



Loving Our Lakes Nature Canada Members Declare Their Love. And We Love It!



By: Ruth Catana
– Chief Operating Officer

Thank you, so very much, to our members from right across Canada who shared their “Love My Lake” declarations with us. It has been inspiring and simply delightful to read your stories and see you respond with such excitement to our campaign to protect Canada’s lakes and waterscapes.

Here are just some of the declarations you shared with us:

Every year for the past 14 years, since my first grandchild was 8 months old, I have taken my grandchildren to Pike Lake to camp. It has been our special time to explore, dig in the sand, watch the star showers, just play and be away from the lights and sounds of the city and the distractions of TV, iPods etc.

– Paulette, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

From the rolling ocean-sized waves during a storm to the cold, clean, clear water, this lake is truly amazing.

Rebecca, Betchewana Bay, Lake Superior, Ontario

Every visit to the lake, no matter the time of year, is a healing to the heart and soul; our lakes are the spirit of our country.

– Cindy, Caslan Alberta

By adding your voices, you have helped us send a clear message that Canadians care about our water and our environment. You can still declare your love for our lakes by visiting stopwastingourlakes.ca and sign the declaration. As you know, the best way to show your love for nature in Canada is to make a special donation to Nature Canada!



Inspiring Youth Our Nature Explorers Program



By: Sharif Virani
– Outreach and Engagement Officer

Our Nature Explorers program connects kids with the natural world in their own backyards and communities. Highly interactive and highly energetic (thanks to the excited kids!), our Nature Explorers represent a new generation of environmental stewards. Your gifts provide important education and mentoring opportunities for youth in your community and across Canada.

Recently, with support from White Swan® house paper products, over 500 children from Simcoe County in Ontario gathered to learn about wetlands, woodland and wildlife. With the help of GPS units, the kids went on high-tech treasure hunts through the Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre. The program was developed to demonstrate to urban youth how technology can be used in the preservation and protection of our natural environment. Plus it was tons of fun!

Thank you for investing in our future!



A Wood Like No Other Meet Myrna Wood, South Shore IBA Caretaker and Nature Canada Legacy Donor



By: Jodi Joy – Manager, Legacy Gifts and Strategic Partnerships

“How could I have missed these all these years!?” Myrna vividly remembers getting her first pair of binoculars and realizing that she was surrounded by wonderful birds each and every day.

And she’s been looking through them ever since. She continues, “falling in love with birds and learning about them led me to understand birds, and also how we are all connected to each other”.

Myrna lives in Ontario’s Prince Edward County, and is an active Caretaker at the South Shore IBA. She reflects, “one spring, 10 or 12 years ago, during the bird migration there was a tremendous storm blowing on one morning. The sky went vicious black. We hurried out of the woods and into a clearing where there were hundreds, thousands of birds sheltering. They looked down at us, wondering what on earth we were doing! I still remember the birds of all sizes and colours. Storms sometimes show us the creatures we don’t always see. It was magical.”

She continues, “this is the last undeveloped shoreline on eastern Lake Ontario, outside of parks. It’s a crucial staging area for migrating birds. If it’s not here, what will the birds do? Where will they go? This is wild land. And I want it to stay like this forever.”

Stand On Guard With Us! Will You Become A Guardian of Nature Today?

Our Guardians of Nature monthly donors take conservation action each and every day. By making a monthly gift, you provide enduring care for wildlife and their vulnerable habitats. Every month, as a **Guardian of Nature**, you would provide us with affordable, automated donations directly from your bank account or credit card. Because we know exactly how much you will give and when, you will help

What do you think? We want to hear from you! We invite your feedback about the Nature Canada newsletter. You can reach our editor Chris Sutton at csutton@naturecanada.ca or 1-800-267-4088, extension 248.



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Saw-whet Owl

Her love for birds is almost as strong as her instinct to protect them. She cares so deeply that she has remembered Nature Canada in her Will, ensuring that even after she is gone, the birds at the South Shore IBA will be cared for.

We asked Myrna what she would say to someone else reflecting on their personal legacy. “Act. Act now. Humans are destroying the last vestiges of our wild lands. We owe it to the next generations. Wherever you are, choose a nearby wetland or stand of trees and start fighting for it. We have to stop and think, what are the lives of children and their children going to be?” As a Nature Canada monthly donor, Myrna says, “the more I learn, the more I realize this is urgent. Our environmental future is at stake.” By remembering Nature Canada in her Will, Myrna is also giving to a brighter tomorrow, ensuring the protection of what she holds most dear: nature.

For more information about how you can leave a natural legacy by gifting in your will or becoming more involved as a volunteer, please contact me at 1-800-267-4088, Ext. 239 or e-mail jjoy@naturecanada.ca. I would love to talk to you.



FALL/WINTER 2012

Your Action Report for the Supporters of Nature Canada

Is Science Endangered? Gutting Our Environmental Laws. Politics Trumping Research. Is Science Itself Endangered in Canada Today?



By: Ian Davidson – Executive Director

If you’ve been following the news lately, you may be wondering. This spring, Parliament passed Bill C-38, the omnibus budget bill with sweeping changes to our system of environmental laws in order to fast-track development projects like the Northern Gateway Pipeline. In passing this budget bill, essential protections are being removed at the expense of our land, water, climate and wildlife.

The gutting of environmental laws means Canadians will face increasing risk from rushed industrial projects, and will have fewer opportunities to participate in environmental reviews. It also means the role of science has been greatly reduced when it comes to making informed policy decisions about energy, the economy and the environment.

The federal government has made changes or cuts to over 70 federal environmental laws — with revisions to essentially every major piece of environmental legislation this country has passed over the last 40 years, including a complete gutting and rewriting of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. The National Round Table on Environment and Economy was dissolved, and

funding eliminated for the PEARL Arctic atmospheric research lab and the Experimental Lakes Area in northwestern Ontario.

At a time of increased investment in a resource economy, Canadians are calling for more environmental protection, not less. We expect the federal government to safeguard our families and nature from pollution, toxic contamination and other environmental threats. We deserve strong environmental laws based on science, not politics.

In this issue, you’ll read about potential changes to the Species At Risk Act, and what that means for our precious wildlife. You’ll also read about the State of Canada’s Birds Report. This report simply would not be possible without scientific research — 40 years’ worth — that has provided us with the means to ensure we have healthy ecosystems for generations to come.

If you’re like me, you might feel frustrated, even angry. But I hope, above all, you feel empowered. As a member of Nature Canada, you are taking action to protect the nature we cherish so much. Your actions in your community are connected across your province and right across our country. More than ever before, nature’s voice in Canada is coming from you, me and other concerned citizens.



The Species At Risk Act is meant to protect all Canadian biodiversity.

Our Species At Risk Act: Changes Ahead



By: Alex MacDonald
– Manager, Protected Areas

Environment Minister Peter Kent says the government is reviewing how to “improve” the Species At Risk Act through new legislation he hopes to introduce later this year. In particular, he has stated the changes could “distinguish between protections for species at greater risk versus those only at risk in some regions”.

To Nature Canada, this sounds dangerously like the federal government proposes to divide our wildlife into haves and have nots, popular and unpopular, lucky and not so lucky. In the end, all our vulnerable plant and animal species could be left with weaker protections.

The Species At Risk Act is meant to protect all Canadian biodiversity. You don’t have to be a scientist to see that allowing politics to trump science when it comes to protecting wildlife places a vast array of iconic and important Canadian species at even greater risk. Removing the protections of the Act means drastically reducing – or even eliminating – funding for monitoring and recovery efforts for our most at risk species.

You can find out more on our website at naturecanada.ca or by calling us at 1-800-267-4088.

Here are some examples:

Killer Whale – BC

- found in every ocean, but the endangered southern resident Killer Whales off BC’s coast number fewer than 90
- boat traffic and toxic discharge pollute the ocean habitat the whales — and the salmon they eat — need to live

Greater Sage-grouse – PRAIRIES

- numbers have plummeted 90% in 20 years, only 56 males left in Canada
- conversion of grassland to agricultural land, development of oil and gas wells and pipelines have dramatically reduced habitat
- Nature Canada and other organizations demanded an Emergency Order to protect their habitat on non-federal lands — and if delisted or deprioritized, this safety net would no longer apply

American Badger – ONTARIO

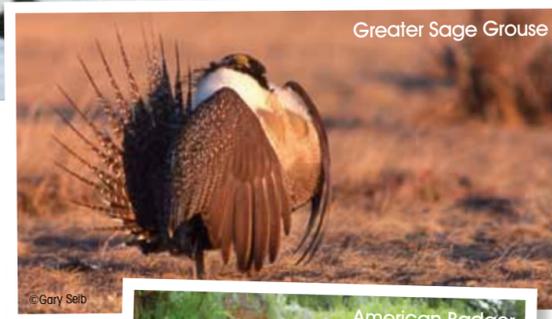
- only found in extreme southwest Ontario and in the northwest Rainy River district, population estimated at under 200
- as other badger subspecies are found in the US, it may be considered ‘not Canadian enough’ for national protection

Prothonotary Warbler – ONTARIO

- every birder wants to catch a glimpse of this bird — arguably one of the key species behind Ontario’s fame for bird watching in Canada
- only found in 15 Ontario locations, representing all that’s left after an 80% decline in numbers since 1995, only a total of 34 counted in the most recent Canadian survey

Eastern Ribbonsnake – ATLANTIC

- need healthy shorelines to survive, like those found in southwest Nova Scotia
- elusive species — we just don’t know enough about them yet



Greater Sage Grouse



American Badger



Prothonotary Warbler



Eastern Ribbonsnake

Thousands of Volunteers Support Critical Bird Research



By: Ted Cheskey
– Manager, Bird Conservation

Canadians are fortunate to live in a country where robins and finches share our backyards. Birds fill our landscapes, and are intertwined with the Canadian culture and

identity. We also rely on them to tell us how the environment is doing — healthy bird populations mean a healthy planet.

Nature Canada contributed to a first-of-its-kind report on the impact that humans have on the health of bird species. Drawing on 40 years of data from professionals and citizen scientists, this report shows that our bird populations have been heavily influenced by human activity, in ways that have helped some species and hindered others.

The report highlights several changes in Canadian bird populations since 1970, including:

- overall, bird numbers have decreased 12%. Grassland birds, including longspurs, meadowlarks, Greater Sage Grouse and others, are in decline largely due to a loss of habitat
- shorebirds have declined by almost half, while Arctic shorebirds like the endangered Red Knot have declined by 60%
- waterfowl populations have increased in part due to successful management of hunting and wetlands

Because I know you, like everyone here at Nature Canada and our members across the country, care about our natural world, I wanted to share with you my personal reflections on the report:

Focus: The State of Canada’s Birds shows us where to focus our conservation efforts. It identifies groups of birds not doing well, and identifies efforts that do make a difference.

Regional Content: We are blessed to live in a country with wildly different and unique biomes including boreal forest, prairies, Arctic and oceans. You can see what’s happening in your own community and right across Canada.

Citizen Science: Our naturalist community played a vital role in the development of this report. Much of the information gathered came from our own citizen scientists – volunteer naturalists providing standardized reporting from their own experiences.

You can find the complete report online at stateofcanadasbirds.org. I encourage all members to read the report. I also heartily encourage you to take a look at our tips below for what you can do to take action and support birds in your community and across our country.

What Can You Do?

Prevent Window Collisions. Birds fly into windows because they see nature reflected in the glass. Make your home or cottage windows visible by applying decals, tape or hanging netting or ribbons in front of windows. In spring and fall, turn off exterior lights and draw curtains at night to prevent migratory birds from colliding with your windows.

Protect Birds from Pets. Keep your cat in a controlled space to prevent it from killing birds. Unleashed dogs can harm birds too — chasing, disturbing or even killing them.

Create A Healthy Yard. Avoid pesticides and herbicides in your yard — they’re deadly! Provide birds with food, nest sites and cover by planting native plants.

Your Morning Coffee. Choose shade-grown organic coffee from Latin America. Shade coffee farms mimic native forests and supports more bird species than sun coffee farms.

Connect Kids With Nature. Take kids for a walk or introduce them to a young naturalist club. Inspire the next generation of environmentalists!

Be a Citizen Scientist. Many projects need volunteers to gather data on birds and their habitat. You can contribute just by watching your bird feeder!

Support Nature Canada! A gift to Nature Canada does all this — and more! Your continued support is vital! You can find out more about all these things you can do by visiting our website at naturecanada.ca. You can also call us anytime at 1-800-267-4088.



Red Knot



Lesser Scaup



Male Bobolink

Olive Sided Flycatcher, Lesser Scaup ©Nick Saunders
Red Knot, Male Bobolink ©May Haga

Your Gifts in Action:

Here’s just some of the ways we put your gift to work. Science is certainly not endangered here at Nature Canada!

- **\$45** pays for us to share information on endangered species with schools across Canada
- **\$54** pays for one of our volunteers to band birds
- **\$100** pays for high-power binoculars for an Important Bird Area Caretaker
- **\$365** pays for a biologist to comment on a Species at Risk recovery strategy
- **\$450** pays to train 10 volunteer IBA Caretakers in the field

“Birds are indicators of the environment. If they are in trouble, we know we’ll soon be in trouble.”

– Roger Tory Peterson, Acclaimed Naturalist and Author