

## Town of Erin Species at Risk Rusty-patched Bumble Bee



A bee is a bee – right? Surprisingly no! There are more than 40 species of bumble bees in Ontario (and bumble bees are just one family of bee), each with a unique niche in the natural world. Rusty-patched Bumble Bees (RPBBs) don't use hives like honeybees or wasps, but live in small underground colonies, frequently in woodlands. They pollinate a large number of native flowering plants and food crops, and thus are a critical part of the ecosystem and to our food system.

**Description:** Like all Bumbles, RPBBs are plump and 'furry' with yellow and black segments. RPBBs have a distinctive rust-coloured patch on their back.

**Habitat:** RPBBs use a variety of habitats, including marshes, farmland, woods, and even urban areas. The presence of flowering plants influences where they are found. They usually nest in abandoned rodent burrows.

**Threats:** RPBBs are in serious trouble. Over the last 30-40 years RPBBs have suffered a near-catastrophic decline. Once common in southern Ontario, only a handful have been found in recent years. The decline is likely due to a number of factors including spread of disease from domestic bees used in greenhouse operations, use of agricultural pesticides, particularly neonicotinoids, which are especially lethal to bees, habitat loss, and potentially climate change.

**Status:** RPBBs are classified as Endangered under the Ontario Endangered Species Act

**What can you do?** Avoid the use of insecticides in your gardening and lawn care and plant native flowers in your gardens. Check out Pollination Canada on the internet and learn about various initiatives to help pollinators such as the RPBB. If you are particularly avid, keep an eye out for bees that match the description of RPBBs and report suspected sightings to the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.



## SARs in the Town of Erin

### Birds

Barn Swallow  
Chimney Swift  
Common Nighthawk

### Mammals

Little Brown Bat  
Small-footed Bat  
Northern Long-eared Bat

### Reptiles and Amphibians

Jefferson Salamander  
Milk Snake



### Flora

Butternut  
American Chestnut  
Ginseng

### Insects

Rusty-patched Bumblebee

## What is ESAC?

ESAC is the Environment and Sustainability Advisory Committee of Council for the Town of Erin. Our mission is to provide sound environmental advice to our Council, develop partnerships with neighbours, businesses and the community, communicate important environmental issues, and help make Erin a sustainable, climate-change-ready, and environmentally progressive community.



**For more about ESAC or to join ESAC contact:**

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## Rusty-patched Bumble Bee

### Species at Risk



Did you know that here in the Town of Erin there are many species at risk (SAR)? They are not the “stars” of the natural world, but are populations of grassland, woodland and wetland creatures that were once plentiful but are now threatened by habitat loss and other factors. How can we help? First, get to know what these threatened species are, then learn what actions might help them flourish again.

