

WASKIMASHTAU

CHISASIBI, QUEBEC

\$2.00

CREE STUDENTS DISCOVERED A VULNERABLE LADYBUG WHILE EXPLORING THEIR LAND WITH THE NUNAVIK SENTINELS PROGRAM.

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During sunny days in Chisasibi last year, grade 5 and 6 students at Waapinichikush Elementary school were running around armed with nets and magnifying glass, lifting rocks and catching all sorts of little creatures when a young girl brought back a nice looking ladybug. What a catch! A special concern species was discovered accidentally! A surprising finding while exploring the insect fauna with the Nunavik Sentinels program from the Montreal Insectarium.

This vulnerable ladybug is called the Transverse Lady Beetle (*Coccinella transversoguttata*). You can recognize it by the solid black band and the two elongated black spots near the end of the body on each side of the orange-red elytra (hard first pair of wings). This ladybug is a habitat generalist, meaning it can live in many types of environments across Canada: forests, parks, meadows,

gardens, agricultural areas, edge of water bodies, etc. The Transverse Lady Beetle controls pests in gardens and agricultural crops by consuming a large variety of aphid species and other insects.

A species of special concern is any species of wildlife that does not meet the criteria of an endangered or threatened species but is particularly vulnerable. It could be because of the destruction of its habitat, introduction of exotic species or an organism that causes disease, use of pesticide and many more reasons.



Prior to 1986, this species used to be one of the most common ladybugs, found all over Canada and the United States, but now sightings are getting rare. In Quebec, only two known findings were reported in the last 10 years (in 2013 and in 2018) and the last mention in Eeyou Istchee dates between 1996 and 2005 (1).

It's not just the status of the Transverse Lady Beetle that is of concern in Quebec, but that of 8 ladybug species that have disappeared between 1979 and 2013 and that of 67 species that appear to be in steep decline or extirpated over the past 10 years. What can you do? Become a citizen scientist by reporting ladybugs sightings to us or through participatory science platforms such as SIKU (siku.org) and iNaturalist (inaturalist.org). Photographs with specific locations are important and useful data to understand when and where organisms occur. You can also volunteer to participate in wildlife surveys and cleaning of the land surrounding you. Participate in the Nunavik Sentinels program to help us obtain a true picture of the



situation in the North and to quickly remedy this decline in biodiversity.

***The Nunavik Sentinels and the Chisasibi Eeyou Resource and Research Institute are looking for committed young people between 15 and 30 years old to take part in a training camp in Chisasibi this summer to gain practical scientific experience in the field. Interested? Contact us: Facebook @SentinellesNunavikSentinels; nunaviksentinels@gmail.com.**



Photos: Chisasibi, 2022 © Espace pour la vie (Amélie Grégoire Taillefer)

1. COSEWIC. 2016. COSEWIC assessment and status report on the Transverse Lady Beetle *Coccinella transversoguttata* in Canada. Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. Ottawa. xi + 57 pp.