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Carp River Conservation Area (CRCA) Animal and Plant Guide



Great Egret – A wading shore bird that mainly eats fish, but also frogs, small mammals, and insects. Look for egrets in the ponds and river edges.



Barn Swallow – A fast moving small bird that eats insects. It's a Species at Risk in Ontario due to habitat loss. Look for Barn Swallows around the bridges, where they often nest.



Osprey – A large, fish-eating hawk. They often hunt over the habitat pond making multiple passes and then diving for a fish. They build large stick nests on top of poles.

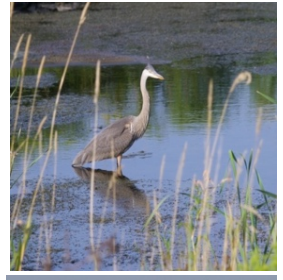


Shorebirds – The Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club has identified the CRCA as one of the top four shorebird habitats in Ottawa. Look for sandpipers, yellow legs, snipes, and plovers.

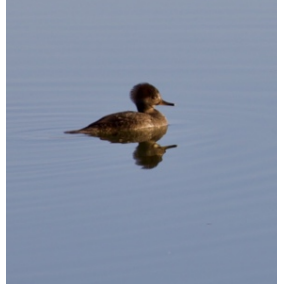


Turtles – All turtles in Ontario are Species at Risk due to loss of habitat and road kill. This site has Painted turtles, Snapping turtles, and Blanding's turtles. Look for them basking in the ponds.

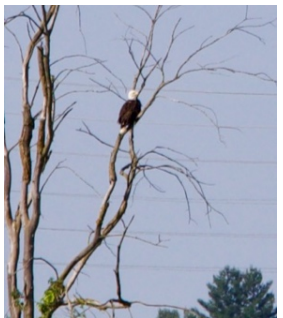
Great Blue Heron – The largest heron in North America. They eat fish, frogs, small mammals, and insects. They usually nest in trees in colonies with other herons.



Ducks – Many ducks species make the Carp River home during non-winter months. Look for Mallards, Hooded Mergansers, and Green-winged Teals.



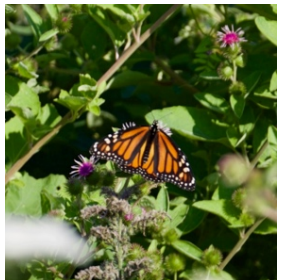
Bald Eagle – A very large bird of prey that has been spotted at this site. This is a Species at Risk that has been making a comeback, a conservation success. They eat fish, carrion, mammals, and crustaceans.



150 bird species have been recorded at the CRCA. Look for Savannah, Swamp, Song, House, and White-throated Sparrows; Flycatchers; Kingfishers; Killdeer; Bank and Tree Swallows.



Butterflies and Moths feed on the nectar in flowering plants. Their caterpillars feed on the leaves of native plants like Milkweed, asters, willows, and poplar trees, all found at the CRCA.



Become a Citizen Scientist

Friends of the Carp River support 6 projects in iNaturalist that cover the Carp River watershed. Add your photo observations of plants and animals to iNaturalist. Add your bird observations to eBird. Download the iNaturalist and eBird apps at the Apple Store or Android Play Store.

For more information, visit our web site: friendsofthecarpriver.com.



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Willows are important wetland plants, stabilizing shorelines and providing food and habitat for insects, birds, and mammals. There are 5 native willow shrub and tree species at the CRCA. The large willow trees you see in the distance are non-native Crack Willows.



Goldenrods – Thirteen native goldenrod species grow in Ottawa; five of them grow at the CRCA. Goldenrods are important for late summer pollinators. They are a host plant for many moth and butterfly caterpillar species.



Spotted Joe-Pye Weed is a common native wetland plant that provides nectar to pollinators. It is a host plant for a number of moth caterpillar species.



Native Rushes, Sedges, and Grasses grow in the floodplain, stabilizing the soil during flooding. Their seeds provide food for birds and mammals.



Wild Parsnip is a non-native, **invasive** species that grows in disturbed sites. Stay Away from it. If the sap gets on the skin, sunlight can cause a reaction resulting in painful blisters and rashes.

Cattails stabilize shorelines, and provide food and nesting material for birds and mammals. They are highly effective in absorbing nutrients like phosphorus that would otherwise enter the river, creating algal blooms. The roots are edible.



Milkweed is a nectar source for many pollinators. It is also an exclusive host plant for Monarch caterpillars, and for some moths and beetles that can tolerate its toxic milky sap. Common and Swamp Milkweed grow at the CRCA.



Cottonwoods are naturally colonizing the river's floodplain. They are fast growing trees that need moisture and sunlight to grow up to 90 feet in height. Cottonwoods are eaten by many insects that in turn feed birds.



Purple Loosestrife is a non-native species that is considered **invasive**. It crowds out native plants that provide food for native species. In 1992 a beetle was released in Canada & the US to control its spread.



Flowering Rush may look pretty, but it is an **invasive** aquatic species. It displaces native species, alters nutrient cycling, and impacts fish habitat. You will see it along the shoreline and in the ditches.



Stewardship of the Ribbon of Life

The Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority planted hundreds of native trees and shrubs at the CRCA in 2018. They also spread a wet meadow seed mix on the floodplain by the habitat pond. These native plants feed native insects, birds, and mammals, supporting biodiversity along the river and its wetlands – the Ribbon of Life.