

## Ontario's Species At Risk: A Wildlife Artist's Perspective and Offering

August 4, 2021 - [Sherry Hayes](#)  
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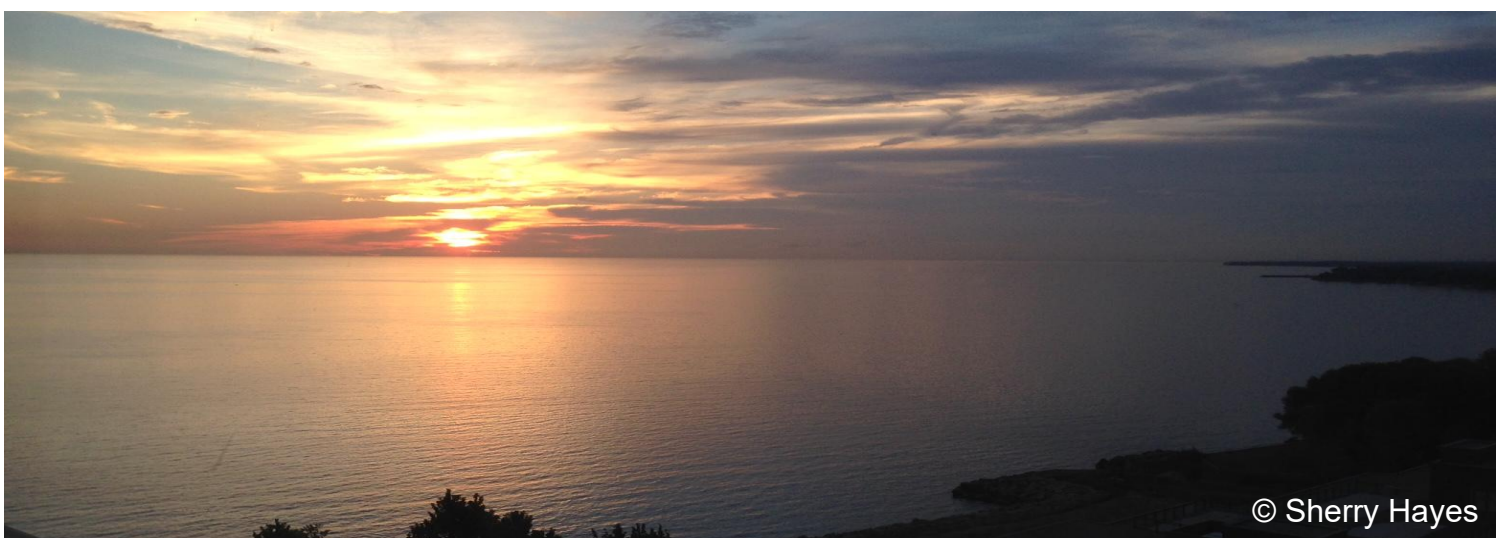
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Monarch Butterfly, Suburban Garden, Hamilton Escarpment and the subject of a special painting *'Winged Warrior'* dedicated to our Endangered Species © Sherry Hayes

Nature is spectacular in its simplest form and magnificent in its complexity. Animal and plant kingdoms alike are stunningly beautiful yet incredibly vulnerable. Some thrive, some survive, and some are lost forever. How can we help protect the ecosystems that sustain us?

### As Simple As 1 – 2 – 3...

1. Be aware. Life on Earth is interconnected. When nature falters, we falter. Therefore, we must be aware of how our actions impact the stability of nature around us.
2. Understand. The pendulum can swing far and hard in the wrong direction when the balance of Nature is disrupted. We must keep our wants versus needs in check.
3. Act. Choose to take a stance for Ontario's species at risk. They depend on all of us.



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Earth's Bounty - Sunrise Over Lake Ontario, Stoney Creek © Sherry Hayes

### Declining Biodiversity

Human activities are having an impact on the world's terrestrial and marine environments, and the rate of species extinctions is accelerating. Extensive deforestation is an important driver of biodiversity loss. Many once pristine wetlands are being destroyed by massive residential and industrial developments. Habitat loss, pollution and climate change also pose serious threats.

When do we determine that this so-called 'progress' has pushed the stability of wildlife and ecosystems past the breaking point? It is a frightening question as we look toward the future and what might lie ahead.



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A perfect example. Once pristine undisturbed lands and a natural Heritage Woodlot flanking Lake Ontario, Stoney Creek. It is a noted migratory pathway for song and water birds. Once teeming with wildlife, in 2015 excavation began and by 2020, it became the sight of clustered high-density residential developments offering miniscule green space.

### Our Own Backyard

While many are concerned about the plight of wildlife worldwide, we sometimes lose sight of the beautiful creatures that live right in our own backyard.



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Bumble Bee on a Hydrangea, Suburban Garden, Hamilton Escarpment © Sherry Hayes

## Species At Risk

Ontario has varied ecosystems. From the incredible boreal forests, tundra and wetlands of the far north to the Carolinian forest of the southern region and the beautiful Niagara Escarpment, our province should be full of biodiversity. Yet evidence shows more than 230 animals and plants are at risk in Ontario.



Snapping Turtle on Spring Trek, Grey County, Ontario © Sherry Hayes

To destroy that which shares this planet with us – particularly for the purposes of unnecessary overindulgence and overconsumption – is a sad legacy. Losing ecosystems like wetlands, forests, prairies and lakes, creates a chain effect that can ultimately affect our communities' wellbeing.

## Our Choice

Nature depends on us. In the opinion of this proud life-long Ontarian and wildlife artist, today is not too soon to protect our wild species and wild spaces.

It is for these reasons, I feel compelled to act in my own humble way. As a wildlife artist and with my love for all things nature, my art has now become my voice. Stepping away from my normal style of art, my latest depictions of our vulnerable species, although haunting, are designed to bring hope to this crisis and shine light on the darkness. This collection has been created for and committed to assisting organizations that are dedicated to the preservation of wild Ontario.



'Winged Warrior' – Original ArtFusion Painting (In part). Created by the Story Author, from her Endangered Species 'Darkness' Series © Sherry Hayes

In a quest to help Ontario's endangered species, one hundred percent of the net proceeds of my original painting 'Winged Warrior' will be donated to Ontario Nature for their ongoing effort in the preservation of wild areas for the sustainability of the monarch butterfly. For more information, please visit: [artscapesbyserry.ca](http://artscapesbyserry.ca) .



Author: Sherry Hayes

Biography: Sherry Hayes, landscape designer and wildlife artist has been active for many years in her pursuit of drawing attention to the plight of wildlife and sensitive lands due to over-development and residential intensification, particularly in Ontario's Golden Horseshoe east area.