

# Background Document d'information



Ministry of Natural Resources

Ministère des Richesses naturelles

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## ONTARIO INTRODUCES PROPOSED ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT, 2007

### BACKGROUND

In May 2006, the Ontario government launched an extensive review of the Endangered Species Act with the goal of updating and strengthening the legislation that protects the province's native species at risk and their habitats.

The Ontario government consulted extensively with the public, Aboriginal Organizations and a wide range of stakeholder groups – including land developers, environmentalists, rural communities, fish and wildlife enthusiasts, municipalities and resource industry sectors.

Based on the findings of this review, the government is introducing proposed legislation that would replace the outdated Endangered Species Act and significantly expand protection for the province's species at risk.

The proposed Endangered Species Act, 2007 would, if passed, be among the strongest such legislation in North America.

More effective legislation is just one of three components of an updated, comprehensive approach to protection and recovery of species at risk in Ontario. The other two components are:

- Programs and policies to implement the new legislation
- Enhanced stewardship programs.

### HIGHLIGHTS OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

Compared to the existing Endangered Species Act, the proposed legislation provides broader protection provisions for species at risk and their habitats, enhanced support for volunteer participation from private landowners and partners, a greater commitment to recovery of species and more effective enforcement provisions.

The significantly improved provisions in the legislation include:

- A clear role for science in determining the status of species at risk
- Stronger protection measures for species at risk and their habitats
- A balance between protection measures and flexibility to accommodate other land use considerations, and recognition that such flexibility can sometimes help achieve the desired outcome of protection and recovery.
- Greater transparency through public reporting requirements
- Effective enforcement measures
- Recognition of Aboriginal and treaty rights protected under the Constitution Act, in addition to a commitment to ongoing dialogue with Aboriginal peoples as the new legislation is implemented
- The creation of a stewardship program for the purpose of promoting stewardship and other related activities to assist in the protection and recovery of species at risk.

More information about the proposed species at risk legislation is available on the ministry's website at [www.ontario.ca/speciesatrisk](http://www.ontario.ca/speciesatrisk).

### **ONTARIO'S SPECIES AT RISK**

Ontario is home to more than 30,000 species of which more than 175 are considered to be at risk. Species may become at risk due to small or declining numbers and limited distributions in combination with other factors such as habitat loss, pollution, competition from invasive species and over-harvesting

Ontario classifies species at risk into the following categories:

- **Extinct** – no longer lives anywhere in the world
- **Extirpated** – lives somewhere in the world, lived at one time in Ontario, but no longer lives in the wild in Ontario
- **Endangered** – lives in the wild in Ontario, but is facing imminent extinction or extirpation
- **Threatened** – lives in the wild in Ontario, is not endangered, but is likely to become endangered if steps are not taken to address factors that appear to be leading to its extinction or extirpation
- **Special Concern** – lives in the wild in Ontario, is not endangered or threatened, but may become threatened or endangered because of a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats.

More information about Ontario's species at risk is available at the species at risk website produced in partnership between the ministry and the Royal Ontario Museum [www.rom.on.ca/ontario/risk.php](http://www.rom.on.ca/ontario/risk.php).

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