

# NWT State of the Environment Report – 2010 Special Biodiversity Edition

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*Hon. J. Michael Miltenberger  
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16th Legislative Assembly*

Mr. Speaker, later today I will be tabling the NWT State of the Environment Report – 2010 Special Biodiversity Edition. The Report celebrates the value of biodiversity, and is part of the Northwest Territories contribution to the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity.

The State of the Environment – Special Biodiversity Edition presents the latest findings on the status and trends of biodiversity, ecosystem integrity, the status of traditional knowledge, growing trends in the sustainable use of biodiversity, and trends in threats to biodiversity. The Report is in collaboration with the Government of Canada, the Wildlife Management Advisory Committee (NWT), the Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board, the Sahtu Renewable Resources Board, the Wek'èezhii Renewable Resources Board, and the North Slave Métis Alliance.

This initiative, as outlined in the Department's Framework for Action will help keep residents and decision-makers informed on the state of biodiversity in the Northwest Territories. Compared to other places in Canada, the Northwest Territories' diversity of plants and animals is essentially unchanged. However, disturbing trends, such as widespread declines in some bird species are of concern.

Biodiversity is the web of life. It is the diversity of our plants and animals that make the NWT's forests, tundra, mountains, lakes, rivers and skies their home.

Biodiversity in the NWT is a combination of healthy ecosystems, the variety of our northern species and the sustainable use of our genetic resources. A loss of biodiversity can threaten the health of people and the ecosystems that we live in.

The environment is of great importance to the people of the Northwest Territories. Residents are fortunate to have clean air and water, and productive forests, land and wildlife, but pressures on the environment, including climate change and fragmentation of our landscape exist and must be monitored and mitigated. Loss of biodiversity reduces nature's capacity to adapt to a changing environment, reducing its ability to provide the vital services we require to survive. By monitoring the changes in biodiversity we can be better prepared to mitigate them, and adapt to a changing environment.

In response to the United Nations 2010 Biodiversity Targets, the Report is divided into six sections: status and trends of NWT biodiversity; ecosystem integrity; status of

traditional knowledge; sustainable use; threats to biodiversity; and a section on planning, programs and partnerships for the future.

The Northwest Territories continues to meet the 2010 United Nations' Biodiversity Goals and Targets. The State of the Environment - Special Biodiversity Report provides the required information to help us understand the complexities of the NWT's biodiversity, how it's changing, and why.

Up-to-date revisions to the full NWT State of the Environment Report are available on the Department of Environment and Natural Resources website and will continue to be updated annually. We invite communities, Aboriginal organizations, industry and interested individuals and groups to review this report.

In honour of 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity, I hope this Report helps teach NWT residents and all Canadians about the importance of diversity in our changing environment. By monitoring and reporting on the status and trends of biodiversity, we can better mitigate environmental changes so future generations can enjoy a healthy and prosperous future.

Mahsi Cho.