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Conservation of Canada's Natural Heritage



The importance of biodiversity in Canada

Canada is a world leader in the conservation of biodiversity. We are strongly committed to the sustainability of abundance and variety of life on Earth. Biodiversity is valued for its own sake, offers resources that can help us respond to environmental challenges such as climate change, is a source of medical discoveries, and provides economic opportunities.

Canada was the first industrialized country to ratify the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity in 1992, and we host the convention's international secretariat in Montréal.

Protecting our lands and wildlife for future generations

Canada is making a major contribution by setting aside wilderness and water for the benefit of future generations. From Darkwoods, British Columbia, to the Nahanni ecosystem in the Northwest Territories, to Deep Cove, Nova Scotia, and many other locations all across Canada, governments have taken action to protect more than 100 million hectares of land—nearly 10 percent of Canada's land mass—and 3 million hectares of ocean.



"Biodiversity is key
to the maintenance
of the world as
we know it."

— E.O. Wilson

Canada 



Conservation actions

We have made substantial investments to support biodiversity, including:

- Investing \$225 million in the Natural Areas Conservation Program, in partnership with the Nature Conservancy of Canada, to ensure the protection of over 200 000 hectares of sensitive land and the species at risk located on these lands.
- Another \$62 million will be invested in the Health of the Oceans Initiative to protect the waters on Canada's three coasts.
- Committing \$275 million over five years on measures related to species at risk, plus \$5 million to work with provincial and territorial partners to address invasive alien species that threaten native wildlife.
- Investing \$96 million in our Action Plan for Clean Water to restore Lake Simcoe, Lake Winnipeg and areas of concern in the Great Lakes.
- Investing \$8.3 million in the creation of three new National Wildlife Areas on and around Baffin Island and negotiating the Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement for National Wildlife Areas and Migratory Bird Sanctuaries in the Nunavut Settlement Area.
- An investment of \$15 million by Environment Canada and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, in addition to \$8.75 million from Parks Canada for the period 2009–2013, as well as \$4 million ongoing to create six National Wildlife Areas in the Northwest Territories with over 10 million hectares of land protected for biodiversity—one of the largest land conservation initiatives in Canadian history.

Protecting biodiversity is a shared responsibility for all Canadians, including federal, provincial and local governments, the private sector, civil society, and Aboriginal peoples. In the past few years, we have made remarkable strides to protect our national treasures by working with our international partners, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as the Nature Conservancy of Canada and Ducks Unlimited Canada, and Canadians. Our actions include:

- Securing over 9.7 million hectares of wetlands and upland habitat for North American waterfowl in partnership with the United States and Mexico.
- Delivering more than 1800 projects since 2000, under the Habitat Stewardship Program, to protect and recover species at risk and their habitats.
- Facilitating conservation of 136 488 hectares of sensitive land by providing tax incentives through the Ecological Gifts Program, with an estimated property value of \$540 million.
- Partnering with industries, provinces, territories and NGOs for the conservation of migratory birds through the North American Bird Conservation Initiative,
- which is a key tool for the implementation of the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994*.
- Committing to complete 25 Bird Conservation Region plans in 2010 to direct conservation actions for migratory birds and their habitats throughout Canada.
- Funding close to 150 projects since 2005 that have targeted over 215 identified invasive species, raised stakeholder engagement, and increased understanding and awareness to minimize the risk of introductions of unwanted invasive species.
- Providing \$5 million in funding over five years to support 14 of the 15 biosphere reserves in Canada and the Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association.

Did you know?

- The United Nations has declared 2010 to be the International Year of Biodiversity.
- Environment Canada's Protected Areas Network currently includes 54 National Wildlife Areas (NWAs) and 92 Migratory Bird Sanctuaries, covering an area twice the size of Nova Scotia. Six more NWAs will be established in the Northwest Territories in the near future.
- Over the last century, Canada has set aside 27.7 million hectares of our nation in a system of national parks and national marine conservation areas. Since 2006, we have added an additional 4.55 million hectares to the system and have taken actions that will result in a further expansion of 4 million hectares, which represents an increase of 30 percent.
- Environment Canada has responsibility for migratory birds management as custodian of the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994* and its related regulations.
- Since the *Species at Risk Act* came into force in 2004, we have legally listed 470 species under the Act and developed recovery strategies for 127 species.

For more information on Canada's conservation action, please visit www.ec.gc.ca and www.pc.gc.ca.

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