

Municipalities & Species At Risk

Project Overview

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Species at risk are animals, plants, and other organisms that are considered to be at serious risk of extinction. Usually species are at risk due to human activities which pose a threat to the species or their habitat. In Nova Scotia there are over ten thousand wildlife species, so far we know that 5 are already extinct and 47 are seriously at risk. In order to secure the future for wildlife, including species at risk, we need the participation and cooperation of all levels of government, industry, community groups, and individuals.

In August 2003, the Wildlife Division of the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources initiated a project to work with municipalities on species at risk conservation and recovery. Up until now little has been done to explore the important role that municipalities may play in supporting conservation and recovery of species and their habitat. This project will raise awareness of species at risk, help build stewardship capacity within municipalities and communities, and explore municipal "tools" that might assist in the conservation and recovery of species at risk.

WHY A MUNICIPALITY MAY BE INTERESTED IN SPECIES AT RISK:

- ▶ **Legislation exists to protect species at risk and municipalities should be aware of how these laws apply to private and municipal lands:**
 - ◆ The Nova Scotia Endangered Species Act protects all species at risk on provincial crown (public) land and all private land
 - ◆ The federal Species at Risk Act (SARA) protects all species at risk on federal land, as well as all marine and migratory bird species at risk
 - ◆ Both acts promote species at risk protection by encouraging stewardship, education, and partnerships
- ▶ **Funding opportunities exist for initiatives that support the conservation and recovery of species at risk, and municipalities would be eligible to apply:**
 - ◆ The Government of Canada Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk supports stewardship initiatives
 - ◆ The Federation of Canadian Municipalities promotes healthy, sustainable communities, and improved quality of life through funding green initiatives
- ▶ **Species at risk can serve as indicators of the health of our natural environment and municipalities could benefit from supporting species at risk initiatives:**
 - ◆ People are aware of the importance of a healthy natural environment and the direct connection to healthy, sustainable communities, and a high quality of life
 - ◆ Participating in initiatives that enhance the natural environment, including species at risk projects, will contribute to retaining and attracting residents and visitors
- ▶ **Municipal government is the level of government nearest to the people and thus can play an important role in species at risk conservation and recovery:**
 - ◆ Municipalities could help in communicating and encouraging awareness and stewardship for species at risk
- ▶ **Municipalities may have "tools" that could be used to assist in maintaining and conserving species at risk:**
 - ◆ Land use planning, zoning, by-laws, policies, and parks and protected areas are all "tools" that can potentially assist in species at risk conservation and recovery

Maintaining and Conserving
Nova Scotia's Wildlife Species:
Focus on Species at Risk



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Government of Canada Habitat Stewardship
Program for Species at Risk

PROJECT TIMELINE:

We will be contacting all municipalities in NS and meeting with them to present information on species at risk, and to discuss the role municipalities may play in conservation and recovery. If you have not heard from us yet and would like to discuss this initiative further or arrange a meeting please do not hesitate to contact us.