



Quinte Field Naturalists

The Quinte Field Naturalists Association is affiliated with Ontario Nature, a non-profit organization sponsoring nature education, conservation and research.

Dear Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks: Rod Phillips

We, the members of Quinte Field Naturalists, are deeply concerned about the Discussion Paper reviewing the Endangered Species Act (ERO #013-4143). Preservation of species and natural habitats is vital to maintaining biodiversity, which in turn is essential for the maintenance of the stability of ecosystems. All living creatures deserve to be protected, both for their own sakes and for the roles they play in ecosystems. Weakening of ecosystems by neglecting to protect the species in them will be seen by future generations as a failure on our part. Failure to protect species at risk means failure to protect critical habitat, which in turn means that species that are more common now may become at risk. It is a downward slide. Listing of species at risk is based on **good science**. Many of our young people are learning this science in increasingly popular courses in environmental science and conservation biology, in our colleges and universities. They are full of enthusiasm for a bright future with healthy, functioning ecosystems, clean air to breathe and clean water to drink. They are basing their careers on this positive outlook. Let's not disappoint and discourage them.

The Endangered Species Act, 2007 was seen as gold standard by jurisdictions around the world but subsequently was weakened. We ask the Government not to weaken the Act further, but to strengthen and maintain it. We urge the Government to repeal the 2013 exemptions for the forestry, hydro, mining and commercial development industries and to amend section 57(1)1 of the Endangered Species Act, so that any future exemptions cannot jeopardize the recovery of endangered and threatened species. We plead with the Government to maintain mandatory habitat protection for endangered and threatened species and to continue COSSARO's current species listing process. This process is based on **good science** and is strongly informed and imbued by community knowledge and aboriginal traditional knowledge {ESA section 5(3)}. Furthermore, we urge the Government to require compensation that results in a direct overall benefit to affected species, where harmful activities have been permitted.

A strong Endangered Species Act is essential to the preservation of biodiversity, and maintaining all of the links in the web of life, is critical to the continuance of a healthy, prosperous future on this planet. Please demonstrate your care and concern for people living in Ontario now and for generations to come by making strong commitments to the ecosystems that support life. Ontario **needs** a gold standard Endangered Species Act.

Sincerely,

George Thomson M.Sc.
QFN President