

Endangered Species

(http://www.cceg.org/resources/learning_centre/classroom_activities/endangered_species.asp)

Geological history records five major periods of species extinction during the last 600 million years. While events on a global scale range from a meteorite collision to glaciation and climate warming are believed to have caused these massive eradications in the past, the list of wildlife casualties in North America since European settlement tells us human action is now the greatest threat to plants and animals.



The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) is charged with determining the list of Canada's endangered species. In April, COSEWIC, which is made up of government officials, conservationists and academics, releases its annual list of species at risk in Canada. There are currently 307 species on the list, and an average of 10 to 20 species are added each year. COSEWIC cautions that this does not necessarily reflect the rate at which species are becoming at risk, but simply reflects the rate at which the committee is able to examine each species. More than 6,000 additional species within the taxonomic groups that are currently considered by COSEWIC require attention.

The list categorizes mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles, fish, molluscs and plants as endangered (facing imminent extinction), threatened (likely to become endangered if limiting factors not reversed) or vulnerable (particularly sensitive to human activities or natural events). There are currently 10 extinct species listed.

(Information from Canadian Geographic Endangered Species map and [COSEWIC website](#))

Resources

- *Terms of endangerment: Saving species begins with saving spaces for them* (Canadian Geographic, May/June 1997)
- *New endangered species plan unveiled: Cod listing shows that mixing politics and science compromises the integrity of decisions, say conservationists* (Canadian Geographic, July/August, 1998)
- *Geography on the job: Kim Bell, Tracking an endangered species* (full article) (Canadian Geographic, July/August 1997).

Endangered species on the Web

- [Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada \(COSEWIC\)](#): the organization that determines the country's species at risk list; made up of government and private individuals and experts; the list is updated annually in April
- [Species at Risk in Canada](#): legislation, lists, recovery efforts and link lists
- [EE Link Endangered species page](#): international listings of endangered species
- [Wildlife — Keeping the Wild Alive](#): includes activities for children from kindergarten to grade 8
- [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora \(CITES\)](#): listed species database
- [UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre](#)
- [Alberta's endangered species](#): lists endangered species in Alberta
- [Nature Canada](#) site