




NATURE CANADA
Annual Report 2011-2012



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OUR THANKS TO YOU

Dear Friend of Nature Canada:

Thanks to your support, we've made significant progress in achieving our mission this year.

We're building healthier bird communities. We reached our goal of establishing volunteer Caretakers in every province, at over 200 sites nationwide. Today, Caretakers are at the front lines of bird monitoring and habitat protection, working within their communities to put local conservation ideas into action.

We're connecting more families to nature. For a third year, more than 400,000 Grade 8 students and their families have received passes to enter national parks with the My Parks Pass program. Through our Nature Explorers Fund, local groups in Ontario and Nova Scotia helped thousands of children enjoy nature.

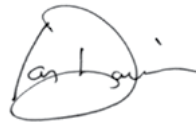
We're speaking out on behalf of endangered species and the protection of their habitat. Our campaign to add the polar bear to the Species at Risk list succeeded, and we helped improve the recovery strategies for some of Canada's most at-risk birds. Meanwhile, we're shining a light on government plans to convert lakes to dumping grounds, and we're fighting the Northern Gateway Pipeline project as official interveners in the public review process.

While these are important gains, it has been a difficult year for the environment. This was a year in which charities

that work to protect the environment were demonized, and core Canadian values like nature and democracy came under attack. The year ended with a federal budget that fundamentally weakens environmental protections in many ways.

As governments and foundations chose to fund different kinds of initiatives, and competition for limited resources increased, we have strived to maintain a focus on fewer, highly effective programs and more emphasis on multi-year programming. In this time of economic and environmental uncertainty, your support is more critical than ever.

So thank you. Thank you for your commitment to nature. Thank you for supporting our conservation mission. Together, we're building a Nature Nation.



IAN DAVIDSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



RICHARD YANK
CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OUR VISION

Together we seek to achieve a vision of Canada as a place where threatened species and ecosystems are protected, common species and ecosystems are conserved, ecological integrity is maintained and people embrace a culture of conservation in their everyday lives.



WHAT OUR MEMBERS SAY

I'm a big supporter of Nature Canada's educational and outreach programs. Just as I teach my children the value of nature and the importance of co-existing with nature, I like to know that my donations help to teach others across the country.

Sharolyn Vettese,
Nature Builder



I enjoy supporting a national organization dedicated to protecting our natural heritage as a whole.

I can't think of a better use for your financial legacy than to further good things in the world.

Judith Carder,
Whittemore Legacy Circle member

I LIKE THAT NATURE CANADA HELPS GET CHILDREN MORE INVOLVED WITH NATURE.

Their work protecting endangered **wildlife is also important to me.**

Barbara Vengshoel, Whittemore Legacy Circle member and former kindergarten teacher

I have fond memories of my time in and around the South Okanagan Similkameen while I was teaching in the area years ago.

Rolling hills and grasslands.
Birds and wildflowers abound.

So when Nature Canada asked me to support their collaborative efforts to protect this precious treasure as a national park, I was more than happy to invest in their efforts.

They've made great progress to date and I look forward to celebrating the day the park is established.

R. Lornie, Nature Builder

Nature Canada shares my principles and values. Not only do they do everything possible to protect biodiversity in Canada, but they also educate young people – helping them change the way they think about nature and giving them practical strategies to be more green.

Patricia Dray, Whittemore Legacy Circle member



I choose to give monthly to Nature Canada because it's important to donate to something you believe in. I like how I'm supporting not only birds or frogs – but a wide gamut of wildlife and their habitats.

Steve Racey,
Nature Builder and
FrogWatch volunteer



HEALTHY BIRD COMMUNITIES

CARETAKERS: ON THE FRONTLINES OF CONSERVATION

Community care of local habitats in and around Important Bird Areas is essential for the health of our birds and protecting the environment. This year, we reached our goal of establishing volunteer Caretakers in every province, at over 200 sites nationwide. Through their hands-on volunteer efforts, Caretakers are at the front lines of bird monitoring and habitat protection.

This year, we provided effective tools Caretakers can use to communicate with each other and within their community. A new training manual, maps, graphs, seasonal abundance charts and outdoor signs were produced, and a series of video interviews, featuring real Caretakers telling their stories, has helped to recruit and retain new volunteers.

The Canadian IBA Caretaker Network is a joint effort between regional partners across the country and two national partners, Nature Canada and Bird Studies Canada. As the national sponsor of the Network since 2009, TransCanada Corporation has committed \$1 million to protecting and conserving birds in Canada.

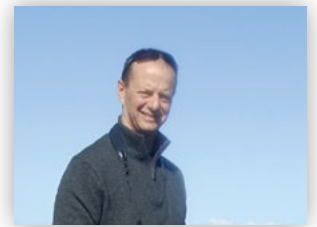


Karl Kaufmann

Important Bird Areas (IBAs) provide vital habitat for threatened birds, large groups of birds, and birds found almost nowhere else on Earth. There are nearly 600 Important Bird Areas across Canada, ranging in size from tiny patches of habitat to large tracts of land or water.

Protecting and monitoring Important Bird Areas are the cornerstones of effective bird conservation in Canada.

Ted Cheskey, Manager,
bird conservation program



CARETAKER PROFILE: Ecologist Kerry Finley examines a diesel fuel leak in Shoal Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary, with absorbent baffles placed by the Town of Sidney, BC. IBA Caretakers are often the first line of defense in the conservation of these sites.



Kerry Finley



MAKING THE CASE FOR IBAS: CONVINCING THE DECISION-MAKERS

Newfoundland and Labrador are home to many IBAs with large concentrations of marine birds. Our work with local communities on the Mealy Mountains National Park enabled us to provide information on IBAs that helped get the sites included in plans to establish the new national protected area, the largest in Eastern Canada.

In Chaplin Lake, Saskatchewan, where Nature Canada secured \$50,000 from Rio Tinto to support local IBA Caretakers, an outreach and awareness campaign is helping local and provincial leaders recognize the importance of the lake. Now joint conservation efforts are underway between Chaplin Lake and communities at other IBAs in the US and Mexico that share the same species.

CARETAKER PROFILE: Not only do Bruce and Hilda Norton make regular visits to Saskatchewan's Rice Lake IBA to monitor birds and changes to the landscape, they share these observations with local farmers whose land abuts the IBA.



Bruce & Hilda Norton



In Ottawa, Ontario we have met several times with senior staff in Environment Canada, including the Minister, where we recommended regional staff biologists be IBA Caretakers for remote IBAs in the Arctic or marine areas. This is happening already in some provinces.

Based in part on Nature Canada's guidance, the Ontario Provincial Bird and Bat Guidelines for Wind Energy now recognize IBAs and urge developers to take them into consideration when siting new projects.

This year we endorsed a Senate motion calling for Important Bird Areas in the eastern basin of Lake Ontario and adjacent lands to be excluded from wind energy projects. The motion passed unanimously and has helped to increase the profile of IBAs and their role in protecting globally important sites for birds and biodiversity.

With the support of an Ivey Foundation grant, Nature Canada is engaging the Cree of James Bay and Hudson Bay to protect migratory birds and their habitat while preserving Cree culture. With 17 Important Bird Areas near or within Cree homelands, such collaboration could play a critical role in the conservation of hundreds of thousands of migratory birds and their habitat.



ENDANGERED SPECIES

Habitat loss, our changing climate, and weak implementation of this country's endangered species laws are placing more animal and plant species on the road to extinction. The list of species scientists consider at risk has grown to 650. Nature Canada works to reverse this trend by calling for the establishment of strong wildlife protection laws, consistent enforcement, and action on preserving critical habitat.

IMPROVED RECOVERY STRATEGIES FOR SPECIES AT RISK

In its watchdog role as an advocate for endangered species, Nature Canada closely reviews recovery strategies for species at risk. This year, our recommendations helped improve recovery strategies for two at-risk birds, the Piping Plover and the Prothonotary Warbler.

POLAR BEAR ADDED TO SPECIES AT RISK LIST

Nearly 63,000 Nature Canada supporters asked the federal government to take action for polar bears, and thanks to you, the Polar Bear is finally listed as a species of special concern under the Species At Risk Act. This important milestone means that, by law, a plan must be devised within three years to prevent the species from becoming endangered or threatened. We've asked the government to complete the plan even sooner.

EMERGENCY PROTECTION NEEDED TO SAVE GREATER SAGE GROUSE

Time is running out for the Greater Sage Grouse. Threatened by habitat loss due to oil and gas development, this iconic prairie bird is on the verge of extinction in Canada. Nature Canada joined other environmental groups to legally petition the Environment Minister to take emergency measures to protect the critically endangered Sage Grouse. And we're working with our partners in Canada's prairie region to coordinate efforts to save this species, before it is too late.

I like that Nature Canada is a national organization. They can keep tabs on upcoming legislation and advocate for better protection for the environment.



Jack and Mary Gingrich, Nature Builders



CONNECTING TO NATURE

EXPLORING NATURE

With the support of White Swan, Nature Canada's Nature Explorers Program has helped create opportunities for kids and their families to experience nature first-hand – from their own backyards to the country's wildest places! What kinds of experiences did young people have this year?

Two examples:

In Ontario, naturalist guides at the Wye Marsh Naturalist Centre led youths on a real-world outdoor treasure hunt in which players used GPS units to find hidden geocaches that helped educate them about the surrounding ecosystem.

The Young Naturalists Club of Nova Scotia started four new chapters in their province and launched an active

schedule of field trips where families enjoyed nature while learning about tides, shorebirds, Acadian Forest, beaches, birding, river restoration, star watching, animal tracking and wilderness survival.

FREE ACCESS TO NATIONAL PARKS

For the third year in a row, more than 400,000 Grade 8/ Secondary 2 students across Canada were given a My Parks Pass that provides them free access to Canada's national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas.

The My Parks Pass program was launched through a partnership between Parks Canada, Nature Canada and the Historica-Dominion Institute.

Profile: Meet Savannah Hayes, Our Ultimate Family Adventure

Canada's Ultimate Family Adventure winner Savannah Hayes and her family visited Jasper National Park on their first ever trip to the Rocky Mountains. The contest was part of the My Parks Pass program. Savannah shares her story:

Oh, where to start! My trip to Jasper was unforgettable. After we arrived, we noticed some sort of brown animal lying in the tall grass. To our surprise, not twenty feet away was a massive male caribou! I would never have been able to have such an experience without my trip from My Parks Pass! For the few days that we were there, my family had time to hike, climb, and paddle our way through the mountains while having time to bond and enjoy nature. I'm glad

that the park is being preserved as its beauty is entirely unique and breathtaking.



CANADA'S WATER RESOURCES

STOP WASTING OUR LAKES

Meet Schedule 2. It's a little-known list of natural water bodies buried in a part of the federal Fisheries Act – lakes, mostly, where toxic mine tailings can be deliberately dumped, with a governmental green light. Weakening of environmental laws enshrined in the 2012 federal budget

The more intimate we are with nature, the more we will fight to protect it. I love how Nature Canada makes conservation personal, the encouragement it provides to individuals, to families, to immerse themselves in beauty.

Allan Casey, author of *Lakeland: Ballad of a Freshwater Country*, winner of the Governor General's Literary Award for nonfiction.

makes it easier for this list of lakes to grow – and it removes crucial protections for fish and fish habitat found in many of Canada's water bodies. With support from EJLB Foundation, we launched the Stop Wasting Our Lakes campaign to shine a light on

this government-sanctioned practice so Canadians can demand that no lake be turned into a dump.

SAY IT LOUD AND PROUD: WE LOVE OUR LAKES

To make our case that Canadians love their lakes – and want them protected – we worked to ensure that industry and government are aware of public opinion on this issue. We commissioned a Leger Marketing national poll that found 96% of Canadians disagreed with metal mining companies converting lakes into dumps for toxic mine tailings – even if it meant the project, and the associated jobs, were cancelled.

We have also called on Canadians to declare their love for our lakes by signing the Love My Lake Declaration, and by sharing stories about their favourite bodies of water. Thousands of you have responded, and made official



Larry Kirtley

On World Water Day 2012, *Business Review Canada* recognized Nature Canada as one of 5 organizations “that work to protect and conserve the world's most vital resource: water”.



your love of Canada's aquatic environments - in all their wondrous forms.

PROTECTING CANADA'S BIRD NURSERY OF THE NORTH

For some very vulnerable species of boreal birds, Canada's boreal forest is their last haven and their best hope for survival. In a report co-authored by Nature Canada, *Birds at Risk: The Importance of Canada's Boreal Wetlands and Waterways*, we called upon Canadian governments to seize on the many opportunities to save intact boreal landscapes—the largest source of global freshwater—while there's still time.

We have managed our homelands for thousands of years and have our systems in place to manage wildlife and migratory birds especially.

When someone like Nature Canada comes along and says this is important to them as well, we get interested. We wanted to listen to Nature Canada, understand their thinking, and see how we could collaborate.

Stan Louttit, Grand Chief of the Mushkegowuck Tribal Council



WILDLIFE HABITAT

Canada's wildlife depend on a strong, well-managed network of protected areas from coast to coast to coast. For more than five decades Nature Canada has championed the development of a connected network of national wildlife areas and migratory bird sanctuaries on land and sea, to protect vital habitat for birds and species at risk.

Alex MacDonald, Manager, protected areas program



PROTECTING CARIBOU HABITAT

Thanks in part to a Nature Canada letter-writing campaign supported by donors like you, the federal government in December 2011 reversed its decision to remove interim protection from subsurface lands in the proposed Edézhíe (Horn Plateau) National Wildlife Area, near Fort Providence, NWT. The decision re-instated important temporary protections against mineral and oil and gas resource exploration and development in the proposed protected area. The Edézhíe National Wildlife Area will protect the globally significant Mills Lake IBA and habitat for species at risk like the Boreal woodland caribou and wood bison.

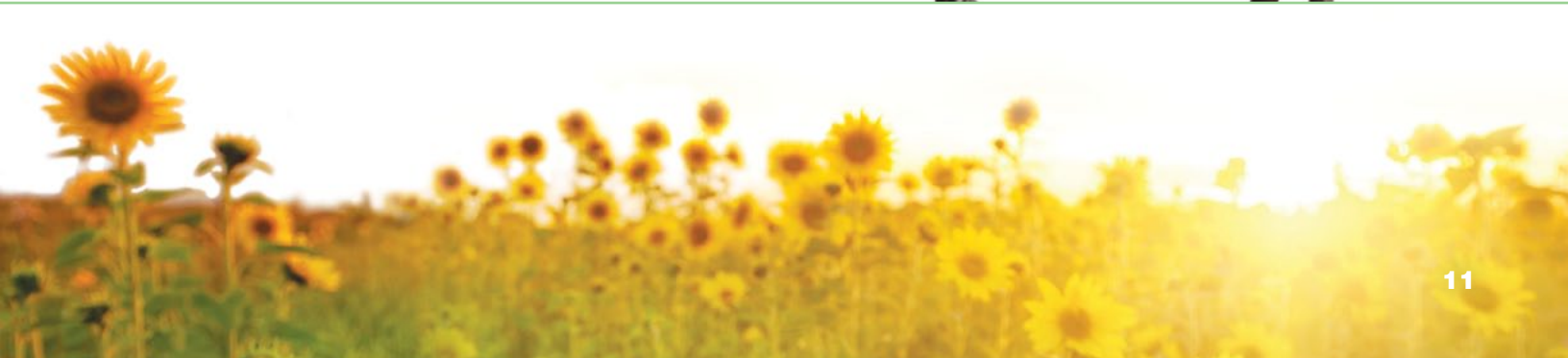
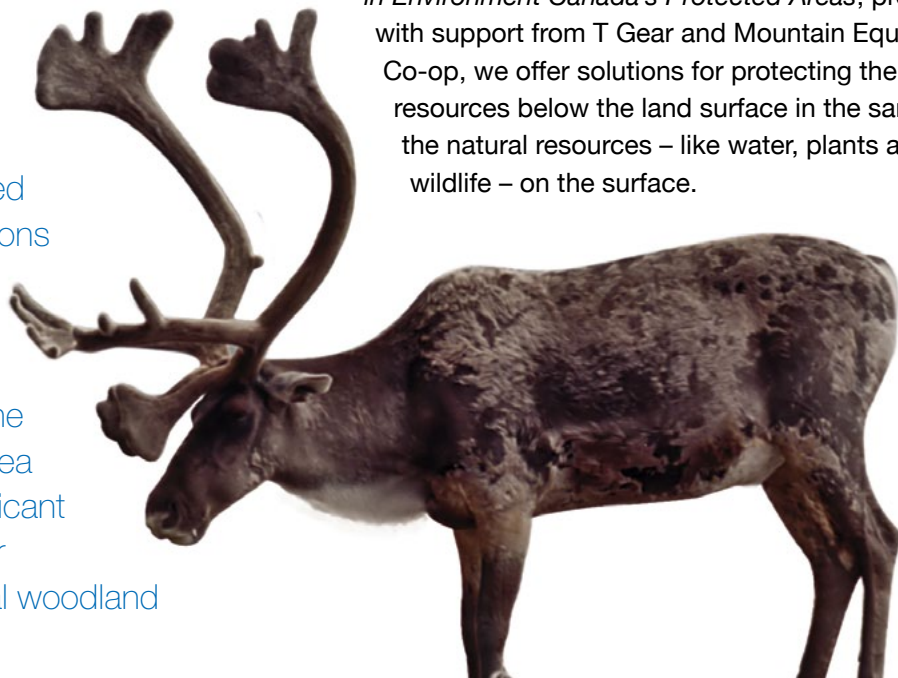
THE UNDERLYING THREAT

Unlike National Parks, the protections afforded national wildlife areas and migratory bird sanctuaries do not extend below the land surface to prevent development, exposing protected areas to a range of environmental problems, including habitat loss, soil contamination, and water pollution.

The Council greatly appreciates Nature Canada's work as a champion of Canada's protected areas.

Dave MacKinnon, Chair, Canadian Council on Ecological Areas, which granted its Gold Leaf award to Nature Canada for our efforts to conserve wildlife

There is an urgent need for clear, up-to-date policies on what is and isn't permitted. In Nature Canada's report, *The Underlying Threat: Addressing Subsurface Threats in Environment Canada's Protected Areas*, produced with support from T Gear and Mountain Equipment Co-op, we offer solutions for protecting the natural resources below the land surface in the same way as the natural resources – like water, plants and other wildlife – on the surface.



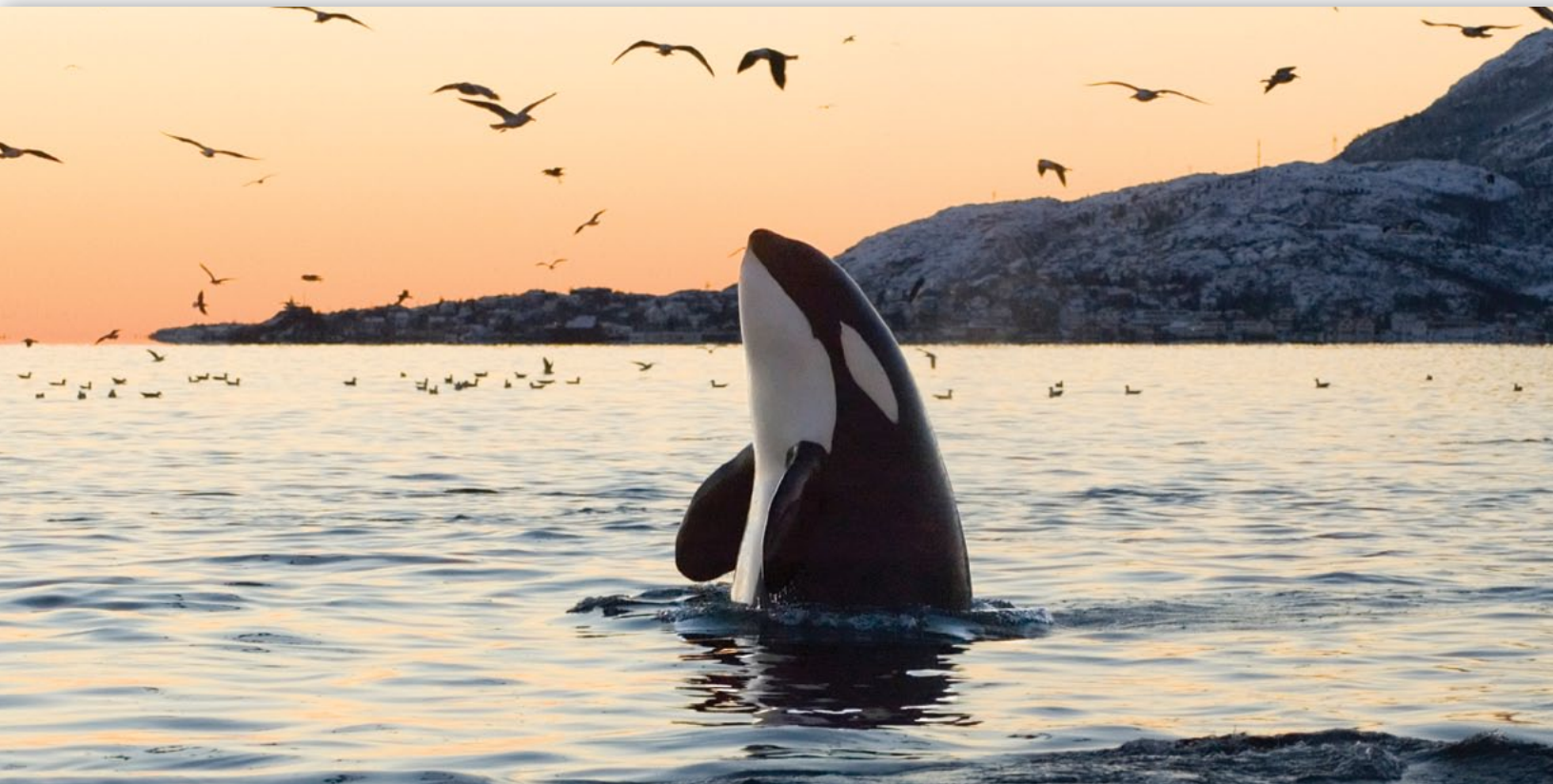
SAFEGUARDING OUR GRASSLANDS

Grasslands are arguably the most threatened ecosystem in the world. In North America less than 20 percent of native grasslands remain intact. To help grasslands stakeholders address this challenge, Nature Canada completed a wide-ranging survey of conservation actions and best practices that successfully advanced grassland conservation while providing economic benefits to local communities on the Canadian Prairies.

The information compiled through the survey will be made available to land owners, managers, First Nations, and other stakeholders making it easier to direct conservation efforts where it's needed the most.

YOU CAN'T PROTECT SOMETHING ONCE IT'S GONE

Nature Canada and BC Nature are joint official interveners in the public review panel process that's considering the Northern Gateway Pipeline. To date we have commissioned three experts to prepare evidence showing how the project will negatively impact at least 30 Important Bird Areas supporting many marine bird species, and fragment critical habitat for the woodland caribou – not to mention risk much of B.C.'s coasts and the communities that reside there. Your donations have helped us continue participation in this process, and to defend our stand during cross-examination from the pipeline's supporters, like Enbridge. We also hope to participate directly in final hearings scheduled later this year.



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Gifts \$20,000+

Allan Stein

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(\$50,000 and above)

Environment Canada Parks Canada Agency TransCanada Corporation

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(\$20,000 to \$49,999)

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Jim Cumming



Donald and Frances Hatherly: Quiet Heroes for Nature

Sometimes it's the most humble among us who have the greatest impact. Donald and Frances Hatherly are two of these quiet heroes.

Donald and Frances lived in Bridgetown, Nova Scotia all their lives. For years, they worked side by side; he as a local lawyer and she as his legal secretary. Donald also served as Town Councillor, sometimes even choosing to forgo his pay to donate it to an underserved area. In retirement, Donald enjoyed gardening and had a particular passion for roses. The couple adored visiting the Annapolis Historic Gardens and watching local wildlife.

Donald passed away in April, 2009 and was predeceased by Frances, his loving wife of 48 years. By leaving a generous bequest in their will, the couple has ensured that the nature they loved so dearly will be protected for generations to come. This thoughtful gift has helped support Nature Canada's bird conservation work and nature education efforts both in Nova Scotia and all across Canada.

If you would like to learn more about how you can leave your own lasting legacy for nature, please contact Jodi Joy at 1-800-267-4088 ext 239.

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Nature Canada and Bird Studies Canada are the Canadian co-partners in BirdLife International, a global alliance of conservation organizations working together for the world's birds and people.



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Financial statements are available online at naturecanada.ca/about_annual_report.asp



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