

Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*)

Status: Special Concern in Ontario.

The Black Tern is shaped like a small gull, with long tail feathers and a pointed black beak. Breeding plumage is mostly black with grey under feathers and sides and spots of white on their wings and under the tail.

In early May look for their open nests in shallow marshes with lots of vegetation. Black Terns eat fish and invertebrates like insects, crayfish, and small mollusks. They feed by swooping down to pick food off plants or near the water surface.



Photo: Greg Schechter

Horned Grebe (*Podiceps auritus*)

Status: Special Concern in Ontario and Canada.

The Horned Grebe is a pigeon-sized waterbird that lives in freshwater wetlands. It has distinctive bright red eyes. In the summer it has a dark head and neck with a whitish stripe, or “horn”, from its eye to the nape of its neck. During flight it can be recognized by its constant wing beats, and feet trailing behind its tail. They build their nests on a mass of vegetation in shallow water. The Horned Grebe dives to capture fish, amphibians, crustaceans, and mollusks.



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Least Bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*)

Status: Threatened in Ontario and Canada.

This tiny heron stays well-hidden amongst marsh vegetation. It usually feeds by hanging off of cattails and waiting for a fish to come close enough to stab it with its long bill. The Least Bittern is light brown along its sides with a white throat and belly, and darker feathers on its back. It has a large yellow bill and yellow legs.

ID tip: The Least Bittern looks similar to the American Bittern, but it is much smaller - about half the size! The Least Bittern usually clings to marsh vegetation, while the American Bittern stands directly in shallow water.



King Rail (*Rallus elegans*)

Status: Endangered in Ontario and Canada.

This crow-sized bird has light brown with dark spots on its back, and white and black streaks along its sides. It is slender with a long beak and long legs. This secretive bird is more easily detected by its call, a slow and low “gelp-gelp-gelp”, or a loud “kik-kik-kik” up to 10 times in a row.

King Rails are found in wetlands with a mix of open water and densely vegetated areas. Herbaceous material is used for cover, stabilization while walking, and as a material for their elaborate nests.



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