



Least Bittern

Ixobrychus exilis

Curve Lake First Nation Species at Risk

Features: The Least Bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*) is more likely heard than seen, as it "coo"s softly from deep in a cattail marsh. This species is the smallest of the North American herons and is distinguished by large chestnut patches on its' wings. Males are darker than females.

Status: Threatened Provincially and Nationally

Range: The Least Bittern occurs widely in North, Central and South America. In North America it ranges from southeastern Canada south to Florida and west to Kansas, with some isolated populations on the west coast. In Canada, the Least Bittern lives in southern Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick. In Ontario, it is mainly found in marshes near the Great Lakes.

Threats: Because of its secretive nature, historical documentation of possible declines here is not reliable. The main threat to Least Bitterns is draining of wetlands for conversion to farmland and urban development. Bitterns generally require large, quiet marshes and as marshes decrease in size and human recreation increases, the population declines in an area.

Protection: Protection is provided to the Least Bittern by Ontario's new *Endangered Species Act*, 2007. The Act prohibits any activities that may cause harm to the species (i.e. harassing, possessing, trading, or killing). The Least Bittern and its nest are also protected under the Migratory Birds Convention Act. Some birds live in public areas such as provincial parks and conservation areas where the habitat receives additional protection.

Text Sources: [Sandilands and Campbell 1988](#); [Austen et al. 1994](#)

Last Modified Date: October 2008

Curve Lake First Nation Species at Risk

23 Winookeedaa Road
Curve Lake First Nation
Government Service and
Cultural Centre
Curve Lake First Nation,
Ontario K0L1R0

Phone: 705-657-8045
Fax: 705-657-8708
E-mail: k_coppaway@yahoo.ca