



In Ontario and around the world, we are facing a twin crisis of climate change and biodiversity loss.

Beyond its intrinsic value, biodiversity provides us with innumerable benefits, from pollinating our crops and mitigating pests to cleaning our waters, creating spaces for outdoor recreation, and protecting us from extreme weather events. The many benefits we enjoy globally for free, the World Health Organization estimates, are valued at [US \\$10 trillion annually](#), and replacing these services would be astronomically costly compared to conserving what we already have. As Canadians know, there is immense strength in diversity.

In Ontario, we have the privilege of living in one of the most biodiverse regions in the country, home to species and ecosystems that are globally rare, such as alvars, oak savannas, and tall grass prairies. Land trusts across Ontario work hard to protect these vital natural resources. Land trusts are local, private, charitable organizations focused on the long-term conservation of lands and waters within their communities. Led by passionate volunteers and staff, we help to alleviate threats to biodiversity by addressing habitat loss, a key driver of biodiversity decline. We also work to address fragmentation, invasive species, flood risk, and pollution. We combat these risks with conservation, stewardship, and restoration.

OLTA's land trust members collectively care for and protect over 2,000 natural areas and green spaces across Ontario, including in areas of high biodiversity such as UNESCO World Biosphere Reserves like the Niagara Escarpment and Frontenac Arch. Local and regional land trusts in Ontario protect habitat for 149 species at risk, offering them a haven where they can recover and thrive.

Our community regularly shares stories of good news for biodiversity and conservation. The [Kirtland's Warbler Restoration Initiative](#), piloted by the Oak Ridges Moraine, offers 33 hectares of protected habitat for the endangered bird near Toronto, and the site has already seen the arrival of several species at risk only a few years into the initiative. The recent acquisition of the [Talisman property by the Bruce Trail Conservancy](#) protects 55 hectares along the sensitive Niagara Escarpment, reflecting local community priorities. The Georgian Bay Land Trust is undertaking groundbreaking research into several bird species through their [Monitoring Avian Productivity Station \(MAPS\) bird banding program](#). This research includes species whose populations are in decline but are not yet designated as at-risk, allowing for early intervention. These are only a handful of examples of the pivotal work of our community.



As awareness of biodiversity and its significance grows, Land Trusts are at the forefront of its protection and are tackling this challenge head-on at the local level. For more information about the work land trusts do in Ontario and how you can support our community, visit [OLTA.ca](https://www.olta.ca).