

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Reports Show Us What Needs to Be Done to Protect Ontario's Biodiversity

NEWMARKET (May 17, 2010) Conservation Ontario acknowledges the release today of two important reports by the [Ontario Biodiversity Council](#). These reports are significant because they establish a base line for monitoring the health of important indicator species; and support our ability to assess the effectiveness of programs intended to maintain healthy habitats and species diversity.

The reports are entitled: *The State of Ontario's Biodiversity 2010* and *Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy Progress Report 2005 – 2010*. The first report provides benchmarks on the state of Ontario's biodiversity by providing information on 29 indicators and identify where more protection or research is needed.

The second report provides information about activities, events, initiatives and programs undertaken in Ontario since the Strategy was first introduced in 2005. While a great deal has been accomplished, both reports conclude that greater efforts will be necessary to arrest species decline resulting from our expanding population, especially in southern Ontario's mixed woodlands ecosystem.

Biodiversity is the rich mix of plants, trees, animals, and habitats such as forests and wetlands that make up the natural areas of our province. Keeping these features and functions healthy and strong is key to ensuring our health and that of Ontario's watersheds.

Nature provides us with many important things that are important to our economy and to our health. Some examples include:

- trees which help to clean the air we breathe, regulate our climate;
- wetlands which filter drinking water sources, and protect us against flooding and drought, preventing millions of dollars in damages;
- wild plants which provide food for us, prevent erosion and help to maintain healthy soil;
- bees and other insects which pollinate crops and wild plants; and
- the Great Lakes provide billions of dollars in revenue from activities such as commercial and sport fishing, tourism, recreational boating, beaches, and most important as a source of drinking water for millions of Ontarians.

We also rely on natural areas for popular outdoor recreation and businesses such as snowmobiling, hiking, canoeing, camping, and skiing.

"All too often we think that our natural world has little or no impact on us. However, we depend daily on the environment around us and we need to pay more attention to it. Not only does it contribute significantly to our economy, but most important, it impacts our health." said Don Pearson, General Manager of

Conservation Ontario. Mr. Pearson is also a member of the Ontario Biodiversity Council.

Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities are pleased to work in partnership with many other organizations, government and landowners to plan and deliver programs and services that promote healthy biodiversity by protecting water quality and quantity; planting trees, protecting water sources and working with landowners to learn about and protect our environment.

To download these reports or find out more information, visit the Ontario Biodiversity Council website: http://www.ontariobiodiversitycouncil.ca/index.php/reports_2010

For more information on Conservation Authority programs: www.conservationontario.ca

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