



Wildlife Preservation Canada

RECOVERY ■ CONSERVATION ■ KNOWLEDGE

Annual Report 2015





Wildlife Preservation Canada

RECOVERY ■ CONSERVATION ■ KNOWLEDGE

Our mission: to save animal species at risk from extinction in Canada by performing hands-on work with species requiring direct intervention to recover, and by providing opportunities for Canadian conservation scientists to grow their expertise in working with animal species at risk and add to the overall body of knowledge.



A message from
the President,
Ian Glen

Conservation of the environment is a big subject. An obvious statement, but more and more we are seeing the impact of our failure to protect the natural world on so many aspects of our lives. The more we've understood the ripple effects of our mismanagement of the environment - and through science, been able to improve our ability to predict the consequences - the more we see the benefits of conservation on our overall quality of life.

At Wildlife Preservation Canada, we've been working for over 30 years in conservation. In 2015, we made continued progress in our programs for a broad range of endangered and threatened species of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, and insects in projects ranging from Nova Scotia to BC's Gulf Islands. We sent our 26th Canada's New Noah to Mauritius for advanced training and a chance to perform field work with some of the world's rarest species. And, after 25 years as Executive Director, Elaine Williams passed the leadership baton to Randal Heide, who, as a former Wildlife Preservation Canada director and skilled executive, is well qualified to take our organization to the next level.

The Board of Directors expresses our gratitude to Elaine for her contribution to Wildlife Preservation Canada and her commitment to the cause of species conservation. I would also like to thank our donors, staff, and project partners, who all play a critical role in allowing us to fulfill our mission to save critically endangered species. Thank you all so much.



YouTube

Reptiles and amphibians are at greater risk of extinction than any other class of wildlife in Canada. In addition to habitat loss and fragmentation, our snakes suffer from human persecution, our amphibians are extremely sensitive to environmental toxins and climate change, and our turtles' nests are being wiped out by exploding populations of human-subsidized predators such as raccoons.

To save these endangered species, we launched a National At-Risk Reptile and Amphibian Initiative in 2015. This initiative builds on our existing recovery projects for key, critically endangered populations with a focus on developing science-based best practices for recovery. Over the next few years, we will build and publish evidence for best practices in key hands-on intervention techniques for which little long-term success data is available for reptiles and amphibians.



Lake Erie Shores

Lake Erie's north shore contains some of Canada's best turtle breeding habitat, and is the site of our longest-running reptile recovery project. Since a 2004 study showed a virtually 100% predation rate of newly-laid turtle nests, the project team has assessed nest-protection methods, headstarted and released nearly 9,000 hatchling turtles, established long-term monitoring of local turtle populations, and expanded the program to include research with the endangered eastern foxsnake.



Ojibway Prairie Remnants

Launched in 2015, this project aims to protect at-risk snakes in tallgrass prairie habitat surrounded by development in Windsor and LaSalle, Ontario. Of particular interest is a genetically unique population of massasauga rattlesnakes, which is now thought to number fewer than twenty individuals in the wild. We are exploring a number of recovery options, including conservation breeding.

Fraser Valley Wetlands

British Columbia's most heavily developed region, the lower Fraser Valley, is also a national hotspot of biodiversity. Reptile and amphibian populations here have been hit particularly hard, leading us to establish this recovery program in 2011. Our primary role is to coordinate conservation breeding and release of the critically endangered Oregon spotted frog and locally-endangered western painted turtle. We are also looking into the feasibility of reintroducing the Pacific pond turtle, which disappeared from Canada in 1959.



Photo: Blanding's turtle
Credit: Ryan Bolton

2015 IMPACT

1,385 spiny softshell, Blanding's, northern map, and snapping turtle hatchlings saved from nest predation and released

130 headstarted western painted turtles released

107 Oregon spotted frogs headstarted

3 scientific research papers published

20 biologists gained hands-on experience in species recovery

Developing & Improving Best Practice



Translocation, or moving wild animals from one location to another, is used to repopulate areas where a species is no longer found, or to augment small, isolated populations in decline. It is also a potential way to save wildlife at risk from impending development. We are investigating how to best apply this technique with massasauga rattlesnakes.

Headstarting involves keeping young in ideal, controlled conditions until they have reached a less-vulnerable size before releasing them into the wild. It is especially popular as a way of avoiding unsustainably high rates of turtle egg and hatchling losses. In 2015, we supported the headstarting of Lake Champlain spiny softshell turtles at the Granby Zoo, and the Kawartha Turtle Trauma Centre's radio-tracking study comparing the success of released headstarted Blanding's turtles versus their wild counterparts.



Conservation breeding is the ultimate weapon against extinction. Typically, it is only used as a last resort when a species' numbers in the wild are unsustainably low. We have specialized in this technique since our founding in 1985, and are currently testing new breeding techniques with Oregon spotted frogs at the Greater Vancouver Zoo.

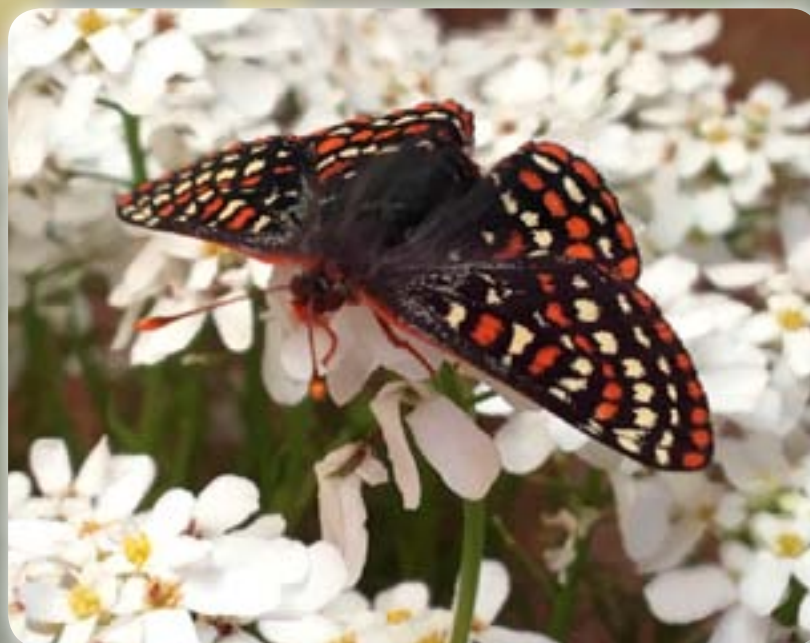
In-situ intervention is the act of assisting a species within its natural habitat. We are currently supporting a McGill University test of artificial breeding ponds established in a wetland overrun with invasive reeds. These reeds destroy open, shallow-water breeding habitat, in this case threatening one of Canada's last populations of the endangered Fowler's toad.



Native pollinators

are essential to the reproduction of over 90% of all flowering plants, and it has been estimated that we depend on pollinators for one-third of the food we eat. And yet, the health of our native pollinators received scant attention until recently.

Wildlife Preservation Canada's National Native Pollinator Initiative began in 2012, in response to the listing of the rusty-patched bumble bee as Canada's first endangered bee. By 2015, some form of hands-on intervention had been recommended for 14 Canadian insect pollinators. This year we conducted conservation breeding for bumble bees and butterflies, combined with a citizen science program to enhance conservation efforts and expand our knowledge of species distribution and occurrence.



Taylor's checkerspot butterfly was believed to be extirpated from Canada before a surviving population was discovered on British Columbia's Denman Island in 2005. When fewer than 25 sightings were recorded in 2013, Wildlife Preservation Canada helped establish a conservation breeding program. The first releases occurred in spring 2015, followed by significant growth of the breeding population through the summer.

Bumblebee bee conservation breeding continued in Ontario and Quebec in 2015, with a special focus on the rapidly-declining yellow-banded bumble bee. Results improved significantly over 2014, with several queens successfully producing workers and one even producing reproductive males. We also initiated genetic research, looking for clues to the causes of this species' decline, which are still not well understood.



2015 IMPACT

341 Taylor's checkerspot butterflies reared and released

7 yellow-banded bumble bee colonies produced workers

1 yellow-banded bumble bee colony produced males

Over 3000 records submitted by BumbleBeeWatch volunteers

7 biologists gained hands-on experience in species recovery

Citizen science is crucial to improving our knowledge of pollinator populations. At one key survey site, trained volunteers were able to spend 6 times more hours surveying than our staff, found 2.5 times more bees, and even found a species previously undetected by our team. To further enhance citizen science contributions through our BumbleBeeWatch.org website, we are developing a smartphone app which will make the submission process even easier.



Photo: Yellow-banded bumble bee
Credit: Victoria MacPhail

Grassland & insectivorous birds

Canada's past efforts to conserve raptors and ducks led to gratifying results. Now, we are seeing alarming declines among grassland and insectivorous birds. Because most of these species are migratory, the job of preserving them is especially challenging.

Wildlife Preservation Canada is taking up the challenge. In 2015, we led or supported important research and recovery work with several species of grassland and insectivorous birds in three regions of the country.

Eastern loggerhead shrike
Wildlife Preservation Canada has led the recovery effort for this short-grassland specialist since 2003. Although the success of our conservation breeding program has kept the species alive in Canada, it is not yet thriving. For it to recover, additional work is required on its migration routes and wintering grounds in order to improve return rates. 2015 saw increased engagement of U.S. partners, including the adoption of loggerhead shrike into the Conservation Centers for Species Survival's Avian Sustainability Program.



Burrowing owl

We have supported long-running efforts to reintroduce this species to British Columbia since 2005, when we introduced a new "soft-release" technique developed in our prior burrowing owl work in Saskatchewan. Use of this technique resulted in a significant improvement in site fidelity, survival, and migratory returns of conservation-bred owls. Migratory returns in 2015 were five times higher than the best rate ever achieved prior to our involvement.



Swallows

Canada's aerial insectivores (birds which feed on insects while in flight) have experienced alarming declines since the 1980's. Nowhere has this trend been more pronounced than in the Maritimes. To aid the development of recovery plans, we are supporting a 3-year life-cycle study to determine the causes of declines in bank, cliff, barn, and tree swallows in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. 2015 was the second year of this study. Preliminary results indicate that climate change may be having an impact, with 3 of the species breeding earlier than in the past.



2015 IMPACT

- 73** eastern loggerhead shrikes reared and released
- 23%** of wild eastern loggerhead shrikes originated from our release program
- 50** burrowing owls returned to British Columbia from migration
- 414** swallow nests monitored
- 4** biologists gained hands-on experience in species recovery

*Photo: Eastern loggerhead shrike
Credit: Larry Kirtley*

Swift Fox Success!

Reintroduced to Canada in the 1990's after a sixty-year absence, the swift fox is a remarkable success story; proof of the positive, lasting difference that hands-on intervention can make in species recovery. Although still listed as threatened and requiring protection, Canada's swift foxes are holding their own in the wild and should no longer require our hands-on assistance. 2015 saw the completion of a population survey which we hope will be our last project related to this species.



In 2015 we turned 30! We celebrated the event with a season-ending party attended by many friends and supporters. Highlights of the event included a tribute to our departing long-time Executive Director, Elaine Williams, and the announcement of a new partnership with the Faculty of Environment Studies at York University.

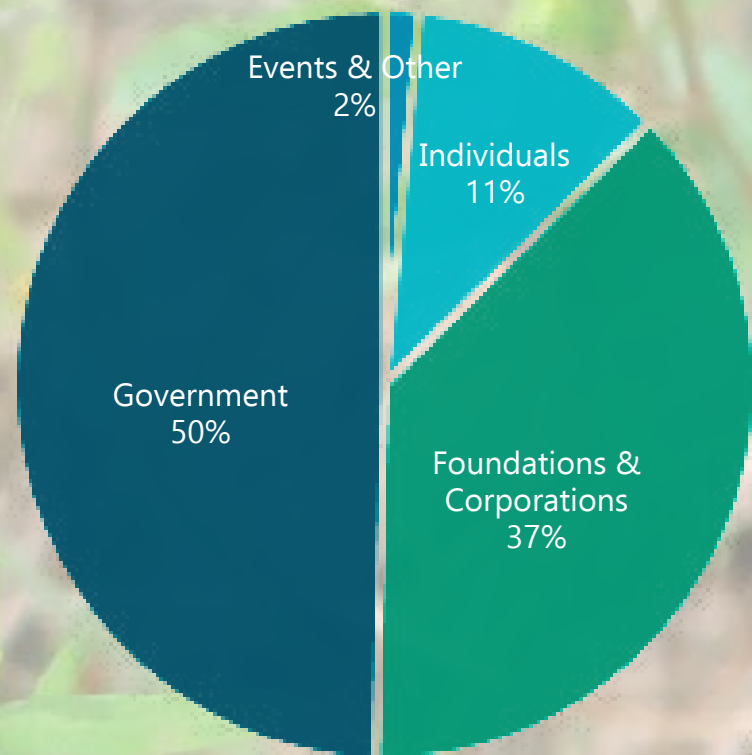
Pictured: Past Presidents (from left) Graham Hallward, Kathryn Dempster Nicholson, Alec Monro.

Our 26th Canada's New Noah

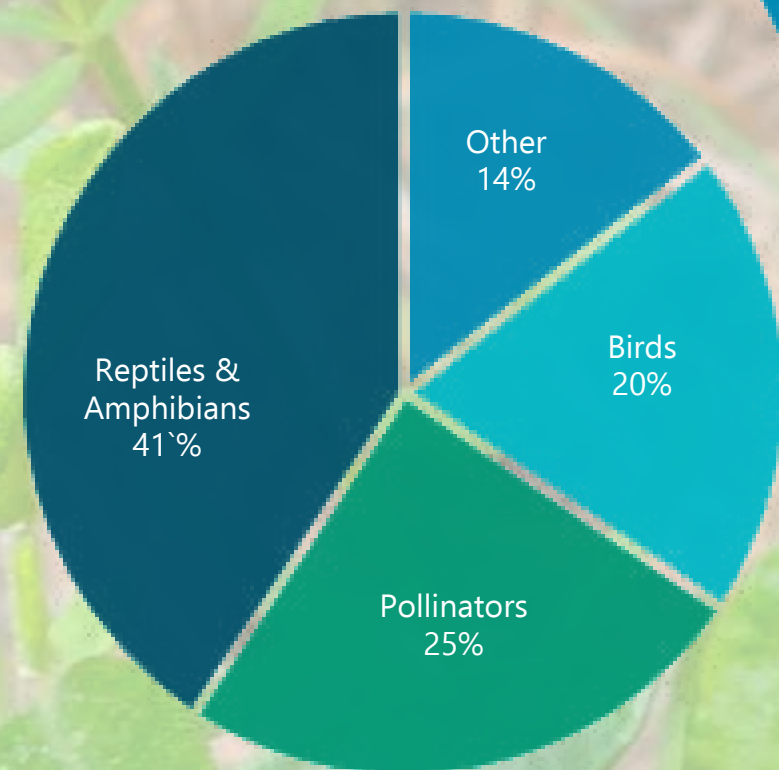
was Patrick Moldowan, of St. Catharines, ON. While spending several months participating in the Durrell Post-Graduate Diploma in Endangered Species Recovery program in Mauritius, Patrick visited the renowned Round Island Nature Reserve and experienced pink pigeons, the Mauritian flying fox (a fruit bat), and a wide variety of reptiles ranging from tiny skinks to the Aldabra giant tortoise. Patrick holds a B.S. in Wildlife Biology from the University of Guelph, an M. Sc. from Laurentian University, and has extensive experience in working with reptiles and amphibians in Algonquin Provincial Park.

Find out more about our unique Canada's New Noahs program on our website at www.wildlifepreservation.ca

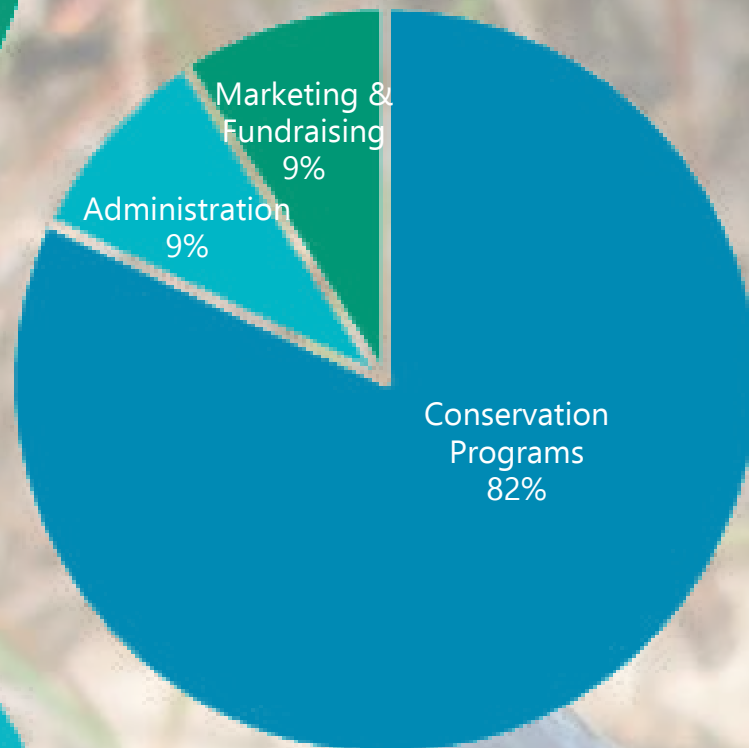




Revenue Sources



Conservation Program Expenses



Expenses

Full audited financial statement available online at www.wildlifepreservation.ca

Thank You!

Wildlife Preservation Canada is pleased and honoured to recognise the following donors whose outstanding generosity has made our critical conservation activities possible. We are grateful to the thousands of other donors and volunteers who contributed throughout the year. We apologise if we have inadvertently omitted your name.

Corporate & Foundation Partners

(\$150,000 or more)

Environment Canada
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources

(\$20,000 to \$100,000)

The Rogers Foundation
The Schad Foundation
The Sitka Foundation

(\$10,000 to \$19,999)

The K.M. Hunter Foundation
Takla Foundation

(\$5,000 to \$9,999)

The Kathleen-Mary and Walter Barron Family Foundation
Hallward Fund at the Toronto Foundation
Patrick Hodgson Family Foundation
Helen McCrea Peacock Foundation at the Toronto Foundation
The John & Pat McCutcheon Charitable Foundation

(\$250 - \$4,999)

The Barraclough Foundation
Jean and Fred Biehl Fund of the Elgin-St. Thomas Community Foundation
Boiler Inspection & Insurance
Alan and Patricia Koval Family Foundation
Grant MacEwan Charitable Foundation
MEC - Mountain Equipment Co-operative
J. Sutton Communications
Don and Hazel Williams Foundation

Honour Roll of Donors

Preserver of Wildlife (\$20,000 and above)

Anonymous
Martha Rogers

Patron of Wildlife (\$1,000-\$4,999)

Barbara Alderson
Brian Dawson
John Grandy
Ellen Hand
Richard Johnson
Patricia Koval
Myles Lamont
Gail Luckhart
Eric Maki
Carole Marshall
Patricia McKenzie
Catherine McLean
Alec Monro
Roberta Olenick
Richard Richardson
Joanna Robertson
Brandy Shaw

Benefactor of Wildlife (\$500-\$999)

Anonymous
Robert Armstrong
Rosanne Gasse
Dennis & Valerie Gielens
Ian Glen
Dorothea Godt
Glen Holmwood
Dorothy Howe
Viola Loewen
Rod MacFadyen
Shirlee McEdwards Monteith
Stephanie McLarty
Nancy S. Netting
William Noble
Tristan Steiner
Bridget Stutchbury
Tiger Fera Investment Inc.
Linda Tuningley
Laurie White
Ken & Lynda Whiteford
Wilyn Pharmacy Inc
Nolan Andres
Brian Armstrong

Friend of Wildlife (\$250-\$499)

David & Mavis Atton
Barry Attridge
Lesley Barrenger
Nancy Biehl
Geraldine Black
Susan Blue
Constance Boldt
Suzanne Bond
Martha Jo Breithaupt
Deanne Buller
David Colcleugh
John Collyer
Cynthea Cooch
John Crookshank
Anne Curtis
Kathryn Dempster
Nicholson
Barbara Goldring
Martha Hallward
Randal Heide
Louise Hoover

Melanie Isbister
Nick Kavassalis
Ivars Kops
Martin Kuhn
Naomi Lee
Marion Magee
R. Gordon Marantz
Nancy McFadyen
Alison McGregor
Marili Moore
Gayle Morton
Pinar Ozyetis
Mary Jane Phillips
RDB Engineering Limited
S.J. Lombard Medical
Donald Stark
Barbara Whitley
Dawn Williams
Elaine Williams
Christiane Willox

Wildlife Guardians

The following joined our monthly giving program in 2015
Morka Boyle
John Crookshank
Ian D'Mello
Mr & Mrs. Steve Digby
Janis Emberly
Laurie Hammond
Carol Hargreaves
Josh Harmon
Dave Johnson
Robert E. Laker
Elizabeth Lewis
Denise McCready
Elizabeth McGregor
Joanne Neely
Anita Norman
Myrna Peraman

Anniversary Event

Donors and Sponsors

Aeroplan
Henry of Pelham Family Estates
KMPG
Lush Cosmetics
Molson Coors
Alec Monro
Duncan Monro
Royal Ontario Museum
Dr. Bridget Stutchbury
Toronto Zoo
Dean Tudor
VIA Rail Canada
Rosemary Waldron
Lance & Rina Woolaver

A special thank you to the project leaders who dedicate themselves to saving species-at-risk across Canada.

We invite you to watch for and join us at upcoming events that entertain, inform, and raise funds to support Wildlife Preservation Canada and species-at-risk conservation.

Photo: Karner blue butterfly





Wildlife Preservation Canada

RECOVERY ■ CONSERVATION ■ KNOWLEDGE

Founder

Gerald M. Durrell OBE

President

Ian Glen

Vice-President

Chris Boynton

Secretary

Pinar Ozyetis

Treasurer

Shripal Doshi

Board of Directors

Christopher Boynton

Shripal Doshi

Ian Glen

John Grandy

Rachelle Hansen

Douglas Hart

Shirley McEdwards Monteith

Stephanie McLarty

H. Alec B. Monro

Pinar Ozyetis

Bridget Stutchbury, Ph.D.

Honourary Directors

Chris Von Boetticher

Louise Gervais

Kathryn B.P. Dempster

Graham F. Hallward

Anson R. McKim

William Noble

Richard Fyfe, OC

Thomas C. Sears

Eleanor R. Clitheroe

W. Paterson Ferns

Stephen T. Molson

William E. Stavert

Lee Durrell, PhD.

Executive Director

Randal Heide

Conservation Programs Director

Jessica Steiner

Photo: Rusty patched bumble bee

Credit: Christy Stewart

5420 Highway 6 North, Guelph, ON N1H 6J2 • TEL: 519-836-9314

admin@wildlifepreservation.ca • www.wildlifepreservation.ca

Charitable Registration Number 89171 0535 RR0001

