

# Biodiversity and You!

## WHAT IS BIODIVERSITY?

Biodiversity is the variety and variability of animals, plants, fungi, bacteria and ecosystems. There is no other planet in the visible universe that has the ability to support such an abundance of life like Planet Earth. Biological diversity not only makes the world a beautiful place to live and explore, it is the very essence which makes life possible.

## WHY IS BIODIVERSITY IMPORTANT?

The Lower Thames Valley Watershed is located in the heart of the Carolinian ecozone, one of the most biologically diverse regions within Canada. Unfortunately, extensive development and agricultural practices have resulted in a significant loss of important habitats that support biodiversity. To date, southern Ontario has lost:

- 70% wetland habitat
- 98% grassland habitat
- 80% forest habitat

These habitats and the species which live in them provide essential ecosystem services such as climate regulation, pollination, air and water purification, as well as food, fuel and fiber– just to name a few!

Consider the Earth as a house with a stone foundation. Each species or ecosystem represents a stone, and as more are removed or lost, the stability of the foundation weakens. If enough stones are removed, the entire house collapses.

Protecting Ontario's diverse species and ecosystems is more than a moral responsibility, our human health and future generations depend on how we care for the Earth today.

## WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

Whether you live in the city or country, you can help protect biodiversity! The LTVCA offers a number of programs for the community to get involved such as tree planting and garbage clean-up events, funding for restoration projects on private land, native tree species at reduced costs, and incentives programs for farmers.

Check out our website [www.ltvca.ca](http://www.ltvca.ca) and look under the Programs Tab in Conservation Services for more info!

Look closely at nature. Every species is a masterpiece, exquisitely adapted to the particular environment in which it has survived. Who are we to destroy or even diminish biodiversity?

–E.O. Wilson, Biologist, Naturalist and Writer