



LIVING PLANET

SPRING 2021

IN THE LAND OF BIG CATS

The science behind catching
cats on camera P.7

BOLD NEW APPROACHES TO CONSERVATION

PRIORITY THREAT MANAGEMENT

For \$33 a year per capita, New Brunswick could recover
40 at-risk species P.4

MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

Why wildlife on the move need more than a
patchwork of protections P.5

WWF-CANADA IN THE NEWS



Female narwhal © naturepl.com / Doug Allan / WWF

| Nunatsiaq News, Feb. 2, 2021

BAFFINLAND SAYS IT WON'T BUDGE ON PROPOSED RAILWAY ROUTE

Inuit have raised concerns about how the proposed expansion of Mary River Mine on north Baffin Island will impact wildlife such as narwhal and caribou. "With a project of this magnitude, we shouldn't be giving Baffinland a blank cheque," says Andrew Dumbrille, WWF-Canada's lead specialist for marine shipping. A geotechnical study is needed to show whether "a certain geological area can sustain the full weight and construction of a railroad. And they haven't done that."

| Canadian Geographic, March 1, 2021

WWF'S MEGAN LESLIE ON HER ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Talking to Canadian Geographic about leaving politics and how individual actions can lead to big change, WWF-Canada's president and CEO, Megan Leslie said, "It's so important for us not to just sit back and expect elected officials to do the right thing. They need our support. They need us to call them out when they're doing something that we don't agree with."



| 🐦 Top Tweet

To mark World Wildlife Day on March 3, WWF removed the panda from its iconic logo for the first time in its 60-year history to highlight what's at stake if we don't act urgently to address biodiversity loss. Brands around the world followed suit.

| In case you missed it

110 HABITATS TO BE RESTORED BY SCHOOLS ACROSS CANADA

In January, we awarded Go Wild grants to 100 schools at the K-12 level and 10 grants to post-secondary schools. This spring and summer, they'll be bringing their ideas to life by creating or restoring habitat for monarchs, salmon, bees and other species.



Monarch Butterfly © WWF-US / Evan Levant

GET INVOLVED

PUT NATURE ON YOUR AGENDA

JUNE 20-26:

Donor Appreciation Week. We're saying thank you for making our conservation work possible.

JUNE 20: Fathers' Day. Give dad a gift that can change the world by symbolically adopting their favourite species.

wwf.ca/shop

JULY 29: Global Tiger Day.

Big cats like the tiger are the heart and soul of their ecosystems. Find out how you can help protect them.

wwf.ca/bigcats

NATURE IS CALLING:

Keep garbage out of nature by cleaning up your local shoreline.

shorelinecleanup.ca



WILDLIFE

WHERE'S WALRUS?

Atlantic walrus © naturepl.com / Tony Wu / WWF

To best protect Canada's walrus populations — as sea ice decreases and shipping traffic increases as a result of climate change — we must better understand their haulout hangouts, which are resting areas on sea ice or land. So, with your support, we've launched a couple of Arctic Species Conservation Fund research projects to do just that. Speaking of launch, the first one takes an incredibly innovative approach by monitoring Atlantic walrus from space. Yes, really!

Using satellite imagery of the aptly named Walrus Island in northern Hudson Bay, this collaboration with Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Sanirajak HTO is determining the

feasibility of using orbiting technology for future walrus studies. While COVID-19 kiboshed the original plan to pair the satellite telemetry with camera traps to more closely observe reactions to passing vessels, the primary part of this pilot project is now being analyzed with next steps being planned. Meanwhile, our resident mapmaker Will Merritt has been busy mapping known walrus haulouts against a decade of Arctic shipping tracks to assess habitat encroachment, determine buffer zone effectiveness and project future trends.

"This work will be crucial given the context of the changing Arctic. Right now, we're seeing a positive-feedback loop where warmer summers means less ice, which in turn means more vessel traffic," explains Merritt, WWF-Canada's GIS & spatial analysis specialist who has been heading this project.

"This means walrus are increasingly reliant on their terrestrial haulout sites and run a greater risk of being negatively affected by passing ships," he adds.

"Our hope is that by comparing known haulouts with the huge amount of data we have on ship navigation, we can paint a clearer picture of where the greatest potential for disturbance is to reduce negative impacts."



Polar bears © naturepl.com / Steven Kazlowski / WWF

Thank you

THANK YOU FOR HELPING ARCTIC WILDLIFE!

This past December, thanks to you, we had our most successful Giving Tuesday campaign ever with more than \$130,000 raised for WWF-Canada's Arctic Species Conservation Fund. We're working with Inuit communities on research projects that will help safeguard narwhal, polar bears, walrus and more.



To receive this newsletter
electronically, call **1-800-267-2632**

© 1986 Panda symbol WWF-World Wide Fund For Nature (also known as World Wildlife Fund) ® "WWF" and "Living Planet" are WWF Registered Trademarks.



Printed on Domtar Cougar
70 lb. text, vellum finish.

BOLD NEW APPROACHES TO CONSERVATION

Every spring, Simon J. Mitchell watches the banks of the Wolastoq (Saint John River) swell near his New Brunswick home and wonders if this year they'll hold. Or will the freshet — an annual spring snow and ice melt — become another historic flood?



© Shutterstock

“With 400 years of colonial settlement, we’ve weakened our natural systems,” says Simon Mitchell, WWF-Canada’s VP of resilient habitats. “In particular, hundreds of years of logging has decimated our forests, leading to significant erosion, flooding and wildlife loss in the region.”

But this threat to wildlife, already stressed by loss of habitat, pollution and climate change, doesn’t recede with the waters. The region has nearly 50 at-risk species, including wood turtles, bank swallows and Atlantic salmon. Scientists predict that all are likely to go locally extinct in the next 25 years without additional interventions.

So, Mitchell and his team have been working with researchers from the University of British Columbia as well as local experts and Indigenous community members on a new conservation decision-making tool called Priority Threat Management (PTM). This approach used data and expert knowledge to identify 15 strategies that will help secure the recovery of 40 species at risk of extinction. The cost? The annual equivalent of \$33 per person in New Brunswick.

WWF-Canada has already started funding three PTM projects to benefit aquatic species. One was organized by the Kennebecasis Watershed Restoration Committee (KWRC), which used a number of approaches, including excavators, to stabilize



Wood turtle © Shutterstock / Jay Ondrejka

riverbanks. “We’re working with landowners [to] restore the river system to a more natural state,” explains Ben Whalen, a KWRC project manager. “We’re very proud to be working alongside WWF-Canada to restore the health of the Wolastoq.”

WWF-Canada would like to thank Fisheries and Oceans Canada, The Patrick and Barbara Keenan Foundation and the Hewitt Foundation for their support of this work.

WILDLIFE NEED MORE THAN A PATCHWORK OF PROTECTIONS

Beluga whales, polar bears, narwhal — these species share the vast and beautiful Canadian Arctic. But that's not all they have in common. They're also constantly on the move, whether it's on land and ice or in the ocean. And one thing animals can't understand is which areas are protected by humans and which are not.

It's impressive that fifteen per cent of marine and coastal areas in the Arctic are provisionally or fully protected, including Tuvai-juiitug Marine Protected Area and Tallurutiup Imanga National Marine Conservation Area. But many of the existing sites have been selected without an overarching strategy to create a network of protected areas.

And why is a network better than a patchwork system of protected areas? Networks are arrangements of protected areas that work together to protect a wider area than an individual site, ensuring that species can move freely and safely throughout their habitats. Networks can also be designed to protect a cross-section of the ecosystem — so areas that are important not just for beluga raising calves or foraging narwhals, but for everything from the species on the seafloor to seabirds nesting in coastal cliffs, ensuring comprehensive conservation that reflects the interconnections between species and habitats.



Beluga / white whale © WWF-Netherlands / Vincent Kneefel

WWF-Canada is working to show how network planning can be done in the Eastern Arctic through its CanPAC project — Canadian Arctic Marine Priority Areas for Conservation. As Canada works towards its international commitments to protect 30 per cent of its marine area by 2030, network planning can help us identify sites for protection that capture the most important areas for Arctic wildlife, helping to curb biodiversity loss and support day-to-day life for local Inuit communities.

STUMP THE EXPERT



Kim Dunn is WWF-Canada's senior specialist for marine conservation and focuses her work on sustainable shipping and ocean governance, including marine protected areas.

QUESTION: WWF-CANADA OPPOSES DUMPING IN MARINE PROTECTED AREAS. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

Marine protected areas (MPAs) are designed to safeguard wildlife like whales, seabirds and fish from the harmful impacts of human activity.

With help from supporters like you, WWF-Canada has successfully advocated for the Government of Canada to adopt new minimum standards that would prohibit destructive activities like dumping. But we need them to *mean* something.

As the government decides how to define these standards, we're calling on them to ensure that "no dumping" includes all ship discharges that harm marine wildlife and their habitats, including: sewage; garbage; treated and untreated "grey water" from sinks, showers and galleys; scrubber effluent from cleaning exhaust systems; ballast water; and oily waste. To actually help struggling wildlife, MPAs must protect species in more than name only.



Sita outdoors
in Thunder Bay
© Sally Woods

SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT

MY LIFE HAS BEEN ABOUT NATURE

Sita's story

For her entire life, Sita Jo-Anne Holland has always chosen nature.

Sita had an “outdoorsy, animal kind of life” growing up in Hudson, QC, and later Thunder Bay, ON. Her dad would often tend to injured ducks or chipmunks and she, too, can't resist an animal in need. “I once saw a bird that had swallowed a fishhook and helped remove it,” she says. “The bird looked at me and paused as if to say thank you.”

Sita raised her daughter in Thunder Bay, working as an elementary school teacher. At age 40, she decided to make a career change and studied to become a registered massage therapist. Setting her own work hours gave her the freedom to spend more time with her family and in the wilderness, surrounded by the moose, otters, mink, lynx, wolves and bears and other wildlife she loves.

And if she had to choose between her car and canoe, she'd choose her canoe every time. (It's a really good canoe!).

Now in her seventies and retired, when Sita was considering the type of legacy she wanted to create, it was an easy decision to choose nature once again by leaving a gift in her Will for WWF-Canada.

“Why not do it?” she thought after receiving a brochure. A monthly donor since the late 1980s, Sita sees leaving a percentage of her estate to WWF-Canada as another way to give back and extend her love of nature. Though she doesn't know how much she'll have in the end, Sita says she trusts that WWF-Canada will put it to good use.

Sita is passing down her love of nature in more ways than one — both through a gift in her Will and by planting milkweed for monarch butterflies in her native plant garden with her grandchildren.

All legacy gifts,
no matter the size,
will make a real
difference for wildlife.

To learn more, please contact
Maya Ahmad at **416-484-7737** or
mahmad@wwfcanada.org or
visit **legacy.wwf.ca**

© Kingsley Ojukwu

SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT



GARDENING FOR WILDLIFE

Kingsley Ojukwu has always been a conscientious gardener, avoiding invasive species and choosing plants native to his area, Ontario's Carolinian Zone. When he found out about our In the Zone gardening program, he also learned that planting native species keeps his soil healthy and attracts local birds and butterflies. By hosting species like coneflower and golden rod in his garden — last year alone, he planted 257 plants on his property — Kingsley is helping local wildlife thrive. Through the program, he found out about the Pawpaw tree and is looking forward to adding one to his flourishing garden this year.

Get involved at **IntheZoneGardens.ca**

ASIA'S CLOUDED LEOPARD IS SHROUDED IN MYSTERY



Rinjan Shrestha with a snow leopard cub

Of Asia's five species of big cats, the clouded leopard is the least studied. Dr. Rinjan Shrestha, WWF-Canada's lead specialist in Asian big cats, is shedding some light on this mysterious species and our work to protect them.

How are clouded leopard populations faring?

We do not precisely know how many clouded leopards are out there in the wild. Most biologists believe there are less than 10,000 — and their population is declining, dropping by an estimated 30 per cent over the past two decades.

Have you ever seen a clouded leopard in the wild?

I've seen a clouded leopard only once. It was a rare encounter and lasted for a brief moment while we were setting up camera traps for common leopards in Nepal. They perfectly blend into the

background landscape, so I was only able to spot the cat when it moved suddenly. But our camera traps have been able to capture their images both in Nepal and Bhutan.

How does the clouded leopard compare to Asia's other big cats?

Clouded leopards are the smallest of all the big cats and are named after their defining feature: large cloud-shaped markings. In South Asia, they are found in the dense tropical and subtropical forests along the Himalayan foothills in between snow leopard and tigers' ranges. Unlike tigers and snow leopards, they spend a considerable amount of time above ground in tree branches.

What concerns you the most?

Like other big cats, clouded leopards are threatened by habitat loss and poaching. The dense tropical forests they inhabit are undergoing some of the world's fastest deforestation. They are also killed by poachers to trade their body parts on the black market.

What is WWF-Canada doing to help clouded leopards?

There has never been an evidence-based conservation management plan for clouded leopards in South Asia. WWF-Canada is supporting a research project in Bhutan that uses cutting-edge technologies such as camera traps and satellite GPS telemetry in order to develop the first-ever conservation plan for clouded leopards in the region. The research team, which is comprised of the Government of Bhutan, WWF and other partners, is hoping to collar and track up to ten clouded leopards over the next two years.

What makes this research unique?

Normally camera traps are placed on trails and other areas where we think cats are most likely to visit. But the sex or age of a big cat can affect the likelihood of capturing them in these locations, introducing bias into our data. To address this, we are placing camera traps in random locations and comparing the results to selective surveys. Complemented with our GPS collar data, this will give us a better idea of how many clouded leopards there are and allow us to develop appropriate plans to protect them.



A clouded leopard caught on camera in Bhutan. © Mr. Lungten Dorje / Royal Government of Bhutan

Why is a world without big cats not an option?

Big cats like the tiger, snow leopard and clouded leopard are the heart and soul of their ecosystem, and an entire web of life exists beneath them would collapse if we fail to protect them. By protecting them and their habitats, we're also protecting the forests and watersheds we all depend on.

Visit www.wwf.ca/bigcats to support Dr. Shrestha's work to save Asia's big cats.

GIFTS THAT CHANGE *The World*



Dad's favourite new socks.

**Coming
soon**

Find more wildly unique gifts at [wwf.ca/shop](https://www.wwf.ca/shop) or call 1-800-267-2632.



A Canada with abundant
wildlife, where nature and
people thrive.

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

Chair: **Lloyd Bryant**
President and CEO: **Megan Leslie**
Editors: **Emily Vandermeer and Joshua Ostroff**

WWF-Canada
400-410 Adelaide Street,
Toronto, Ontario M5V 1S8, Canada

Toll-Free: **1-800-267-2632**
Email: ca-panda@wwfcanada.org
Website: [wwf.ca](https://www.wwf.ca) Donate: [wwf.ca/donate](https://www.wwf.ca/donate)