

Managing Species at Risk

Niagara Parks is the steward of some of the highest concentrations of rare and endangered species in Ontario. From northern dusky salamanders to peregrine falcons and butternut trees, some of the province’s most at-risk species of flora and fauna survive because of habitats managed by Niagara Parks. Niagara Parks protects these species through a wide-ranging program of habitat conservation, collaborative research and public education.

Niagara Parks is currently focused on protecting and/or assisting in the recovery of a number of species at risk, including:

FAUNA	MONARCH BUTTERFLY	iconic orange, black and white butterfly assessed as a “species of special concern” under Ontario’s Endangered Species Act (2008)
	KARNER BLUE BUTTERFLY	small blue butterfly originally designated “endangered,” but re-assessed as “extirpated” (no longer living in the wild in Ontario) in 2009
	TIMBER RATTLESNAKE	well-known, thick-bodied snake that was eradicated from Ontario by hunting in the nineteenth century
	NORTHERN DUSKY SALAMANDER	small amphibian once thought to be extirpated, but now officially “endangered” as it was rediscovered in the wild in 1989
	BOBOLINK	migratory black, white and yellow songbird designated as “threatened” – the classification before a species becomes “endangered”
	EASTERN MEADOWLARK	distinctive yellow, medium-sized songbird that has been designated as “threatened”
FLORA	DEERBERRY	a short, “threatened” shrub recognizable for its clusters of white flowers and light blue-green berries
	AMERICAN WATER WILLOW	a “threatened” aquatic plant usually less than a metre high with small tubular flowers

Protection Strategies

Successfully reintroducing and protecting species at risk demands a range of strategies that can create and sustain habitat, reduce or eliminate dangers, and mitigate the impacts of everything from climate change to recreational activities.

This is why Niagara Parks’ species at risk strategy deploys a range of tactics beginning with strong research and monitoring activities, often working with key stewardship partners including Ontario’s Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, the Canadian Museum of Nature, the Canadian Wildlife Service and Brock University’s Environmental Sustainability Research Centre.

Niagara Parks staff also sit on several Species at Risk Recovery Teams to develop effective stewardship strategies for species from the timber rattlesnake to the deerberry.

The core species protection strategy is almost always habitat restoration and conservation. Niagara Parks has protected and enhanced species at risk habitats through native species plantings, invasive species removal and the redesign of recreational use to minimize human impact. Niagara Parks is also engaged in a number of public education initiatives that raise awareness of issues related to species at risk and help engage the public in protecting Ontario’s natural heritage.