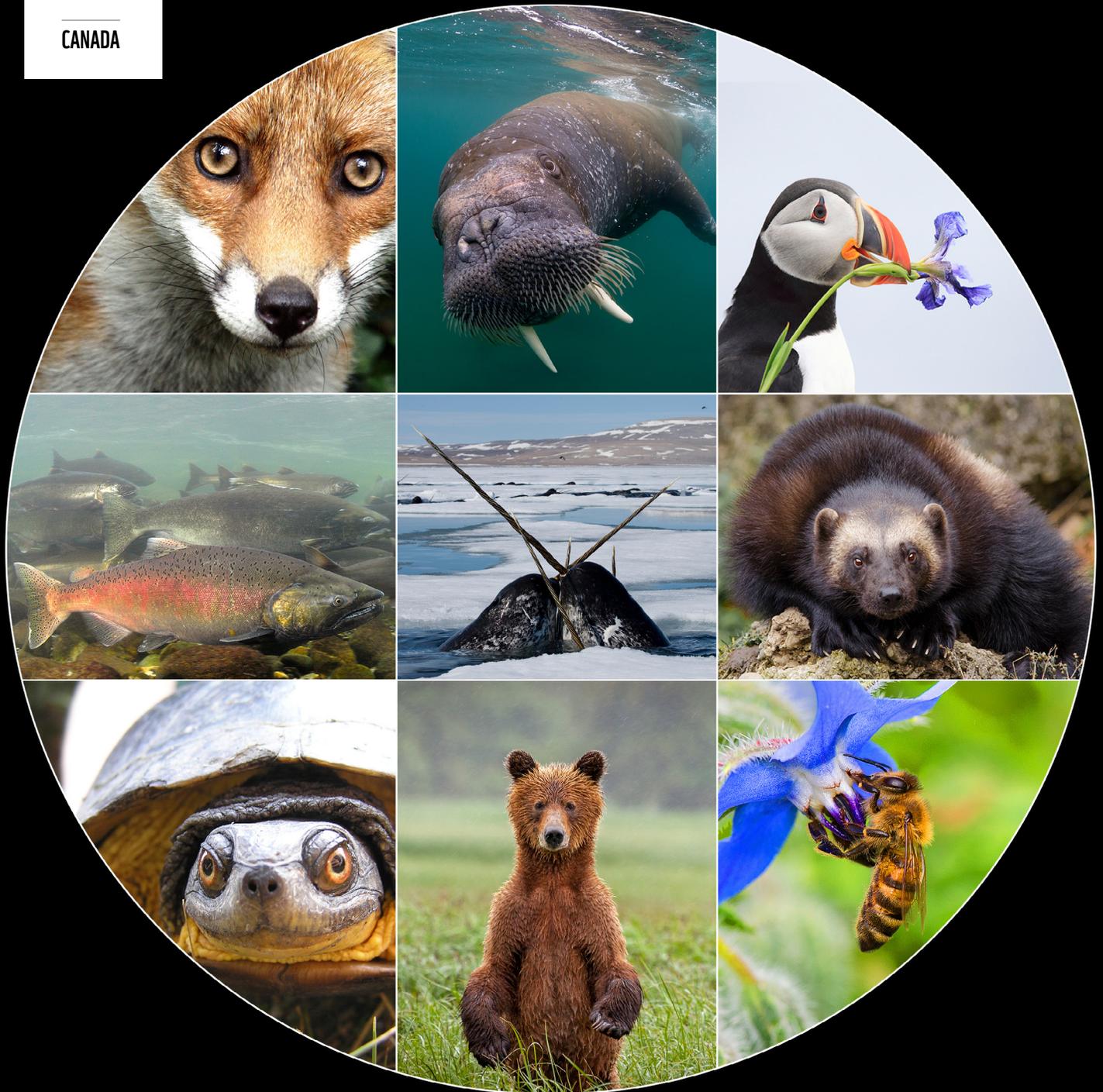




WWF

CANADA



# WWF - CANADA

## ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO



Well, this year sure didn't turn out as we expected. Things were already dire with the Australian bushfires when, in our first *Fieldnotes* newsletter of 2020, I was asked what gives me hope despite so much bad news. I said something then that I still firmly believe, no matter how the subsequent months unfurled:

“What grounds me is taking a step back and looking at what we're doing here at WWF-Canada. We're working on nature-based solutions, that's what calms me down. That's what makes me get out of bed in the morning. I am inspired to come to work every day.”

Of course, within a couple months I'd be getting out of bed and coming to work at the kitchen table, but I am even more inspired today. I'm inspired by our staff, who figured out how to keep doing crucial conservation work during quarantine. And I'm inspired by you, our donors, who kept supporting our mission to reverse wildlife loss and reduce climate change even in the face of this unprecedented pandemic.

Our annual report, which covers July 2019 to June 2020, provides an opportunity to reflect on our accomplishments, from restoring salmon habitat on the east and west coasts to securing unprecedented commitments to ocean protection. It allows us to learn from our challenges, from COVID-19 to climate change. And it helps us prepare for the next stage of our mission, which will be fueled by our new ten-year strategic plan.

The next decade likely won't turn out as expected, either, but together we will make a measurable and meaningful difference. What's more inspiring than that?

Megan Leslie,  
WWF-Canada President and CEO

# NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

The COVID pandemic has had an enormous and, at times, tragic impact on Canadians nationwide. It has challenged long established growth models, redefined our way of life and raised questions about our true relationship with nature.

And, for me it has clarified that WWF-Canada's conservation work is more important than ever as our marathon race to reverse wildlife loss and reduce climate change has continued unabated. Fortunately, your supporters' passion for preserving our environment has remained similarly steadfast during this unprecedented time.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to congratulate Megan and her senior management team for their outstanding navigation of these uncertainties. As you will see in the following report, no matter where our staff was working – in the field, in the office or at home – we have continued to have progress on conservation issues ranging from ocean protections to wildlife recovery. The steps we've taken and wins we've achieved this year provide a solid foundation from which we can achieve new wins for nature and people in the coming years.

As the outgoing Chair nearing the end of my term, it has been a real honour and pleasure to take part in shaping the next decade of conservation at WWF-Canada through the organization's new 10-year strategic framework. Made possible through collaboration across many different levels, it's an achievement of which I am tremendously proud. It brings me, and should also bring you, great hope about the future of our greatest national treasure – nature.

Congratulations to everyone at WWF-Canada and especially to our supporters who make this work possible. Thank you for all that you do for nature. Stay safe.

David Martin,  
WWF-Canada Chair of the board



# WWF-CANADA: 2019-2020

## MILESTONES AND HIGHLIGHTS

**\$588,807**

in Canadian donations sent to WWF-Australia in response to one of the worst wildlife disasters in modern history.



We committed to support the Mushkegowuk Council's conservation efforts in the Hudson and James Bay Lowlands (HJBL), **home to the largest contiguous wetlands in the world** and one of the world's largest remaining tracts of unmanaged boreal forest.

**39,348 hectares**

of native plant habitat restored in Ontario's Carolinian Zone through our In the Zone program in partnership with Carolinian Canada.



**12,068 students**

enrolled in our Living Planet @ Campus program (surpassing our goal of 7,500) and representing **75 per cent** of Canada's post-secondary institutions.



First steps taken towards establishing a **93,087 km<sup>2</sup>** marine protected area (MPA) around Southhampton Island in Hudson Bay.



We partnered with Katzie First Nation to restore four salmon spawning sites equal to **11,326m<sup>2</sup>**.



Canada surpassed its target of **10%** marine protected areas, reaching almost **14% (793,906 km<sup>2</sup>)**. This win for oceans comes after more than 20 years of work from WWF-Canada and the interim designation of the Tuvaijuittuq Marine Protected Area (nearly **320,000 km<sup>2</sup>**).



**4,273 individuals** and **150 corporate teams** registered for our annual CN Tower Climb for Nature and continued to support us as we quickly transitioned to a virtual event due to COVID-19.



We laid the foundation for a series of **Blue Montreal revitalization projects** ranging from bringing underground rivers back above ground to building new urban rivers to manage climate-increased storm water runoff.

In partnership with OceanWise, our Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup program, had a record-breaking year with **83,803 volunteers** preventing **163,501 kilograms** of trash from entering our rivers, lakes and oceans and preventing harm to wildlife.



# OUR VISION: A CANADA WITH ABUNDANT WILDLIFE WHERE NATURE AND PEOPLE THRIVE

WWF-Canada's work benefits some of Canada's most iconic and at-risk species, including southern resident killer whales, narwhal, polar bears, little brown bats and salmon as well as the people who depend on them.

Guided by scientific and Indigenous knowledge, we're working to tackle the biggest threats to wildlife and protect vulnerable habitats across the country, including the Arctic where the foundation of life is melting; built up regions

where biodiversity is giving way to human development; our oceans, which are an irreplaceable source of life and livelihood; and the lakes, rivers and tributaries that sustain us all.

When nature thrives, so do we. By working together with Indigenous and local communities, individuals, businesses and governments, we can create victories for nature that are victories for people too.



## WWF-CANADA WORKS TOWARD:

- Meaningful marine and coastal protections on all three coasts
- All freshwater ecosystems in good health
- Low-impact sustainable fisheries, habitat-friendly renewable energy and responsible development solutions that conserve wildlife and help communities prosper
- A vibrant and ecologically sound future for the Arctic
- Canadians taking action to protect and restore nature in their communities



# ARCTIC

The far north of Canada is a sprawling and spectacular place that's home to iconic wildlife and incredible people and culture. It is also on the front line of the climate crisis as it is warming like nowhere else on the planet.

As the largest international conservation organization with a permanent office in the Canadian Arctic, our efforts focus on working with local communities on collaborative research and stewardship of at-risk species, co-developing new protected areas and supporting sustainable economic opportunities for northerners. Our work in the Arctic is helmed by Paul Okalik, WWF-Canada's lead Arctic specialist and Nunavut's first premier.

Locally led conservation and the combination of Inuit knowledge (Inuit Qaujimagatugangit) and guidance with scientific research and leading-edge technology is key to our success in helping to conserve this polar region.



© Pete Ewins / WWF-Canada

## ARCTIC SPECIES CONSERVATION FUND

The fiscal year kicked off with the fifth field season for our Arctic Species Conservation Fund, which supports high-quality research and stewardship of priority at-risk species. We distributed \$250,000 for projects on pressing environmental concerns facing the North by partnering with university researchers, government scientists and Inuit organizations in Nunavut and Nunavik.

Our ten 2019–2020 projects ranged from using satellites and drones to determine critical habitat and nursery areas for one of Canada's most threatened beluga populations, to developing a network of Indigenous Guardians to conserve the Bathurst herd, one of Canada's most decimated caribou populations. Other projects included measuring climate and shipping impacts on narwhal and work on reducing human-polar bear conflict.

After COVID-19 travel restrictions kicked in, some projects pivoted to data analysis and planning while others, like the Inuit-run polar bear den mapping on Southampton Island, were deemed safe to proceed as it was run by locals and no travel was required.



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## PROTECTED AREAS

In the wake of massive protections in the region WWF dubbed “The Last Ice Area” — made official in August 2019, interim Tuvaijuittuq Marine Protected Area and now-permanent Tallurutiup Imanga National Marine Conservation Area cover more than 427,000 km<sup>2</sup> — the first steps have been taken towards establishing a 93,087 km<sup>2</sup> marine protected area (MPA) around Southampton Island in Hudson Bay. WWF-Canada’s work providing science and research advice on Southampton — as part of our ongoing project to identify a potential network of marine priority areas for conservation — has helped to build the case for, and inform future management of, an eventual MPA.

We also supported local efforts toward establishing the Aviqtuuq Inuit Protected and Conserved Area along the Boothia Peninsula, a polar bear denning habitat,

caribou calving ground and summering area for narwhal, beluga and bowhead whales. The 1100-person community of Taloyoak in the central Canadian Arctic wants to protect this region for future generations with a new model where they remain in control and can operate economic opportunities within the region, including small-scale fisheries, outfitting camps, tourism and community Guardian programs. In August 2019, the community secured over \$500,000 in federal funding to scope and develop this area, with WWF-Canada providing the necessary 20 per cent matching funds as well as in-kind staff resources. As the community leads this initiative, we will continue to offer technical and strategic advice and support as requested.

## SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Another example of intertwining wildlife protection with economic opportunity is WWF-Canada’s work in helping develop sustainable inshore fisheries for Hudson Bay and adjacent communities of Sanikiluaq, Kinngait (formerly known as Cape Dorset) and Arviat. These renewable, low-impact and Inuit-owned fisheries will provide environmentally sound economic opportunities for locals as an alternative to jobs in - in extractive or other sectors which can disrupt ecosystems and habitat.

WWF-Canada enlisted scientific research partners as well as technical support from IBM on a machine learning-based survey technique combining traditional harvest sampling with the use of non-invasive remotely operated vehicle (ROV) video. The data analysis is providing the required information to continue moving toward sustainable community-based commercial fisheries.

After the pandemic hit, WWF-Canada also successfully helped the Pond Inlet HTO oppose last-minute format changes to the phase two Baffinland technical hearings that would have prevented community members most impacted by the project’s expansion from having their voices heard. These concerns include increasing ship strikes and underwater noise associated with increased production.

In September 2019, we released a report which highlighted how alleviating Nunavut’s diesel dependency through wind and solar energy is both environmentally responsible and fiscally feasible. We also co-hosted the Kivalliq Energy Forum in Rankin Inlet and held community education nights across the territory to further promote renewables.

Travel restrictions also forced us to cancel visits to the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, Nauyasat and other communities. But our Arctic team was able to pivot and conduct webinars and other online engagements to continue our crucial work.



*“For a long time, my husband Alan and I have been passionate about conservation and the preservation of biodiversity. The Arctic has been a special interest for us, with its magnificent landscapes and its unique and highly charismatic species. I am also a strong proponent of what Canada’s Indigenous communities can accomplish in conservation and it’s important to me that WWF-Canada has always worked closely with Indigenous people. After all, it’s only by working with local communities that we can really effect change.”*

— Pat Koval, former WWF-Canada Board Chair and, along with Alan Koval, foundational donors to WWF-Canada and the Arctic Species Conservation Fund.

# FRESHWATER

WWF-Canada has been a leader in freshwater conservation for over a decade. This past year, WWF-Canada's freshwater experts focused on **protecting freshwater health through ecosystem restoration, building water stewardship with local communities, and finding the best innovative technological solutions to tackle the pressures that are stressing our watersheds.**

## RESTORING AND PROTECTING OUR RIVERS

WWF-Canada partnered with Katzie First Nation to restore salmon habitat in the Upper Pitt River watershed in B.C. With Coca-Cola Canada's support, this work resulted in the restoration of four sites, equal to 11,326m<sup>2</sup>. Within weeks, salmon were spotted returning to the restored spawning sites. The success of this restoration led to a multi-year partnership to restore other areas of the Upper Pitt River watershed. Unfortunately, some monitoring that was planned for the spring was delayed due to COVID-19, but the team adapted to the challenges and additional restoration work was completed safely in July and August 2020.

More good news for river protection arrived in October 2019 when Transport Canada officially added 25 rivers to the List of Scheduled Waters, including 6 out of 10 of the rivers we identified through our *Wild and Free-flowing Rivers* report. These rivers, identified by WWF-Canada as essential for the safeguarding of wildlife and communities who rely on them, have received additional oversight under the *Canadian Navigable Waters Act*. By maintaining navigation rights, it also ensures that species will be able to move freely throughout their habitat – a key component to ensuring healthy wildlife populations.



*"The destruction and disruption that flooding and other environmental disasters cause can be devastating for communities across the country. We want to help Canadians get ahead of these risks and be more confident in managing them and protecting the things they care about. With climate change increasing the frequency of such events, communities must be better prepared, and infrastructure must be more resilient. RSA Canada is thrilled to work alongside WWF-Canada and local communities in the Saint John River to demonstrate how nature-based solutions – like restoring a wetland – can help reduce risk."*

— Amalia Kyriacou,  
Communications and  
Corporate Responsibility  
Manager at RSA Canada



## BUILDING A WATER STEWARDSHIP CULTURE ACROSS CANADA

In 2019, groups across Canada restored 193 hectares of habitat, planted 19,399 native plants, and treated and removed 75,185.5 m<sup>2</sup> of invasive species — that's enough to fill Buckingham Palace! This year we restored less habitat but removed more invasive species than the year before (2096 hectares and 49,440 m<sup>2</sup> respectively). This variation in our results is to be expected as our goal is to support projects across the country and some years see us fund more of one activity than another. This amazing work was carried

out through the Loblaw Water Fund, which in its six years saw more than 24,000 individuals get involved in activities to make an impact on nature.

From July to September 2019, we held our first official STREAM (Sequencing the Rivers for Environmental Assessment and Monitoring) field season with Living Lakes Canada. Over the course of five training events, we helped 68 people from 21 local groups collect 40 benthic invertebrate samples — the tiny bugs that live on the bottom of

rivers — in watersheds that were lacking data. We ran into challenges in the Bow sub-watershed (Canmore) because of Whirling disease, where constant sanitation of the equipment is required to prevent spreading the disease, making it difficult to collect samples. COVID-19 also forced us to cancel training plans for June 2020, but we're looking into safe ways to continue this important work with communities and partners.



© Catherine Paquette / WWF-Canada



© Cassidy Swanston / WWF-Canada



© Allan Colton / WWF-Canada

## FRESHWATER CONSERVATION GOES HIGH-TECH

This year we launched the Generation Water Tech Challenge to find bold and innovative solutions to freshwater health issues. A total of \$75,000 was granted to the four Generation Water Tech Challenge award recipients, in addition to a spot in the Centre for Social Innovation's Climate Ventures' Earth Tech accelerator to help bring their solutions to life. Their technologies will help modernize our approach to freshwater data and reduce urban threats to freshwater habitats. And we will use the learnings from this challenge to inform future technology challenges through our Living Planet Tech Hub.

# OCEANS

WWF-Canada is committed to protecting marine and coastal areas for species and people, ensuring responsible development and shipping, and promoting community-led and sustainable fisheries for communities and wildlife alike.

## PROTECTING MARINE AND COASTAL AREAS

This year, Canada surpassed its target of 10 per cent marine protected areas, reaching 13.81 per cent (793,906 km<sup>2</sup>). This win for oceans comes after more than 20 years of work from WWF-Canada and the interim designation of the Tuvaijuittuq Marine Protected Area (nearly 320,000 km<sup>2</sup>) in August 2019. We continue to advocate for setting minimum standards to ensure destructive activities like oil and gas development are prohibited in marine protected areas (MPAs) and to develop MPA networks that allow wildlife to travel throughout their ranges.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 stalled our regular coastal restoration work this year, but we were able to install four beaver bafflers — devices that help Atlantic salmon (and other fish) along their migratory routes. These installations opened up 185 km of linear river/stream habitat for salmon and will help with species recovery.

After years of WWF-Canada advocating for bans on Heavy Fuel Oils (HFO) in the Arctic and large tanker ships on BC's north coast, the Canadian government has committed to tackling these issues. While the details of these commitments are still being negotiated, WWF-Canada continues to advocate for stringent timelines and measures.

*"The Sitka Foundation feels honoured to support WWF-Canada's team and other local organizations in their efforts to fill gaps in understanding and build community responses in order to protect and restore forage fish spawning habitat around the coast of the Salish Sea. These little fish feed our wild salmon and many other species in our backyard. We believe that community built and led solutions are essential to solving the massive environmental problems that humans have created in our natural world."*

— Carolynn Beaty, executor director of The Sitka Foundation, championing the recovery of Pacific forage fish since 2017



WWF-Canada continued our efforts working with industry and government to reduce shipping speeds and promote other measures that reduce impacts from underwater noise and ship strikes to at-risk whale populations, including:

- Measures to reduce shipping speed and noise impacts for southern resident killer whales led by the Port of Vancouver with commercial shippers, were supported by WWF-Canada and others, for the third consecutive year in 2019. These measures resulted in a 50 percent reduction in sound intensity levels in Haro Strait in the Salish Sea over 4 months in the summer, providing killer whales increased feeding opportunities.
- In collaboration with the Gitga'at First Nation and the North Coast Cetacean Society, we used underwater microphones to understand the soundscape of the area and how whales use the Squally Channel in Gitga'at Territory on the north coast of B.C. where more than 700 annual transits from LNG carriers and related vessels are set to begin in 2024.
- With the Inuvialuit Game Council, we developed a Western Arctic Mariner's Guide to help avoid impacts on wildlife and Inuit harvesting areas.

In early 2020, concerned that a flawed environmental assessment would allow risky oil and gas exploration and development that would put sensitive marine habitats in danger, WWF-Canada and a group of environmental organizations filed a Judicial Review against the Government of Canada regarding the Regional Assessment for Offshore Oil and Gas Exploratory Drilling East of Newfoundland and Labrador with the intention of having the assessment reopened and conducted to a higher standard. There is no resolution yet, but we will continue our efforts to protect the wildlife, communities and commercial fisheries that live and operate in this region.

## COMMUNITY-LED AND SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES



© Neil Ever Osborne / WWF-Canada

WWF-Canada aims to advance an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management using local and Indigenous knowledge, scientific research and citizen science. In April of this year, WWF-Canada recommended a precautionary pause to commercial fishing of capelin to allow the species reprieve. We are concerned about the probability of a further 90 per cent decline of capelin populations due in part to fishing activities, and the negative impact it will have on Indigenous communities and important species throughout the food chain. Although our recommendation to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans was not taken, we influenced the advice sent from the Department to the Minister, and we will continue our efforts to restore this key forage fish population.

Over the past few years, WWF-Canada staff participated in herring and mackerel advisory committee meetings to support an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management and science-based decision-making. This year, we were pleased to hear environmental and ecosystem-based data being discussed at these meetings, but there is still more work to do to include additional metrics and analysis in fisheries decisions.



Abandoned, lost and discarded fishing gear (ghost gear) in Atlantic Canada poses a serious threat to wildlife, habitats and the safety and economic viability of fisheries. To address these threats WWF-Canada has a series of projects, from leatherback sea turtle disentanglement training for cod fish harvesters, to supporting research into marine “hotspots” and on-land management of ghost gear to understand just how significant the challenges are (report to be released next year). Finally, we are supporting the Confederacy of Mainland Mi’kmaq to take an ecosystem-based approach to addressing ghost gear challenges in First Nation fisheries and Atlantic Canada waters.



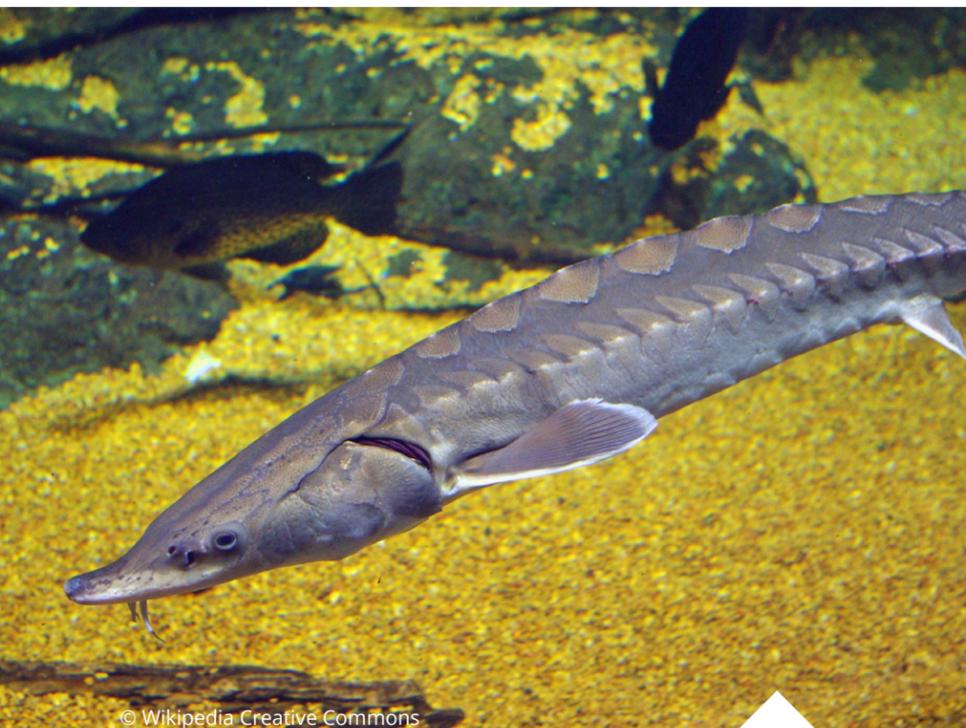
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# SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

## UNDERSTANDING THE THREATS

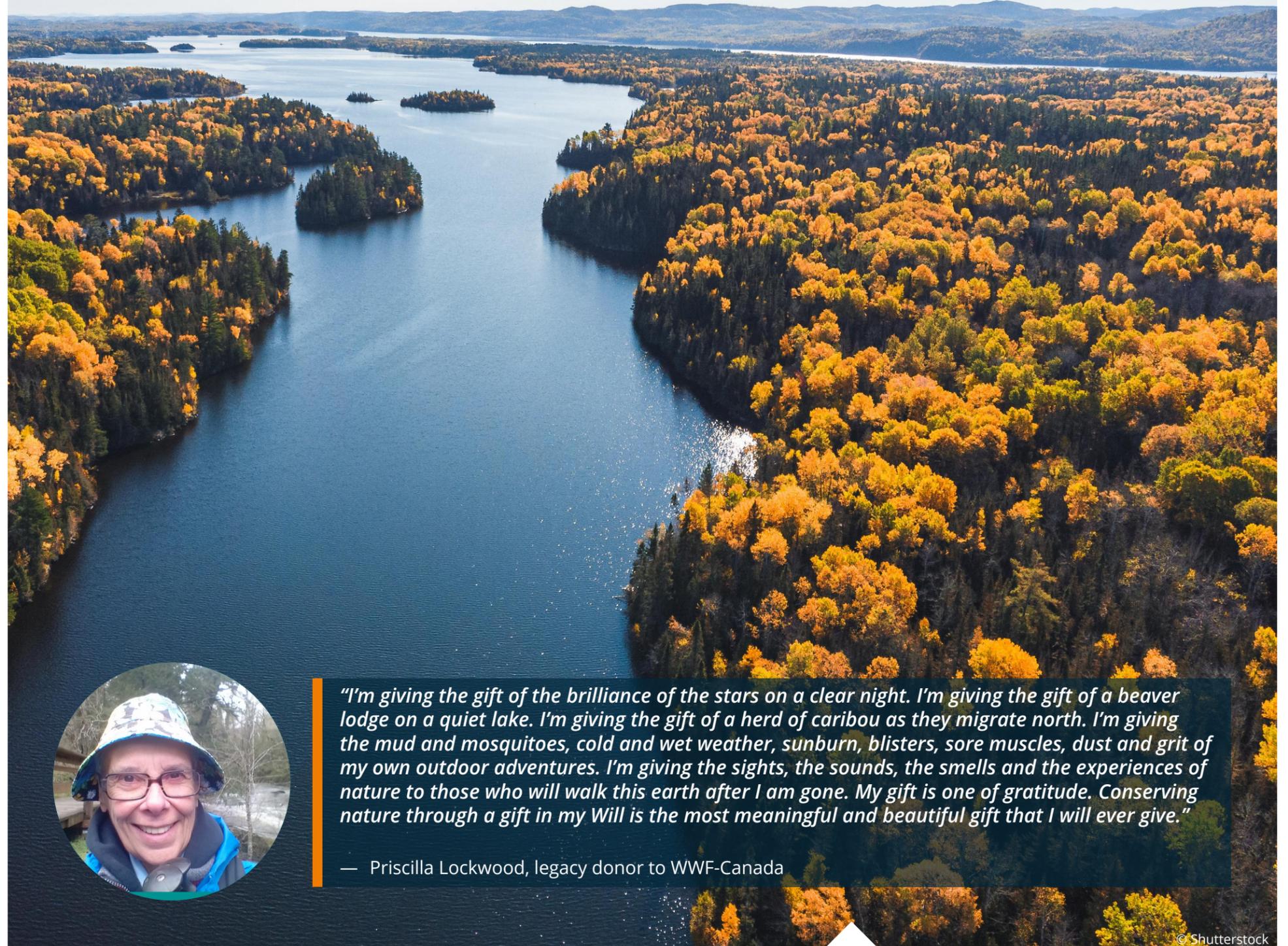
Canadian wildlife recovery efforts have not been as successful as we would like, so this year WWF-Canada conducted a threats assessment for species assessed as at-risk. Published in the scientific journal FACETS, our study found that Canadian species at risk (SAR) face, on average, five threats, while at-risk amphibians and turtles face seven, on average. To address these varying and complex threats, we made the case for broad, ecosystem-based conservation solutions that can simultaneously address multiple threats for multiple species.

These findings were incorporated into the Living Planet Report Canada 2020, WWF-Canada's foundational report on the state of wildlife in Canada, which was released in September 2020.



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Our planet's future requires new and innovative solutions to tackle the dual crises of climate change and biodiversity loss. During 2019–2020, WWF-Canada experts worked with other scientists, using data analysis and leading-edge technologies to test new conservation solutions to understand and reduce threats to wildlife, and map important carbon stores across Canada. We also launched the Living Planet Technology Hub to help promote the use of technology in conservation, which successfully supported the Generation Water Tech Challenge this year with plans for other technology challenges in coming years.



*"I'm giving the gift of the brilliance of the stars on a clear night. I'm giving the gift of a beaver lodge on a quiet lake. I'm giving the gift of a herd of caribou as they migrate north. I'm giving the mud and mosquitoes, cold and wet weather, sunburn, blisters, sore muscles, dust and grit of my own outdoor adventures. I'm giving the sights, the sounds, the smells and the experiences of nature to those who will walk this earth after I am gone. My gift is one of gratitude. Conserving nature through a gift in my Will is the most meaningful and beautiful gift that I will ever give."*

— Priscilla Lockwood, legacy donor to WWF-Canada

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## CHOOSING THE MOST EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS

A long-standing criticism of Canada’s approach to species at risk (SAR) recovery is that the process takes too long to go from assessing a species to developing a recovery strategy to finally taking action. This year, WWF-Canada collaborated with Dr. Tara Martin at the University of British Columbia to test a new decision-making tool — called Priority Threat Management — intended to identify conservation strategies that benefit

the greatest number of species, taking cost, benefits and feasibility into consideration. Working in the Wolastoq/Saint John River watershed in New Brunswick, a region home to 50 SAR, we hosted workshops with experts to identify threats and conservation actions and strategies. This report will be released, with specific strategies and solutions for species recovery, in the next year.

## KEEPING CARBON IN THE GROUND

The peatlands in the Hudson and James Bay Lowlands (HJBL) are the largest contiguous wetlands in the world and one of the world’s largest remaining tracts of unmanaged boreal forest, covering almost 374,000 km<sup>2</sup> — an area greater than the size of Germany. This year, WWF-Canada committed to supporting the Mushkegowuk Council’s conservation efforts in the region, which include sampling peatland carbon and cataloging coastal habitats to identify areas for future conservation efforts.

Our partnership with the Mushkegowuk Council is a leading example of the type of work we will be pursuing in our next 10-year plan: working with Indigenous and local groups to protect and restore natural habitats to benefit wildlife and reduce atmospheric carbon levels. Our new understanding of both wildlife needs and carbon storage, developed this year, will support future nature-based solutions that benefit both.

# NATURE-CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

Reversing the decline of wildlife will take all of us. And this year, our supporters embraced the challenge. Throughout Canada, tens of thousands of people took measurable actions for nature. Protecting everything from tiny backyard insects, to sea turtles and fish swimming in our waters, to at-risk polar bears in our Arctic. While the global pandemic caused WWF-Canada to pause or alter many of our spring and summer activities, we still made incredible strides for wildlife together.

## KEEPING PLASTIC AND LITTER OUT OF NATURE

We had a record-breaking year in 2019 with **83,803 volunteers** taking part in the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup to prevent **163,501 kilograms** of trash from entering our rivers, lakes and oceans where it can harm wildlife. This was an increase of over 20,000 volunteers and almost 50,000 kg of litter from the previous year. Our joint conservation initiative with Ocean Wise, presented by **Loblaw Companies Limited** and **Coca-Cola Canada**, also hit two other significant milestones in its 26-year history: volunteers have cleaned up a staggering 2 million kilograms of trash and 44,000 kilometres of shoreline. To put that into perspective, that's the equivalent of walking the circumference of the Earth! As this program is a partnership, we report on it differently than other projects and the above represents the successes of 2019.



## IN THE ZONE: GARDENS THAT HELP WILDLIFE THRIVE

Home to one-third of Canada's at-risk plants and animals, southern Ontario's Carolinian zone was identified by WWF-Canada's Wildlife Protection Assessment as one of the areas most in need of protection. In collaboration with Carolinian Canada, In the Zone encourages gardeners to restore biodiversity and create habitat for bees, birds, butterflies and other wildlife by growing native plants. Our goal for 2020 was to establish 5,000 native plant gardens in the region. To date, **5,474 gardeners** have restored **39,348 hectares** of native plant habitat, a 40 per cent increase over last year.

While many of our engagement activities were put on hold or cancelled this spring due to COVID-19, In the Zone flourished as many people turned to gardening as a new activity during lockdown. In Zone's *Project Swallowtail* brought together 350 residents of a west Toronto neighbourhood to grow a connected corridor of garden habitat. The project pivoted quickly to include socially distant plant sharing and direct-to-door delivery of plants. Our partnership with **Loblaw Companies Limited** was essential in introducing new gardeners to the concept of native plant gardening by offering native plants with the In the Zone tag in 35 of its garden centres. We also launched a popular series of Garden for Wildlife webinars to replace our usual community outreach activities.

## VIRTUAL CLIMB FOR NATURE

This year's event was unlike any we've had in the past. With a few weeks to go before our thirtieth annual CN Tower Climb for Nature, the decision was made to transition to a virtual event. A huge thank you to all **4,273 individuals** and **150 corporate teams** who registered for the Climb and raised **\$556,941** for nature, and to our **sponsors Nissan Canada Foundation** and **IKEA Canada** whose support helped make the transition online possible. And while we did not meet our fundraising goal this year, we're endlessly grateful to our incredible supporters who found creative ways to mark the iconic tower's 1,776 steps and 144 floors. Some of the ideas including skipping, jumping on the bed, and even taking the stairs dressed as Marvel superhero Deadpool (attracting the attention of Canadian actor Ryan Reynolds).



*"World Wildlife Fund is important to me because ever since I learned about wildlife extinction and endangerment, I've wanted to make a difference and change our planet for the better!"*

*To me, WWF-Canada is an incredible organization and they do so much to make a difference. I think it's important to support the World Wildlife Fund during this pandemic because even though things are difficult right now, we shouldn't give up on protecting nature and wildlife."*

— Noah Anhorn, 12 years old



## ENGAGING STUDENTS AND WORKPLACES IN ACTIONS FOR NATURE

This year, we continued to grow our Living Planet @ School, Campus and Work programs despite the challenge of COVID-19.

**Living Planet @ School:** Schools play an important role in connecting students with nature and empowering them to make a difference for wildlife in their communities through educational, hands-on projects. During the 2019-2020 school year, we saw an estimated **54,841 new students and educators** take part in actions for nature such as Nature Sketch, Schoolyard Cleanup, Polar Bear Walk, Earth Hour and National Sweater Day. WWF-Canada also awarded **50 Go Wild grants** to schools across the country. Due to

the pandemic and closure of in person classes in some parts of the country, many of the Go Wild school projects are ongoing. Since launching in 2017, our program consists of over **117,000 students** across the country and we are well on our way to achieving our 2021 goal (engaging 10 per cent of Canada's schools, or 200,000 students). Our focus for the coming year will be on supporting teachers and students as they manage the complexities of the pandemic.

**Living Planet @ Campus:** Post-secondary students are the future leaders of communities and businesses, so it's important that they graduate with the experience to contribute to creating a more sustainable Canada. To date, we have **12,068 students** enrolled in the program (surpassing our 2020 goal of 7,500 students), representing 75 per cent of Canada's post-secondary institutions. This year we celebrated the first cohort of 19 students to complete their Living Planet Leader certification with another 606 students working towards it. WWF-Canada also awarded **eight Go Wild grants**, which supported projects to remove invasive species, reduce waste, address plastic on campus and create habitat for bees, bats, birds and pollinators. The Go Wild projects reached an additional 22,350 students, bringing us closer to achieving our 2023 goal of 57,990 post-secondary students contributing to environmental sustainability where they live, learn and work.

**Living Planet @ Work:** WWF-Canada's Living Planet @ Work program – sponsored by **The Printing House** – empowers businesses and their employees to find greener ways to do business—for the good of their company and the planet. This year, workplaces led shoreline cleanups, reduced paper consumption, took action to make their properties more energy-efficient and less salty, and generously raised funds for WWF-Canada's conservation efforts. This year we also experienced a 10 per cent increase in champions and a seven per cent increase in companies over the previous year. With many of our champions working from home due to the pandemic, they were able to reduce their travel footprint, but many other workplace sustainability campaigns were put on hold.



*"The journey to complete the certification was nothing short of life changing. Once you are inspired to lead a more sustainable and conscious life, it's easy to explain to your network why it makes sense for them to, too. To say that it changed the way I live would be an understatement."*

— Joe Perez, Supply Chain and Operations Management at George Brown College and Living Planet Leader with WWF-Canada.

# QUÉBEC



WWF-Canada's Québec program has two goals: creating and implementing conservation projects in Southern Québec – a priority region highlighted in our Wildlife Protection Assessment – and communicating WWF-Canada's work to Francophone audiences across the country. This year, we focused on biodiversity and resilient communities as well as shipping and protected areas in the St. Lawrence River.

*"My greatest passion is animals. But there are so many threats to species and our own planet! I am passionate about snow leopards and pandas, but for me, all species are a priority. I always feel connected with nature: when I'm in the garden, on the sidewalk, in the forest, etc. I feel like these wildlife species depend on me and us!"*

— Lucas Tessier, age 12, supports wildlife through symbolic adoptions and shoreline cleanups

## MAKING COMMUNITIES AND URBAN HABITATS MORE RESILIENT

Aiming to return water to its rightful place in the urban and peri-urban landscape, our Blue Resilience Research Action Centre work, developed in collaboration with l'Université de Montréal, improves and strengthens community adaptation to the climate crisis through better water management. As part of this work, we participated in numerous site assessments around the Greater Montreal area.

We also completed three feasibility studies for our Blue Montreal project which identified target areas as well as benefits for communities, species, and natural spaces. The studies also laid out potential revitalization projects ranging from bringing underground rivers back above ground to building new urban rivers to manage climate-increased storm water runoff.



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## IMPROVING URBAN BIODIVERSITY ACROSS QUÉBEC

WWF-Canada's Biopolis, the first urban biodiversity hub in North America, is designed to facilitate expert knowledge sharing and project best practices. Initially exclusive to the island of Montreal, this year Biopolis and its digital platform expanded across the province of Québec to feature new urban biodiversity projects in Gatineau, Saint-Bruno-de-Montarville, Victoriaville and Trois-Rivières.

## THE COLLECTIVE TOGETHER FOR A PLASTIC-FREE ST. LAWRENCE

In collaboration with the Nature Connected Communities program, the Quebec program has been developing local Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanups and more than quadrupled participants year-over-year, surging from 1736 in 2018 to 8367 people in 2019.

With our partners Mission 100 tonnes, Stratégies Saint-Laurent and The Blue Organization, we also more than quadrupled the number of cleanup events, primarily along the St. Lawrence River. Our International Coastal Cleanup Day collaboration with **Frank And Oak**, for instance, saw 153 kilograms of trash collected from two kilometres of shoreline.

And to demonstrate why these cleanups are so crucial, we also hosted a conference in Montreal's Old Port which was attended by more than 200 people eager to learn about the impact of plastics on the ocean and aquatic life.

# BEYOND CANADA

With a country as vast and in need of nature conservation as Canada, almost all our donations are spent right here — but this year was a little different in this regard.

As usual, a small percentage of our funds went to support big cat conservation in Nepal.

With a goal of ensuring that tigers and their prey are secured in the wild by 2021, we supported WWF-Nepal's tiger conservation initiatives in the Banke National Park, buffer zones and critical habitat beyond the protected areas. The park was established in 2010, following a global pledge of doubling tiger numbers by 2022, a goal known as Tx2. WWF-Canada has been assisting tiger conservation initiatives in the Banke National Park since 2013 and a recent tiger survey estimated that there are 21 tigers in Banke – an 80 percent increase from the 2010 survey. In order to give momentum to this success story and achieve the Tx2 goal, this year we provided funding assistance to WWF-Nepal's ongoing efforts to reduce human-tiger conflict, create income-generating conservation incentives for local communities and reduce wildlife mortality due to water scarcity and road kills by protecting and restoring wetlands in and around the Park.

In addition to tiger conservation work, our lead specialist on big cats, Rinjan Shrestha, provided technical assistance to WWF-Nepal to prepare a climate-integrated landscape management plan for snow leopard conservation in the Western Himalayas. However, this collaboration was done virtually due to COVID travel restrictions in the spring.

The unprecedented situation triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic influenced every sector including conservation. Now, more than ever, there is an urgent need to integrate local communities' needs into the conservation agenda. WWF will be there, working with communities to safeguard the conservation successes we've made together and overcoming the heavy losses communities have suffered during the pandemic.

Aside from the pandemic, what set this year apart was how you came through for the wildlife and people of Australia, after watching the bushfire tragedy unfold Down Under last winter. Accelerated by climate change, the catastrophic fires took dozens of lives and thousands of homes while burning 19 million hectares, with 12.6 million hectares primarily forest and bushland.

WWF-Australia CEO Dermot O'Gorman called it “one of the worst wildlife disasters in modern history” and commissioned a scientific study that later estimated that the fires had killed or displaced nearly 3 billion animals, including 143 million mammals, 2.46 billion reptiles, 180 million birds and 51 million frogs. Many of these species, like koalas, are found only in Australia and are at dramatically increased risk of extinction.

In the face of this almost incomprehensible wildlife loss, we were able to send \$588,807 in Canadian donations to WWF-Australia for their recovery and restoration work.

While the focus at the peak of the fires was emergency support for frontline organizations doing search, rescue and rehab for injured and affected wildlife, WWF-Australia soon also went to work on habitat recovery and future-proofing the country.

Despite being slowed by the pandemic, WWF-Australia distributed \$8 million across 34 projects between January and June. These efforts included: food, water and medical airdrops; funding equipment for wildlife hospitals; protecting and restoring forests and bushland; cultivating habitat connectivity, improving Indigenous and rural fire management; and strengthening endangered species laws and climate

policies. As part of their commitment to doubling the koala population on the East Coast, they've even started using drones to spread eucalyptus seeds in fire-affected areas to bring back the beloved marsupial's primary food source.

The impact of your generosity toward WWF's work at home and abroad simply cannot be underestimated, it has been a consistent bright spot during a very dark year.

*“WWF speaks for wildlife who can't speak for themselves. As an animal lover, I always wonder why more people don't see how the environment and wildlife are in trouble, and that we all urgently need to act to protect them. Part of what I do for wildlife is support WWF. Since 2006 I have been a monthly donor, and I recently included a gift in my Will, not just because of the good work they do but also because of their thoughtful approach to conservation.”*

— Kathryn Davidson,  
monthly donor since  
2006



# WHAT'S NEXT: OUR TEN-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

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Protecting, conserving and restoring Canada's nature has been our mission for our 50 years.

But missions need evolving strategies as the facts on the ground change. So, we've created an ambitious and bold new strategic framework for the next decade, an action plan that combats the deepening dual crises of biodiversity loss and climate change by harnessing the power of nature.

Our 10-year vision has a series of measurable and meaningful targets to propel our work into 2030, using improvement in habitat for species in decline, tonnes of natural carbon stored and protected and the integration of Indigenous wisdom as indicators of success. Ten years may not be a long time in the natural world, but it is enough time for us to make a significant difference in reversing wildlife loss, reducing carbon emissions and increasing healthy ecosystems. And we have no time to waste!

Nearly half of Canada's wildlife populations are in steep decline and the main cause is habitat loss, the destruction and disruption of areas where they find food and water, raise their young, escape predators, migrate, and hibernate.

The impacts of industrial activities and pressures like unsustainable mining, shipping, and commercial fishing, the siting of ecosystem disrupting energy infrastructure, and pollution are increasingly threatening wildlife survival even as climate change creates unprecedented new problems. Rising sea levels, more frequent and intense drought, wildfires, superstorms, heat waves, melting glaciers and warming oceans directly harm animals and destroy the places they live.



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The magnitude of these challenges is so enormous that we completely re-organized our activities and re-aligned our operations to ensure greater successes. Inspired by the complexities of ecosystems, we are focusing on four integrated goals:

Expanding habitat in areas of wildlife decline; increasing natural carbon storage and avoiding natural carbon loss; reducing industrial stressors on wildlife; and, inspiring communities, individuals and organizations to take measurable actions for conservation.

Reaching these goals will depend in large part on Indigenous-led conservation, the most effective, efficient and equitable means of safeguarding nature, and by embracing Indigenous knowledge systems alongside technical science and innovation.

Massive restoration, regeneration and stewardship of forested lands, wetlands, grasslands and coastal lands, along with concerted efforts in built-up regions where many people live, will increase biodiversity and reduce the release of greenhouse gases.

If this year has taught us anything, it's that change isn't easy and challenges aren't predictable. But we know we're facing a global nature crisis and that our hard work will be worth it. We are in potentially transformational moment where anything and everything is possible. Let's change the world, together.

# LETTER FROM FINANCE

Courage.

A core value of the WWF Network is courage. We demonstrate courage through our actions, we work for change where it's needed, and we inspire people and institutions to tackle the greatest threats to nature and the future of the planet.

As 2020 unfolded and the COVID-19 pandemic took hold, we all needed courage to face the unknown and the unprecedented. WWF-Canada was no exception. For the safety of our participants, we were forced to cancel the CN Tower Climb and our Kids Run for Nature. As our most significant fundraising events, these cancellations could have threatened our financial security. But despite the challenges, we were able to successfully raise over \$28 million for the fiscal year, which ended June 30. Knowing that more than 55 per cent of our fundraising revenue comes from donations by people like you, we have the security and courage to take our next steps for the future of conservation.

Fiscal 2020 was the final year of our five-year strategic plan that focused on our priority areas of conservation effort, including the Arctic, freshwater and oceans. We are proud to say our donors financially supported our conservation efforts with \$18.6 million, meaning that 75 per cent of our spending this year was for conservation initiatives. We understand our supporters put their trust in us to be responsible with their financial gifts and to apply as

much as possible to our conservation efforts. Financial stewardship and fiscal responsibility are key to achieving our goals. We maintain a strong internal control environment, sustain effective governance, and each year conduct an independent audit of our financial records. During the year we maintained control over our fundraising and administrative costs. In fact, there was a cost reduction compared to the prior year due to the need to pause certain fundraising efforts, such as door-to-door fundraising, due to COVID-19 concerns. As a result, our fundraising costs for fiscal 2020 as a percentage of our revenue was 19.4 per cent.

Our stakeholders can be confident that — with operating and capital funds of over \$29 million — WWF-Canada is safeguarded to be financially stable in both good times and bad so we can continue to work on our mission with courage.

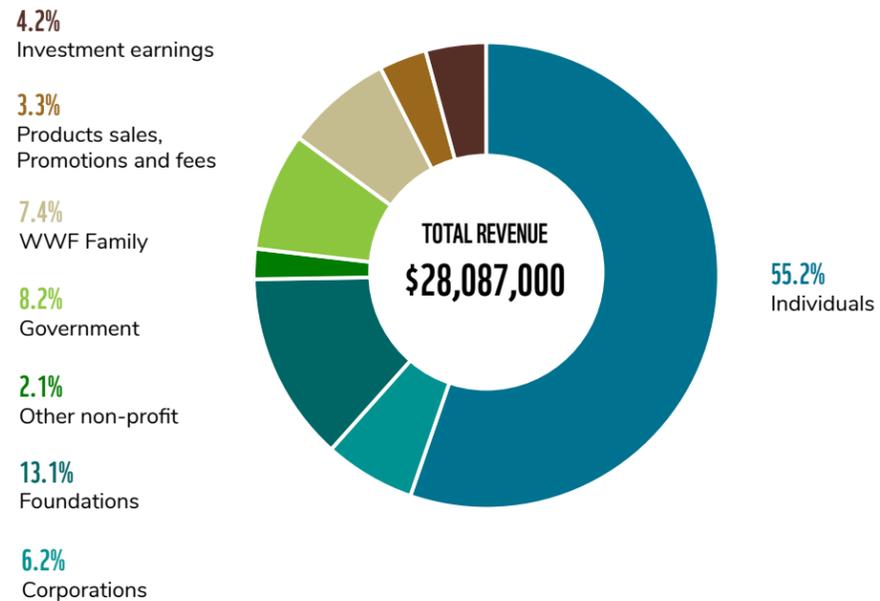
WWF-Canada is embarking on a bold new 10-year strategic plan. But we also enter this with concern for the future as we continue to live with COVID-19. We need courage from our donors. No gift is too small, and many small gifts can have great collective impact.

*David Cornfield*

David Cornfield,  
Interim Senior Vice  
President, Finance &  
Administration

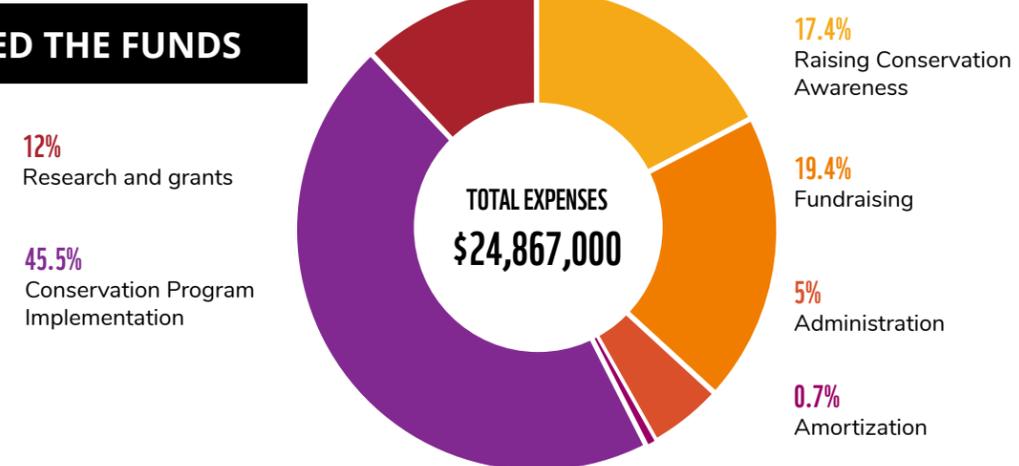


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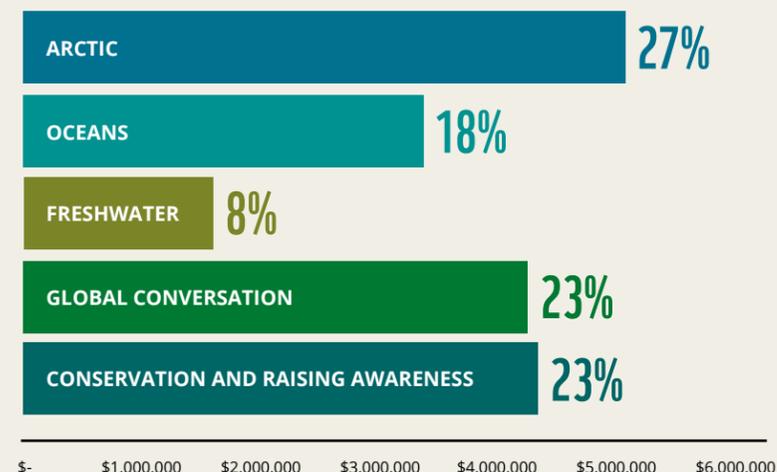


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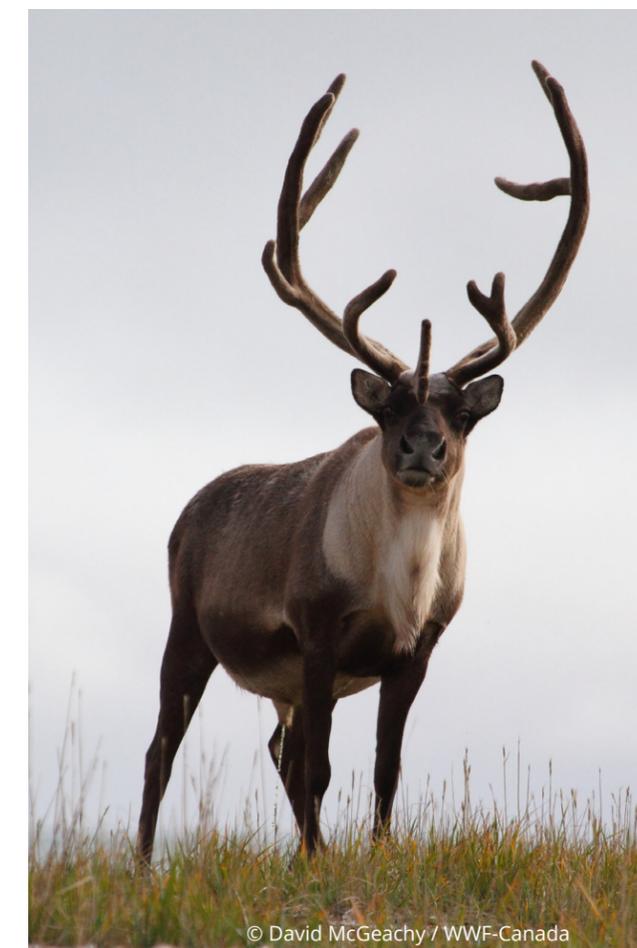
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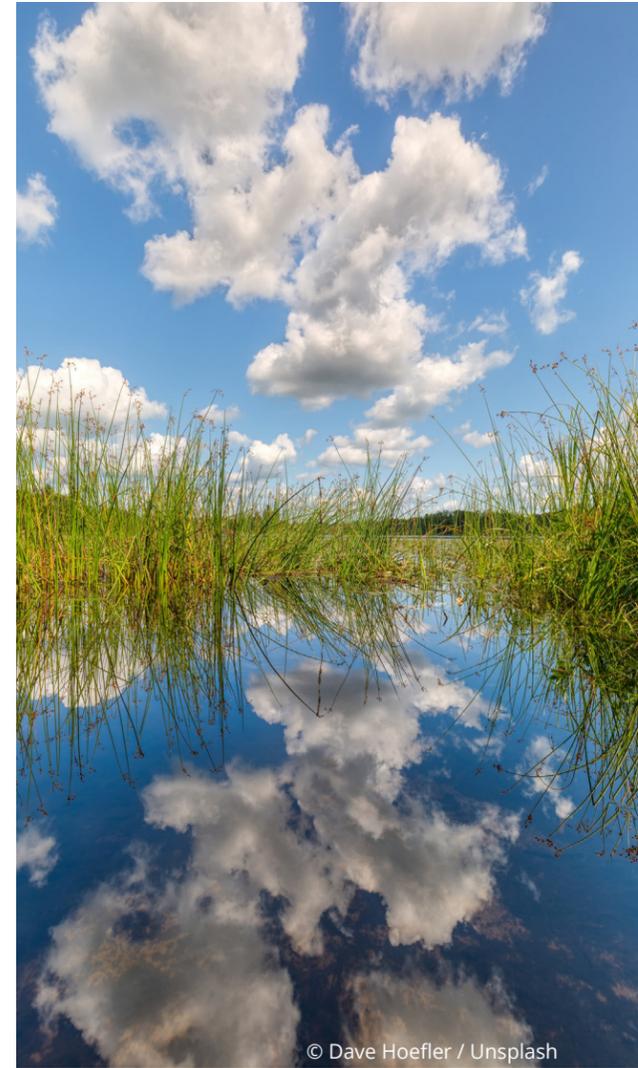
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