

## What makes an Endangered Species an Endangered Species?

Good question! There are actually five levels of 'at-risk' classification ranging from those who are of *special concern* to those who are already *extinct*.

The five levels are:

1. **EXTINCT** - (13)- a species formerly indigenous to Canada that no longer exists anywhere i.e. the Sea Mink
2. **EXTRIPATED** - (23) - species that no longer exist in the wild in Canada, but exist elsewhere in the world i.e. the Black-Footed Ferret
3. **ENDANGERED** – (238) -a species threatened with imminent extinction or extirpation throughout all or a significant portion of its Canadian range. i.e. the Wolverine
4. **THREATENED** – (146) - a species likely to become endangered in Canada if the factors affecting its vulnerability are not reversed .i.e. the Wood Bison
5. **SPECIAL CONCERN** - (157) - a species particularly at risk because of low or declining numbers, small range or for some other reason, but not a threatened species i.e. the Black-Tailed Prairie Dog.

*The numbers in brackets represent the numbers of Canadian species in each level as of November 2008.*

While there are many species that are on the 'Species At Risk' list there are also many success stories of species who's status has improved due to the conservation efforts of various groups and government agencies. Some of these species include the Peregrine Falcon, which has gone from near extinction in the post WWII year to now having Threatened status. The Swift Fox was on the Extirpated list in 1978 and is now classed as Endangered. This would not be possible if we did not protect our wildlife. Even though we are close to losing some species, we are also discovering many new species every day. Since 2000

the Cypriot Mouse, 30 new species of bats, 16, lemurs, 9 monkeys, 5 marsupials and the Pygmy Three-Toed Sloth have been discovered!

But we still need to conserve the ones that need our help and that is part of what we do, here at Papanack Park Zoo through our breeding programs, most notably with our Snow Leopards and Lemurs.