



Regional Biodiversity of Species and Significant Natural Communities Status

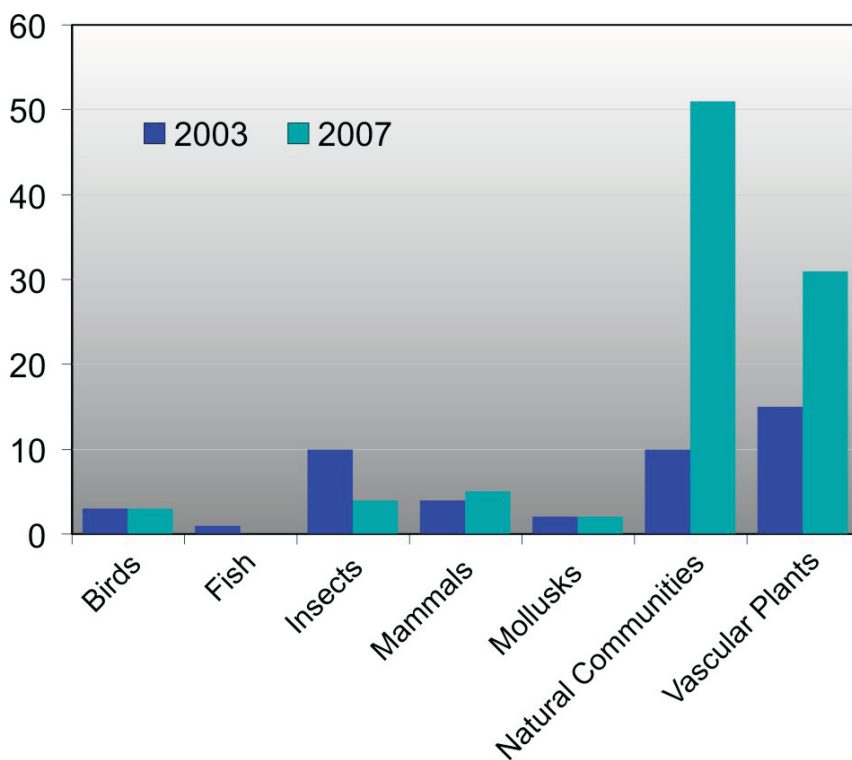
Goal: Establish an integrated, linked, permanent parks and open space system that will include a variety of open space and make appropriate open space accessible to all of our region's population.

Policy: Conserve and protect natural resource areas for future generations. Important natural resources include surface waters, riparian areas, wetlands, forests and woodlands, prairie grasslands, wildlife and wildlife habitat, and other environmentally sensitive lands.

Measure: The number of species and natural communities in our region categorized as imperiled or vulnerable to extinction by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP), a program of Colorado State University. CNHP determines conservation status based on field surveys for bird, fish, insect, mammal, mollusk and vascular plant species, among others. They also assess the status of "natural communities," which are generally defined as ecological plant associations.

Conclusions: The number of imperiled or vulnerable species and natural communities in the DRCOG region increased from 45 in 2003 to 96 in 2007 (see figure). The 2007 number of imperiled and vulnerable species represents around 1 percent of the state's biodiversity (3,597 total species in 2002). Although this is a relatively small percentage, any species loss is irretrievable.

Imperiled and Vulnerable Species



Action Steps: To protect species biodiversity and maintain significant natural communities, our region can take the following actions:

- Support continued efforts to collect data on biodiversity and to identify and map areas that contain significant concentrations of biodiversity and significant natural communities.
- Refine conservation goals to help identify conservation areas that provide representation of species and communities native to the region and provide sufficient habitat for them to ensure their future survival.
- Carefully consider impacts and prepare and implement mitigation strategies to address them in transportation and land use planning decision-making through environmental impact analysis and comprehensive plan implementation.