

What are Species at Risk?

Species at risk are plants and animals that are in trouble, and need our help. There are currently over 580 in Canada, 75 in Nova Scotia, and almost 30 in our surrounding waters. Every one of these species is in danger of disappearing from Nova Scotia, Canada, or even the entire planet.

Species are assessed by experts, at national and provincial levels, who identify which species are at risk and in need of conservation and recovery efforts. Each species is placed in one of the following six status categories, which describes how much trouble it is in:

EXTINCT:

No longer living anywhere on the planet.

EXTIRPATED:

No longer living in a particular region (province, country) but still exists elsewhere. Facing imminent extinction.

ENDANGERED:

THREATENED:

Likely to become endangered if limiting factors are not reversed.

VULNERABLE/SPECIAL CONCERN:

Sensitive to activities that may make it endangered or threatened.

NOT AT RISK:

Not at risk of extinction.



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The provincial and federal status for a species may differ, as the provincial status is for populations in Nova Scotia, while the federal status is for populations in Canada.

The following table depicts the different jurisdictions, legislations, assessment bodies, and primary status categories for species at risk in Canada and Nova Scotia.

Jurisdiction	Legislation	Assessment Body	Status Categories
Canada 	Species at Risk Act (SARA)	Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC)	Extinct, Extirpated Endangered Threatened Special Concern Not At Risk
Nova Scotia 	Nova Scotia Endangered Species Act (NS ESA)	Nova Scotia Species at Risk Working Group	Extinct, Extirpated Endangered Threatened Vulnerable Not at Risk
Nova Scotia 	None	General Status Assessment Team	Blue Red Yellow Grey Purple Orange Green Black

In this guide you will see the national and provincial status of each species next to its name.



The status by the Canadian flag refers to its listing under SARA and/or designation by COSEWIC:
www.sararegistry.gc.ca.



The status by the flag of Nova Scotia refers to its listing under the NS ESA:
www.novascotia.ca/natr/wildlife/biodiversity/species-list.asp

How are they protected?

Species At Risk Act (SARA)

This Act applies to all species at risk (including migratory birds and marine species) on lands and waters administered by the federal government in Canada. Under this act, all species at risk and their habitat are protected by federal law.

www.sararegistry.gc.ca



Nova Scotia Endangered Species Act (NS ESA)

This Act applies to all species at risk on land administered by the provincial government in Nova Scotia. Under this act, all species at risk and their habitat are protected by provincial law.
www.novascotia.ca/natr/wildlife/biodiversity/legislation.asp



Recovery Teams

In addition to laws that protect species at risk, all species listed as threatened or endangered in Canada under NS ESA are to have a Recovery Team that advises on how best to protect and recover these species. Members include people from federal and provincial governments, aboriginal groups, communities, universities, museums, industry, and conservation organizations. Recovery actions include research, education, communication, management, and stewardship.

Who are they?

Over 2500 species across the country have been assessed and ranked under the General Status of Species in Canada.



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In Nova Scotia, only a handful of species that are in trouble are legally listed under SARA or NS ESA. Many more are ranked as **RED** (at risk), **ORANGE** (may be at risk), or **YELLOW** (sensitive). A full list of species assessed and ranked can be found at:

www.wildspecies.ca (National ranks)

www.gov.ns.ca/natr/wildlife/genstatus/ (Nova Scotia ranks)

www.accdc.com/en/ranks.html (Regional ranks)



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Why are they important?

All species that live on the Earth have inherent value, but humans also give them ecological, cultural, spiritual, economic, and other importance as well. Depending on your philosophy, or world view, you will find different ways in which each is important to you, or your community.

Some species at risk are indicators of environmental health, and others are staples of major industries, or attractions for ecotourism. Some have medicinal value, and all are beautiful to behold. Each can act as a representative of its natural habitat, and all the other species and processes that occur there.

Species at risk put a face to conservation, and allow people a more intimate connection with nature. All species have stories to tell and if they disappear they will be gone forever.

What threatens their survival?

Many species are in trouble because of the threats they face, most of which are caused by humans. Habitat destruction and disturbance are the major factors, but pollution, climate change, over-harvesting, and the introduction of invasive species are all major problems as well. Natural processes like predation, disease, and extreme weather events are also factors that threaten species.

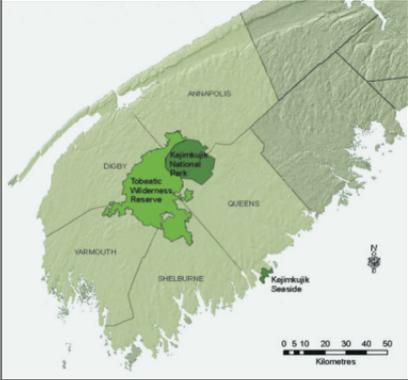


Where do they live?

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Species at risk live throughout Nova Scotia in a variety of habitats including wetlands, waterways, lakeshores, forests, barrens, and coastlines. The southwest region of the province has a notable abundance of biodiversity, which is one reason it has been designated by the United Nations as a “Biosphere Reserve”.

Five counties in southwest Nova Scotia comprise the Biosphere Reserve: Annapolis, Digby, Yarmouth, Shelburne, and Queens. This area shows a “balanced relationship between humans and the biosphere”, meaning that collaborative efforts among people promote the sustainability of local economies and communities, as well as the conservation of terrestrial and coastal ecosystems. Its core protected areas are Kejimikujik National Park and National Historic Site, and the Tobetic Wilderness Area



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Do you have them on your property?

If yes, congratulations! You may be excited about the privilege of having one or more of the most rare and fascinating species in Nova Scotia in your own backyard - very few people do. If you are interested, you have the opportunity to get involved in conservation, volunteer monitoring, and stewardship programs.

What if you observe one?

- First and foremost, take special care not to disturb or harm the species, but observe it and enjoy the rare opportunity.
- Next, photograph the species and note the location of your sighting (on a map, or with a GPS).
- Record any additional observations that are of interest.
- Finally, report the sighting using the contact information listed for each species under “Sighting Reports” or at www.speciesatrisk.ca/sightings.



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How can you help?

Since this guide was first printed in 2008, 27 additional species have been designated as at risk in Nova Scotia. Lets work together to reverse this trend. Refer to the “How You Can Help” section on each species page and read the specific actions you can take to make a difference. Understand the threats they face, especially in your local area - this is where you can help the most. Share what you know with your friends, family and community



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To learn more about getting involved in behind the scenes volunteer opportunities that make a real difference for species at risk in SW Nova Scotia visit and “like” the “Kejimikujik-Southwest Nova Volunteer Programs” and “Mersey Tobetic Research Institute” pages on Facebook, or email volunteer.keji@pc.gc.ca or info@merseytobetic.ca.



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People across Nova Scotia are contributing to conservation by giving their time and energy to local recovery actions. Organizations that are involved in recovery programs are listed under “Stewardship” in the contacts section. Join their team and get involved!