



CANADA

LIVING PLANET

Summer 2020



NATURE'S HEROES

Helping to protect the beauty of nature
for people and wildlife



© MICHEAL PACITTO

Aleta and Fred discuss cattail hybridization at Curry Park, Kemptville, Ontario.

WWF IN THE MEDIA



Monte Hummel

BCLOCAL NEWS, MAY 25, 2020

“Dr. Schueler — an expert on often-neglected wildlife such as reptiles and amphibians, crayfish, mussels and wetland plants — has been crucial to protecting natural sites from coast to coast to coast. Aleta’s beautiful paintings and biological illustrations have inspired conservation efforts, and she has generously donated her work to raise funds for nature protection campaigns. This is truly a dynamic duo who have made a quiet but huge difference for nature in Canada.”

— Monte Hummel, WWF-Canada president emeritus, on the latest winners of the Glen Davis Conservation Leadership Prize.



Sigrid Kuehnemund

THE CHRONICLE HERALD, JUNE 4, 2020

“[The] assessment didn’t properly consider the impacts of exploratory drilling on the environment, and it didn’t properly consider the impacts on Canada and provincial climate change targets. It truly damages Canada’s and Newfoundland and Labrador’s ability to reach net zero emissions by 2050, and also puts many sensitive marine habitats at risk.”

— Sigrid Kuehnemund, WWF-Canada’s VP Ocean conservation on why we joined other environmental groups in a legal action against the federal government for failing to properly assess the impacts of exploratory drilling.



Emily Giles

CBC HERE AND NOW, MAY 6, 2020

“I can certainly see why the city has fallen in love with these animals. I think they’ve offered us a kind of welcome distraction right now from everything else that’s going on. On one hand, it’s great that people are so passionate and care about these foxes. But we also want make sure that people stay away and give them the opportunity to be foxes and to be as wild as possible.”

— Emily Giles, WWF-Canada senior species specialist, on the infamous fox family that moved into Toronto’s east end.

GET INVOLVED

PUT NATURE ON YOUR AGENDA

ALL SUMMER: Connect with nature from the indoors action.wwf.ca/things-to-do-at-home/

JULY 29: Global Tiger Day

SEPT. 19: International Coastal Cleanup Day

GROW CANADA’S BIGGEST WILDLIFE GARDEN: inthezonegardens.ca

BINGE WATCH: The groundbreaking Our Planet docuseries is now streaming on YouTube

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS: meet some of nature’s heroes who make our conservation work possible at wwf.ca/stories

YOUR IMPACT

FINDING NATIVE PLANTS MADE EASIER



© ST. WILLIAMS NURSERY-ECOLOGY-CENTRE

It can be difficult to tell which plants are truly native. This spring, WWF-Canada partnered with Loblaw to source native plants with a special In the Zone tag for 35 of their Garden Centres in southern Ontario. Every native plant sold was more habitat restored for wildlife.

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Balaenoptera physalus

WILDLIFE

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT: FIN WHALE

Fin whales are the second largest mammal in the world, next only to blue whales, yet they're such fast swimmers they've earned the nickname "greyhound of the sea." Despite their signature speed, fin whales were still nearly hunted to extinction by commercial whalers during the 1900s.

Since most commercial whaling

was banned, fin whales have been showing encouraging signs of recovery and today can be found in almost all the world's oceans. But like many of Canada's whales, they continue to face threats from human activity, including ship strikes and entanglement in fishing gear. They also risk being drowned out by escalating levels of ocean noise that

make it difficult to communicate, navigate and find food.

To ensure fin whale and other wonderful whales that visit our waters continue to flourish, WWF-Canada is working with partners across the board to make our oceans quieter, safer and healthier. This means we're advocating for stronger regulations to reduce underwater noise and put limits on oil and gas exploration in critical habitats, as well the creation of high-quality marine protected areas where ocean species can take refuge.



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT



Hussein Alidina

Watch our **#WildlifeWednesday** episode on fin whales with our ocean conservation lead specialist, Hussein Alidina. Each week, our conservation experts go LIVE at 3 p.m. ET to talk about Canada's incredible wildlife and answer your questions:

[facebook.com/wwfcanada](https://www.facebook.com/wwfcanada)



NATURE'S HEROES

EMPOWERING NATURE'S HEROES, ONE STREAM AT A TIME

JCSC staff and
citizen scientists
at a CABIN
training last fall.

© CATHERINE PAQUETTE / WWF-CANADA

Local water stewards like the Junction Creek Stewardship Committee (JCSC) are what you might call nature's heroes. Based in Sudbury, Ontario, they're working to revive Junction Creek, an urban waterway that is experiencing some big threats such as pollution, garbage dumping and excess road salt in the winter.

As a 2019 Loblaw Water Fund grantee, JCSC undertook a project to monitor the health of fish populations and restore habitat for brook trout, a freshwater umbrella species, which will also help conserve many other species.

While community-based water monitoring groups like JCSC know their home waters well, a lack of resources can be an obstacle to understanding the full picture. This year, JCSC partnered with

WWF-Canada and the STREAM team (Sequencing the Rivers for Environmental Assessment and Monitoring) to expand their benthic invertebrate monitoring program, which looks at the aquatic bugs, worms and snails living below the surface for clues about watershed health. During a two-day CABIN (Canadian Aquatic Biomonitoring Network) training, seven staff and volunteers were certified to lead water monitoring in their community.

Empowering citizen scientists and local water stewards like JCSC will have a huge impact on water health. By collaborating, we can efficiently expand national and local databases, including WWF-Canada's Watershed Reports – and a clearer picture of Canada's freshwater health will help us better protect it.

So, you've always wanted to be a citizen scientist?

Donors like you are funding groundbreaking conservation research across the country. If you've always dreamed of becoming a citizen scientist yourself, here's how you can with WWF-Canada:

- » Record the native plant habitat you restore with the In the Zone Garden Tracker (inthezonegardens.ca)
- » Contribute to Canada's only national litter database with Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup (shorelinecleanup.ca)
- » When you see capelin rolling, submit your sightings to ecapelin.ca



© DOUG CHASSON



© MIRABLE MCDONALD / WWF-US

Arctic tern.

STUMP THE SCIENTIST

QUESTION: What is habitat-friendly renewable energy?

Confronting the climate crisis means we must dramatically reduce our carbon emissions. But renewable energy can still negatively impact wildlife — hydro



Martha Lenio

projects can affect fish habitats, wind turbines can affect birds and bats — so planning must account for biodiversity, migratory patterns and sensitive habitats. In fact, solar installations can even be designed in ways that help restore native plants and animals! That's why as we shift to clean forms of energy, including in diesel-based places like Nunavut where I work on this issue, it's so important to ensure they're both low-carbon and safeguard important wildlife habitats. That's how we'll create a truly environmentally sustainable future.

Martha Lenio is WWF's renewable energy specialist. Based out of our Iqaluit office, she works to increase engagement in the north and develop stronger working relationships with the Government of Nunavut.

Have a question for our scientists?

Email evandermeer@wwfcanada.org and your question could appear in a future *Living Planet* magazine

CONSERVATION

FISHING FOR SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS IN THE ARCTIC

One of our most important challenges as a conservation organization is ensuring that our work benefits both wildlife and people, especially in places like Nunavut where there is so much economic insecurity.

To provide a renewable resource alternative to industries like mining

or oil and gas, which can harm wildlife and worsen climate change, we've been partnering with Inuit communities on Hudson Bay and Hudson Strait to help them develop small-scale commercial fisheries.

The residents of places like Kinngait, Sanikiluaq and Arviat have developed their own local fishing expertise over centuries. Our role is to assist them by providing state-of-the-art scientific research — including an underwater ROV, or remotely operating vehicle — to evaluate fish, mollusk and sea urchin stocks and help develop management plans. That way, these low-impact and Inuit-owned inshore operations can improve the lives of community members while also contributing to a sustainable Arctic economy of the future.

TRAILING TIGERS TO NEW HEIGHTS

How citizen scientists helped document Nepal's first high-altitude tiger

After locals reported a tiger roaming the mountain paths of far-western Nepal, WWF-Nepal research officer Sumundra Subba excitedly set out to catch it on camera. While tigers have been seen at high altitudes in Bhutan, in Nepal tigers lived only in the lowlands. Or did they?

"The one thing science has always taught us is to remain hopeful no matter how vague the picture may be," Subba said. So his team set up 32 pairs of camera traps and trained local citizen scientists to monitor the data.

There were some false alarms, but another call from a citizen scientist

brought their hopes up. "Our eyes didn't trick us this time," said WWF-Nepal wildlife biologist Sabita Malla. "It was official: an individual tiger had been camera trapped at an altitude of ~2500 metres."

For tigers, which survive in just four per cent of their historic range, this momentous discovery demonstrates the importance of protecting diverse and connected habitats. It's also a positive sign that our conservation efforts are working. Nepal is now one of the safest places for wild tigers to thrive and on track to hit their TX2 goal to double the population by 2022.



Nepal's first documented high-altitude tiger.



© MARTIN HARVEY / WWF

Koalas feed on Eucalyptus leaves in Australia.

YOUR IMPACT

HOW YOU ARE HELPING KOALAS AND WALLABIES RECOVER FROM DISASTER

Australia spent months being ravaged by the most devastating bushfire season the country had ever seen. Even during a global pandemic the recovery work continues unabated. With donations coming in from Canada and around the world, WWF-Australia has been helping care for koalas, bush-tailed wallabies and other animals hurt in the fires. And now that the fires are out, WWF is also turning its attention to restoring forests and damaged habitats so that wildlife will have homes to return to when they are released back into the wild.

© WWF-NEPAL

© ASHLEY COOPER



Boreal forest in Northern Alberta, Canada near Fort McMurray.

NATURE'S HEROES

MY KIDS GIVE ME HOPE

James Fong's story

Xavier and Arya are like any other kids, their rooms filled with stuffed animals – on their beds, shelves, and often scattered around the floor. But they don't just love animals – they're committed to protecting them. Arya fundraises for WWF-Canada campaigns like Australia's bushfires, and every birthday Xavier and Arya donate to WWF-Canada through the Eco-Age program.

My kids give me hope. In many ways, the gift in my Will to WWF-Canada is for them. With this gift, I can make a meaningful contribution in the fight against climate change, the biggest challenge of their lifetime. I'll have peace of mind knowing I did all I could to help my children, and their future children.

My first donation to WWF-Canada was over 30 years ago while in university, and I've donated monthly since then. To be blunt, I don't see why I should stop giving when I die. This won't be the only legacy I leave behind for the environment. At 12 and 14 years old, Xavier and Arya are young eco-warriors. When I'm gone, I trust them to carry my torch.

To learn more about leaving a legacy, contact Maya Ahmad at mahmad@wwfcanada.org or 416-484-7737



Arya, Jennifer and Xavier Fong.

© GREAT CANADIAN SHORELINE CLEANUP

© JAMES FONG

CONSERVATION

NATURE AND CORONAVIRUS

Hidden deep within the tragedy of the COVID-19 outbreak is an important undercurrent of the increasing risk of disease and our current relationship with nature — how we use, degrade and often destroy important habitats for wildlife.

The drivers of human consumption and use are putting people and wildlife closer together and increasing the risk for so-called "spillover" events where

disease in animals can make its way into our human populations. There is a clear need to protect intact ecosystems that people and wildlife rely on, and to actively restore areas that have been degraded or destroyed.

During this time, we have also learned how important community is, and how small actions matter to the health and well-being of others. As we look ahead, let's take this moment to build better, more resilient communities and economies, and recognize that our interconnectedness extends to our relationship with nature.

To receive more content like this, sign up for our Fieldnotes e-newsletter.



valuable citizen science data about the items found on our shorelines. Cigarettes once again topped the Dirty Dozen, with tiny pieces of foam debris, food wrappers and bottle caps also filling out the list.

NATURE'S HEROES

THANK YOU FOR HELPING KEEP PLASTICS OUT OF NATURE!

The Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup saw a record-breaking 3,012 cleanups last year! Across the country, Canadians cleaned 3,937 kilometres of shoreline and prevented 163,505 kilograms of litter from entering our freshwater and marine ecosystems.

Volunteers also helped collect

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1-800-267-2632



Why we are here.

We are creating solutions to the most serious conservation challenges facing our planet, helping people and nature thrive.

[wwf.ca](https://www.wwf.ca)

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