



# Creating Targeted Habitat for Wildlife in the Greater Toronto Area

With support from the Government of Canada's [Habitat Stewardship Program](#) (Prevention Stream), the [Living City Foundation](#) conducted a one-year project in 2014–2015 to create habitat structures for 14 target species on Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) lands while raising public awareness for species at risk through use of social media.

## WHY THIS PROJECT IS IMPORTANT

Many species throughout the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) in Ontario, including those not listed under the *Species at Risk Act*, are threatened by habitat destruction and fragmentation. For some of these species in the GTA, TRCA properties contain their only remaining habitat, and for others, TRCA lands provide essential habitat for part of their life cycle. The 14 target species (8 birds, 4 amphibians, 1 mammal, and 1 reptile) addressed in this project face threats in the GTA. Some of these species have been assessed as Not at Risk by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), including the [Common Tern](#) (*Sterna hirundo*). Others have not been COSEWIC-assessed, including Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) and Midland Painted Turtle (*Chrysemys picta marginata*).

## WHAT WAS DONE

Coastal marshes of the Lake Ontario shoreline are important stopover and breeding areas for Osprey and Common Tern. The TRCA installed one Osprey nesting platform and three tern nesting rafts, as well as 201 logs in 51 log-tangle clusters as basking and cover areas for Midland Painted Turtles. In forested areas, 222 logs were placed as drumming (display) logs for grouse, and 60 nesting boxes for flying squirrels and 39 nesting and roosting boxes for owls were installed. In addition, 74 nesting boxes were installed in meadow sites for cavity-nesting songbirds. The project also included broad public outreach via Twitter ([@TRCA\\_Restore](#)) to showcase restoration projects and gain support and volunteers.

## ACHIEVEMENTS OF THIS PROJECT

- Installed 1 Osprey and 3 Common Tern nesting platforms.
- Installed 39 owl boxes for Barred Owl and Eastern Screech Owl.
- Installed 74 nesting boxes for Eastern Bluebird, Tree Swallow and Great Crested Flycatcher.



▲ Midland painted turtle (*Chrysemys picta marginata*)

- Installed 222 logs for Ruffed Grouse breeding habitat and to provide cover for Spotted Salamanders, Eastern Newts, Blue-spotted Salamanders, and Eastern Red-backed Salamanders.
- Installed 60 Flying Squirrel boxes.
- Installed 201 basking and cover logs in 51 log tangle clusters for Midland Painted Turtles.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROJECT

The Living City Foundation increased habitat diversity and availability in the GTA, allowing the 14 targeted species to continue to thrive in the area and potentially expand their ranges throughout the region. With increased habitat, TRCA properties can continue to act as integral corridors throughout the GTA.

### INVESTMENT: 2014–2015

Habitat Stewardship Program Funds:	\$49,322
Partner Support Leveraged:	\$82,269
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$131,591</b>