

# EXAMPLE 2015 EXAMP

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#### NATURE IS A KEY PART OF CANADIAN HERITAGE AND IDENTITY, BUT WE CAN NO LONGER TAKE IT FOR GRANTED. WE HAVE A CRITICAL OPPORTUNITY TO SAFEGUARD NATURE AND THE PLACES WE LOVE.

Photo: Stuart Clark

In 2019, a new UN report concluded that one million species are at risk of extinction around the world due to human activity.<sup>1</sup> Canada has promised to protect vast tracts of wilderness from disruptive human activity by the end of 2020—doubling what is currently protected. Fulfilling that pledge would help give threatened species a chance to avoid extinction. It would create connectivity for migratory species and ensure safe havens for plants and animals to adjust to climate change.

Because Canada's wilderness is still vast, conservation here is crucial for the health of the entire planet. If we don't have room for nature, who does?

Canada's commitment is also an opportunity to promote reconciliation. By acknowledging the role of Indigenous communities as guardians of nature and by working with Indigenous governments, Canada can meet its conservation goals and strengthen Indigenous cultures and knowledge.

# BUT IT WON'T HAPPEN UNLESS WE SPEAK UP.

The federal government has made progress toward fulfilling its pledge, but there is a long way to go. Our leaders need to hear from us.

# NATURE CANADA INVITES YOU TO JOIN THIS EFFORT.

Nature Canada is working in partnership with local nature groups, individuals and allies across the country to press federal officials to double protected areas by 2020—and protect more in the longer term.<sup>2</sup> Your actions can make a difference. Citizen voices already won protection for an 11,000 km<sup>2</sup> tract of the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Newfoundland that was slated for oil and gas development.

Other crucial areas for wildlife and global ecosystems remain vulnerable, like the Prairie Grasslands, the Pacific Deepsea Oasis, the James Bay Basin and more.

<sup>1</sup> United Nations, "Report of the Intergovernmental Panel for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services" (May 2019)

<sup>2</sup> Nature Canada supports the call to protect 30% of nature by 2030 as a next target, within the long-term goal of protecting half of nature.

# WE'RE CALLING ON THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT TO:

Make good on the pledge to double protected areas by the end of 2020, including at least 17 per cent of Canada's land and inland waters, and 10 per cent of our oceans;

2 Commit to long-term funding for collaborative stewardship of those lands and waters; and

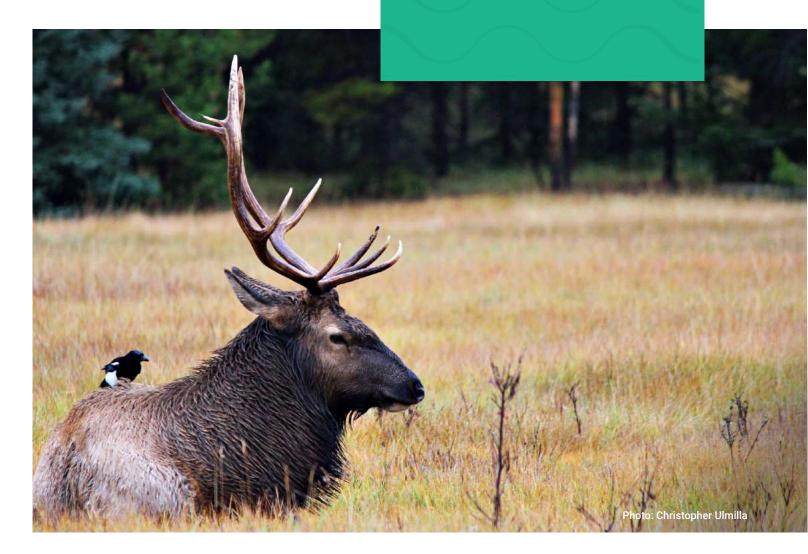
**3** Support Indigenous-led conservation efforts.

# READ ON TO LEARN WHAT YOU CAN DO.

# WHAT IS A PROTECTED AREA?

Canada has adopted the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) definition:

A protected area is a clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.





WHY RALLY FOR NATURE? BECAUSE WE CARE ABOUT WILDLIFE AND WE CARE ABOUT OUR FUTURE.

None of us survives or thrives in isolation.

If you have watched warblers or nuthatches pecking at insects on the bark of a maple, spruce or dogwood, you have witnessed nature's web of life. The birds need the insects for food, the insects need the trees for their reproduction, and the trees need the birds to keep the numbers of insects in check.

The web of life is of course far more complex, involving millions of species from the mammoth Blue Whales off the coast of British Columbia to the microscopic fungi in our soil. Many species can survive disruptions to this web, but few can handle the current scale of destruction that human activity is causing.

## EXTINCTION LOOMS FOR ONE MILLION SPECIES OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS.

This shocking news came from a landmark United Nations report in May 2019.<sup>3</sup> Species loss is accelerating at a rate tens or hundreds of times faster than in the past. Forty per cent of bird species are in decline, and one in eight may be wiped out. Fish species are under particular stress, having declined by half since 1970. Insect populations have collapsed in many places, undercutting a foundation of the food chain that keeps all of us alive.

Canada is not immune. Since 1970, half of the species that the World Wildlife Fund monitors in Canada have suffered population declines. Those falling populations have seen their numbers drop by an average of 83 per cent. (See Box). More than 600 species in Canada are now at risk, including such iconic species as the Piping Plover, the Southern Resident Orca, the Woodland Caribou and the Swift Fox.<sup>4</sup>

Each species lost is devastating on its own. Taken together, species die off imperils us all, including humans. When many life forms disappear, nature can no longer provide the things we take for granted: clean air, drinkable water, forests that absorb carbon from the atmosphere, insects that pollinate our crops or fish that provide us food.

Photo: Brittany Crossman

<sup>3</sup> United Nations, "Report of the Intergovernmental Panel for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services" (May 2019), for statistics that follow. 4 Species at risk public registry. <u>https://wildlife-species.canada.ca/species-risk-registry/sar/index/default\_e.cfm</u>

# CANADA'S WILDLIFE IN DECLINE

# AERIAL INSECTIVORE POPULATIONS FELL BY MORE THAN 59 PER CENT

#### CANADA'S WILDLIFE IN DECLINE

Since 1970 the population of about half of monitored wildlife species declined severely. Among those species with falling populations:

- Mammal populations fell by 43 per cent
- Grassland bird numbers dropped by 57 per cent
- Numbers of aerial insectivores, such as swifts and swallows, fell by more than 59 per cent
- Shorebird populations declined by 40 per cent
- Amphibian and reptile populations declined by 34 per cent

Protected areas can give wildlife the chance to rebound!

[source: World Wildlife Fund (Canada), "Living Planet Report Canada" (April 2019) and NABCI-Canada, "State of Canada's Birds" (June 2019)]

# DESTRUCTIVE HUMAN ACTIVITY IS TO BLAME.

Wildlife collapse appears to be almost entirely due to the activities of a single species—humans.

Climate change is a factor, since rapidly rising average temperatures and erratic weather place many species under stress. Over-exploitation and the introduction of invasive species are other causes, especially for fish in oceans, lakes and rivers.

But the primary cause is the direct destruction of habitat by human activity. Humans have severely altered 40 per cent of the marine environment, fully half of inland waterways and three-quarters of the planet's land.<sup>5</sup>

Wildlife—and plant life—cannot survive the draining of wetlands for urban development, the clearcutting of forests, the massive use of herbicides and pesticides in agriculture or the toxic effects of industrial pollution.

# CANADA'S WILDLIFE IN DECLINE



FELL BY 43 PER CENT

5 United Nations, op cit.

"What's happening here is very important to us. The Pacific is the foundation of our Nuu-chahnulth culture, our society and our economy. Our connection to the Pacific is profound. It's important to have our voices heard, to protect what is important to us."

- Judith Sayers, President, Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council

# PACIFIC DEEPSEA OASIS

#### EIGHTY KILOMETRES WEST OF VANCOUVER ISLAND LIES AN OTHERWORLDLY SEASCAPE OF UNDERWATER MOUNTAINS AND FRAGILE CORAL FORESTS.

The area features 44 mountains, many rising over 1,000 metres from the seafloor. They are hotspots for ocean life—from microscopic creatures to octopus, rays, sharks, dolphins and whales—thanks to hydrothermal vents that release billowing gases superheated by the earth's core.

Currently, only 97 km<sup>2</sup> of the 140,000 km<sup>2</sup> oasis is protected. Bottom trawling is prohibited in a larger portion (82,500 km<sup>2</sup>) as of 2017, but the entire water column remains open to large-scale fishing, shipping and other industrial activities.<sup>6</sup> A moratorium on oil and gas exploration, in effect since the 1970s, could be lifted at any point.

The Nuu-Chah-Nulth and Haida First Nations, among others, are seeking co-governance of the area to ensure proper stewardship in keeping with an Indigenous vision for conservation. Gaining comprehensive protection for the Oasis in a way that respects Indigenous rights and draws on the knowledge of local First Nations would move us a step closer toward the 2020 target for marine protection while advancing Canada's commitment to reconciliation.

Nature Canada is working with BC Nature, CPAWS BC, David Suzuki Foundation and others to ensure the Deepsea Oasis is designated a Marine Protected Area free from harmful industrial activities.



"We must stop pillaging our oceans for our sake, for the sake of the life in the oceans and for the sake of generations of Canadians to come."

- Sheila H., Nova Scotia - Took action to tell the government to keep oil and gas activities out of Marine Protected Areas

6 Department of Fisheries and Oceans, "Offshore Pacific Seamounts and Vents Closure," <u>http://dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/oeabcm-amcepz/refuges/offshore-hauturiere-eng.html</u>

# PROTECTING WILDERNESS CAN STEM MASS EXTINCTION.

Specific interventions make a difference. Discouraging the use of lead fishing gear prevented the poisoning of loons and other wildlife. Partnerships between government, conservation groups, scientists and concerned individuals reintroduced the Swift Fox to the prairies. Outlawing the pesticide DDT and ending whale hunting allowed decimated raptor and whale populations to rebound.

But because of the vast damage wrought to date—and the interrelationship among species—only by enabling habitats to flourish as close to their natural state as possible can we hope to stem the collapse of life occurring all around us.<sup>7</sup>

Limiting destructive human activity on large tracts of land and water can create connectivity for migratory species, preserve safe havens for species that cannot adapt at the pace the climate is changing and help give nature a chance to recover. It can allow carbon safely stored in the ground to remain there.

#### WHICH AREAS ARE CURRENTLY PROTECTED?

The land-based federal network of protected areas consists of 39 National Parks, 54 National Wildlife Areas and 92 Migratory Bird Sanctuaries, across all provinces and territories. Canada's 13 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and five National Marine Conservation Areas (NMCAs), lie in all three oceans, the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes. Lists of the areas can be found at Environment and Climate Change Canada and Department of Fisheries and Oceans.



# CANADA'S WILDLIFE In Decline



# GRASSLAND BIRD NUMBERS DROPPED BY 57 PER CENT

7 Richard Leakey, "Protected areas: a hope in the midst of the sixth mass extinction," IUCN Crossroads Blog (2018) https://www.iucn.org/crossroads-blog/201803/protected-areas-hope-midst-sixth-mass-extinction\_

# **PRAIRIE GRASSLANDS**

#### THE PRAIRIE GRASSLANDS OF SOUTHERN SASKATCHEWAN AND SOUTHERN ALBERTA ARE ONE OF THE MOST ENDANGERED LANDSCAPES ON EARTH.<sup>8</sup>

Nearly 70 per cent has been lost to intensive agriculture, and two to three per cent of what remains disappears every year. In 50 years this unique habitat could be gone. Nature Canada, Nature Saskatchewan, Alberta Wilderness Association and others have been working for years to secure protection for the area; more voices are needed!

Today less than one per cent of the 137,000 km<sup>2</sup> of grasslands in those two provinces is protected.<sup>9</sup> Fragile but ecologically important, these heritage ranchlands store around 150 million tonnes of carbon and provide habitat for an incredible number of diverse species, including the Greater Sage Grouse, the Swift Fox, the Ferruginous Hawk, the Pronghorn Antelope, the Loggerhead Shrike, the Long-billed Curlew, the Burrowing Owl, the American Badger and the Northern Leopard Frog.



"We need to protect what remains of the grasslands for the many economic and ecological services it provides, and the unique species that make it their home."

- Emily Putz, Habitat Stewardship Coordinator, Nature Saskatchewan, Regina



Alberta's Milk River Ridge, Milk River Basin, Pakowki Lake and Cypress Uplands, along with southwest Saskatchewan's community pastures in Govenlock, Nashlyn and Battle Creek, feature some of the largest tracts of native grass left. The grasslands support an economy based on "continued ranching"—a landscape-friendly practice that replicates natural bison grazing. Pakowki Lake is a crucial stopover for migratory birds.

Long-term conservation of these precious prairie lands requires engagement with ranchers, First Nations, Metis and local organizations to ensure effective management.

Legally protecting the grasslands of Alberta and Saskatchewan is crucial to the survival of this unique and important area.

 8 IUCN, "Life in a Working Landscape: Towards a Conservation Strategy for the World's Temperate Grasslands" (2008), https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/import/downloads/hohhotworkshop2008.pdf
9 Size estimate from Prairie Commons, "The State of Native Prairie in Saskatchewan," http://www.prairiecommons.ca/?page\_id=300 and ABMI,
"The Status of the Human Footprint in Alberta," <u>https://abmi.ca/home/reports/2018/human-footprint/details.html?id=13</u>

# WHAT CANADA DOES MATTERS.

Scientists have dubbed Canada a "conservation superpower"—not because we lead the world in protecting nature, but because our conservation efforts are critical to preserving global ecosystems.<sup>10</sup> We have close to a quarter of the world's wild forests and wetlands, 20 per cent of the world's fresh water and nearly one-third of its land-stored carbon.<sup>11</sup> We have the longest coastline and one of the largest and richest marine environments.<sup>12</sup>

With wealth comes responsibility. We have a critical role to play in protecting nature globally and stopping species extinction.

Only a small fraction of Canada's wildlife habitats currently have legal protection. Conservation is weakest in areas that are home to a high concentration of species at risk, such as the grasslands of Alberta and Saskatchewan and wide swaths of southern Ontario, southern Quebec and New Brunswick.<sup>13</sup>



# CANADA'S WILDLIFE IN DECLINE

# SHOREBIRD POPULATIONS DECLINED BY 40 PER CENT

# WE'RE NOT DOING ENOUGH.

The pledge to protect 17 per cent of land and freshwater and 10 per cent of oceans by the end of 2020 was agreed by 195 countries as part of the Convention on Biological Diversity, signed in Achi, Japan in 2010. It's an interim step. Scientists estimate somewhere in the range of 25 to 75 per cent must be protected from damaging human activity if we are to halt species collapse.<sup>14</sup> In other words, we need to work towards protecting half of nature.

Towards that goal, nature groups are calling for protection of 30 per cent of nature by 2030 as the next milestone after 2020 targets are achieved. But we have a ways to go.

Six years ago, only 10 per cent of Canada's land and one per cent of its oceans were protected. Since then, protected marine areas have risen to 8.27 per cent and land to 11.8 per cent.<sup>15</sup> Canada ranks last in the G7 in terms of protected areas.<sup>16</sup>

10 Laura E. Coristine et al, "National contributions to global ecosystem values," *Conservation Biology* (January 2019), https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/cobi.13284

- 11 https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/water-overview/frequently-asked-questions.html;
- https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/forests/report/area/17601 12 https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-402-x/2012000/chap/geo/geo01-eng.htm
- 13 World Wildlife Fund (Canada), op.cit.

- 15 Environment and Climate Change Canada, "Protected Areas-Canada," http://data.ec.gc.ca/data/species/protectrestore/protected-areas-canada/
- 16 CPAWS. "What's next? Parks and protected areas to 2020 and beyond." (July 2018), p. 8, http://cpaws.org/uploads/CPAWS\_ParksReport2018\_web.pdf.

<sup>14</sup> Noss et al, "Bolder Thinking for Conservation" Conservation Biology (2012) https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1523-1739.2011.01738.x

# JAMES BAY BASIN

SPANNING ONTARIO AND QUEBEC AND BORDERING THE TERRITORY OF NUNAVUT, THE JAMES BAY BASIN HAS SUPPORTED A WIDE ARRAY OF WILDLIFE, AS WELL AS THE TRADITIONAL CULTURE OF THE CREE, OJI-CREE AND INUIT PEOPLES FOR MILLENNIA.

The 400,000 km<sup>2</sup> area includes a wide range of environments, from the marshes, estuaries, islands and waters of the coastal zone to the dense, coniferous forests in southern areas to the sparsely treed tundra bordering the Arctic.

The coast contains critical sites that provide safe harbour and feeding for many shorebird species to power their lengthy migrations to South America, including the endangered Rufa Red Knot and the threatened Hudsonian Godwit. It is also a breeding area for many species at risk, including the Rusty Blackbird, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Canada Warbler, Common Nighthawk and Yellow Rail, as well as the Boreal Caribou.

The Moose Cree First Nation in Ontario and the Cree Nation Government, along with individual coastal First Nations in Quebec, are leading efforts to extend protection to significant parts of their homelands in the James Bay Basin.<sup>17</sup> The Moose Cree have declared their homelands protected under Indigenous law and are pressing for recognition and respect of that decision by other levels of government. They are also seeking designation of the coastal area as a Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network site, since it supports significant portions of the global population of several species.

Nature Canada has worked with the Cree Nation of Waskaganish since 2012 to identify important

17 "Cree Regional Conservation Strategy," <u>https://www.</u> eeyouconservation.com/cree-regional-conservation-strategy/ shorebird habitat along their coastal region, and helped establish the new Miinshtuk-Wiinebek Important Bird and Biodiversity Area. In 2018, Nature Canada began supporting the efforts of the Ojibwe Lac Seul First Nation and James Bay Cree Nation of Wemindji to safeguard species at risk.

Ensuring protection of the critical wildlife habitat of the James Bay Basin for and by the Cree would help fulfill Canada's pledge to protect nature, while at the same time advancing reconciliation.

"The Cree homeland is a remarkable habitat for wildlife like migratory birds and caribou. For thousands of years, we've been caretakers, managing and depending on the natural resources around us. Making sure the land continues to be protected goes handin-hand with a thriving Cree culture."

- Darlene Cheechoo, Chief of the Cree Nation of Waskaganish

# CANADA'S WILDLIFE IN DECLINE



## AMPHIBIAN AND REPTILE POPULATIONS FELL BY 34 PER CENT

# **CANADIANS CARE.**

Polls show almost nine out of 10 Canadians support the commitment to double protected lands. Even more agree that conserving forests and wetlands will help combat climate change. And over two-thirds of Canadians support federal investment in Indigenous protected areas.<sup>18</sup>

The 2018 federal budget earmarked an unprecedented \$1.3 billion over the next five years for the protection and conservation of nature, with \$500 million committed to saving species at risk and establishing protected areas.

"I signed the petition to protect the Laurentian Channel because species are going extinct at an alarming rate. Isn't it time to act on plans to help protect and conserve what we have left?"

- Sharon C. from British Columbia

18 Abacus Data, "Public attitudes on conservation and the role of international and indigenous partnership," (April 23, 2019), https://abacusdata.ca/theres-a-conservation-consensus/

# HOW PROTECTED AREAS ARE MANAGED IS IMPORTANT.

Local communities that live in harmony with their environment are essential guardians of nature. From inshore fishermen on our coasts and inland waterways to ranchers in the Prairie Grasslands, people are a key part of the solution.

Nowhere is this clearer than in Indigenous communities.

The UN's landmark 2019 report highlights the fact that Indigenous peoples inhabit most of the world's remaining wilderness. They have the traditional knowledge and skills required to steward those natural areas.

## CANADA'S PROTECTED AREAS SHOULD ADVANCE RECONCILIATION.

Recognizing Indigenous communities as guardians of the lands and waters where they traditionally reside is critical for the future of conservation and nature protection in Canada. Indigenous-led conservation, including Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs), can help provide a sustainable foundation for local economies, strengthen Indigenous knowledge and practices and ensure respect for Indigenous rights—all cornerstones of reconciliation.



# LAURENTIAN WHALE PASSAGE - ACHIEVED!

THIS DEEP OCEAN VALLEY OFF THE COAST OF NOVA SCOTIA AND NEWFOUNDLAND SUPPORTS A UNIQUE DIVERSITY OF COLD WATER CORALS, WHICH IN TURN PROVIDE SHELTER FOR MANY SPECIES WHEN FORAGING FOR FOOD OR RAISING YOUNG.

Each year, at least 20 different species of whales and dolphins journey through the passage during migrations in and out of the Gulf of the St. Lawrence. The area, which is twice the size of PEI, is also one of the few places where Black Dogfish and Porbeagle Sharks give birth to their young, and it provides sanctuary for species at risk like the Leatherback Sea Turtle.

Following decades of work by conservation groups like CPAWS, WWF, the Ecology Action Centre and local communities, more than 70,000 people wrote to urge the government to keep the Laurentian Whale Passage off-limits to resource development and ensure all Marine Protected Areas are free of oil and gas activity. Our voices were heard!

In April 2019 the federal government declared the 11,619 km<sup>2</sup> Laurentian Channel an official Marine Protected Area.

"Setting aside areas where nature can take its course is a cornerstone of effective conservation. And conservation is essential for healthy communities and healthy economies. But without strong standards, protected areas won't work. That's what conservation groups, including the Ecology Action Centre, fought for in the Laurentian Channel Marine Protected Area and at other sites across the country, and won."

- Jordy Thomson, Marine Science and Conservation Coordinator, Ecology Action Centre, Halifax



# PROTECTED PLACES DECLARATION

Over 300 nature groups have signed on to the "Protected Places Declaration," which urges governments, civil society and business leaders to:

- PROTECT at least 17 per cent of our lands and inland waters, and 10 per cent of our coastal and marine areas by 2020;
- DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT protected areas to achieve ecologically representative, well-connected networks in every province and territory; and
- RESPECT the right of Indigenous Peoples to free, prior and informed consent in the process of identifying and managing protected areas.

# NATURE CANADA INVITES YOU To be a voice for nature.

Nature Canada is working with partners and allies across the country to promote protected areas. They include Indigenous governments, riverkeepers, watershed alliances, naturalist clubs, friends of national parks, trail associations and others. More than 350 organizations have signed onto the Protected Places Declaration, calling on Canada to fulfill its pledge to double protected areas by 2020. They are helping to mobilize Canadians in this crucial struggle.

Representatives from many of these groups travelled to Ottawa to meet with MPs and help Nature Canada present the declaration to government for Nature Day 2019. Others invited their MPs out on local hikes to deliver the same message. Still others, like Nature Kids BC and Halifax's Ecology Action Centre, are holding local events across the country to build awareness of the threats to nature and the opportunity to protect wildlife.

"Nature can't speak directly to decision-makers, and that's why it was important to show up for Nature Day on Parliament Hill. Now is the time for communities to tell our elected officials to protect the natural places we love."

- Vanessa Roy-McDougall, Executive Director, Nature NB, Fredericton





# HERE ARE THINGS YOU AND YOUR GROUP CAN DO TO ENCOURAGE CANADA TO DOUBLE PROTECTED AREAS BY 2020

Visit naturecanada.ca or email info@naturecanada.ca to learn how you can:



Sign up for actions you can take over the coming months to protect nature from coast to coast to coast.



Sign the Protected Places Declaration or Petition.



Make a donation to support conservation and the fight to protect nature.



Join a local conservation group and encourage them to get involved in the campaign to end the extinction crisis.

NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT! THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF NATURE. #DOUBLEDANDPROTECTED

## JOIN THE CAMPAIGN TO ENSURE CANADA DOUBLES THE AMOUNT OF NATURE PROTECTED ON LAND AND SEA BY 2020.

Sign up for actions you can take over the coming months to protect nature from coast to coast to coast.

Sign the Protected Places Declaration or Petition

Visit naturecanada.ca or email info@naturecanada.ca for more info.

# NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT! #DOUBLEDANDPROTECTED



NATURECANADA.CA INFO@NATURECANADA.CA 1-800-267-4088



Photo: Artur Stanisz