

Manitoba's Species At Risk

In Danger of Disappearing

Manitoba is Taking Action

Because every plant and animal species at risk faces its own threats and has its own specific needs, efforts to help each one vary. Manitoba Conservation is taking specific action for each listed species, in partnership with government agencies, non-government partners and knowledgeable individuals.



Grassland birds, such as the Burrowing owl, have declined throughout their range due to loss of habitat in both their breeding and wintering ranges

Species at risk are defined as plants and animals in danger of disappearing from all, or part, of their natural range. Natural range refers to the area, large or small, where species normally live.

Extinction Rate is Increasing

Plants and animals have come and gone as long as there has been life on earth, with many reasons for their extinction. Today, however, the rate at which species are becoming extinct appears to be increasing. In addition, more species seem to be showing signs of decline. Possible causes include:

- habitat loss due to human population growth
- alien invasive species outcompeting native ones
- the earth's changing climate

The situation is often worse for species found at the edge of their range, especially if there is little habitat available. In such cases, these species may be even more at risk.

Protecting Species at Risk

Many countries, provinces and states have laws to protect species at risk of extinction. Manitoba passed its *Endangered Species Act* in 1990; Canada passed the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) in 2003. These acts protect certain species from harm and propose plans for recovery.

Manitoba's *Endangered Species Act* prohibits activities that would:

- kill, disturb or interfere with any listed species
- damage, destroy or remove habitat and natural resources that listed species depend on

Possession of listed species is prohibited. Manitoba's conservation minister may grant permits for exceptions to these rules for scientific research or reintroduction efforts.

Protecting species at risk can be complicated. Many are found in areas of heavy human use. Protection plans must balance the interests of the species at risk and the people they co-exist with. In Manitoba, recovery planning efforts take these factors into consideration by bringing different people and organizations together to find solutions to these problems.

Four Categories of Species

Under Manitoba's *Endangered Species Act*, species may be legally designated in one of four categories:

- Extinct species are species that have disappeared completely from earth.
- Endangered species are species that are at risk of disappearing throughout all, or most, of their Manitoba range.
- Threatened species are species that are likely to become endangered due to low or declining numbers in Manitoba, if the factors affecting them do not improve.
- Extirpated species are species that were once native to Manitoba, but have disappeared throughout all of their former range. Extirpated species may still be found elsewhere or in captivity.

In addition, there is a watch list of special concern species. These species are not regulated under the act but could be in the future. The list of species changes over time. Visit www.manitoba.ca/conservation/wildlife or contact Manitoba Conservation's Wildlife and Ecosystem Protection Branch for a current list.

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Cool Facts

Many of Manitoba's species at risk, such as the Piping plover and Western prairie fringed-orchid, are at risk throughout their entire range. Others, such as the Great Plains ladies'-tresses, are considered common in nearby provinces and states.

Extirpated species such as the Whooping crane and Grizzly bear are occasionally observed in Manitoba. These species, however, will remain listed as extirpated until confirmed as regular breeding residents in Manitoba.

Species at risk are often clustered together, based on their habitat preferences such as grassland birds on mixed-grass prairies in southwestern Manitoba, or tall-grass prairie species in southeastern Manitoba.

Multi-species recovery plans may be needed to examine how to conserve all of them, especially in cases where their needs may differ.



Western spiderwort can be displaced from its sandhill habitat by Leafy spurge, an invasive plant that is difficult to control.

Landowners Can Do their Part

If you are working on land that supports species at risk, good planning can help minimize potential harm to these species. Landowners can:

- conduct work outside of breeding season and other sensitive periods
- move work away from sensitive habitats
- learn more about the species and how to reduce negative effects

Landowners with species at risk on their property may wish to provide voluntary protection through a conservation agreement. This agreement allows landowners to protect natural ecosystems, fish and wildlife habitat and plant or animal species while continuing to use and develop their land.

Help Conserve Species at Risk

If you are interested in conserving Manitoba's biodiversity, including species at risk, you are encouraged to get involved. Consider participating in citizen-based monitoring projects such as the Christmas Bird Count or the Piping Plover Guardian Program. Become informed about conservation programs and share this information with friends, family and the community. Commit to any action that reduces our impact on the environment, including conserving energy, driving less often and reducing waste and water use.

For more information on Manitoba's species at risk and what can be done to conserve them, please contact:

Manitoba Conservation Wildlife and Ecosystem Protection Branch

Box 24, 200 Saulteaux Crescent

Winnipeg MB

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(204)945-7775

toll free 1-800-214-6497

www.manitoba.ca/conservation/wildlife



Polar bears are threatened by loss of sea ice, due to climate change, along the western coast of Hudson Bay.

Extirpated Species

Any species once native to Manitoba that has disappeared through all of its Manitoba range. Extirpated species are declared as such by regulation under the *Endangered Species Act*.

Endangered Species

Any native Manitoba species threatened to disappear through all or most of its Manitoba range. Endangered species are declared as such by regulation under the *Endangered Species Act*.

Threatened Species

Any native Manitoba species likely to become endangered or at risk due to low or declining numbers in Manitoba if the factors affecting it don't improve. Threatened species are declared as such by regulation under the *Endangered Species Act*.

Special Concern Species

Species not regulated under the *Endangered Species Act* but which could eventually be considered Endangered or Threatened if the factors affecting them do not improve.