redfish and Acadian redfish under the Species at Risk Act (SARA).

COSEWIC's recommendation is based on a population decline of cod of 97 to 99 per cent off Labrador and northeastern Newfoundland over the past 33 years, and a 76 to 89 per cent population decline in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and on the south coast in 3Ps over the past 30 years.The province’s largest fisheries union(FFAW) is asking the federal government to reject the COEWIC recommendations. Union President Earle McCurdy said recent scientific assessments of key cod stocks do not support the COSEWIC recommendation.

Meanwhile George Rose, a former federal fisheries scientist who has studied cod for decades, said while stocks are not as plentiful as they once were, they are not nearing extinction.

TAGS: cod, COSEWIC, endangered, George Rose, Earle McCurdy