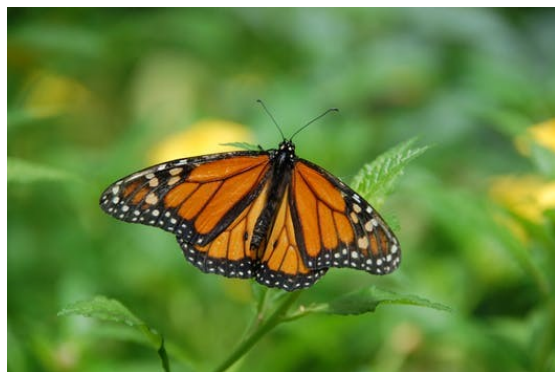


THE VALUE OF BIODIVERSITY

Living as we do in a rare Oak Savanna forest can give us a false sense of what is happening globally to the natural world. We delight in beautiful wildflower diversity, the purple wild geraniums followed by the corals of columbine and wave after wave of native species that flourish on our properties year after year. And, dependent on this diversity is the variety of wildlife that delights our senses. But, even here, biodiversity is diminishing.



Monarch Butterfly has been declared to be a **Species-at-risk of becoming extinct.**

The causes of the decline are climate change and loss of habitat.

We can help by planting milkweed seeds in sunny spots on our properties this fall.

The Monarch caterpillars feed exclusively on milkweed. The gradual eradication of this plant has led to fewer numbers of Monarchs. Mid-summer roadside cutting cuts down milkweed in bloom at the very time that it is needed most by Monarchs.

This spring, CBC reported that each year 80,000 new species are discovered but 100,000 species become extinct.



More than 700 of the 4,000 native bee species in North America and Hawaii are believed to be inching toward extinction due to increased pesticide use leading to habitat loss,

“If pollinator declines continue at this rate it will have serious implications not just for human food security and economics but also for biodiversity and the health of ecosystems in general,” says Berry Brosi, assistant professor of environmental sciences at Emory University. March, 2017 Reuters



Eastern Hog-nosed Snake-**Threatened Species**

Lives in Huron Woods, supported by conservation of natural environment



Endangered Species The Common Five-lined Skink, Carolinian population, lives in Huron Woods. Lot owners must contact the MNR before a lot can be cleared because this species' habitat is protected by SAR legislation.

According to Ontario Nature, “ between 10 and 30 percent of all mammals, birds and amphibians are threatened with extinction. Whole ecosystems are threatened. The main threats are due to alteration, fragmentation and destruction of habitat, introduction of invasive species, increased pollution, human population growth, overconsumption of natural resources, the production of massive amounts of garbage and the impacts of climate change.”

How Protecting Diversity of Plants and Animals Helps Us All

- Seventy-five percent of the world’s food crops depend on pollination by at least one of the 20,000 species of pollinators, including bees, butterflies, moths, wasps, beetles, birds, bats, and other vertebrates.
- Many crops also represent an important source of income in developing countries, such as coffee and cocoa. The United Nations Biodiversity Report 2017 found that the annual total value of global crops directly affected by pollinators is between \$235 billion and \$577 billion. Healthy economies in the developing world reduce the chance of conflict, and the mass human migrations fleeing such conflict.
- A diverse ecosystem is able to recover from floods, fires and disease according to Ontario Nature. These disasters are increasing in frequency due to climate change.
- Biodiverse habitats provide not only clean air, fresh water, food, fuel and medicines but also pristine views and quiet places to relax and reconnect with nature
- Diverse environments allow plants and animals to evolve, creating new varieties, any one of which may provide solutions to future human challenges.

We Can Help By

- eliminating fertilizer, insecticide and herbicide use around our homes and properties
- choosing vehicles that reduce fuel consumption
- wasting less food
- wasting fewer materials that go into landfill
- choosing alternate sources of protein to reduce beef consumption, since cows release large amounts of methane gas, thereby contributing to greenhouse gas buildup.
- conserving or restoring native ground covers, shrubs and trees to maintain biodiversity in Huron Woods
- buying locally produced food to reduce transportation costs and pollution
- buying locally produced honey to encourage beekeeping
- lending your time and expertise to a local organization that supports biodiversity
- choosing foods that have been grown without use of insecticides and herbicides (neonicotinoids cause bees to lose their ability to find their hives)
- planting varieties of milkweed to encourage the return of Monarchs to Huron Woods
- reporting turtle, amphibian and reptile sightings to the Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas at atlas@ontarionature.org

Huron Woods is not immune to diminishing biodiversity. Ask yourself this. When was the last time you saw a meadow full of Monarchs? Have you ever seen a Common Five-lined Skink? Where are the dozens of Painted Turtles that used to sunbathe on logs in the Old Ausable Channel?