

# Worksheet #10 – Living with Wildlife

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Use this worksheet to learn about living alongside wild nature.

## ***Why should you be concerned?***

- It is important to accommodate wildlife on your property, just as much as the wind-swept pine and the colourful gneiss, they're part of the reason why you enjoy the setting of your home or property.
- Ensure that wildlife doesn't become a safety concern preventing you from enjoying your property (e.g. bears).
- Learn about local wildlife; they can be very beneficial and even in-directly decrease your property maintenance, costs and efforts (e.g., songbirds can decrease insect pest populations).
- Protecting local wildlife is key to a healthy ecosystem and watershed.
- There is incredible wildlife diversity along lakeshores and other watercourses however this coastal biodiversity is increasingly threatened by human activities and development.

## ***What you can do.***

1. Protect natural habitats and species that depend on specialized conditions.
2. Ensure that any buildings or structures on your property are appropriately built and sealed to prevent wildlife from entering.
3. Learn about Species-at-Risk and take a proactive role in protecting these species and their habitats. Take actions to expand the quality of their habitat in the landscape whenever possible.
4. See the landscape as an integrated whole and support initiatives that connect areas together.
5. Provide space and resources for wildlife in specific areas so that they don't become a nuisance.
6. Work with neighbours to ensure contiguous habitat areas along shorelines and watercourses.

# Living with Wildlife: How do you rate?

Topic	Best <b>4</b>	Good <b>3</b>	Fair <b>2</b>	Poor <b>1</b>	Your Rating
<b>RESOURCES FOR WILDLIFE</b>					
<b>1. Familiarity with local wildlife</b>	<p>Thorough understanding of wildlife in Georgian Bay, and their seasonal patterns,</p> <p><b>OR</b> continually seek to learn how you can provide habitat for local wildlife, especially species-at-risk.</p>	<p>Good understanding of wildlife in the Georgian Bay area and their seasonal patterns</p>	<p>Basic familiarity with local wildlife,</p> <p><b>AND/OR</b> general idea of wildlife seasonal patterns</p>	<p>No knowledge,</p> <p><b>OR</b> no consideration for wildlife on your property,</p> <p><b>OR</b> immediately take action to exterminate without sufficient knowledge.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>1. Wildlife habitat planning</b>	<p>Development and implementation of a wildlife habitat plan that enhances habitat resources for desired wildlife,</p> <p><b>AND</b> plan seeks to link habitat on property with the larger landscape using ecological corridors.</p>	<p>No formal plan exists but property management includes wildlife habitat enhancement,</p> <p><b>AND</b> property management links habitat on property with the larger landscape using ecological corridors.</p>	<p>Property provides some wildlife habitat that is protected and preserved.</p>	<p>Property is managed with no regard to wildlife habitat requirements.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Trees, shrubs and other plants on your property provide for food for birds, butterflies and other wildlife.</p>	<p>Bird seed is available but other animals are kept out of feeders. Feeders are only used from Nov. 1 - April 1.</p>	<p>Birds are expected to forage elsewhere beyond your property.</p>	<p>Bird feeders are readily accessed by other animals.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Tip

To learn about species at risk in your area, go to: [www.gbbr.ca](http://www.gbbr.ca)

Topic	Best <b>4</b>	Good <b>3</b>	Fair <b>2</b>	Poor <b>1</b>	Your Rating
<b>RESOURCES FOR WILDLIFE</b> <i>continued</i>					
<b>2. Providing wildlife habitat</b>	<p>Extensive buffers are created or conserved along shorelines and the property contains several woody and herbaceous plant species, offering a large range of wildlife habitats including coastal wetlands and vernal pools.</p>	<p>Numerous buffers are created along shorelines and the property contains several woody and herbaceous plant species, offering a range of wildlife habitats and good water quality protection.</p>	<p>A few buffers are present but contain no woody species, offering a limited range of wildlife habitats but do offer some water quality protection</p>	<p>No buffers present.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Basking rocks used by reptiles are left in place near vegetative cover providing habitat for Eastern Foxsnake and Massasaugas. Species and their habitat are avoided especially in the spring.</p>	<p>Natural vegetation cover is maintained, and some rocks are in place to provide habitat for snakes. Species are left alone.</p>	<p>Some natural vegetation is maintained and some rocks are in place to provide habitat for snakes. Species are left alone.</p>	<p>No natural vegetation and rocks have been removed.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Natural bird-food sources, nest boxes and perches are placed and managed to include species that provide specific "services" (e.g. fly, mosquito, or garden insect control) <b>AND</b> are cleaned regularly, <b>AND</b> are all more than 1.5 metres above the ground.</p>	<p>Natural bird-food sources, nest boxes and perches are available but not strategically placed and only managed for species that provide specific "services"(e.g. fly and mosquito control).</p>	<p>Natural bird-food sources such as berry-bearing shrubs are provided.</p>	<p>Natural bird-food sources, nest boxes, or perches are not present.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Topic	Best <b>4</b>	Good <b>3</b>	Fair <b>2</b>	Poor <b>1</b>	Your Rating
<b>AVOID ATTRACTING NUISANCE WILDLIFE</b> <i>continued</i>					
<b>3. Food and waste scraps</b>	All food/waste (including pet food and bird seed) is stored indoors in rodent/bear proof containers. Recyclables are rinsed and stored. Waste is taken to sanitary landfill. Compost is properly maintained. BBQ is cleaned and stored in a secure area.	Garbage is temporarily stored outside, but in rodent/bear proof containers. Waste is taken to sanitary landfill.	Empty food and drink containers are rinsed. Garbage is stored in sealed containers in an out building. Waste is taken to sanitary landfill.	Compost is improperly maintained, or rodent/bear proof containers are not used. Waste is improperly disposed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4. Preventing unwanted browsing of plants</b>	Never use plastic or metal mesh (e.g. chicken wire) to cover plants as it entangles wildlife. If necessary, plants are covered with burlap and trees are protected with light coloured pipe.				<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>PET MANAGEMENT</b>					
<b>5. Controlling access</b>	Cats are kept indoors. Dogs are kept on a leash or in a run. All pets have up-to-date vaccinations.	Cats are belled and kept on a leash.	Pets are allowed outside unleashed, but are supervised.	Pets are allowed to roam freely outside and are unsupervised.	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Take Action**

Cats can be disastrous for young birds and other wildlife including Ontario's only lizard, the five-lined skink. Keep your cat indoors.

## DEALING WITH NUISANCE WILDLIFE

Control measures for nuisance wildlife are regulated by provincial legislation. Contact the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources if you have any questions or concerns regarding nuisance wildlife.

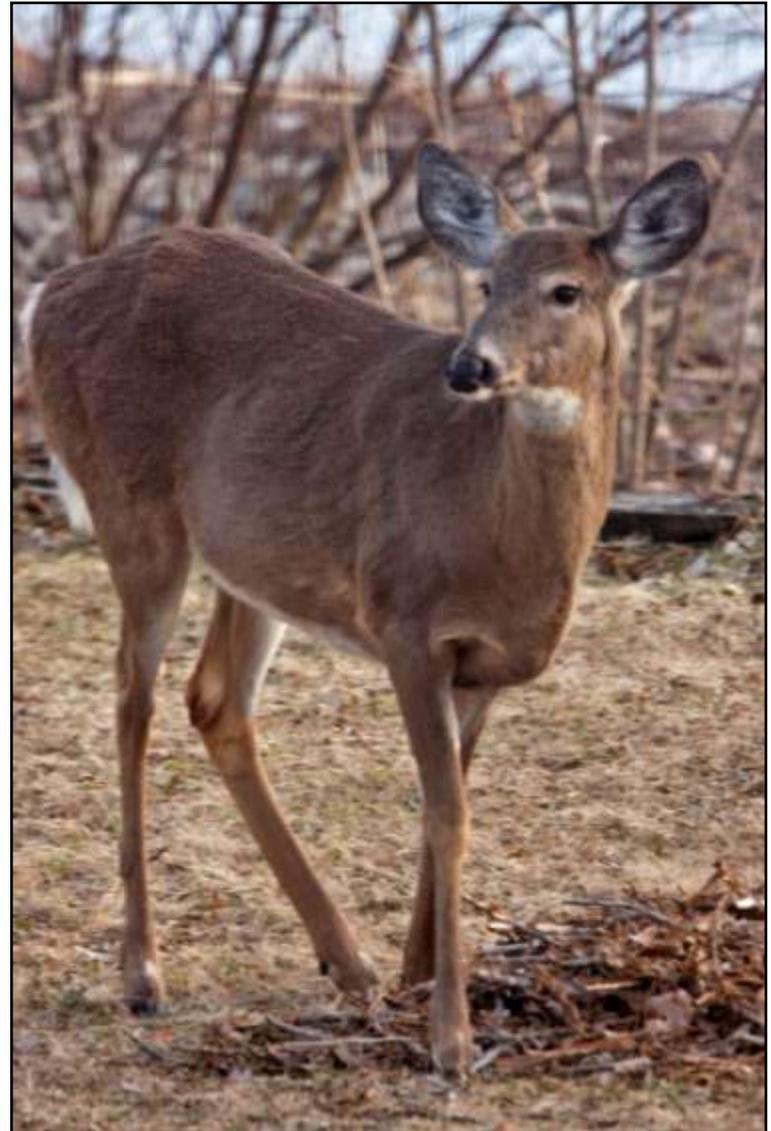
Managing the interactions between wildlife and residents are a challenge. But the significant contribution that residents are making toward the conservation of biodiversity is key to preserving our natural landscape and protecting the quality of our water.

## FOUND A WILD ANIMAL IN DISTRESS?

First be certain that the animal is truly injured or abandoned. Some species act injured to lure predators away from their nest or young. A young animal may appear to be abandoned but could just be temporarily unattended by its parents. Your presence may keep the parents from returning. This is often the case with fawns which are left while their mother is nearby feeding. And although it is sometimes hard to accept, your removal of that animal may deprive predators of a natural food source.

If you decide that an animal truly needs help, please call for advice first. Some injured animals could be dangerous while others simply don't need help. The Ministry of Natural Resources or an animal rehabilitation centre can offer advice on how to best resolve the situation. Do not attempt to treat the animal yourself. The sooner it receives professional help, the greater the chance of it being returned to its natural habitat. It is also illegal in Ontario to keep native species without proper licensing.

**Leave wild animals, including snakes and turtles, alone and never feed them.**



White-tailed Deer  
Credit Ted Krug

## WHAT IS A "SPECIES AT RISK"?

A species at risk is any native plant or animal that is at risk of extinction or of disappearing from our province. One third of Canada's species at risk are found in Ontario (180 plus species) and over 30 of those species are found in eastern Georgian Bay. For several of these species, this area is essential for their survival. The entire Ontario population of the plant Branched Bartonia is found in Parry Sound and Muskoka. For species such as Engelmann's Quillwort, Eastern Foxsnake and the Massasauga, this area provides a significant portion of their range.

Just as we define our community as the place where we live and work, areas such as wetlands and mixed forests with their associated plant and animal species help define natural communities. Some species like the Least Bittern, occupy only marshes while others, like the Eastern Wolf, use a number of different habitats. Each species has its own niche or role in these natural communities. Animals like the Eastern Foxsnake and Massasauga help control rodent populations. The Chimney Swift and Common Nighthawk are efficient insect predators. The loss of even one species can have a ripple effect in the community and indicates a stress in that environment. This is why maintaining biodiversity is important for the overall health of our natural community. Take the time to learn about the species at risk in your area. The worksheets and the action plan that you are developing can help benefit species at risk.



Common Nighthawk  
(Threatened)  
Credit Ted Krug

## THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

The Endangered Species Act (2007) deals with the protection and recovery of species at risk in Ontario.

If a species is identified as an endangered or threatened species on Ontario's Species at Risk list, it is illegal to kill, harm, harass, capture, remove, collect, buy, sell, lease, trade or offer to buy, sell, lease or trade one of its members.

Maximum fines of \$250,000 for individuals, and up to \$1 million for corporations are applicable.

Please report your sightings of species at risk on the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve's web site [www.gbbr.ca](http://www.gbbr.ca) or to:

Species at Risk Biologist  
Ministry of Natural Resources  
7 Bay St.  
Parry Sound  
P2A 1S4  
705-746-4201



Branched Bartonia  
(Threatened)  
Credit Jeremy Rouse

## Who is at Risk in Your Neighbourhood?

Think of the types of habitat in your neighbourhood- are you surrounded by forest or rock outcrops with juniper shrubs? Do you have a wetland nearby? This chart is a guide to some of the species at risk that may find the area where you live essential for their survival. You can help their survival by leaving as much of your property as possible in its natural state. For more information on species at risk in Parry Sound and Muskoka, including range maps, please go to [www.gbbr.ca](http://www.gbbr.ca)

### Endangered (E)

A species facing imminent extirpation or extinction.

### Threatened (T)

A species that is likely to become endangered if limiting factors are not reversed.

### Special Concern (SC)

A species that has characteristics that makes it particularly sensitive to human activities or natural events.

Type of Habitat	Important for:	Your Actions
Rock barrens	Common Nighthawk (T) Eastern Foxsnake (E) Massasauga (T) Five-lined Skink (SC) Eastern Milksnake (SC) Eastern Hog-nosed Snake (T)	Leave rocks in their natural place. They provide important cover for reptiles and areas to regulate their body temperatures.  Keep dogs on a leash.
Mixed forest	Red-headed Woodpecker (SC) Bald Eagle (E) * nesting sites near water Eastern Wolf (SC) Eastern Hog-nosed Snake (T)	Limit the number of trees that are cut. If safe to do so, leave dead trees standing. If you must cut a dead tree, try to leave some logs to slowly decay at the edge of your property. Create brush and leaf piles rather than burning them. Refer to section <u>Seven Trees and Plants on Your Property</u>
Wetlands	Massasauga (T) Blanding's Turtle (T) Northern Ribbonsnake (SC) Spotted Turtle (E) Eastern Hog-nosed Snake (T) Branched Bartonian (E) Snapping Turtle (SC)	Do not fill in wetlands. These areas are essential for the survival of many species.
Coastal Wetlands	Northern Ribbonsnake (SC) Massasauga (T) Eastern Foxsnake (E) Blanding's Turtle (T) Spotted Turtle (E) Stinkpot Turtle (T) Northern Map Turtle (SC) Least Bittern (T)	Do not add fill or alter the natural shoreline. These areas are essential for the survival of many species. Refer to Section <u>Seven Natural Buffers and Shoreline Access</u> and Section Six <u>Water-based Recreation</u> for guidelines.

# Resource List

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## Living with Wildlife

### *For more information....*

- Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals  
(T): 1-888-ONT-SPCA  
[www.ospca.on.ca](http://www.ospca.on.ca)  
info@ospcs.on.ca
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources  
7 Bay Street, Parry Sound P2S 1S4  
Tel: (705)746-4201  
Fax: (705)746-8828  
  
or, Natural Resources Information Centre  
(T): 1-800-667-1940  
[www.mnr.gov.on.ca](http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca)
- Bear Wise Program- fact sheets are available on living or camping in bear habitat.  
[www.ontario.ca/bearwise](http://www.ontario.ca/bearwise)

See Animal Control, your local Health Unit or local municipality in the *Blue Pages* for regulations and information

### Species at Risk

- Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve  
[www.gbbr.ca](http://www.gbbr.ca)
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources  
[www.mnr.gov.on.ca](http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca)
- Parks Canada  
[www.pc.gc.ca/nature/EEP-sar](http://www.pc.gc.ca/nature/EEP-sar)
- Royal Ontario Museum  
[www.rom.on.ca/ontario](http://www.rom.on.ca/ontario)
- Massasauga Recovery Team- The Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake Stewardship Guide  
[www.massasauga.ca](http://www.massasauga.ca)
- Trent-Severn Waterway Wildlife- Action for Habitat Health  
[www.waterwaywildlife.com](http://www.waterwaywildlife.com)

# Action Plan Worksheet #10 -Living with Wildlife

Any ratings of 1 or 2 indicate that your management of wildlife should be changed to reduce the potential for environmental damage. Use the information from the worksheet and the resource section to help analyze your potential problems and decide what you can do to solve or control them. Remember, this is YOUR Action Plan. It must suit you and your property.

Topic Number	Workshop Theme	My Rating	Short-term Action	Long-term Action
4	<i>Food waste and scraps</i>	2	<i>Research options for composting and bear proof storage of garbage.</i>	<i>Purchase and properly install or build a bear proof garbage container or store garbage in a sealed container in a basement. Recyclables are stored in a secure fashion. Composting is carefully managed.</i>