

REAPS READER



Have you helped the environment today?



Endangered Species



This year, why not make a resolution to help endangered animals?

According to the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada, there are currently **539** plant and animal species at risk in Canada. At least **13** other species are already extinct. There are over **11,000** species at risk in the entire world.

There are five different categories of species at risk:

Extinct: a wildlife species that no longer exists

Extirpated: a wildlife species that no longer exists in Canada, but does exist elsewhere

Endangered: a wildlife species that is facing imminent extirpation or extinction

Threatened: a wildlife species likely to become endangered if nothing is done to reverse the factors leading to its extirpation or extinction

Special concern: a wildlife species that may become a threatened or endangered species because of a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats

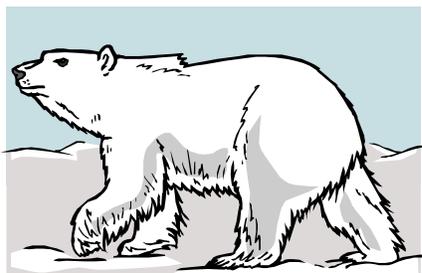
**We share the earth
not only with our
fellow human
beings, but with all
the other creatures.
- Dalai Lama**

There are lots of reasons why species become at risk, but the number one reason is *habitat loss* and *degradation*. Habitat problems affect about 60% of the species at risk in Canada. Habitat loss occurs because as the human population grows, development increases, spreading across the landscape. Construction of houses, buildings, and roads, logging, mining, and agriculture all cause habitat to shrink. Changes to the landscape that harm the environment, such as building dams for hydroelectricity that change the flow of water and add silt to rivers, can also cause habitat to become unsuitable for many species. Environmental contaminants are the second largest factor in species endangerment. Chemicals, like pesticides that can leach off agricultural lands into water bodies, and toxic substances released into the air and water by industry can be very harmful to wildlife. Some of the other factors that lead to endangerment include over-harvesting and illegal poaching, genetic and reproductive isolation, disease, invasive species, and climate change.

Across Canada, government departments and recovery teams are working to help save endangered wildlife. You can help too! To reduce the impact of climate change on endangered species, do your part to reduce greenhouse gases by walking or riding your bike to school instead of driving, and try carpooling with your friends to soccer practice. What other ways can you think of? Another way you can help species at risk is by always practicing the 3 R's: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle. And perhaps the most important thing you can do is to learn as much as you can about endangered species, and tell other people about what you've learned. **Spread the word!**

Did you know?

Global warming is decreasing the thickness of the ice in the Arctic, which makes hunting difficult for polar bears. This has a negative impact on their survival rates. Some polar bears have even drowned because melting ice leaves long distances for bears to swim.



Hey Eco Kids! Check out this cool website where you can learn more about endangered species and all sorts of other environmental stuff. There's tons of fun games and activities too.
www.ecokids.ca

In partnership with Science World's Scientist and Innovators in the School (SIS) program, REAPS school program is supported by the Program for the Awareness and Learning of Science (BC PALS) thanks to the province of British Columbia through the Ministry of Education.