
Where is your project located?

You have selected HUMAN ALTERED.

Examples of human altered sites include: buildings, boathouses, other structures, etc. Since the objective of the screening tool is to avoid impacting species at risk habitat, we're going to show you what species and their associated habitat features to avoid disturbing on human altered sites. In many cases, people wish to refurbish or replace older structures and/or buildings. If you find one of the species and/or habitat features listed below, please do not disturb the species while it is raising its young (generally June to September) and please contact the Parry Sound MNR Species at Risk Biologist (705-773-4205). Learn how to identify the species presented below by visiting:

- <http://www.gbbr.ca/our-environment/species-at-risk>

Species at risk commonly found on human altered sites include:

1. Barn Swallow (threatened species) – Nests near grasslands and other open areas, including urban parks, which have structures for nesting. Preferred sites include eaves, rafters, and cross beams of barns and sheds, as well as the undersides of bridges, wharfs, and large culverts.
2. Chimney Swift (threatened species) – Nest in dark sheltered places, such as in chimneys (uncapped, unlined chimneys generally built pre-1960), barns, silos and large hollow trees. Nests tend to be within 1 km of water.
3. Little Brown Myotis (endangered species) – These bats often select attics, abandoned buildings and barns for summer colonies where they can raise their young. Bats can squeeze through very tiny spaces (as small as six millimetres across) and this is how they access many roosting areas. This bat is active from roughly March to October.



Barn Swallow

Photo credit: Angela Mills



Chimney Swift

Photo credit: Bruno Kern



Little Brown Myotis

Photo credit: Sandy Dobbyn

Now that you know what habitat features to avoid, here's a list of best practices to follow on your building project:

1. Construction workers should be provided with the list of species at risk that may be found on the property. To determine what species at risk may be found in your area, please visit:

- <http://www.gbbr.ca/our-environment/species-at-risk>

If species are encountered during the construction phase, they should be protected from harm and the sighting reported to the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve. In particular, turtles may be attracted to areas of new fill to lay eggs (typically June). If a nesting turtle is encountered, the area must be marked and protected with a 5 metre buffer. For further information on how to mark and protect the turtle nest, or if maintaining a 5m buffer around the nest for the duration on the incubation period will hinder construction, please contact the Parry Sound MNR Species at Risk Biologist (705-773-4205).

2. Vegetation removal and disturbance outside of the building envelope should be minimized. With regard to the Migratory Birds Convention Act 1994, clearing of vegetation should be completed outside of the nesting period of May 15 to July 31.
3. Good site management practices can mitigate the impacts of runoff associated with construction. This could include protecting nearby water bodies/streams from siltation during the construction phase. A safety advisory regarding the use of silt cloth in areas with large bodied snakes is available at:

- http://www.gbbr.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/advisory_silt_fence.pdf

About the Habitat Screening Tool

The Georgian Bay coast is home to more than 1,100 native plant and animal species. Most have stable populations, but some are experiencing significant declines and therefore have protection under the Provincial Endangered Species Act (ESA). The loss of biodiversity has many consequences that we understand, and many that we do not. The loss of species may reduce the environment's resistance to disturbances which can lead to a decrease in available natural resources. Currently, over 40 species are "at risk" in the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve (GBBR) due to a variety of factors including habitat loss and fragmentation, road mortality, competition from invasive species, pollution and over-harvesting. Much of GBBR offers excellent habitat for species at risk, especially reptiles.

It is your responsibility to ensure your building project is in compliance with the ESA. Local Townships are not responsible for verifying if you are compliant under the ESA, and do not have the authority to consider the ESA provisions in their decision to issue a building permit.

This habitat screening tool has been created to help you determine how the ESA may be applicable to your proposed building project. Essentially the screening tool helps you determine the potential for species at risk habitat on, or adjacent to, your proposed building site. This is best completed as early as possible in your planning process. This screening tool has been designed for small scale building projects.

Please note that this screening tool does not replace an ESA permit or absolve the user of any responsibility under the Endangered Species Act. Please contact the Parry Sound MNR Species at Risk Biologist at 705-773-4205 with any questions or clarifications about the ESA.