

Step Outdoors

2. What is causing these animals and plants to become endangered?

Extinction has always been a natural process for plants and animals since life began, with some scientists believing that over 90% of all the species that have existed are now extinct. Today, this process continues, but now it is very alarming as the rate of extinction has accelerated due to our involvement. Biologists estimate that humans destroy from one to three species per day - extinction, due to our irresponsible actions.

As the human population of Earth continues to increase, we need to continually create new places for us to live, and to increase agricultural areas to grow all of our food to feed us. This results in the reduction of 'natural habitats and



Western Prairie Fringed Orchid – G. Fortney

ecosystems which are required for plants and animals to successfully live. Some species are able to adapt quickly to the changing ecosystems, but others cannot find all of their requirements for survival in these changed areas, and may not be able to find them anywhere else. These are the animals we are losing at an alarming rate.

Southern Manitoba is home to most of Manitoba's *Species At Risk*. This is due in large part to the impact that human settlement has had on habitat for these plants and animals.

Endangered Manitoba Species

Baird's Sparrow
Burrowing Owl
Eskimo Curlew
Loggerhead Shrike
Peregrine Falcon
Piping Plover
Whooping Crane
Uncas Skipper
Small White Lady's-Slipper
Great Plains Ladies'-tresses
Western Prairie Fringed Orchid

Threatened Manitoba Species

Ferruginous Hawk
Great Plains Toad
Dakota Skipper
Ottoe Skipper
Mule Deer
Culver's-root
Riddell's Goldenrod
Western Silvery Aster
Western Spiderwort
Hairy Prairie Clover

Please see References for access to updated list.

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ACTIVITY

Outdoor Hike:

Have the group take a hike and discover a natural area in your region. Discuss the various animals and plants that may live there. Is this habitat home to any *Species at Risk*? If so, what are they, and why are they *At Risk*? If not, what activities would have to occur in this habitat that would cause plants and animals to become *At Risk*? (This activity could be incorporated into a snowshoe hike or paired with another program).

Species at Risk Worksheets:

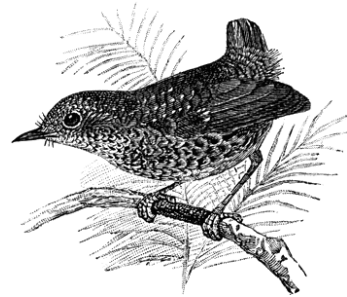
Each participant will choose their favorite animal and plant from the list of *Species at Risk* in Manitoba. They will investigate their choices and then document what they have learned about each on the worksheets provided.

(This can be a take-home activity, or done during the current or next group session). Once completed, have each participant share what they learned about one of their animals/plants with the group.

EXTENSION

Migration Headache Game

The object of this activity is to help participants to understand how the loss of habitat affects species populations - this game is written to focus on Migrating Canada Geese - it can be modified to reflect any native species and the issues threatening their existence.



To play the game:

- Within a large playing area, distribute Wetlands (squares of carpet, paper plates, or any other object) at both ends of the field (one end represents the 'Nesting Habitat, the other end - the Wintering Habitat) Place 1-wetland for every three students at each end of the field.
- Explain to the students that they are geese and are about to migrate to Manitoba to start nesting in the spring. When you give the signal, the students will fly to the Wetlands (paper plates), in order to make a successful migration they must end up with 1-foot on the wetland.
Maximum number of geese per wetland is 3.
- The first migration will result in all of the geese making a safe journey.

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- Explain that many factors will limit the survival of populations of geese - food abundance, wetland availability, predation etc.
- On the next migration south, remove several wetlands from their wintering ground. When the geese migrate, several upon arrival will not have any suitable habitat available for them, and they will perish. (have these students come back as predators).
- On the next Migration north, the geese will face more wetland loss as well as predators along their way (the predators need to tag the geese as they fly by).
- The game can continue as long as needed.

Factors to incorporate while playing:

Factors limiting Survival:

- Wetland drainage
- Water pollution
- Urban expansion
- Starvation
- Predation
- Disease
- Storms

Factors Favouring Survival:

- Preservation of wetlands
- Restoration of habitat
- Balance with predators

REVIEW

1. What is a *Species at Risk*?
2. List and describe the categories of Endangerment
3. List 2 causes of animals and plants becoming endangered.
4. List 2 ways in which we can help plants and animals so they do not become *At Risk*.



Burrowing Owl

© Environment Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service, Photo: Geoff Holroyd

REFERENCES

- Manitoba Conservation - Wildlife and Ecosystem Protection Branch
 - Web site for a list of current Species At Risk in Manitoba.
www.gov.mb.ca/natres/wildlife/index.html
 - Box 24, 200 Saulteaux Crescent, Winnipeg, MB. R3J 3W3
(204) 945-7775 for FREE Species At Risk Information Packages
- Species at Risk - Environment Canada Site
www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca

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SPECIES AT RISK IN MANITOBA WORKSHEET

Name of Manitoba **Plant** at Risk: _____

Draw a picture of this Plant:



What type of Habitat does this plant live in? (eg forest, prairie, pond etc)

Why is this plant at Risk?

What can we do to help this plant survive here in Manitoba?

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SPECIES AT RISK IN MANITOBA WORKSHEET

Name of Manitoba **Animal** at Risk: _____

Draw a picture of this animal:



What type of Habitat does this animal live in? (eg forest, prairie, pond etc)

Why is this animal at Risk?

What can we do to help this animal survive here in Manitoba?
