

Endangered Species and Spaces

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7.0 Invertebrates

Invertebrates constitute by far the greatest proportion of the biodiversity of British

Columbia. They include the phyla (groups of similar organisms) Rotifera (rotifers), Nematoda (roundworms), Mollusca (snails, slugs and clams), Annelida (segmented worms), and the giant group Arthropoda (jointed-legged animals). Arthropods include butterflies, beetles, bugs, spiders and mites, and insects - of which the last are by far the most diverse organisms on earth (Harding, Lee E. and Allison Ader, 1999).

Currently, it is estimated that there could be as many as 40,000 species of insects in the province, although only about 25,000 have been identified so far (Harding, 1997). Because of the lack of knowledge and high degree of uncertainty about the distribution and abundance of insects, it is extremely difficult to determine whether they are at risk (threatened or endangered). Since no baseline data exists, surveys cannot determine whether new species are endemic, endangered or widespread. Habitat destruction is proceeding unabated in many areas of the province and many species will be lost before we have any knowledge of their plight. There is an immediate need to inventory and map the distribution and abundance of invertebrates, and to minimize the adverse effects of human activities.

The current (August 1998) provincial tracking list for invertebrates contains 142 records (78 **Red list** - 64 **Blue list**) of species that are considered threatened or vulnerable. Of these, only 9 are found within the Columbia Basin.

Table 8: Rare Invertebrates of the Columbia Basin

Common Name	Latin Name	Global (G) Prov. (S) Rank	Provincial Listing
Damselflies & Dragonflies			
Vivid Dancer	Argia Vivida	G5,S2	RED
Forcipate Emerald	Somatochlora Forcipata	G5, S1S2	RED
Butterflies			
Gillette's Checkerspot	Euphydryas Gilletti	G3,S1S2	RED
Eastern Tailed Blue	Everes Comyntas	G5,S2S3	BLUE
Great Gray Copper	Gaeides Xanthoides	G5,S1	RED
Sweetflag Spreadwing	Lestes Forcipatus	G5,S1S3	RED
Edward's Arctic	Oeneis Taygete Edwardsi	G5T3,S2	RED
Flies			
A Robber Fly	Myelaphus Lobicornis	G5,S1S2	RED
Snails			
Shortface Lanx	Fisherola Nuttalli	G2?,S1	RED

The status of invertebrates in the Columbia Basin is not well known. Very little work has been done in the Kootenays relative to other areas in the province (Cannings, pers. comm.). Baseline studies and local surveys need to be conducted, and then information needs to be communicated to the public, educators and decision-makers alike. It can be safely assumed that, with continued degradation of habitats, that many invertebrates will suffer extirpation. One species under such threat is the Vivid Dancer, a

small damselfly. The following specie account is used for illustrative purposes.

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