

Glossary

adaptations: traits (changes in behaviour, physiological processes or body structure) that have given individuals of a species possessing these traits an 'edge' over other individuals, making them more likely to survive and reproduce, hence passing on the genes relating to the favourable traits.

breeding habitat: habitat that provides the conditions (food, water and shelter) conducive to successful breeding.

carbon sink: a place where carbon accumulates, such as forests, which convert carbon dioxide from the air into carbon-containing sugars and plant fibre.

climate: a combination of information about how weather behaves and how it changes for a given place, and over a long period of time.

climate change: a long-term shift (warming or cooling) in climate. It occurs as a result of natural factors as well as from human activity. Natural factors that cause climate change include major volcanic eruptions, interactions between the atmosphere and oceans, changes in the sunlight intensity caused by very long-term changes in Earth's orbit around the sun, and changes in the radiation emitted by the sun. Human factors include local air pollution, landscape changes, and changes to greenhouse gas concentrations.

conservation: the study, protection, sustainable utilization, restoration and enhancement of natural resources with a long-term perspective.

COSEWIC: the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada, an independent group of experts funded by the government that conducts research and designates which wild species are in danger of disappearing from Canada. This information is used by the Government of Canada to determine which species will be listed in the Species at Risk Act.

deforestation: clearing an area of forest for another long-term use, such as roads, buildings, golf courses and parking lots.

forest fragmentation: the process of breaking up a large, once-intact forest into smaller, and often isolated fragments, usually as a result of logging, agriculture, mining, pipelines, roads and other developments.

habitat: the arrangement of food, water, shelter and space in a given area.

intact forest: forest that exists in a natural state and has not been negatively impacted by humans.

interdependence: dependence on each other.

invasive species: a non-native species that has arrived in an area due to migration or to the direct or indirect effects of human activity; can cause problems for native species.

land use planning: a decision-making process used to guide human activity in a given area. A variety of methods are used in various jurisdictions.

management: careful planning and decision-making that goes into the conservation of natural resources such as forests, fresh water and fisheries. This could include harvest levels, protected areas, and policies on use.

migration: a behavioural adaptation or strategy that involves movement from one location to another in order to boost an individual's chance of survival and successful reproduction overall, although it also presents risks for the same individual. Migration is a useful strategy in many species' life cycle because it allows them to access new food sources when nearby sources get used up, and it provides access to more favourable living and breeding conditions in certain areas at certain times of year.

native species: a species normally found in an area.

non-renewable resources: naturally occurring assets such as oil, gas and minerals that exist in finite amounts.

organism: a living thing.

renewable resource: a natural resource that replenishes naturally such as trees, fish, plants and wildlife.

resident species: a species that does not migrate, but lives in basically one location year-round.

riparian zone: a distinct area between land and water (excluding ocean) featuring specific types of water-tolerant vegetation. Trees and plants here are important for wildlife habitat and food, sediment control and prevention of erosion.

SARA: Canada's Species at Risk Act

species at risk: a species that is of special concern, threatened, endangered (facing imminent extinction) or extirpated (extinct in certain areas of previous inhabitation).

stakeholder: a person or organization that has an investment and concern in a particular item or endeavour. Stakeholders wish to be included in the sharing of information and contribute to decision-making.

sustainable: used to describe practices that allow for controlled consumption so that a renewable resource remains at basically the same level for use by future generations.

Traditional Knowledge: knowledge and values that have been acquired by Aboriginal people through experience, observation, from the land or from spiritual teachings, and handed down through generations. This knowledge and these values sustain social roles and responsibilities, cultural values, and rights in relation to land use and livelihoods. Traditional Knowledge includes the knowledge of Elders and other knowledge holders on such topics as natural resource use (e.g., hunting, fishing and trapping sites), burial grounds, natural resource observations over time (e.g., water levels, species and population numbers) and cultural and spiritual sites.

wetland: a distinct wet area of habitat featuring varying degrees of water and specific types of vegetation and soil, including swamps, bogs, fens and marshes. Spruce bogs are very common in the boreal forest.