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The winners of this year's CWF Conservation Achievement Awards prove that where there's a will, there's a way

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Helene Van Doninck,  
winner of the Stan  
Hodgkiss Outdoorsperson  
of the Year Award.

# Game Changers

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Each year, the Canadian Wildlife Federation honours individuals and organizations for outstanding commitment to wildlife and habitat in Canada. In the pages that follow, you'll meet this year's honorees in six categories. As you'll see from their stories, individuals and groups can make a difference—a big difference.

**Helene Van Doninck**  
STAN HODGKISS OUTDOORSPERSON  
OF THE YEAR AWARD

*In recognition of outdoorspeople who have demonstrated an active commitment to conservation.*



**Ian James**

RODERICK HAIG-BROWN AWARD

*Awarded to individuals for their contribution to conservation and wise use of recreational fisheries in Canada.*

**H**elene Van Doninck splits her professional life between her work as a veterinarian who runs a domestic small-animal clinic and her position as a part-time instructor at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College. However, it's her volunteer work—most notably as founder of the Cobequid Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre in Brookfield, N.S.—that puts her in the public eye. Since 2001, she and other volunteers with the centre have formed a team that has provided veterinary care to injured, orphaned and sick wildlife. Along the way, Doninck has developed unique methods for ensuring the long-term health of wild animals under her care. For instance, she has crafted a collection of accurate bird puppets, covering some 50 species, so that orphaned chicks in her care do not come to associate feeding with humans.

In addition to her work at the rehabilitation centre, Doninck played a key role in the creation of the Atlantic Wildlife Coalition, a network of agencies in the Maritimes that responds to oiled wildlife emergencies. Recognized as an expert in the field, she has developed and taught courses on oiled wildlife rehabilitation to vets, government and military officials, emergency response teams and non-profit organizations in both Canada and the United States. Doninck is also well known as an educator for adults and youth, and serves on volunteer boards for organizations such as the International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council and the Marine Animal Response Society.



**T**here are several reasons why Ian James is famous in Canadian fly-fishing circles. A resident of London, Ont., he is one of the top guides on the Grand River. He is credited as the individual who popularized fly-fishing for carp in North America, earning the nickname “The Carpfather.” He is the author of a popular book, *Fumbling with a Flyrod*, and his own flies are sold worldwide. (James holds the distinction of being the only fly tyer to receive a design award from the Ontario Arts Council.)

Over the years, James has contributed to several important conservation projects, such as the Hamilton Harbour Fisheries Management Plan and the Grand River Fisheries Management Plan. He has also donated countless volunteer hours to various projects. His most unique contribution to conservation, however, derives from his role as the instructor for Canada's first for-credit fly-fishing course, launched in 2009, at London's Fanshawe College. More than an introduction to the sport, James's program seeks to impart a strong conservation ethos. Students are required to delve into topical issues such as the impact of dams on aquatic ecosystems and whether or not to stock lakes and streams with non-native species.

HELENE: AARON MCKENZIE FRASER; IAN: NEIL EVER OSBORNE



**Dennis Sherratt**

ROLAND MICHENER CONSERVATION AWARD  
CO-RECIPIENT

*Recognizing commitment by an individual to promote and enhance natural resource conservation.*

**D**ennis Sherratt started his career in 1972 as a research biologist with the Wildlife Research Branch of Saskatchewan's provincial government. Since then, he has played a leading role in developing and implementing numerous major conservation programs. Having held positions with the province such as executive director for fish and wildlife and general manager for the Saskatchewan Wetlands Corp., he has spearheaded initiatives including the province's internationally recognized Heritage Marsh Program and the adoption of the Wildlife Habitat Protection Act, which saw more than two million acres of sensitive lands protected under legislation. As general manager of the wetlands corporation, Sherratt also paved the way for wetland development in Canada under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

Sherratt played key roles in the creation of Saskatchewan's Fish and Wildlife Development Fund, which has resulted in the conservation of 160,000 acres of fish and wildlife habitat, and the design and implementation of the Saskatchewan Representative Areas Network, the province's protected areas strategy. In addition to his work within government, Sherratt has maintained close working relationships with conservation organizations, including the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, Ducks Unlimited Canada and Nature Canada, where his contributions have helped support and promote broad conservation objectives.

CAREY SHAW



**SCHOOL PRIZES**

*Every year, CWF recognizes conservation education efforts at Canadian schools through its WILD and Blue Schools initiatives. Meet this year's honorees.*

**WINNER**

**Hillcrest Central School, Teeswater, Ont.**  
Teacher: Tawnya Schlosser

Grade 2 and Grade 3 students in Tawnya Schlosser's classes learn lessons about butterfly habitat, insect life cycles and native plants through a project called Monarch Paradise. Each year, they create a butterfly garden on school grounds, featuring native plants and a “puddling” dish for birds. Students contribute by researching plant species and planting them. They also water and weed the garden and make wildlife observations.

**RUNNERS UP**

**R.W. Bobby Bend, Stonewall, Man.**  
Teachers: Irene Pawlow, Kelly Griffith, Sandra Miller

Grade 2 students at Bobby Bend school get an early start on learning about local bird species with their A Place for Birds program. At the start of the program, they learn about local species, then follow up by building nesting boxes, which they install around their community.

**Université de Moncton, Campus d'Edmundston, Edmundston, N.B.**

Teacher: Diane Landry

The forestry department at Université de Moncton's Edmundston campus hosts a summer school for students ages 11 to 14 to raise awareness about wildlife and environmental sciences. One of the activities involves building bat houses to help students learn about bat ecology, behaviour and habitat.

**HONOURABLE MENTIONS**

Two schools earned honourable mentions in this year's awards program. Students at **Glenway School** in Dominion, Man., use outdoor activities to learn about ecology. At **École Sainte-Maire** in Princeville, Que., students learn about native plants through research and hands-on activities.



**Michael Léveillé**  
YOUTH MENTOR AWARD

*Awarded for significant contributions to creating or presenting conservation, wildlife or habitat programs for youth.*

For Michael Léveillé, a teacher at St-Laurent Academy in Ottawa, the goal of science education is to imbue his young students with a sense of responsibility about the environment and the role their efforts can play in conservation. In an era when headlines are dominated by bad news, it's an empowering message. The centerpiece of his efforts at St-Laurent, a school for students in kindergarten to Grade 8, has been the Macoun Marsh Project. Launched in 2004, the ongoing initiative sees Léveillé's students studying the marsh year-round, recording scientific observations in journals and monitoring the ecology of the ecosystem. The project has received wide recognition nationally and internationally.

In addition to the Macoun Marsh Project, Léveillé helped host the Second International Youth Forum on Biodiversity in Ottawa in 2009 (the first symposium was held in Mexico City in 2005). Léveillé promotes science education through various activities besides his teaching. In 1991, he founded the Ottawa Paleontology Society to advance understanding of fossils. Over the years, he has also created a number of popular programs for the Canadian Museum of Nature, working with people of all ages to promote awareness of the natural world.



**Otto E. Langer**  
ROLAND MICHENER CONSERVATION AWARD  
CO-RECIPEINT

*Recognizing commitment by an individual to promote and enhance natural resource conservation.*

If not for the work of biologist Otto Langer, the field of environmental enforcement and prosecution might not be what it is today. During a 30-year career with the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, he was a pioneer in the field, providing expertise to courts in more than 100 cases across several Canadian jurisdictions.

In addition to his government work, Langer has been a valuable resource for environmental groups, providing training in gathering evidence and getting cases before the courts. Although these efforts often made his life difficult at Fisheries and Oceans, he remained an influential member of the staff until he left the department in 2001. Among his achievements as a civil servant were the leading roles he played in having habitat protection added to the Fisheries Act and lobbying for strong government guidelines on habitat mapping and monitoring.

A longtime critic of Fisheries and Oceans' commitment to conservation, Langer has supported many citizen and non-government environment groups in their work, including the David Suzuki Foundation, where he helped create its marine directorate. Now retired, Langer continues to serve as a scientific advisor to a number of non-government fisheries protection groups.

MICHAEL: TONY FOUHSE. OTTO: CURTIS COMEAU

**Braden and Jonathan Judson**  
YOUTH CONSERVATION AWARD

*Recognizing the contribution of individual youths or youth groups to wildlife or habitat conservation projects.*

In December 2007, a landslide near Ladysmith, B.C., sent tonnes of sediment and garbage from an old dump into a local creek, known as Stocking Creek. To local residents, the landslide was nothing short of a disaster, the near-total destruction of a highly used salmon habitat and spawning ground.

Not all was lost, however, and members of the Ladysmith Sportsman Club quickly began work on restoring Stocking Creek. In the months that followed, volunteers cleared more than 20 tonnes of garbage and seven tonnes of steel from the water, much of it by hand. The members of that dedicated team included 15-year-old Braden Judson and his 13-year-old brother, Jonathan.

Over the past four years, the brothers have continued to contribute to the restoration project, devoting countless hours on weekends and over holidays. Stocking Creek has now been cleared of the debris, and new habitat structures have been put in place. The results of the cleanup effort are beginning to show, with chum and coho fry once more using Stocking Creek's habitat.

CURTIS COMEAU



**Pronghorn Antelope  
Travel Corridor  
Enhancement Project,  
Alberta Fish & Game  
Association**

DOUG CLARKE MEMORIAL AWARD

*In recognition of a conservation project recently completed by an affiliate of the Canadian Wildlife Federation, its clubs or members.*

Pronghorn antelope, the last wide-ranging mammal in North America, can be found in Alberta and Saskatchewan, and south through the American prairies. Small and fast, their population in Canada is abundant, but they do face risks: pronghorn antelope are known for their lengthy seasonal migrations, and roads and ranches across their home range are creating barriers along their natural migration routes.

In 2008, the Alberta Fish & Game Association launched a project to improve movement corridors for Canadian pronghorns. The concept was simple—raise the lowest wires on ranch fences so that pronghorns can crawl under them, and replace old barbed-wire strands with plain wires to avoid causing injuries. The execution, however, was more complex, involving stakeholder consultations, identifying areas where the project would have the greatest impact, gaining approvals from affected landowners, recruiting and training volunteers, and conducting follow-up work. But members of the game association persevered and, in April and July of 2009, completed a pair of four-day fencing expeditions, covering about 100 kilometres.

In total, the project cost \$50,000, not including in-kind donations. And it has been a success on more than one front: pronghorns are crawling under the fences and media coverage of the project has helped raise awareness of the issue of conserving wildlife corridors. 🐾