

# *Canadian* **WILDERNESS**

A publication of CPAWS • Fall 2018 /Winter 2019

## PRESERVING THE WILD

Canada's Species  
at Risk



 **CPAWS**  
CANADIAN PARKS AND WILDERNESS SOCIETY

# The summer of smoke

## Climate change and threats to biodiversity

MIKE ROBINSON

By the time this message is published it will be fall, and 'the summer of smoke' on British Columbia's Lower Mainland and Sunshine Coast will have passed, hopefully, to a full-on embrace of the rainy season. Skelhp, the community I live in south of Powell River, has spent much of August under smoky skies because of unrelenting wildfire outbreaks, in large measure triggered by lightning strikes in dry coastal rainforest.

For the past five years, we have been experiencing drier springs, and extended summer heat. The seven decades of 'Smokey the Bear' forest fire suppression, less-than-perfect logging scrub removal practices, and growing back-country visits by quads and four-wheel drive trucks have also introduced new challenges to preserving biodiversity.

And of course, it's not just humans who are at risk because of forest fires. Wildlife of all descriptions are at risk because of fire, lack of water and smoky air conditions. This year the young cedar trees on our property are all turning red and dying off. I've spent two days cutting down the dead trees closest to our house,

and yarding boughs off to the landfill. The trunk wood has all been split for winter fireplace use. I'm now noticing the same die-off all the way down the highway to Vancouver, 100 kilometres to the south.

We have a rain-water catchment pond next to our house, which is the home to eight carp that have grown with us since we moved in. This year, the pond is supplying drinking water to a much larger community. For the first time, we've seen cougars, deer and raccoons walking up the stairs to the pond deck to get a drink.

It's becoming more and more evident that we all have a role in preserving biodiversity in our warming world.

Pond serves as local watering hole for nearby wildlife.

Photo: Courtesy Mike Robinson



# Canadian WILDERNESS

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# Preserving the Wild

## Canada's Species at Risk

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*COVER: Caribou, Jasper National Park.*

*Photo by Douglas Noblet/Shutterstock*

*ABOVE: Orca and calf.*

# THE PLIGHT OF CANADA'S CARIBOU

Stories of a disappearing species

**C**aribou have been a fundamental part of our nation's ecosystems for more than 2 million years. They have shaped and been shaped by the harsh climates and landscapes, and are built for survival where few others can live. They are a resilient species, adapting over time to survive in different landscapes and to natural events like forest fires and insects.

However, even a resilient species cannot adapt overnight to significant changes in their landscape that directly undermine their survival strategies. Caribou populations are dwindling across Canada due to extensive fragmentation of their landscape by human activities. Some herds are teetering on the brink of extinction.

CPAWS is working with industry, partners and allies to help save this iconic species and the wild places they call home. Sign the pledge at [caribouandyou.ca](http://caribouandyou.ca) to do your part.

## SOUTHERN MOUNTAIN CARIBOU

It's been a bad year for southern mountain caribou. These animals used to roam from central British Columbia and Alberta south into Idaho's craggy peaks. But decades of rampant industrial exploitation have pushed these caribou out of the continental US, and the remaining herds north of the border are now on the brink of disappearing altogether.

At least one herd in the southern interior of BC has been declared functionally extinct in 2018, with another dipping to such dangerously low numbers that it's possible they face the same fate in the coming years. In the past two decades, the total population of southern mountain caribou has been nearly cut in half.

Southern mountain caribou have sometimes been called "grey ghosts" – these shy creatures are notoriously difficult to spot. They spend much of the year high in the alpine, using their snowshoe-like feet to walk in deep snow drifts and reach their favourite winter food: lichen.

BC's poorly regulated resource extraction industry has carved roads and clearcuts into the heart of caribou territory. Trucks and recreational snowmobilers have made use of those roads, packing down snow and making predator highways for animals like wolves. Clearcuts have created prime habitat for prey like moose, further attracting wolves and other predators into caribou ranges.

Earlier this summer, the BC government consulted on a new Draft Recovery Program for caribou across the province. The proposed program was deeply flawed. The plans to restore and protect habitat are not ambitious enough to keep up with the rate of habitat loss. To make matters worse, during the lengthy review and implementation process, government is continuing to allow new development that will further destroy and fragment caribou habitat.

This is not a recovery plan: it's an extinction plan.

With your help, we pushed back against the Draft Recovery Program and highlighted the need for an immediate moratorium on development in key caribou habitat, and increased protection where it's most needed. We're also pushing the federal government to implement emergency measures under the *Species at Risk Act* to ensure these animals finally get what they need to bounce back.

By using every tool at our disposal to fight for caribou, we can ensure this species will continue to survive and thrive in our majestic alpine landscapes.

## PORCUPINE CARIBOU

One of the last healthy barren-ground caribou herds in Canada is in greater peril than ever before. Every year, the Porcupine caribou herd undertakes a marathon migration – the longest of any land mammal on earth. Caribou cross the forests and tundra of the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Alaska, and give birth to their calves on the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The Porcupine caribou



Porcupine caribou calf  
Photo: Malcolm Boothroyd

herd is critical to the culture and subsistence ways of life of Indigenous peoples across the north. Despite its importance, a provision buried deep in the U.S. Government's 2017 tax overhaul opened up the Arctic Refuge to oil and gas extraction, in the heart of the herd's calving grounds.

Before drilling can occur, the U.S. Department of Interior must complete an environmental review. Reviews of this magnitude normally take 3-4 years to complete, but the Department of Interior is racing to complete its Environmental Impact Statement in under one year. They have ignored requests to extend public comments and declined invitations to hold hearings in Indigenous communities within Canada. The Department is trying to save time by using old data on the Arctic Refuge in its environmental review, rather than collecting up-to-date information.

Not so fast.

An alliance of Indigenous leaders, environmental groups, lawyers and storytellers are standing up for the Porcupine caribou. CPAWS Yukon has worked closely with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and other organizations such as Nature Canada to ensure that Canadians were heard. Over 500 Yukoners and 15,000 Canadians voiced concerns during the Department of Interior's public scoping period — joining nearly 700,000 people from across the United States and countries around the world in calling for protection of the Arctic Refuge. The campaign received another boost in May, when investors controlling over 2.5 trillion USD in assets called on the fossil fuel industry to stay out of the Arctic Refuge.

There are many ways for Canadians to help. Starting September 17th, we're helping launch a campaign urging BP, one of the biggest players in Alaskan oil, to stay out of the Arctic Refuge. Visit [cpawsyukon.org](http://cpawsyukon.org) to write your letter

to CEO Bob Dudley, or use the hashtag #BackOffBP. Follow CPAWS Yukon on social media for updates on the Arctic Refuge and more ways to take action. The importance of caribou transcends borders. It's critical that Canadians step up and help save the Porcupine caribou herd.

## BOREAL WOODLAND CARIBOU

The Woodland Caribou that once roamed all of our northern forests are now under serious threat due to habitat loss and expanding industrial development. Today, they are mostly confined to Canada's Boreal Forest.

The females travel alone for days searching for a safe place to give birth. They use the dense trees of the boreal forest and the deep snow to protect themselves from predators. As human activity increases the fragmentation of their habitat, they become more vulnerable to wolves and other predators.

In Saskatchewan, CPAWS is working with forestry partners in both the eastern and western portions of Saskatchewan's boreal to find collaborative solutions to protect these iconic caribou populations.

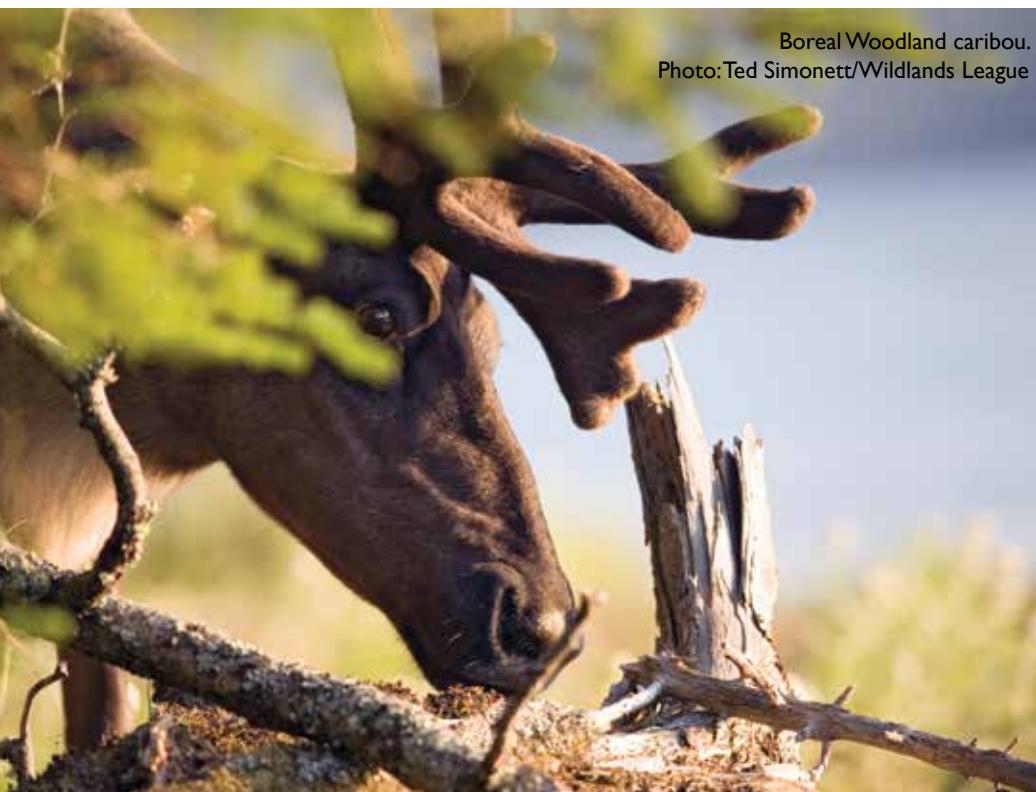
In western Saskatchewan, CPAWS Saskatchewan and CPAWS Northern Alberta have joined forces with Ducks Unlimited Canada and two forestry companies, Mistik Management and Al-Pac. Together, we are working to accelerate caribou planning and management, while also identifying and creating solutions for protected area gaps.

In the eastern part of the province, CPAWS Saskatchewan is working with Ducks Unlimited Canada and the communities of Cumberland house to raise awareness, and ultimately protect the amazing Saskatchewan River Delta and Mossy River

Watershed. Not only will protection of the Delta accelerate caribou planning and management for the region, but it will also protect the feeding and nesting grounds for hundreds of thousands of waterfowl, and habitat for countless other species.

Other forestry partners, Weyerhaeuser Canada and Edgewood Forest Products, are working with CPAWS to conduct boreal woodland caribou monitoring to enhance their ability to better manage for caribou. Both companies have volunteered to keep harvest out of known caribou habitat, and work to identify areas of potential connectivity.

CPAWS-Saskatchewan is proud of its work with forest industry partners and the very positive impact that working together cooperatively has had on the sector in the province.



Boreal Woodland caribou.  
Photo: Ted Simonett/Wildlands League

Southern Mountain Caribou.  
Photo: David Moskowitz/  
Mountain Caribou Initiative



## SHÚHTA GO̱EPÉ (NORTHERN MOUNTAIN CARIBOU)

Caribou populations exist across the Northwest Territories in herds that are identified within five caribou ecotypes: the Peary, Dolphin-Union, Barren Ground, Boreal and Mountain Woodland. Unlike their domesticated reindeer cousins, each ecotype is very unique in ecology and behaviour, including different physical characteristics, seasonal migrations, distribution and habitat use.

Each ecotype is listed separately as a Species at Risk (SAR) under territorial or federal SAR legislation. Management or recovery plans must consider a number of threats such as the unpredictable impacts of climate change, habitat loss and connectivity of migration routes. Monitoring and managing caribou across so many variables is complex, time-consuming and expensive. An effective solution to increasing caribou stewardship capacity is found in Indigenous-led conservation planning.

For example, Shúhtaot'íné (Mountain Dene) traditional knowledge indicates that a serious conservation concern

needs to be addressed for Shúhta Go̱epé (Northern Mountain Caribou). It is thought that sub-populations are at greater risk than what limited and dated scientific information identify. While Shúhta Go̱epé are listed as a species of Special Concern federally and are scheduled to be assessed through the territorial SAR committee in 2019, there is little certainty that the development of a SAR-required management or recovery plan will be timely enough to improve the caribou's status.

In response to this concern, the Tulít'a Dene Band, Tulít'a and Norman Wells vəhdzo Got'íné (Renewable Resources Councils), Tu Łidlini Dena Council and supporting organizations formed a working group. A draft *Nío Né P'ené Begháré Shúhta vepé Narehvá – Trails of the Mountain Caribou Management Plan* has since been created.

The draft plan includes a vision and values to be protected and sets priorities for achieving stewardship outcomes such as an indigenous guardian and healing program, reducing disturbance of Shúhta Go̱epé, protecting land through protected areas, education and communication of Dene/Métis laws, evaluation and learning. This proactive Indigenous planning approach is encouraging for the future of Shúhta Go̱epé and for all NWT residents who harvest these caribou for food.

For more information: <http://bit.ly/2NILSmp>

# DARE TO BE DEEP

At-risk species in our waters



**C**anada's diverse wildlife are an integral part of the Canadian identity and essential to a healthy and resilient environment. Currently, there are 521 plant and animal species at risk that are listed under the Species at Risk Act and the list continues to grow. The following are just some of the at-risk species CPAWS is working to protect. The maps are for presentation purposes only. Please refer to the Government of Canada's website for official maps, <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca>.

Orca. Photo: Tory Kallman/Shutterstock

## ORCAS

This summer put BC's killer whales in the spotlight, but not in a good way. A female orca named Tahlequah made headlines around the world for her "tour of grief." Her newborn calf, the first born to the endangered population in 3 years, died shortly after birth. Tahlequah carried the calf's body for an astounding 17 days, often helped by her supportive family members. Tahlequah and her pod defied human notions of animal grief and made a statement to us all: her family is dying and we're not doing enough.

The southern resident orcas are iconic. But despite being national and international treasures, they are at risk of extinction. After years of government inaction to protect the killer whales, there are barely more than 70 remaining.

Southern resident orcas range throughout the Salish Sea, and their key habitat is in the Southern Strait of Georgia – an area between Vancouver and Victoria that surrounds BC's Gulf



Islands. CPAWS has been pushing to protect key orca habitat under a National Marine Conservation Area Reserve, which would also safeguard a vital ocean ecosystem for thousands of other species. But year after year, Parks Canada has failed to act with urgency. Botched consultations with First Nations and a lack of prioritization from Parks Canada leadership has put the entire ecosystem – and endangered species like killer whales – at risk.

With your help, we're working to ensure a future for the Salish Sea that includes a thriving population of southern resident killer whales. After mounting pressure, the federal government put out a report under the *Species at Risk Act* finding that these orcas face "imminent threats" to survival and recovery.

Governments know they need to step up for orcas or face the consequences. Together, we will redouble our efforts to protect the Salish Sea and ensure the home of the orcas is protected for Tahlequah and her family.

## WESTSLOPE CUTTHROAT TROUT

The clear flowing streams of Alberta's Rocky Mountains inspire anglers and outdoorspeople from far and wide. But below the water's surface live some of the last remaining populations of Alberta's native fish, including the westslope cutthroat trout, now listed as a threatened species. Cutthroat trout were among the first fish to recolonize western Canada after the last glaciation, surviving for 10,000 years in cold, clear waters, protected by shady streamside vegetation and surrounded by intact forests and grasslands.

Over the last century, these native fish populations have declined due to habitat degradation, overharvesting, and the introduction of non-native species. In the Bow River Watershed, westslope cutthroat trout now occupy less than 5% of their historic range. Populations in southern Alberta are limited to a few of the less accessible upstream reaches of streams and rivers.

While harvesting threats have been reduced by 'catch and release' fishing regulations, we still have a long way to go to protect and restore a healthy habitat, free from sediment and non-native species. Increases in resource roads and off-highway vehicle access into native trout habitat have led to more stream bank erosion, dirtier water, and increased angling pressure in less accessible areas. Additionally, given their requirement for cold water, westslope cutthroat trout are especially vulnerable to climate change.

CPAWS Southern Alberta works to highlight the cumulative impact of resource exploitation and high-impact recreation and to identify solutions for native fish and our headwaters. We were instrumental in ensuring that recently released land-use plans for southwest Alberta placed limits on the number of roads and trails, reduced off-highway vehicle damage, and



included plans for habitat restoration. We also work to ensure that forestry and associated roads avoid critical habitat for westslope cutthroat trout and minimize potential damage to streams.

We have a chance to ensure these beautiful native fish thrive, rather than continue their path of decline. We need to protect and restore upland and riparian habitats and clean water for native fish and for all of us that rely on healthy headwaters.

## NORTHERN BOTTLENOSE WHALE

The Northern Bottlenose whale is a globally rare beaked whale that can be found in Atlantic Canadian waters. The population found along the continental slope off of Nova Scotia and southeastern Newfoundland is referred to as the Scotian Shelf population. The majority of the sightings of this population have been in canyons on the Eastern Scotian shelf, including the Gully, the largest submarine canyon in the western North Atlantic.

While the Northern Bottlenose whale has been observed in the Gully year-round, research has revealed that these whales frequent adjacent canyons, Shortland and Haldimand, and the areas in between. These deep-sea areas are thought to accumulate or attract squid, one of the main food sources for the whales. In fact, the Northern Bottlenose whale can spend more than an hour diving in these canyons in search of food.

Unfortunately, harmful human activity has resulted in the decline of the Northern Bottlenose whale. As an estimated 135 individuals remain, it is not surprising that the Scotian Shelf population has been identified as endangered. Currently, the biggest threats to the Northern Bottlenose whale include entanglement and bycatch in fishing gear, oil and gas activities, acoustic disturbance, vessel strikes, and contaminants. There have been increasing efforts to monitor



Northern  
Bottlenose  
Whale  
Photo: Wild  
and Free  
Nature Photo/  
Shutterstock

this population and establish conservation measures that protect these whales and their associated habitat.

The Gully was designated as a marine protected area (MPA) in 2004 and, more recently, critical habitat areas were created and a fisheries closure on Eastern Canyons proposed – efforts that could be helpful for the Northern Bottlenose whale. CPAWS has been a strong advocate for the protection of the Northern Bottlenose whale and we will remain vigilant so that the species can survive and people can continue to marvel at the beauty and wonder of these animals for years to come.

## COPPER REDHORSE FISH

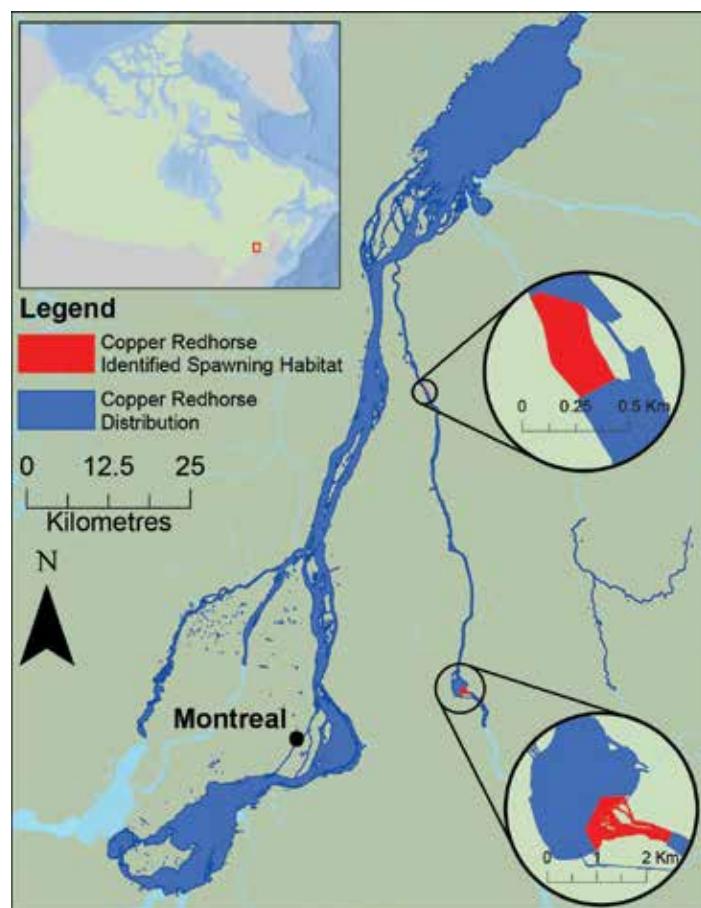
The copper redhorse, a species of fish native to Quebec, has been around since the melting of glaciers over 9,000 years ago. While it took refuge in the United States during the last glaciation, today its global range covers only a meager territory in southwestern Quebec. Archaeological excavations indicate that it was a food source for Aboriginal peoples before the arrival of Europeans, and it was on the menu of some nineteenth-century Montreal inns.

The copper redhorse is recognized by its small triangular head and hunched back, as well as the coppery reflections of its scales during the spawning period. A typical adult measures 65 cm in length and weighs 4 kg. It has a highly specialized jaw, characterized by massive arches carrying

huge molar-like teeth, which is used to grind the shell of mollusks, the fish's only food source.

Biologists estimate the population to be only a few hundred adult individuals around the world, all concentrated in the greater Montreal area. The documented contraction of its range, the observed aging of spawners and the low number of young fish are all warning signs that the situation is highly critical. The fragmentation of their habitat by numerous dams, an increase of sediment, agricultural and industrial pollution, boat traffic, and the lack of action by the responsible authorities only encourage the decline of the species.

The copper redhorse breeds in white water where the conditions are conducive to laying eggs. The embryo that became a larva leaves the spawning area about two weeks after spawning, taking advantage of the river's momentum to settle downstream. The shallow grass beds of the St. Lawrence River are an important food source for the species. The Port of Montreal Expansion Project at Contrecoeur is a serious threat to the survival and recovery of this species. The copper redhorse hopes that its critical habitat will be protected soon.



# RISK MANAGEMENT

Who is responsible for saving our at-risk species? **BY FLORENCE DAVIET**

**T**here has been lots of news lately around the federal government and the federal *Species at Risk Act*. Killer whales, right whales, bison, as well as boreal and mountain caribou have all caught public and media attention and the ask is often for the federal government to do more. But what is the responsibility of the federal, provincial and territorial governments when it comes to species at risk? And what are the next steps needed to protect these species and their habitat?

To answer the first question, we have to go back in time.

In 1992, Canada committed to implementing legislation to protect threatened species and biodiversity as part of its commitment to the convention on biodiversity. This commitment led to national discussions on how this should be done, and the signing of a *National Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk* in 1996. The accord states that the goal of federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for wildlife is to prevent species in Canada from becoming extinct as a consequence of human activity.

In the accord, provinces and territories agreed to put in place complementary legislation, regulations, policies and programs to protect species. The idea was that provinces and territories would be primarily responsible for protecting species and critical habitat on their own lands, while the federal *Species at Risk Act*, introduced in 2002, would cover cross-boundary species such as migratory birds, freshwater fish and marine life, and wildlife found on federal lands. The federal act was also to provide a backstop for terrestrial species where provincial/territorial legislation did not do an effective job of protecting the species or their habitat.

Despite these good intentions, all parties have been lagging on their responsibilities. While the federal government has taken some very promising steps in the past year in response to crisis (such as for the right whale) and repeated requests for action by the public, non-governmental organizations, and others (such as for caribou, killer whales and others), there is still much they need to do.

Equally important is that the provinces and territories continue to lag in implementing meaningful protection for threatened and endangered species, something made obvious

in last year's reports on the level of protection for boreal woodland caribou.

## WHAT NEEDS TO COME NEXT?

Moving forward, the government needs to show clear leadership by acting to protect the species directly under their responsibility, whether it's on federal lands, in parks or beyond. Additionally, provinces and territories need to start taking measures to protect species and their habitat with the legal tools currently in place, while developing stronger legal tools where needed.

All levels of government need to collaborate with indigenous governments, industry, farmers, land owners, non-governmental organizations, and others on how protecting species should occur. Programs to fund or incent habitat protection need to be developed and implemented where there are willing actors to demonstrate that we can live side by side in harmony with these species.

As a final recourse, if critical habitat is not effectively protected and no progress is being made to protect habitat and address the threats, the federal government needs to use the "safety net" or emergency order tools to protect species and their critical habitat, while the province or territory puts appropriate protections in place.

## WHAT DO GOVERNMENTS NEED?

All governments need to hear from you, from Canadians from all walks of life, to express why protecting Canada's biodiversity is not just a nice to have, but vital for the future of our planet. They need to hear that Canadians support action to protect biodiversity and will stand up to thank them when such actions are taken. They need to hear that Canadians will hold them accountable.

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SAVING OUR SPECIES AT RISK?

It turns out we all are. Be the voice for these species by taking action on our campaigns, calling or writing to your representative, writing a letter to the editor, or just sharing your concerns with family and friends. Together, we can protect our wildlife and the wild places they call home.



Threatened grizzly bear in Alberta meadow.

Photo: Duane Rosenkranz

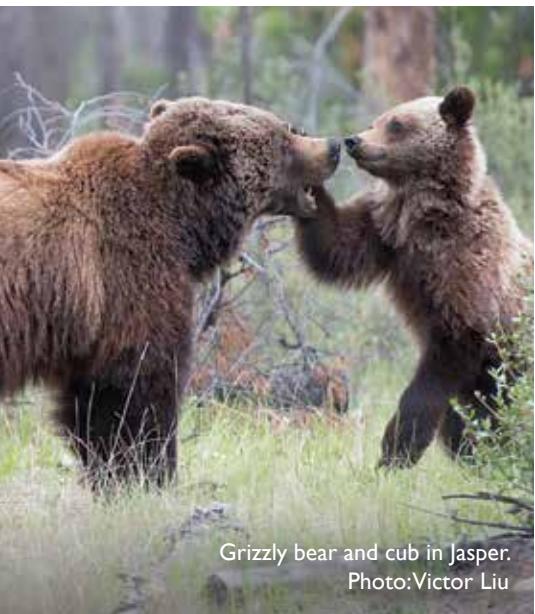
# CANADA'S BIODIVERSITY CRISIS

The earth's sixth mass extinction event and what we can do about it.

BY ALISON RONSON



Beluga whales.  
Photo: John Wollwerth/Shutterstock



Grizzly bear and cub in Jasper.  
Photo: Victor Liu

**T**he Earth has experienced five mass extinction events in its history – the most well known of which heralded the end of the dinosaurs approximately 66 million years ago. What is not well known is that the Earth is currently experiencing a sixth mass extinction event. We are in the midst of a biodiversity crisis – and human activity is making it worse.

Scientific studies are estimating that the current extinction event is happening at a rate up to *100 times greater* than normal background extinction rates (some studies show 1,000 times!). This means that we are losing plants and animals at an unprecedented rate around the world – and Canada is not immune. In the World Wildlife Fund Canada's *Living Planet Report Canada*, released in the fall of 2017, WWF Canada found that *half of monitored Canadian wildlife species populations declined, on average, 83% from 1970 to 2014*. Climate change, habitat loss, and habitat fragmentation are key factors driving this decline.

It is becoming more widely acknowledged that, along with climate change, the loss of the planet's biodiversity is an environmental crisis we cannot ignore. Biodiversity is the variety of organisms, genes, species, and ecosystems on Earth and the ecological processes of which they are a part. As these components are all interconnected, the increase or loss of one component can lead to cascading effects on others. For example, one recent study found that the increase in human population due to domestication of livestock, adoption of agricultural lifestyles, and the Industrial Revolution has led to a corresponding decrease in wildlife. Now, humans and domesticated cattle and poultry far outweigh both wild mammals and wild birds.

Protected areas are one of the best solutions for stopping a global biodiversity decline. The habitat they secure for wildlife allows these animals to find shelter, feed, and safely rear their young. Studies have shown that there are both more individuals and more species in protected areas than in unprotected areas – especially where those protected areas minimize human-dominated land-use activities and safeguard habitat.

CPAWS continues its efforts to slow the decline in Canada's biodiversity. Our chapters across the country are all working on establishing new protected areas to safeguard the habitat of iconic species such as orcas and beluga whales, grizzly bears and caribou, sage grouse and badgers, and freshwater fishes. To learn more, visit [cpaws.org/parks-report](http://cpaws.org/parks-report) for our most recent report, *What's Next: Parks and protected areas to 2020 and beyond*, which highlights marquee sites across the country.



Sage grouse.  
Photo: Janice Chen/Shutterstock



## Manitoba teen kayaks 1,750 km to promote better stewardship of Lake Winnipeg

*"It has been an absolute dream"*

Those were the words Alex Martin told his parents after he completed a solo circumnavigation of Lake Winnipeg—a 1,750-kilometre journey.

Alex set out in his kayak just days after graduating from high school.

The trip, which was sponsored by CPAWS and The Lake Winnipeg Foundation, had many goals: to raise awareness of the ecological and cultural gems which can be found along Lake Winnipeg's shoreline, to promote better water stewardship, to connect with the people who live in lakeside communities, and for Alex to share his passion with others.

Lake Winnipeg is the 10th largest freshwater lake in the world, and the second largest watershed in Canada. Some 25,000 people live along the shoreline and the lake supports a \$25-million fishing industry.

The surrounding boreal forests and wetlands help by filtering many of the excess nutrients that would otherwise enter the lake and cause it harm. CPAWS is partnering with Fisher River Cree Nation, whose traditional lands span the southwest basin of the lake, to increase conserved areas in the region.

CPAWS Manitoba supported Alex during his journey in his efforts to educate about the importance of protecting the landscapes and ecosystems that support the health of Lake Winnipeg. Like so many others who set out to enjoy the Lake, Alex found its beauty marred by algae blooms. CPAWS shares Alex's concerns about these unsightly formations that

are threatening the lake, its wildlife, and the communities that rely on it.

"The Boreal region within Lake Winnipeg's watershed act as a kidney that filters incoming waters. Without additional conservation of these boreal forests and wetlands, all other efforts to save the lake will be greatly undermined and the algae blooms will intensify," said Ron Thiessen, CPAWS Manitoba's Executive Director.

Alex's circumnavigation began on June 27, 2018, at the beach at Grand Marais Point, inside of Grand Beach Provincial Park. Alex returned to Grand Beach on August 3, 2018.

His journey began in cottage country and became increasingly more secluded and remote. At times, Alex was hundreds of kilometres away from the nearest community.

While circumnavigating Lake Winnipeg, Alex paddled the shoreline of a number of areas recognized for their importance in the lake's ecology, such as the newly-minted UNESCO World Heritage Site of Pimachiowin Aki, Fisher Bay Provincial Park, and Kinwow Bay Provincial Park, which are all designations that CPAWS supported Indigenous communities in securing.

"It was a pleasure working directly with Alex to educate citizens about the essential connection between Lake Winnipeg and its supporting forests and wetlands," said Thiessen.

Read more about the journey on Alex's blog ([lakewinnipegcircumnavigation.com](http://lakewinnipegcircumnavigation.com)) and view his stunning photos on Instagram ([instagram.com/alex.marrtin/](https://www.instagram.com/alex.marrtin/)).

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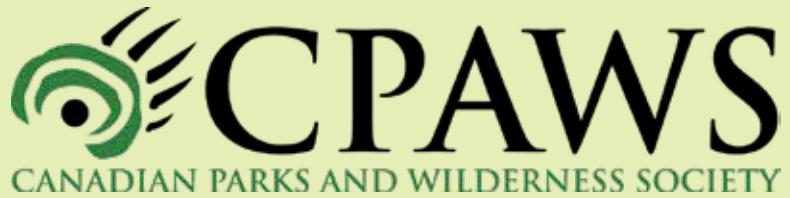
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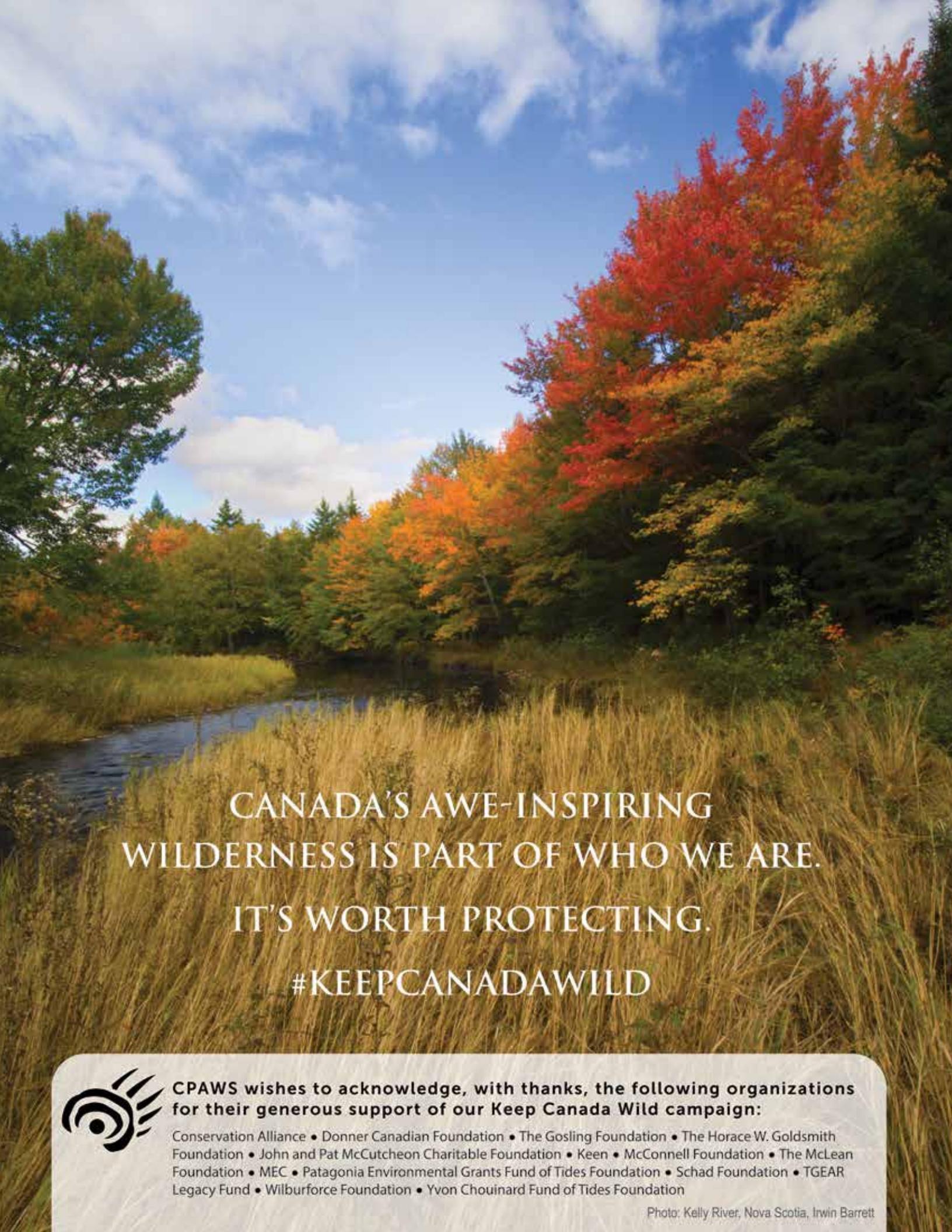
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