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We stand for wildlife



Making conservation science happen in a year like no other

Covid added to the challenges, but our scientists kept going

It has been a challenging year, to say the least. But with the consequences of human disturbance of natural areas and wildlife now being felt worldwide through a devastating spillover of the corona virus from wildlife to people, we found many ways to keep our important conservation science work going.

We look back on this year like no other [in a blog that recaps a number of important achievements](#), from managing to retrieve data-rich equipment from the Arctic Ocean and remote northern rivers with the help of partners to making a strong – and successful -- case for a Regional Environmental Assessment in advance of mining development in the globally important and ecologically intact far north region in Ontario.



Conservation staff from the Moose Cree First Nation retrieve sound recorders from remote rivers in northern Ontario as part of our joint research into sturgeon movements. Photo: WCS Canada Photo

It's a story of perseverance and adaptation, from turning to a dusty set of samples in a government lab to replace field samples that could no longer be gathered to recruiting family members to aid in field outings, listening to bats on the wing and whales in the ocean from hundreds or even thousands of kilometres away, and sharing our knowledge in all sorts of new virtual ways.

Whether it was chasing tiny blackpoll warblers in dense Yukon forests or tracking wolverines across vast areas of northern Ontario bush, our scientists also found ways to continue with field work in a manner that was safe for them and the animals they were investigating.

This year has brought home a vitaly important lesson about the consequences of disturbing wildlife and wild areas. Canada may not be a hotbed for the development of new viruses, but as we now know, in a highly interconnected world, we are still vulnerable. And we face our own homegrown problems, from the spread of West Nile virus due to human degradation of forests to the threat posed to wildlife by viruses we have transported, such as white-nose syndrome in bats.



Our bat research team initially stopped handling bats to protect bats from possible Covid transmission. We then developed new protocols for safely handling bats and keeping them safe from the virus. Photo: Jason Headley. Photo taken pre-Covid.

Throughout this challenging year, a particular bright spot has been the way our supporters have stood with us. From foundations to individual donors, we have been honoured by the support we have received for our research and their understanding of why keeping wild places healthy is now more important than ever and central not only to biodiversity conservation but to combating climate change and assuring

human wellbeing as well.

[Our work](#) in some of Canada's most remote areas is never without challenges, but the Covid crisis certainly added an interesting new dimension. We are proud of the way our scientists rose to the challenge, stayed safe and brought home results that will be critical to helping Canada build back better.



We are now tracking a record number of GPS-collared wolverines in Northern Ontario to understand how these elusive creatures are faring in an industrialized landscape. Photo: Susan Morse.

Support our work to save wildlife!

At WCS Canada, we stand for wildlife and are in the field every day working to save wildlife and wild places. You can support our work by [making a secure donation](#) right now!

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