

Rapids Clubtail

Ontario Government Response Statement



Photo: Lois Stacey

PROTECTING AND RECOVERING SPECIES AT RISK IN ONTARIO

Species at risk recovery is a key part of protecting Ontario's biodiversity. Biodiversity – the variety of life on Earth – provides us with clean air and water, food, fibre, medicine and other resources that we need to survive.

The Endangered Species Act, 2007 (ESA) is the Government of Ontario's legislative commitment to protecting and recovering species at risk and their habitats. As soon as a species is listed as extirpated, endangered or threatened under the ESA, it is automatically protected from harm or harassment. Also, immediately upon listing, the habitats of endangered and threatened species are protected from damage or destruction.

Under the ESA, the Ministry of Natural Resources (the Ministry) must ensure that a recovery strategy is prepared for each species that is listed as endangered or threatened. A recovery strategy provides science-based advice to the government on what is required to achieve recovery of a species.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE STATEMENTS

Within nine months after a recovery strategy is prepared, the ESA requires the Ministry to publish a statement summarizing the government's intended actions and priorities in response to the recovery strategy. The recovery strategy for Rapids Clubtail was completed on September 10, 2010 (http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/Business/Species/2ColumnSubPage/STDPDPROD_066841.html).

The response statement is the government's policy response to the scientific advice provided in the recovery strategy. In addition to the strategy, the response statement is based on input from stakeholders, other jurisdictions, Aboriginal communities and members of the public. It reflects the best available traditional, local and scientific knowledge at this time and may be modified if new information becomes available. In implementing the actions in the response statement, the ESA allows the Ministry to determine what is feasible, taking into account social and economic factors.

Rapids Clubtail is a small, brightly coloured dragonfly that lives in clear, cool, medium-sized to large rivers with gravel shallows and muddy pools. Like all dragonflies, the Rapids Clubtail begins its life as an aquatic larva and is transformed into a winged adult during the summer.

MOVING FORWARD TO PROTECT AND RECOVER RAPIDS CLUBTAIL

Rapids Clubtail is listed as an endangered species under the ESA, which protects both the animal and its habitat. The ESA prohibits harm to or harassment of the species and damage to or destruction of its habitat without authorization. Such authorization would require that conditions established by the Ministry be met.

In Ontario, Rapids Clubtail has been found in only three rivers in the past 25 years: the Thames, the Humber and the Mississippi. Historically, the species was also found in the Credit River, where it has not been observed since 1939. The primary threat to the species is the degradation of river habitats. Activities or conditions that impede or alter the quantity and quality of water in the rivers, such as dams and pollution, pose threats to Rapids Clubtail.

The government's goal for the recovery of Rapids Clubtail is to ensure its long-term survival by protecting existing populations and, where feasible, by rehabilitating degraded habitat at known sites.

Protecting and recovering species at risk is a shared responsibility. No single agency or organization has the knowledge, authority or financial resources to protect and recover all of Ontario's species at risk. Successful recovery requires intergovernmental co-operation and the involvement of many individuals, organizations and communities.

In developing the government response statement, the Ministry considered what actions are feasible for the government to lead directly and what actions are feasible for the government's conservation partners to undertake with government support.

GOVERNMENT-LED ACTIONS

To help protect and recover Rapids Clubtail, the government will directly undertake the following actions:

- Develop a survey protocol to be used by proponents and partners to detect the presence or absence of Rapids Clubtail.
- Educate other agencies and authorities involved in planning and environmental assessment processes on the protection requirements under the ESA.
- Encourage the submission of Rapids Clubtail data to the Ministry's central repository at the Natural Heritage Information Centre.
- Undertake communications and outreach to increase public awareness of species at risk in Ontario.
- Protect the Rapids Clubtail and its habitat through the ESA. Develop and enforce a regulation prescribing the habitat of the species.

- Support conservation, agency, municipal and industry partners in undertaking activities to protect and recover Rapids Clubtail. Support will be provided through funding, agreements, permits (including conditions) and advisory services.
- Establish and communicate annual priority actions for government support in order to encourage collaboration and reduce duplication of efforts.

GOVERNMENT-SUPPORTED ACTIONS

The government endorses the following actions for the protection and recovery of Rapids Clubtail. Actions identified as “high” will be given priority consideration for funding or for authorizations under the ESA. The government will focus its support on these high-priority actions over the next five years.

Focus Area: Protection and Management

Objective: Protect, maintain and rehabilitate habitat in the three rivers in Ontario where Rapids Clubtail has been found within the past 25 years.

Actions:

1. **(HIGH)** Develop best management practices for protecting Rapids Clubtail and its habitat and promote these practices to landowners and land managers whose land surrounds occupied locations.
2. Rehabilitate degraded habitat at occupied locations where feasible.

Focus Area: Inventory

Objective: Conduct an inventory of Rapids Clubtail in suitable habitat.

Actions:

3. **(HIGH)** Develop and conduct an inventory program for Rapids Clubtail prioritized by historic locations, other sites on the currently occupied rivers and other suitable rivers.
4. Integrate searches for Rapids Clubtail into ongoing benthic inventory programs♦ in rivers across the province.
5. Train volunteers, such as field naturalist clubs, on undertaking surveys to increase knowledge of the species distribution.

Focus Area: Monitoring

Objective: Implement a monitoring program for the locations where Rapids Clubtail is known to exist.

Actions:

6. Develop and implement a monitoring program to be conducted by qualified personnel at known locations.

♦ These programs involve collecting benthic macro-invertebrates, which are mostly aquatic insects or the aquatic stage of an insect, that live at the bottom of a water body. As these types of species are sensitive to changes in environmental conditions, they provide valuable information on water and habitat quality.

Focus Area: Research

Objective: Implement a monitoring program for the locations where Rapids Clubtail is known to exist.

Actions:

7. Investigate the sensitivity of Rapids Clubtail to various habitat features to determine why the species occurs in so few rivers and to prioritize threats.
8. Carry out research on basic biology, such as prey, duration of life stages and dispersal after Rapids Clubtail emerges from the water.

IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

Financial support for the implementation of actions may be available through the Species at Risk Stewardship Fund, Species at Risk Farm Incentive Program or Community Fisheries and Wildlife Involvement Program. Conservation partners are encouraged to discuss project proposals related to the actions in this response statement with the Ministry. The Ministry can also advise if any authorizations under the ESA may be required to undertake the project.

Implementation of the actions may be subject to changes in priorities across the multitude of species at risk, availability of resources and the capacity of partners to undertake recovery activities. Where appropriate, the implementation of actions for multiple species will be co-ordinated across government response statements.

REVIEWING PROGRESS

The ESA requires the Ministry to conduct a review of progress toward protecting and recovering a species not later than five years from the publication of this response statement. The review will help determine whether adjustments are needed to achieve the protection and recovery of Rapids Clubtail.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to thank all those who participated in the development of the "Recovery Strategy for Rapids Clubtail in Ontario" for their dedication to protecting and recovering species at risk.

For additional information:

Visit the species at risk website at
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