



Things You Can Do To Protect Wildlife

Wildlife conservation starts with each one of us—it doesn't have to be difficult. In fact, you can start right here with these simple steps

Illustration by James Braithwaite



Build a bat box

Bat populations in North America are in rapid decline because of the arrival of a fungal infection called white-nose syndrome. Building bat boxes helps support surviving bats by providing safe, seasonal habitat.



Don't pour crap down your drains

This means paints, solvents and any other household chemicals. They just end up in the water system. Instead, take chemical waste to your local dump, where it will be disposed of safely.



Clean your boat

Even it's just a canoe, wash and dry your watercraft and equipment before you move it to a new body of water. Keeping your recreational vessel clean helps prevent the spread of non-native, invasive species.



Build a composter

Chemical garden fertilizers can damage habitat over wide areas as a result of runoff. Avoid them by turning your household's organic waste into compost. It's effective fertilizer—and it's sustainable and free.



Take up cross-country skiing

Or canoeing. These types of outdoor activities have a lower impact on the environment than pastimes such as downhill skiing, snowmobiling or motor-boating.



Report banded birds

Banding is an important part of monitoring bird populations. If you spot a banded bird, report it to the Canadian Bird Banding Office.



Know your labels

Learn about certifications such as Energy Star, Forest Stewardship Council, the Marine Stewardship Council and EcoLogo. Use them to guide your buying choices and promote sustainability at the consumer level.



Make wildlife corridors

If you live on a large piece of property, such as a farm or large acreage, keep continuous spaces of wildlands available for animals on the move.



Be good to bees (and other pollinators)

The decline of honeybee populations is well documented. Experts are also concerned about falling populations of other pollinators around the world. Here are four ways you can fight the decline in your own garden:

Choose native plants that support pollinators in your region.

Choose plants that flower at different times so that local pollinators are supported throughout the season.

Grow your plants in clumps. This will help attract pollinators.

Use of variety of plants to attract and support different pollinator species.



Keep roads and highways litter free

Garbage attracts animals looking for a quick (if not necessarily nutritious) meal. That increases the risk of collisions that we could avoid.



Fight City Hall

Well, you don't have to fight, per se. But get involved. Attend public planning meetings and support efforts to promote sustainable development and habitat conservation in your area.



Avoid driving at dawn and dusk

Many animals are on the move in the time between day and night. Staying off the road reduces the risk of collision.



Adopt a brownfield

Support habitat locally by teaming up with other members of your community to rehabilitate derelict plots of land in your area. Check out the de-pave movement—depave.org—for ideas and inspiration.



Reduce. Reuse. Recycle

What else needs to be said? The less we consume, the smaller our environmental footprint.

The smaller our footprint, the more space available for every other species on the planet.



Pour beet juice on your icy sidewalk

Rock salt melts ice on pavement, but it also damages habitats near and far as a result of runoff. There are better options, among them sugar-beet juice. Better still, avoid the problem—shovel early and often.



Wash with plain old soap and water

Anti-bacterial soaps and gels may seem appealing, but research shows they are no more effective than traditional soap. Moreover, the active ingredient in many products—triclosan—can be harmful to wildlife, starting with interfering with algae's ability to photosynthesize, to accumulating in animals higher up the food chain.



Visit parks and conservation areas

The more you learn about ecosystems and the species they support, the more you'll appreciate them—and want to protect them.



Love a weedy beach

Sandy beaches and manicured lawns at cottages and recreational properties make lousy habitat. Take steps to keep your shoreline wildlife friendly. Visit loveyourlake.ca for more info.



Get involved

Join or support organizations that promote wildlife conservation. You have a plethora of groups to choose from—local, regional, national and international. Just do it.



Be a pal to migrating birds

Here are four ideas to get you started.

Grow native plants that provide fruit and berries to feed birds that fly through your region.

Put a birdbath in your yard so that birds have clean water for drinking and bathing.

Turn out the lights or close the blinds at night—especially in office towers and apartment buildings—to reduce the risk of birds flying into windows.

Build a birdhouse to help birds find safe, secure nesting habitat.