



LIFE ON THE BAY

A STEWARDSHIP GUIDE FOR
EASTERN GEORGIAN BAY
AND INLAND LAKES



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



GEORGIAN BAY
BIOSPHERE
MNIDOO GAMII

Worksheet #10 – Living Alongside Wildlife

Use this worksheet to learn about living alongside wildlife.

Why Should You Be Concerned?

- Wildlife have been inhabiting this region well before property ownership was a legal concept. We must remember that we are newcomers on this landscape and it is humans that need to learn to live with wildlife, in their habitat.
- Living alongside wildlife is key to a healthy ecosystem and watershed.
- Understanding how to live with wildlife will help ensure that wildlife doesn't become a safety concern preventing you from enjoying your property and will help ensure the safety of wildlife who may pass through.
- Local wildlife can be very beneficial and even indirectly decrease your property maintenance costs and efforts (e.g., songbirds and bats decrease insect pest populations).
- There is abundant wildlife diversity along shorelines. However, this coastal biodiversity is increasingly threatened by human activities and development.

What Can You Do?

1. Learn about species at risk and take a proactive role in living alongside these species and their habitats. Take actions to expand the quality of their habitat on your property wherever possible.
2. Ensure that any buildings and structures on your property are appropriately built and sealed to prevent wildlife from entering.
3. See the landscape as an integrated whole and support initiatives that connect areas together.
4. Work with neighbours to ensure contiguous habitat areas along shorelines (see Chapter 7).
5. Manage pets appropriately so they do not harass or harm wildlife.

Living Alongside Wildlife: How Do You Rate?

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

**These conditions may violate provincial legislation or municipal bylaws.*

Topic	Best 4	Good 3	Fair 2	Poor 1	Your Rating
RESOURCES FOR WILDLIFE					
3. Providing wildlife habitat	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.	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.	A few buffers are present but contain no woody species, offering a limited range of wildlife habitats but some water quality protection.	No buffers present.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Basking rocks used by reptiles are left in place near vegetative cover, providing habitat for snakes. Species and their habitat are avoided especially in the spring.	Natural vegetation cover is maintained, and some rocks are in place to provide habitat for snakes. Species are left undisturbed.	Some natural vegetation is maintained and some rocks are in place to provide habitat for snakes. Species are left undisturbed.	No natural vegetation and rocks have been removed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Natural bird food sources, nest boxes, and perches are placed and managed for species including those that provide specific services (e.g. fly, mosquito, or garden insect control). They are all more than 1.5 m (5 ft) above the ground and nest boxes are cleaned regularly.	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).	Natural bird food sources such as berry bearing shrubs are provided.	Natural bird food sources, nest boxes, or perches are not present.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Topic	Best 4	Good 3	Fair 2	Poor 1	Your Rating
AVOID ATTRACTING WILDLIFE					
4. Food and waste scraps	All food and waste (including pet food and birdseed) is stored indoors in rodent/bear-proof containers. Recyclables are rinsed and stored. Waste is taken to a 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 a sanitary landfill.	Empty food and drink containers are rinsed. Garbage is stored in sealed containers in an outbuilding. Waste is taken to a sanitary landfill.	Compost is improperly maintained, or rodent/bear-proof containers are not used. Waste is improperly disposed of.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Preventing unwanted browsing of plants	Plastic or metal mesh (e.g. chicken wire) is not used to cover plants as it entangles wildlife. If necessary, plants are covered with burlap, and trees are protected with a light-coloured pipe.	No consideration given to wildlife in attempts to protect plants from animal browsing.			<input type="checkbox"/>
PET MANAGEMENT					
6. Controlling access	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. Dogs are on a rope.	Pets are allowed outside unleashed but are supervised.	Pets are allowed to roam freely outside and are unsupervised.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Helpful Hints

Pet Management

- Cats can be disastrous for young birds and other wildlife including Ontario's only lizard, the five lined skink. Keep your cat indoors.
- Always keep dogs on a leash or rope, or in a contained space.

Property Management

- Leave rocks in their natural place. They provide important cover and areas for reptiles to regulate their body temperature.
- 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.
- Do not fill or alter wetlands or the natural shoreline. These areas are essential for the survival of many species.

Interacting with Wildlife

- Do not disturb wild animals, including snakes and turtles, and never feed them.
- Control measures for nuisance wildlife are regulated by provincial legislation. Do not attempt any control methods without consulting local and provincial regulations or without the help of a professional.

Wildlife in Distress

- If you come across an animal in distress, 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. 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 a provincial authority or animal rehabilitation centre for advice first. Some injured animals could be dangerous while others simply don't need help. The provincial authorities or an animal rehabilitation centre can offer advice on how to best resolve the situation. Never 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.

Get Involved!

Learn everything you need to know about finding both injured and uninjured turtles on roadways with the Turtles on Roads Guide!

Available here: www.gbbr.ca/conservation-guides

Additional Information

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 (known as extirpation).
- Over 50 species at risk are found in eastern Georgian Bay. For several of these species, this area is essential for their survival.
- Species at risk are classified as either:
 - Endangered – facing imminent extirpation or extinction;
 - Threatened – likely to become endangered if limiting factors are not reversed; or
 - Special concern – has characteristics that make it particularly sensitive to human activities or natural events.
- 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. Each species has its own niche or role in these natural communities. The loss of even one species can have a ripple effect in the community and indicates stress in that environment. This is why maintaining biodiversity is important for the overall health of our natural community.

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 in your community (see iNaturalist page).



iNaturalist

- iNaturalist is an app that is popular across the world as a citizen science tool that helps collect observations and identify species of plants and animals posted by users.
- Every observation can contribute to biodiversity science, from the rarest butterfly to the most common backyard weed. Join the **Georgian Bay Biosphere iNaturalist project** to showcase your observations of unknown, rare, at-risk, and common species!
- All observations will help researchers to gather more information about the species on the eastern coast of Georgian Bay in order to better understand threats and where efforts into research and mitigation should be directed. These observations will help guide research questions, mitigation projects, and other conservation initiatives.
- iNaturalist shares your findings with scientific data repositories like the Global Biodiversity Information Facility to help scientists find and use your data. All you have to do is observe.
- Learn more: www.inaturalist.ca/projects/georgian-bay-biosphere.



Stats






Totals

13773
Observations »






2477
Species »

854
People »






Most Observations

-  **toochill**
1645 observations
-  **hannahdodington**
834 observations
-  **reinerjakubowski**
747 observations
-  **ricksnider**
592 observations
-  **ajrmills**
495 observations

Most Species

-  **ricksnider**
430 species
-  **toochill**
390 species
-  **reinerjakubowski**
383 species
-  **hannahdodington**
335 species
-  **rsety**
305 species

Most Observed Species

-  **Massasauga**
463 observations
-  **Common Watersnake**
356 observations
-  **Painted Turtle**
299 observations
-  **Common Gartersnake**
258 observations
-  **Common Snapping Turtle**
223 observations

Resource List

Stewardship & Conservation

- Species at Risk in the Georgian Bay Biosphere
www.gbbr.ca/species-at-risk
- Maamwi Anjjakiziwin – Together, Land, Renewal, Life
www.maamwigeorgianbay.ca
- Pollinator Gardens: A Guide for Eastern Georgian Bay
www.gbbr.ca/conservation-guides
- Ontario Nature
www.ontarionature.org/programs/community-science
- Birds Canada
www.birdscanada.org/you-can-help/citizen-science
- Keep Cats Safe and Save Bird Lives
www.catsandbirds.ca
- Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre
www.ontarioturtle.ca
- Aspen Valley Wildlife Sanctuary
www.aspenvalley.ca

Government Resources

- Bear Wise Program
www.ontario.ca/bearwise
- Preventing Conflicts with Wildlife
www.ontario.ca/page/prevent-conflicts-wildlife
- Animal Welfare Contacts
www.ontario.ca/page/animal-welfare
- Ontario Species at Risk
www.ontario.ca/page/how-species-risk-are-protected
- Report Rare Species
www.ontario.ca/page/report-rare-species-animals-and-plants
- Creating Wildlife Habitat
www.ontario.ca/page/creating-wildlife-habitat
- Endangered Species Act
www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/07e06

Action Plan Worksheet #10

Living Alongside Wildlife

Any ratings of 1 or 2 indicate that your management of wildlife should be changed to reduce the potential for harm. Use the information from the worksheet and the resource list 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>

Thank You Miigwech

The Georgian Bay Mnidoo Gamii Biosphere (GBB) is a community-based organization that builds capacity for regional sustainability in eastern Georgian Bay.

The GBB is a non-profit registered Canadian charity governed by a Board of Directors.

For more information, please visit:

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