

Annual Report 2012



Wildlife Preservation Canada

RECOVERY ■ CONSERVATION ■ KNOWLEDGE

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Charitable Registration Number 89171 0535 RR0001



Letter from the Executive Director

Wildlife Preservation Canada’s mission is to save endangered animal species. And being a Canadian organisation, we focus on the many species right here in Canada on the ever-growing list of those who need our help.

There are 46 Canadian at-risk wildlife species on Wildlife Preservation Canada’s priority list - species whose recovery plans call for the types of hands-on interventions such as captive breeding, reintroductions and translocations, nest protection among others that we are known for.

In 2012, we maintained many of our ongoing programs across Canada - working with eastern loggerhead shrike, burrowing owls, swift fox, freshwater turtles. We expanded others - our Oregon spotted frog captive breeding and head-starting program grew to include the western painted turtle. In Alberta, we added the experimental translocation of Ord’s kangaroo rats to our portfolio. In the Maritimes, we finalized the protocols for rearing rescued piping plover eggs in captivity and releasing the young fledglings.

Finally, we added our first non-vertebrate to our recovery work. Our pollinator program aims to save butterfly and bee species, 14 of which are listed as either endangered or extirpated. Specifically, we embarked on a recovery effort for the

rusty-patched bumblebee - Canada’s first bumblebee to be federally listed as endangered. Look for an expansion on these efforts to include other pollinators in 2013.

We welcomed back Jessica Steiner, Species Recovery Biologist, from her leave after the birth of her son. She jumped right back in to managing the Eastern Loggerhead Shrike Recovery Program and contributing her expertise to our partners. We thank Tara Imlay, who covered for Jessica for the year, and are pleased to be supporting her recent work with Atlantic swallows - which are declining faster than any other group of birds in North America. Stay tuned for updates!

Thank you for supporting Wildlife Preservation Canada. You can be proud of our accomplishments throughout the years - removing the Mauritius kestrel from the endangered species list, returning the swift fox to the prairies, building a strong conservation network of dedicated biologists through our Canada’s New Noah and Canadian Collection programs. Sadly, the number of species in need is growing, but happily, with your continued support, so is our capacity to answer their call for help.

Elaine Williams

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WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

Wildlife Preservation Canada is a lean, hands-on organization based in Guelph, Ontario. Since 1985, WPC has worked to save critically endangered species both in Canada and around the world - species whose numbers are so low that a great deal more than habitat protection is required to recover them.

Wildlife Preservation Canada believes that extinction is forever. The loss of any one species can damage the web of life, resulting in unexpected environmental changes that impact other species, including our own. Without urgent action, these irreplaceable animals will be gone forever.

Wildlife Preservation Canada is the only independent, national, non-profit charitable organization in Canada that focuses exclusively on the active recovery of critically endangered wildlife. We use applied scientific knowledge and practical hands-on recovery tools such as captive breeding, reintroductions and translocations. We are also the first non-profit organization to be the lead in implementing a Species Recovery Action Plan under Section 11 of the federal government’s Species at Risk Act.

Professional training, scientific field research, captive breeding, reintroduction, population management, habitat stewardship, public education and community involvement - Wildlife Preservation Canada uses each of these important tools to pull species from the brink of extinction. Species such as the Mauritius kestrel, pink pigeon and echo parakeet would be extinct today if it were not for WPC and its sister organizations. We are increasingly applying what we learned overseas to endangered species recovery efforts in Canada.



In addition to our involvement with species recovery, a special priority is building Canada’s conservation capacity by training young scientists to create a network of skilled professionals who will drive conservation efforts in Canada and around the world for decades to come. This is done through our Canada’s New Noahs training program and by supporting dedicated Canadian conservation biologists undertaking applied research with risk species.

Wildlife Preservation Canada was established in 1985 by the late author and naturalist, Gerald Durrell, and is primarily funded through individual, foundation and corporate donations. Any government funding we receive is directed to restricted program activities.

Wildlife Preservation Canada, with the support of donors like you, has supported significant scientific advances with over 30 endangered species in Canada and around the world, from birds to foxes to lemurs to bumblebees. You are vital to helping us save animals from extinction. Thank-you.





Burrowing Owl

With fewer than 1,000 breeding pairs of this prairie species remaining in Canada, the burrowing owl is listed as endangered. The Canadian Wildlife Service predicts that, unless its declining population trends are reversed, the burrowing owl will disappear from the prairies within a few decades.

Wildlife Preservation Canada has been involved in the recovery of the burrowing owl since 1995, acknowledging that a long-term commitment is what it takes to establish a sustainable population. 2012 marked the 10th anniversary of the introduction of the soft-release technique to the recovery program by Wildlife Preservation Canada. We introduced and compared our methods, pioneered in Saskatchewan, to the British Columbia recovery efforts, and in 2007, the soft-release technique was adopted by the team. This has resulted in returning owls steadily increasing to over five times prior to implementing this technique, which makes us hopeful of reaching our recovery targets sooner!

Each year new release sites are identified and, with landowner consultations, artificial nest boxes are installed. One of the 21 spring returning owls was released in 2010 from a new site in the South Okanagan valley - signalling the suitability of that site. Returns of an endangered migratory species are always cause for celebration!

B.C. owls have been spotted in Oregon, Washington and as far south as San Diego, California. There is national and international interest in this owl and the need to coordinate research, recovery efforts and expertise on both sides of the border is increasingly important and B.C. researchers share information with US wildlife personnel.



QUICK FACTS 2012:

Spring Returns from Migration:	21
Captive Raised Owls Released:	81
Juvenile Owls Banded:	165

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Eastern Loggerhead Shrike

Grassland birds have shown steeper, more widespread and more consistent decline than any other category of North American birds. Most grassland birds are migratory, wintering in the United States or Mexico. Changes to historical grassland habitat and the task of finding migration routes and wintering grounds and addressing issues there make for great challenges to conservation plans for these species.

The eastern loggerhead shrike is a unique, and critically endangered, grassland bird - a songbird which hunts like a raptor, by impaling its prey upon barbs or thorns and shredding it with its strong beak. In 1997, there were only 18 breeding pairs of shrike remaining in Canada, in a handful of isolated pockets.

The Eastern Loggerhead Shrike Recovery Program, now in its 13th year under the management of Wildlife Preservation Canada, combines breeding captive birds and releasing the fledglings in historic areas with habitat stewardship and restoration. Since the inception of the program, Wildlife Preservation Canada has re-introduced over 600 captive-bred shrikes to the wild, in hopes of augmenting and building sustainable populations. Since 2005, over 38 of our released birds have returned to breed in the areas we are monitoring.

Wildlife Preservation Canada is forever grateful for the ongoing dedication and enthusiasm of field interns, birders, volunteers and local landowners. Without their support and involvement, these recovery activities would not be possible. Other project partners include: The Harold Crabtree Foundation; Boisset Family Estates; Bird Studies Canada; Environment Canada; Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources; Couchiching Conservancy, Toronto Zoo; African Lion Safari; Mountsberg Raptor Centre at Mountsberg Conservation Area - Halton Conservation, Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums and over 250 landowners!



QUICK FACTS 2012:

Pairs Returned from Migration:	22
Wild Shrike Fledged:	85
Captive Bred Shrike Released:	55

Due to a combination of budget cuts and priorities established by the recovery team, in 2012 we closed our Dyer's Bay field breeding and release site, bred only 8 pairs at our Carden site, and increased the number of pairs to be bred at our partner facilities - the Toronto Zoo, Mountsberg Raptor Centre and African Lion Safari. The 33 young produced at these facilities were released at a new site in Napanee after a one or two week period of acclimatization at the site.

The hot, dry weather of 2012 appeared to have been good for the shrikes - a total of 79 wild fledglings were raised in Ontario, a substantial increase over past years. Of the 22 pairs confirmed in the wild, almost every one successfully raised one clutch of young, and 5 pairs produced two clutches. One of the returned and paired birds was a shrike bred and released from our field aviaries 6 years ago - a testament to the fact that our birds can thrive!



Freshwater Turtles



In Ontario, the turtle crisis gets scant attention. Over the last 10 years, declines of more than 30% have occurred in some Ontario populations of freshwater turtles.

Christina Davy and her dedicated team continued to protect nests and eggs of threatened turtle species like Blandings turtles, snapping, painted and map turtles, as well as spiny soft-shells (shown above).

By September 2012, hatchling season was winding down. There were only a few stragglers left in the incubators and hundreds of hatchlings (745 that is) had been released into the wild, bringing the total number of hatchlings released since 2005 to over 4,000. The summer's success was due in large part to the dedication of dozens of committed volunteers who joined Christina and her team at the study site. Every day was different, and over the course of the summer the work included mark/recapture surveys, protecting nests from predation and flooding, and taking biometrics of tiny hatchlings, and marking and releasing those same baby turtles.

Ord's Kangaroo Rat



The Ord's kangaroo rat (*dipodomys ordii*) is the only species of kangaroo rat native to Canada and is one of Alberta's most endangered animals. Their habitat is open arid landscapes where they do not spread disease or have a negative effect on crops, but these areas, such as the Sand Hill's undeveloped dunes, are becoming fragmented. The small populations remaining are isolated and not sustainable.

In the first year of a three year study to test translocations of the Ord's Kangaroo rat, Dr. Darren Bender and his team, in cooperation with the University of Calgary translocated seven kangaroo rats. Six were soft released into below-ground artificial nests constructed to provide shelter and food. The seventh escaped during handling at the release site, representing a hard release. By late August, none were present, and foot surveys failed to detect any evidence of kangaroo rat activity in the area. Future plans include the use of telemetry to track the released kangaroo rats.

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Canada's New Noahs

New Brunswick native Josh Noseworthy became Wildlife Preservation Canada's 22nd Canada's New Noah, taking part in this unique training and field experience program.

Past Canada's New Noahs are grateful for the experience. "I felt like I walked way with a set of tools in my bag that will help me guide my future in this field and really make a difference in the conservation world," enthused past New Noah Diane Casimir.

The Canada's New Noahs program was established to fill a gap in conservation training. "While I have worked on a number of projects

in this field, it was good to finally get some actual training in the subject," Diane continued, who currently works as a Species at Risk biologist with Parks Canada.

The graduates of the ten-month program become more and more obviously a benefit to the conservation of endangered species, around the world and especially here in Canada. The hands-on training received by our graduates in Mauritius with some of the most endangered bird species in the world fuels a passion for conservation which is reflected in their contribution to endangered species research and recovery.

Oregon Spotted Frog/Western Painted Turtle

The Oregon spotted frog has the unhappy distinction of being one of Canada's most endangered organisms, and is on the brink of extirpation from Canada. It is now found only in British Columbia's Fraser Valley, where it is believed that perhaps 300 breeding individuals remain. The western painted turtle population in the Fraser Valley is similarly facing a high risk of extinction.

To address these concerns, and thanks to the success of the captive rearing of the Oregon spotted frog in 2011, Wildlife Preservation Canada established the Wetlands Wildlife Recovery Initiative in the lower Vancouver mainland that includes the Oregon spotted frog, western painted turtle (hatchling at right), and eventually the northern leopard frog.

WPC's multi-year commitment to this project will see a ramping up of production in future years, including studying habitat use and head-starting success, which will rely on radio-telemetry data from captive-reared frogs and turtles



released into the wetlands.

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QUICK FACTS 2012:

Headstarted Frogs Released:	256
Rescued Turtle Nests:	2
Number of Turtle Eggs Hatched:	12





Rusty-Patched Bumblebee



Recent studies have determined some native North American bumblebee species have suffered rapid declines in the wild. The status of other wild pollinators is poorly known, but are likely at risk as well. There are over 1000 species of pollinating insects in Canada. Together they are an indispensable natural resource, and their daily work is essential for over a billion dollars of apples, pears, cucumbers, melons, berries, and many other kinds of Canadian farm produce.

In Canada, the rusty-patched bumblebee (*bombus affinis*, above) was recently listed as endangered federally and provincially. This species went from being one of the most common species throughout its extensive eastern North American range to almost extinct in less than two decades.

Wildlife Preservation Canada added this species to its recovery programs in 2012. Project leader and native bee specialist, Sheila Colla, explored suitable habitat and historical locations to locate

populations of the rusty-patched bumblebee. The hope is to collect mated queens in to establish a captive colony for releases into historical quality habit. Though many bumblebees, including the rusty-patched bumblebee, are easily reared in captivity, a captive breeding and release program would be the first of its kind in North America.

Unfortunately, after surveying over 40 historical sites in the hopes of identifying a source to initiate the breeding program, Dr. Colla was unable to locate any populations. Whether this was due to the hot, dry conditions of the summer of 2012 or whether the population is now extirpated from Canada cannot be confirmed until further field surveys are concluded.

Wildlife Preservation Canada has made a commitment to this species, and is expanding the program to include other pollinators in our 2013 and future seasons.

Piping Plover

In partnership with New Brunswick’s Magnetic Zoo Hill Park and Parks Canada, Wildlife Preservation Canada supported past Canada’s New Noah Kendra MacDonald to develop protocols suitable for Atlantic conditions through an experimental captive rearing and release program using abandoned wild eggs.

Despite ongoing conservation efforts since it was first listed as endangered in 1985, Atlantic Canada’s piping plover population has shown few signs of recovery. The piping plover nests only on beaches, where it lays eggs in a small hollow scratched out of the sand. Apart from habitat loss, one of the biggest threats to the plover’s survival is the activities of humans or their pets on the beach. Even if these activities don’t destroy the relatively unprotected eggs, they often cause the parents to abandon the nest.



The protocols developed through the piping plover recovery program will set standards for care for further recovery work.

Wildlife Preservation Canada received the 2012 Parks Canada CEO Award of Excellence in recognition of this work.

Swift Fox

Thanks to the reintroductions of 942 swift foxes to the Canadian prairies between 1983 and 1997, the 2005/6 census stated, “this continued growth indicates that this is the most successful reintroduction of a nationally extirpated carnivore to date.” While now listed as threatened, population censuses for the swift fox to determine their presence, numbers, and/or a decrease or stabilization over time are important steps to helping this little house cat sized fox.

Cynthia Moehrenschrager has been involved with the reintroductions and 2005/6 census and is recoding raw trapping data from 29 field assistants over a 16 year period. Answering the questions with this recoded data can profoundly affect the understanding of the health of the population. We need this information to ensure the continued survival of this little fox on the Canadian prairies.





WPC Financial Highlights *

STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENSES AND CHANGES TO FUND BALANCES

REVENUE

EXPENSES					
Project Implementation	55,827	34,893	--	90,720	109,203
Conservation grants	33,458	401,640	--	435,098	413,420
Grant Expenses	37,634	50,412	--	88,046	70,874
Administrative and fund raising	71,344	50,485	--	121,829	121,575
Special Event	5,907	--	--	5,907	7,403
Web Development	2,708	--	--	2,708	32,101
	206,868	537,430	--	744,308	754,576

Excess (Deficiency)
of revenue

Notes:

- *For a complete set of the audited financial statements prepared by Robinson Lott & Brohman, please call (519) 836-9314 or e-mail us at admin@wildlifepreservation.ca or download from wildlifepreservation.ca.

*The following joined our
monthly giving program in
2012.*

Anne Curtis
Joyce Cook
Fleur Hardy
Flor De Maria Horta-Ash
Nancy MacPherson
Alice Redahl
Helen Van Volkenburg

And a special thank you to all
our wonderful volunteers!



6th Annual Run Wild with Wildlife Preservation Canada!

Run or walk at your local marathons! You can join Team Run Wild -choose Wildlife Preservation Canada as the charity you wish to support through your efforts.

Sunday, October 14 - Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront 5K, Half-Marathon or full Marathon.

Sponsor the Run Wild team online at torontowaterfrontmarathon.com and receive an instant tax receipt.



Wildlife Preservation Canada
invites you to our

Annual Auction

Join us for an evening of refreshment, delicious food, exciting guest speakers and – of course – your chance to bid on and win fabulous auction prizes. All proceeds go to support Wildlife Preservation Canada programs to save critically endangered animal species.

Thursday November 21, 2013
Evening begins at 6 pm
KPMG Conference Room
333 Bay St, 46th Floor Toronto

To purchase tickets or for more information please call
1-800-956-6608 or email
admin@wildlifepreservation.ca

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