



# We stand for wildlife



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## It's not too late to act on climate

*But we need action now to protect carbon-rich wild areas and wildlife*

With the UN Secretary General declaring “a code red for humanity” in the wake of the latest International Panel on Climate Change report, it can be easy to feel alarmed and even depressed about our prospects for dealing with climate change. [But in an interview with CBC Radio](#), WCS Canada scientist Chrystal Mantyka-Pringle provided some reasons for optimism – if we commit to act now. Chrystal makes the point that the world has shown with the COVID -19 crisis that it is more than capable of responding to a global-scale crisis. At this point, she notes, we are going to have to both accelerate efforts to reduce our climate impact while also focusing on adaptation to warming that is already “baked into” planetary systems.

For Yukon, where Chrystal is based, that means ensuring full consideration of potential climate impacts and changes to landscapes and how to deal with these in regional land-use planning processes that are just getting underway. With extreme weather, fires and floods making it clear that climate change is rapidly gathering momentum – and leading to serious destruction – we must look at what we can do to minimize impacts on both communities and wildlife ASAP. That starts with reducing emissions, but it also includes improving the resilience of natural areas in a variety of ways, something WCS scientists in every part of Canada are focusing on.



Wildfires have once again burned large areas in Western Canada this summer. Our scientists discuss the impacts of such fires on wildlife in [recent media interviews](#).

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The impact of increasingly intense and more frequent fires on wildlife is a hot topic and a number of WCS scientists have been interviewed on this subject recently. Fisheries expert Connie O'Connor [spoke to CBC radio about the mixed effects fire can have for fish](#) – actually adding nutrients to waters, but also potentially destroying shade for streams and raising water temperatures, for example. Wolverine expert Matt Scrafford explained on the same program how the huge ranges occupied by wolverines can be a benefit when some areas are burnt over, but also how fire may compound impacts from things like logging and roads that are already disturbing these reclusive animals. Finally, avian buff Claire Farrell addressed [the potential impacts on birds in an article that wraps up the perspectives of all three of our northern boreal scientists](#).

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## A fish-eye view of sturgeon life

Have you ever seen a fish use a keyboard? Well, that doesn't happen too often, but we thought we'd take a bit of a different approach to [telling the story of lake sturgeon](#), amazing fish that can live for over a century and can weigh more than a person. So we decided to [write a blog](#) from a fish-eye view and the result is a true "insider" story of sturgeon life authored by our friend *namew* (Cree for sturgeon). It is also the story of why WCS Canada is so focused on this particular fish, an at-risk species that has ancestors that were swimming when dinosaurs were around. Learn about some of sturgeon's unique features – from sensitive electromagnetic barbels to shark-like skeletons – [in this new Muddy Boots blog](#).

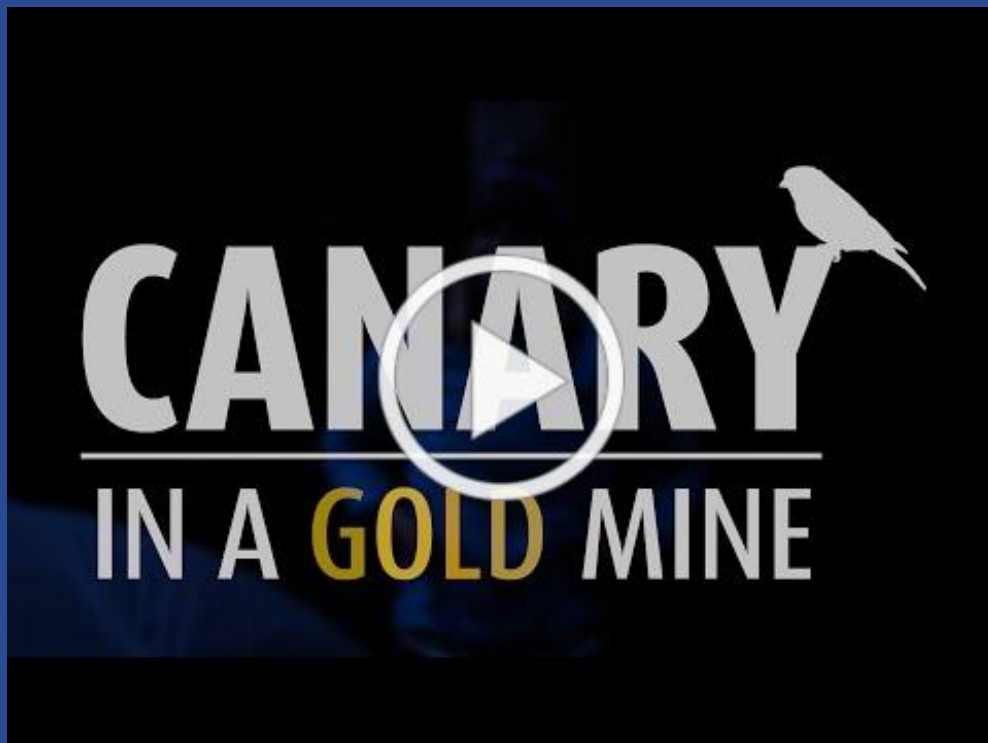


A lake sturgeon being released back into one of North America's wildest rivers after being fitted with a tracking tag. Photo: WCS Canada

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## Canary In a Gold Mine

This video doesn't just feature beautiful footage of colourful songbirds in Yukon, it tells the story of how our research team is using birdlife to assess the health of broader wild landscapes.



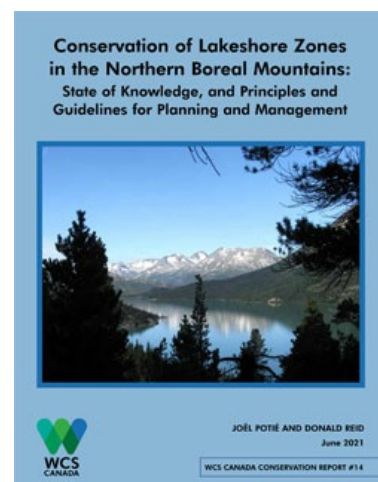
Diving into all that lakes have to offer

The lakes and lakeshores of northwest Canada [need more planning and management attention](#) to sustain their diverse ecological values and the numerous benefits they provide to people. In this mountainous boreal region, lakes and ponds, and the shore-zone ecosystem that span water and adjacent land, are essential to a wide variety of wildlife, from fish and amphibians to insects and mammals. Lakes are highly valued by people as sources of fish for food and water for drinking along with other uses, such as industrial production and irrigation. They are also prime places for residential development and recreation.



Lakes are more than water as our new Conservation Report makes clear by looking at everything from the influence of land to climate on these waters. Photo: Don Reid/WCS Canada

In Yukon and northern British Columbia, growing numbers of people and increasing extraction of natural resources are intensifying threats of water pollution, over-fishing, loss of shorelines to development, and disturbance to wildlife. An overheating climate layers on new threats of warming and more acidic water plus siltation and loss of shorelines to permafrost melt. In our new conservation report, [Conservation of Lakeshore Zones in the Northern Boreal Mountains](#), we summarize scientific information about the various types of lakes in this region, how lake and lakeshore ecosystems function,



Our [Conservation Report](#) dives deep on the value of lakes and how to conserve them.

and the threats they face.

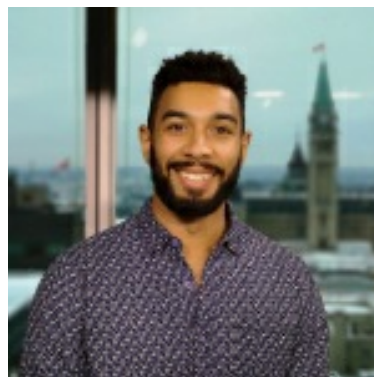
We also advocate for more explicit attention for these ecosystems in regional land use planning, as well as in local area planning and environmental impact assessments. We lay out a number of principles for planning and management of lakes and lakeshores at regional, and single-lake scales, along with guidelines for applying those principles. This approach covers issues ranging from protection of a representative selection of different lake and shore-zone types, zoning of lake shores with respect to types and intensities of allowable human activities, protecting critical habitats for focal species whose habitat needs are easily impacted by people, and providing guidelines for stewardship of lakeshores by private land holders.

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## Comings and goings

We are very excited to welcome the following new staff to the growing WCS Canada herd:

**Peter Soroye** joins the KBA program as its new Assessment and Outreach coordinator, supporting both research and communications. Peter's PhD work was recognized by the Canadian Society for Ecology and Evolution with a prestigious Excellence in Doctoral Research award.



**Anthony Kissoon** brings his tremendous organizational skills to the role of executive assistant. He completed his double-major in Law and Psychology at York University with honours and has extensive experience in helping organizations run more smoothly.



**Brian Paterson** joins us as a North American Bat Monitoring (NABat) program analyst. He is a wildlife biologist with more than 10 years experience collecting and analyzing acoustic bat calls and has done other significant research on bats.



**Rimi Chawngte** is our Human Resources Intern. She is currently a student at York University, but prior to this she worked in recruitment, business partnering and talent management in the telecom and internet technology sectors in India.



**Sara Katsabas** is wrapping up her stint as the Spatial Analyst Intern for the Northern Boreal Mountain landscape program. Sara joined us through a prestigious Mitacs fellowship. She is a fourth year Geographic Analysis student at Ryerson University.



But change is a constant and we are saying goodbye to one valued staff member:

**Jaime Grimm** joined WCS Canada as a conservation intern in 2019. She quickly made her mark with her “get it done” approach, including completely overhauling our website while supporting all of our conservation programs. From there, Jaime jumped to our [Key Biodiversity Areas program](#), where she has played a key role in shaping this fast-growing program. Sadly for us, but not for the world of science, Jaime is leaving WCS to pursue a PhD at the University of Toronto. We know she will do spectacularly well.



## 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!

Top banner image of sturgeon: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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