



We stand
for wildlife



Ontario's best kept conservation secret

Conservation Authorities bring One Health perspective to watersheds

Ontario's Conservation Authorities may be one our best-kept conservation secrets. Established in the 1940s when the province recognized that deforestation and poor farming practices were having a devastating impact on waterways, the authorities bring a unique entire-watershed approach to their work. This ability to focus on a broad and ecologically relevant area is a real strength when it comes to implementing programs that build on the [One Health](#) principles, which recognize, among other things, that the health of natural areas directly affects the health and wellbeing of people. Unfortunately, the provincial government has already tried to restrict the ability of Conservation Authorities to deal with the wide range of ecological threats to watersheds and human health, and is actively considering narrowing their mandates further, in keeping with broader efforts to loosen environmental protections. WCS Canada President Dr. Justina Ray and Anastasia Lintner of the Canadian Environmental Law Association [explain the important role of Conservation Authorities as potential vanguards for a much needed One Health approach in a new Muddy Boots blog](#)



Conservation Authorities are unique in focusing on the health of entire watersheds. Above: Maitland River. Photo: Maitland Conservation Authority

Fast fact: Bats are incredibly loud

We can't hear the ultrasonic sounds made by bats, but if we could it would be like standing next to a jet plane. WCS Canada bat researcher Dr. Cori Lausen will tell us more during bat week (Oct. 24-31) so watch our [twitter bat channel](#) for more about these amazing animals.

Going for the double

If you don't succeed at first, try, try again. That seems to be the mantra for barn swallows nesting in Yukon. These sleek birds with their red ruffled throats and long forked tails are listed under the federal Species at Risk Act as "Threatened" in Canada and so nesting success is an important factor in growing the species' numbers. It's thought that many migratory birds attempt "double brooding" – raising two sets of chicks in a single season – but that is hard to study in a dense boreal forest. Barn swallows make it much easier by nesting inside old barns and other farm structures where it is a lot more straightforward to study nesting behaviour. We found about a quarter of the breeding pairs we monitored went for the double with a fair bit of success. Our scientists talk about what it means for these birds to be able to find a safe place on the farm and how double brooding may be an underappreciated species survival tactic [in Muddy Boots blog that has had Twitter chirping](#).



These hungry barn swallow chicks were captured on camera in a Yukon barn. Raising a second set of chicks could be an important survival mechanism for a species that is considered threatened.

Photo: Maria Leung



Canada has high ambition

Late last month, the Canadian government agreed to join a “high ambition” coalition of countries committed to [protecting 30% of their lands and oceans by 2030](#). As Prime Minister Trudeau pointed out, Canada is the only one of the ten countries with the largest land areas in the world to join the high ambition group so far, and called on the remaining nine to quickly come on board. However, with the second largest landmass in the world, there is no question that Canada can do a lot to stem the ongoing loss of biodiversity by itself. The Prime Minister noted that achieving the goal will require “working with Indigenous peoples who

need to be partners in protecting the land, who understand how important it is to be good stewards of this land and these waters that sustain us.” A good way to put these words into action would be to continue to support the work of the Kaska Dene in northcentral BC to advance [their proposal for an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area in the magnificent and largely intact Muskwa-Kechika](#). WCS scientist John Weaver drafted [a detailed assessment of the conservation potential of the Muskwa Kechika area](#) that includes, but goes beyond, the Kaska Dene traditional territory.



This video featuring Shaunna Morgan Siegers of [the Indigenous Leadership Initiative](#) (Canada), featured at a [Nature for Life hub](#) at the recent virtual UN Biodiversity Summit is a great introduction to Indigenous-led conservation.

Key Biodiversity Areas can guide Canada's high ambition

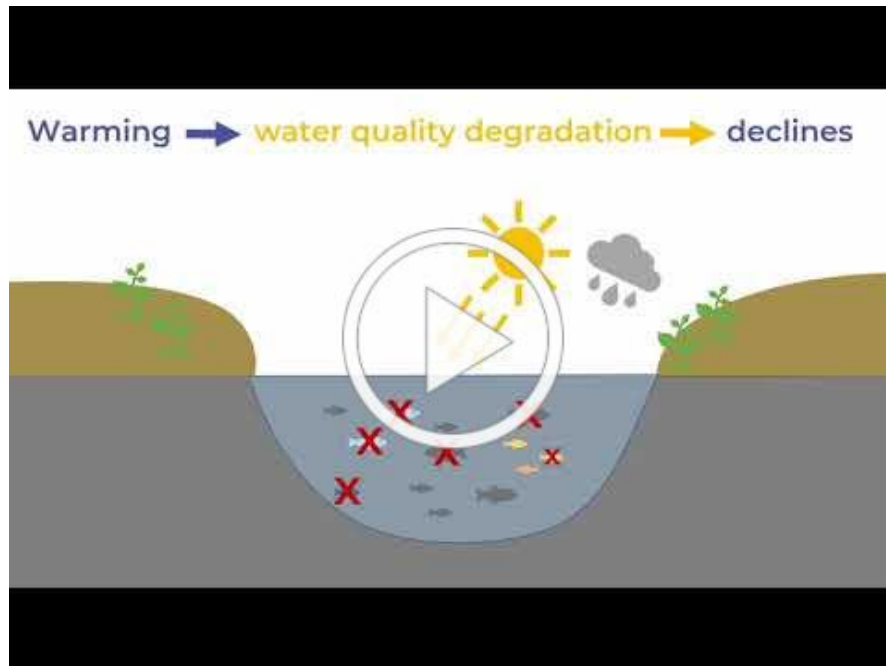
To effectively conserve biodiversity, we have to work together to prioritize conservation in areas that best support the persistence of wildlife. Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) are an important tool to guide the work of identifying areas that are excellent candidates for protected areas or that require other forms of stewardship. Canada is leading the way as one of the first countries in the world working to identify KBAs across the country through a broad coalition effort.



Earlier this month, KBA Coordinator Ciara Raudsepp-Hearne (WCS Canada) was joined by our partners at World Wildlife Fund-Canada and the Nature Conservancy of Canada to talk about how KBAs can be used to help protect endangered and endemic species. You can watch [her presentation](#) above.

Fish smarts

Looking beneath the surface is a habit for our former [W. Garfield Weston Fellow](#) Alyssa Murdoch. What Alyssa discovered when she looked into the waters of northern lakes and rivers for her PhD research is that a combination of rapidly accelerating climate change and resource and other development could have serious impacts on northern fish. This innovative research recently earned Alyssa the [Peter A. Larkin Award](#) for Excellence in Fisheries at a Canadian Institution. It is also the subject of this [short video](#) that demonstrates not only the importance of this research, but also the cutting-edge communication skills of this young scientist.



A brighter outlook for coral reefs

WCS scientists have some good news about the world's coral reefs, widely considered highly threatened by climate change. They found that reefs in the Indo-Pacific Coral Triangle is ["surprisingly resistant" to the effects of warming oceans](#) like coral bleaching. As a result, scientists believe this area has the potential to be an important climate refuge for corals.



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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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