

Species at Risk



Species at risk are plants and animals that are in danger of becoming extinct if something isn't done to protect them. Habitat loss due to human activities is the biggest reason for biodiversity decline.

Conservation efforts to preserve our native species and their environments can help restore what has been lost and ensure their survival for future generations. The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) is an independent organization of scientific experts who identify and track species at risk for conservation.

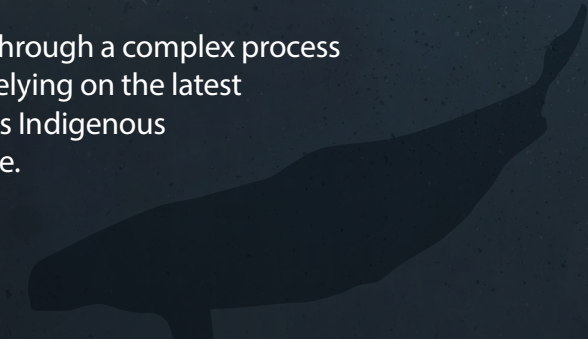

IN CANADA,
THERE ARE
MORE THAN
800 SPECIES
AT RISK.

How is a species identified as being “at-risk”?

A species at risk falls into one of the following categories:

- **Extirpated** — a species that no longer exists in the wild in Canada, but exists elsewhere in the wild
- **Endangered** — a species that is on the brink of extirpation or extinction
- **Threatened** — a species that is likely to become endangered if nothing is done to reverse its decline
- **Special concern** — a species that may become threatened or endangered due to certain factors

Each year, COSEWIC goes through a complex process to identify species at risk, relying on the latest scientific research as well as Indigenous and community knowledge.



How does that help bring species back from the brink?

In Canada, there is an important law called the Species at Risk Act (SARA), which exists to prevent wildlife species from becoming extinct and to help species at risk recover. Under this act, COSEWIC provides advice to the government of Canada on which species to add to the official SARA list.

Once a species is listed under SARA, it becomes illegal to kill, harass, capture, or harm it in any way. SARA also forbids the destruction of habitats critical to the survival of species at risk.



Working together in conservation

The government of Canada works with provincial, territorial, and Indigenous governments, as well as supporting conservation organizations and communities, to put in place strategies and plans for protecting biodiversity and preventing the extinction of our most vulnerable species.

Every Canadian has a role to play in protecting wildlife, whether that means volunteering for your local environmental group, growing native plants, or taking steps to reduce your carbon footprint.

WHAT WILL YOU DO TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

