

Continued from page 10

own backyard.

CVC ecologist Laura Timms says the numbers are higher than what's expected for "baseline extinction" - species that go extinct because of natural processes.

"The number of species going extinct now is way higher because of human activity," she said. "There's a lot of evidence for it."

An example from the watershed is the Jefferson Salamander. It's a salamander that lives in the wetlands and forests that has been threatened by development and land conversion in Brampton and Mississauga.

"They're a symptom of this problem of wetland loss," Timms said.

She explained Ontario has lost around 85 per cent of its wetlands since European settlement and that the loss of wetlands not only threatens species, but flood attenuation.

"Wetlands are like sponges," Timms said. "They soak up the water, collect it, and prevent it from spilling over and creating floods."

With the rise of floods in cottage country this year, the threat of wetland loss is visible, she added.

Another example of an at-risk species in the watershed is the Bank Swallow. This bird, an aerial insectivore, is in decline, which inadvertently increases the number of mosquitoes - their prey. Timms added that there are indeed "more mosquitoes around these days."

But the significance of losing these species and the disappearing wetlands isn't just pest control and flood attenuation. The Credit River's ecosystem provides nutrient cycling, soil formation, photosynthesis, pollination, and many more processes important to all life.

In the watershed, land development is the primary cause of creating at-risk species, Timms identified.

UTM associate professor of political science and geography Andrea Olive says the IPBES report coincides with new changes to the Endangered Species Act.

Olive says when it comes to environmental matters in the watershed, they're a provincial responsibility.

"Ontario's Endangered Species Act was seen as the best one in Canada," Olive said. "But now, you can pay to get out of protecting a species."

Olive is referring to changes to the act proposed through Bill 108, which would allow developers to pay a charge or a mitigation fee to build in areas where there are endangered species. The money would be collected into a fund that is intended to be used for conservation and other services.

"You can never pay enough," she said. "You'll never be able to replace the habitat."

**AT-RISK SPECIES IN THE CREDIT RIVER WATERSHED:**

**AMPHIBIANS:**

- Jefferson Salamander
- Blue-spotted Jefferson Salamander
- Western Chorus Frog

**BIRDS:**

- Acadian Flycatcher
- American White Pelican
- Bald Eagle
- Bank Swallow
- Barn Swallow
- Black Tern
- Bobolink
- Canada Warbler

- Cerulean Warbler
- Chimney Swift
- Common Nighthawk
- Eastern Meadowlark
- Eastern Whip-poor-will
- Eastern Wood-pewee
- Evening Grosbeak
- Golden Eagle
- Golden-winged Warbler
- Grasshopper Sparrow
- Henslow's Sparrow
- Horned Grebe
- Least Bittern
- Loggerhead Shrike
- Louisiana Waterthrush
- Olive-sided Flycatcher
- Peregrine Falcon
- Prothonotary Warbler
- Red-headed Woodpecker
- Rusty Blackbird
- Short-eared Owls
- Wood Thrush
- Yellow-breasted Chat

**FISH:**

- American Eel
- Atlantic Salmon
- Deepwater Sculpin
- Lake Ontario Kiyi
- Lake Sturgeon
- Redside Dace
- Shortnose Cisco

**INSECTS:**

- Eastern Persius Duskywing
- Monarch Butterfly
- Mottled Duskywing

- Rapids Clubtail
  - West Virginia White
- MAMMALS:**
- Eastern Small footed Myotis (bat)
  - Little Brown Myotis
  - Northern Myotis
  - Tricolored Bat
  - Woodland Vole

**PLANTS:**

- American Chestnut
- American Ginseng
- Black Ash
- Butternut
- Common Hop-tree
- Eastern Flowering Dogwood
- Hart's-tongue Fern
- Hill's Pondweed
- Kentucky Coffee-tree

**REPTILES:**

- Blanding's Turtle
- Eastern Milksnake
- Eastern Ribbonsnake
- Midland Painted Turtle
- Northern Map Turtle
- Snapping Turtle

**STORY BEHIND THE STORY**

Our newsroom received the press release of the IPBES report and thought of how species loss affects our own backyards.

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