

Speaking Out for Species at Risk



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Specific Learning Outcomes

4-1-03: Identify the components of an animal habitat.

4-1-13: Predict, based on their investigations, how the removal of a plant or animal population may affect the rest of the community.

4-1-14: Investigate natural and human-caused changes to habitats, and identify resulting effects on plant and animal populations.

4-1-15: Describe how their actions can help conserve plant and animal populations and their habitats.

General Learning Outcomes

4-0-1a: Ask questions that lead to investigations of living things, objects, and events in the local environment.

4-0-4e: Identify problems as they arise, and work with others to find solutions.

4-0-4g: Communicate questions, ideas and intentions, and listen effectively to others during classroom-learning experiences.

4-0-7b: Identify new questions that arise from what was learned.

4-0-7d: Construct meaning in different contexts by connecting new experiences and information to prior experiences and knowledge.

Vocabulary

wetland, plant, animal, species at risk, extinct, extirpated, endangered, threatened, special concern

Summary

Students continue their exploration of wetlands by researching a species at risk that lives in a wetland habitat, preparing a television public service announcement (PSA) aimed at helping to conserve the species and their wetland habitat.

Materials

- Paper
- Writing utensils
- Access to the internet
- Access to library

Procedure

Warm Up

Begin by reminding students about their visit to Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre, briefly reviewing the day's activities. Remind students of the word 'wetland' and ask them what they think it means now that they have visited one.

Ask students to identify the four main components that are required in order to make a habitat (food, water, shelter, space). Brainstorm together what would happen if one or all of these components were taken away (the draining of the water in the marsh, or the removal of plants for example), how would this affect living things? What if the removal of basic habitat components occurred en masse? How would living things who depend on these habitats and habitat components survive?

All over the world there are living things that have disappeared or their population has been severely reduced in numbers due to the natural and human-caused changes to habitat. Across Canada there are living things that are being greatly affected by natural changes to habitats, which has resulted in certain living things being at great risk of disappearing forever (extinction). The Government of Canada has created the *List of Wildlife Species at Risk* so Canadians can take action to make sure these living things do not disappear and can thrive once more in Canada.

The Activity

According to Wildlife Habitat Canada, one out of every three species at risk in Canada live in or a wetland at some point in their life.

Wetlands, like Oak Hammock Marsh, are important habitats to protect for they house many living things, including species at risk (see lists).

One way of helping species at risk in Canada who depend on wetlands is by spreading awareness through an educational platform. Explain to students that they will be working in groups to create a television public service announcement (PSA) to help spread awareness about one living thing that is at risk in Manitoba.

A PSA is like a commercial but instead of selling a product the PSA provides a persuasive message that is in the public's interest. A PSA's main objective is to change the public's attitude and behaviour towards a social issue. Look up **Hinterland's Who's Who** for excellent examples of PSAs with an environmental focus.

Each student group will choose one species that is listed as a Species at Risk and can be found at Manitoba or in another wetland habitat in Manitoba (see lists). Students will then work together to research and create a persuasive presentation on their chosen species and their habitat, which they will present to the class.

Students must include in their presentation:

- The name of their species with a picture of what it looks like
- Identify its habitat needs (what it eats, what it uses for shelter, etc.)
- Briefly explain what human– and/or natural-caused changes are occurring which are damaging critical habitat for the species
- Identify how these changes affect the plant and animal populations, especially how it affects your chosen species
- Provide three ideas of how to help conserve this species and its habitat

Students can check out the following websites to help them with their research. *Make sure to check the websites beforehand to see if they are correct and still functioning.*

- **Hinterland's Who's Who — Species at Risk in Canada:** <http://www.hww.ca/en/issues-and-topics/species-at-risk-in-canada.html?referrer>
- **Government of Canada—A to Z Species Index:** https://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/sar/index/default_e.cfm
- **Government of Canada—Why do some species become at risk in Canada?** <https://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=7C05556B-1>
- **Government of Canada—Everyone can help!** <https://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=566F2794-1>

Recommended: Before students present their work, have them write a script for their PSA, with notes that indicate their plan for the presentation. Students should then hand in their scripts for approval prior to the presentations to ensure the criteria are met, and allow time for revisions.

Wrap Up

Wrap up this activity with the class presentations, finishing off with a question period.

Optional: Have students write down at least five ways that they can help conserve at risk plant and animal populations and their habitats.

Conclude by reiterating that wetland habitats, like Oak Hammock Marsh, are very important places which help conserve and protect at risk plant and animal populations, alongside non-threatened species, by providing the space, shelter, food and water they need to flourish.

Animal Highlight — the Red-Winged Blackbird

On the cover of this section, and in the insets you will see pictures of the Red-winged Blackbird. The Red-winged Blackbird is found in abundant numbers in wetlands across North America. The male's telltale black body with its bright red patch and yellow striped shoulders make it easy to identify. The female however looks more sparrow-like, with its brown body and black speckled breast.

The Red-winged Blackbird eats insects, mainly foraging on the ground. The males will spend most of the breeding season perching and singing, while the females collect food and nest materials. The female will nest in dense grass-like vegetation such as cattails or Phragmites, creating a deep cup-shaped nest where she will lay two to four eggs which are coloured pale blue, grey with black or brown markings. Once hatched, the young will grow their feathers, learn to feed, fly and what a predator is all before they have to migrate in the fall.

To learn more, visit: www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Red-winged_Blackbird/id

Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre, together with the Province of Manitoba and Ducks Unlimited Canada as our partners, we work to connect people with wetlands through educational and hands on experiences.

Ducks Unlimited Canada, who's national headquarters is located at Oak Hammock Marsh, are excellent examples of Canadians working to conserve and protect wetlands and the many species that need them. Learn more about Ducks Unlimited Canada's conservation efforts at ducks.ca.

Canada's List of Wildlife Species at Risk

Species found at Oak Hammock Marsh

Extirpated Species:

Greater Prairie-Chicken (Bird)

Endangered Species:

Burrowing Owl (Bird)

Piping Plover *circumcinctus* subspecies (Bird)

Red Knot *rufa* subspecies (Bird)

Monarch (Invertebrate)

Threatened Species:

Least Bittern (Bird)

Bobolink (Bird)

Olive-sided Flycatcher (Bird)

Chestnut-collared Longspur (Bird)

Common Nighthawk (Bird)

Bank Swallow (Bird)

Barn Swallow (Bird)

Wood Thrush *accidental sighting* (Bird)

Canada Warbler (Bird)

Golden-winged Warbler (Bird)

Red-headed Woodpecker (Bird)

Special Concern Species:

American Badger *taxus* subspecies (Mammal)

Rusty Blackbird (Bird)

Peregrine Falcon *anatum/tundrius & pealei* subspecies (Bird)

Horned Grebe (Bird)

Western Grebe (Bird)

Evening Grosbeak (Bird)

Red-necked Phalarope (Bird)

Short-eared Owl (Bird)

Yellow Rail (Bird)

Special Concern Species continued:

Buff-breasted Sandpiper (Bird)

Baird's Sparrow (Bird)

Harris's Sparrow (Bird)

Snapping Turtle (Reptile)

Western Painted Turtle (Reptile)

Northern Leopard Frog (Amphibian)

References:

Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. (2017, October). *Canadian wildlife species at risk*. Environment and Climate Change Canada. Retrieved December 19, 2017 from http://www.registrelep.gc.ca/sar/assessment/wildlife_species_accessed_e.cfm.

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Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre. (n.a.). *Species list: Fish at Oak Hammock Marsh*. Retrieved December 18, 2017 from <http://www.oakhammockmarsh.ca/assets/2014/12/Fish-List-2017.pdf>

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Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre. (n.a.). *Species list: Reptiles of Oak Hammock Marsh*. Retrieved December 18, 2017 from <http://www.oakhammockmarsh.ca/assets/2014/12/Reptile-List-2017.pdf>

Canada's List of Wildlife Species at Risk

Species found in Manitoba

Extinct Species:

Passenger Pigeon (Bird)

Extirpated Species:

Greater Prairie-Chicken (Bird)

Endangered Species:

Caribou *eastern migratory population* (Mammal)
Little Brown Myotis (Mammal)
Northern Myotis (Mammal)
Burrowing Owl (Bird)
Eskimo Curlew (Bird)
Piping Plover *circumcinctus* subspecies (Bird)
Red Knot *rufa* subspecies (Bird)
Whooping Crane (Bird)
Prairie Skink (Reptile)
Eastern Tiger Salamander (Amphibian)
Lake Sturgeon *Western Hudson Bay, Saskatchewan—Nelson River populations* (Fish)
Gypsy Cuckoo Bumble Bee (Invertebrate)
Mottled Duskywing *boreal population* (invertebrate)
Hite Flower Moth (Invertebrate)
Gold-edged Gem (Invertebrate)
Nine-spotted Lady Beetle (Invertebrate)
Monarch (Invertebrate)
Dusky Dune Moth (Invertebrate)
Dakota Skipper (Invertebrate)
Ottoe Skipper (Invertebrate)
Poweshiek Skipperling (Invertebrate)
Gattinger's Agalinis (Plant)
Rough Agalinis (Plant)
Fascicled Ironweed (Plant)

Endangered Species Continued:

Western Prairie Fringed Orchid (Plant)

Threatened Species:

Caribou *boreal, barren-ground population* (Mammal)
Least Bittern (Bird)
Bobolink (Bird)
Lark Bunting (Bird)
Olive-sided Flycatcher (Bird)
Ross's Gull (Bird)
Ferruginous Hawk (Bird)
Chestnut-collared Longspur (Bird)
Common Nighthawk (Bird)
Sprague's Pipit (Bird)
Loggerhead Shrike *prairie* subspecies (Bird)
Bank Swallow (Bird)
Barn Swallow (Bird)
Chimney Swift (Bird)
Canada Warbler (Bird)
Golden-winged Warbler (Bird)
Eastern Whip-poor-will (Bird)
Red-headed Woodpecker (Bird)
Shortjaw Cisco (Fish)
Carmine Shiner (Fish)
Verna's Flower Moth (Invertebrate)
Mapleleaf (Invertebrate)
Western Silvery Aster (Plant)
Smooth Goosefoot (Plant)
Small White Lady's-slipper (Plant)
Western Spiderwort (Plant)

Canada's List of Wildlife Species at Risk

Species found in Manitoba

Special Concern Species:

American Badger *taxus* subspecies (Mammal)
Grizzly Bear (Mammal)
Polar Bear (Mammal)
Wood Bison (Mammal)
Atlantic Walrus (Mammal)
Beluga Whale (Mammal)
Wolverine (Mammal)
Rusty Blackbird (Bird)
Peregrine Falcon *anatum/tundrius & pealei* subspecies (Bird)
Horned Grebe (Bird)
Western Grebe (Bird)
Evening Grosbeak (Bird)
Red-necked Phalarope (Bird)
Short-eared Owl (Bird)
Yellow Rail (Bird)
Buff-breasted Sandpiper (Bird)
Baird's Sparrow (Bird)
Harris's Sparrow (Bird)
Eastern Wood-pewee (Bird)
Snapping Turtle (Reptile)
Western Painted Turtle (Reptile)
Western Tiger Salamander (Amphibian)
Northern Leopard Frog (Amphibian)
Great Plains Toad (Amphibian)
Bigmouth Buffalo (Fish)
Lake Sturgeon (Fish)
Yellow-banded Bumble Bee (Invertebrate)
Transverse Lady Beetle (Invertebrate)
Pale Yellow Dune Moth (Invertebrate)

Special Concern Species Continued:

Buffalograss (Plant)
Riddell's Goldenrod (Plant)
Hairy Prairie-clover (Plant)
Flooded Jellyskin (Plant)
Golden-eye Lichen (Plant)

References:

Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. (2017, October). *Canadian wildlife species at risk*. Environment and Climate Change Canada. Retrieved December 19, 2017 from http://www.registrelep.gc.ca/sar/assessment/wildlife_species_accessed_e.cfm.