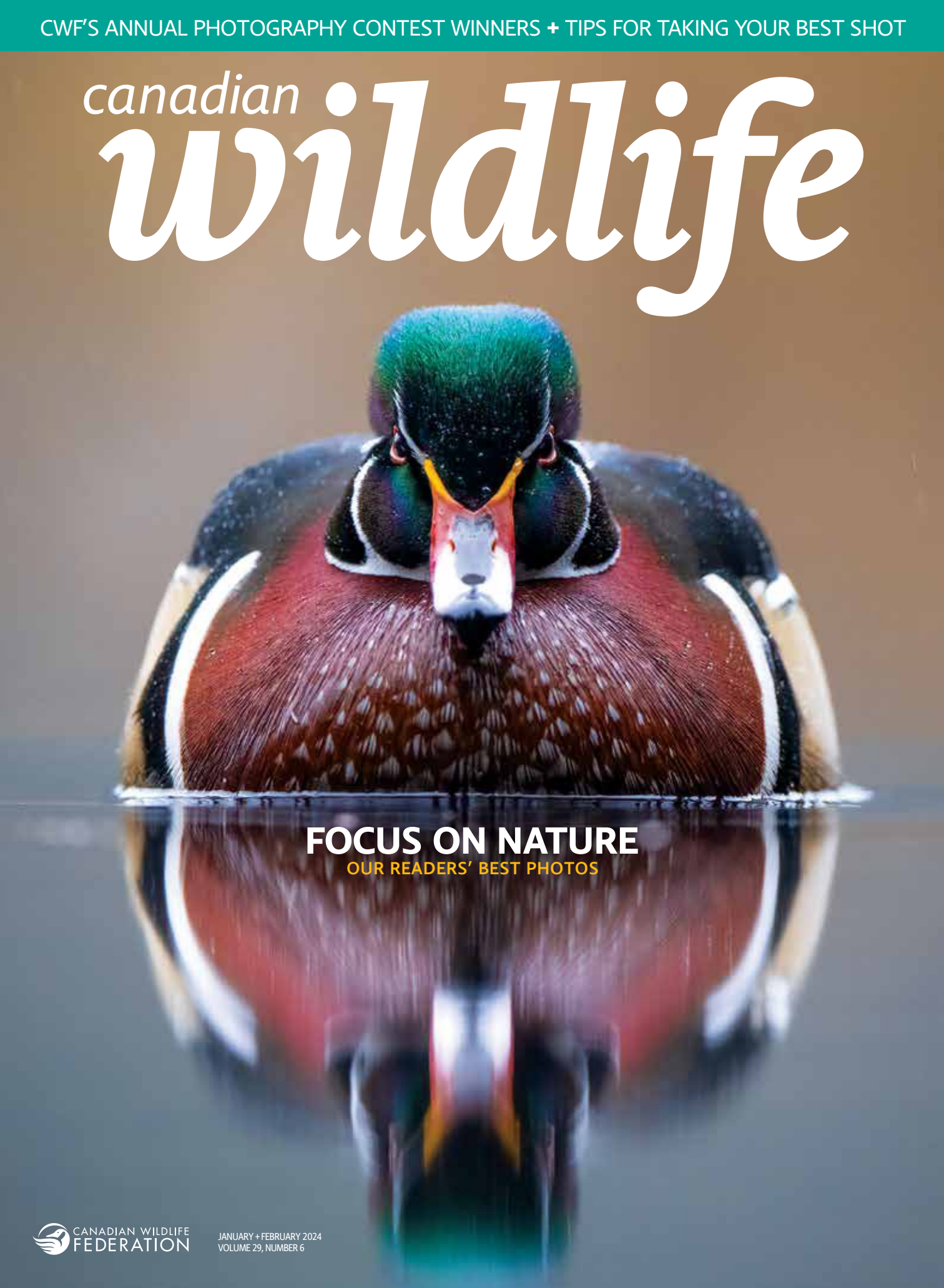
CWF'S ANNUAL PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST WINNERS + TIPS FOR TAKING YOUR BEST SHOT

canadian wildlife



FOCUS ON NATURE

OUR READERS' BEST PHOTOS

CANADIAN WILDLIFE FEDERATION

JANUARY + FEBRUARY 2024
VOLUME 29, NUMBER 6

NOMINATIONS NOW BEING ACCEPTED
Entry deadline January 31, 2024

2024 CWF CONSERVATION AWARDS

Honour a Conservation Champion!



ALEXANDRA MORTON
Winner of the 2023 Roland Michener Conservation Award, honouring the commitment by an individual to promote and enhance the conservation of Canada's natural resources.

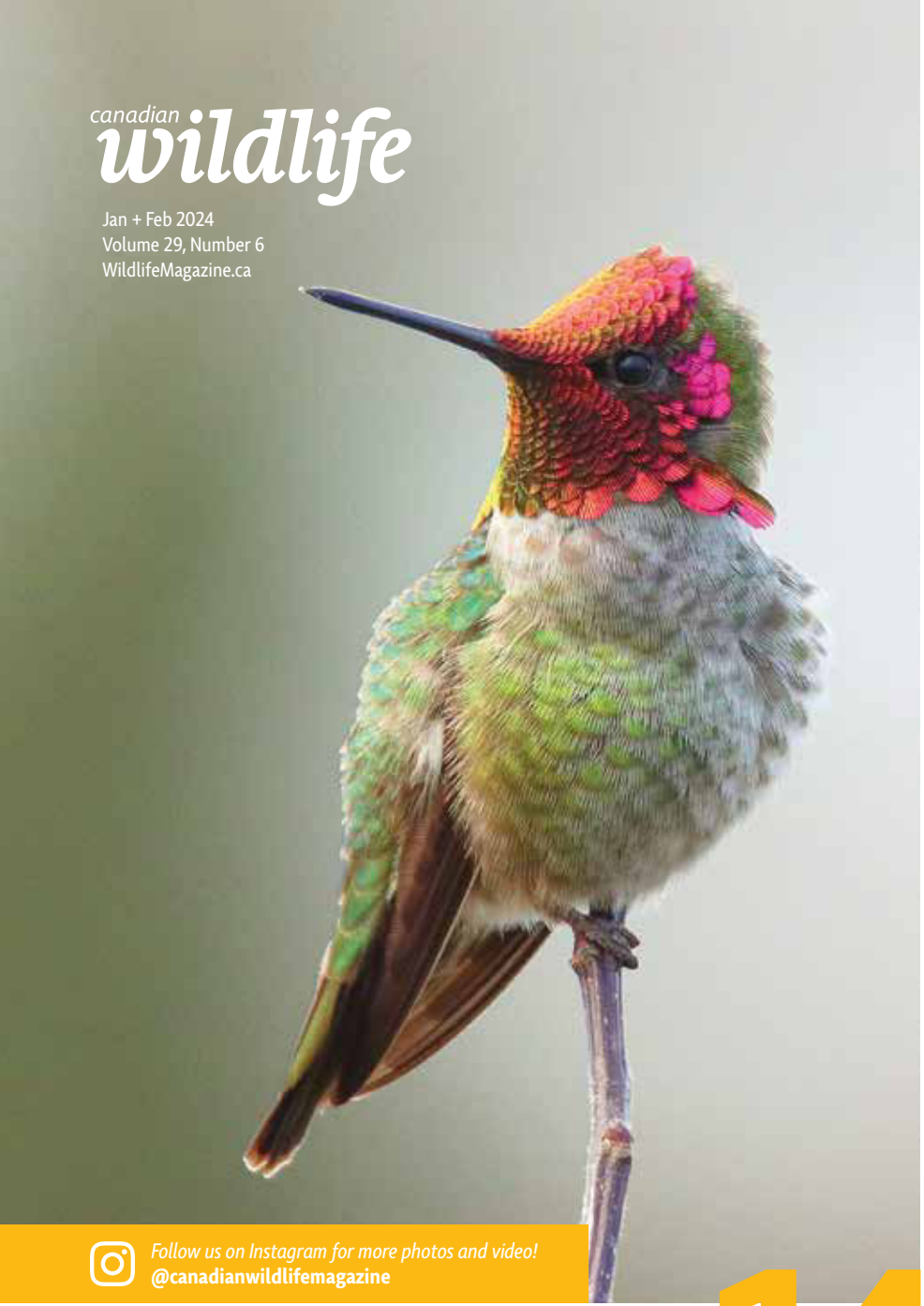
Nominations are now open for the 2024 CWF Conservation Achievement Awards to honour Canadians who demonstrated extraordinary commitment to wildlife conservation and innovation.

For the nine categories and nomination details, visit: CanadianWildlifeFederation.ca/Awards

CANADIAN WILDLIFE FEDERATION

PHOTO: MADISON REARDAN

canadian wildlife
Jan + Feb 2024
Volume 29, Number 6
WildlifeMagazine.ca



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45° 32' 12.1" N
78° 32' 49.6" W
Head Creek, Algonquin Provincial Park, Ontario

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ON THE COVER
Focus on Fauna Finalist
Wood duck, Vancouver, B.C.; submitted to the Reflections of Nature photo contest by Joe Rousseau of Milton, Ont.

HINTERLAND WHO'S WHO & WILD MAGAZINE

PRESENT



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CANADIAN WILDLIFE FEDERATION

The Canadian Wildlife Federation is dedicated to ensuring an appreciation of our natural world and a lasting legacy of healthy wildlife and habitat by informing and educating Canadians, advocating responsible human actions and representing wildlife on conservation issues.

For donations and program information call 1-800-563-9453, email info@cwf-fcf.org or visit CanadianWildlifeFederation.ca

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Happy New Year!

Welcome to our photography issue. The natural and enduring connection between photography and wildlife conservation is a big reason why we at CWF introduced our Reflections of Nature annual photo contest in 2007. This organization has long recognized the value of images to inspire and move Canadians of all backgrounds and perspectives to care — and to act on that emotion. It's also why in 2003 we relaunched the iconic 1960s video series Hinterland Who's Who (hww.ca), a Canadian tradition that continues today.

Over the years, our commitment to wildlife photography has grown into one of our signature outreach efforts, with ongoing monthly and annual photo contests in which people from across the country share their photos and their passion for wildlife. The results are inspiring. I hope our finalists' and winners' efforts will move you to take photos of the wildlife that inspires you. With the pros' shooting tips and advice on the right gear, we have some practical advice to help you get started.

Photos have the power to drive change. Today, with the enormous reach and magnifier effect of social media, more people are being inspired than ever before. Photos can go viral fast, bringing much-needed attention and occasionally urgent action to wildlife in need. Field photography is also a big part of citizen science and can be an essential tool for monitoring and tracking wildlife. Check out how you can join the CWF Observation Nation at iNaturalist.ca, the fast-growing nature app of which CWF is proud to be the lead partner in Canada.



The growth in popularity of nature photography is a wonderful thing. It speaks to a heightened appreciation for the environment and to Canadians' meaningful engagement with it. At a time when we must encourage humans' healthy relationships with nature, inspiring interest and personal action to support all species is a good thing.

Finally, thanks to every single one of the thousands of photographers who submitted photos this year to CWF's monthly and annual photo competitions. The stunning photos are motivational, as is the energy, care and passion that you all bring to conserving Canadian wildlife. Please visit our website to learn how you can join the fun.

Rick J. Bates
CEO, Canadian Wildlife Federation

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GRIZZLY BEAR
KHUTZEYMATEEN INLET, B.C.

While quietly navigating estuaries in the inlet in a small boat, we came upon this beautiful bear having an afternoon nap

Photo by Andy Vanderplas

*Originally submitted to a Canadian Wildlife Federation photo contest. Visit **cwf-fcf.ca** to learn how you can enter your wildlife photos.*

Canadian Conservation Corps

Serving Canada one conservation project at a time.

The Canadian Conservation Corps (CCC) was developed by the Canadian Wildlife Federation to provide youth ages 18 to 30 with opportunities to learn, grow and give back to Canada. By developing and delivering unique conservation projects, CCC participants are having a real impact in their communities and across the country.



Together, CCC participants are providing a brighter future for wildlife and Canadian conservation. Learn more. Visit CanadianConservationCorps.ca.

CCC CANADIAN conservation corps

CANADIAN WILDLIFE FEDERATION

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WAYNE LYNCH.

RED SQUIRREL

SCIENTIFIC NAME
Tamiasciurus hudsonicus

REGION
Coniferous forests from Yukon to Newfoundland

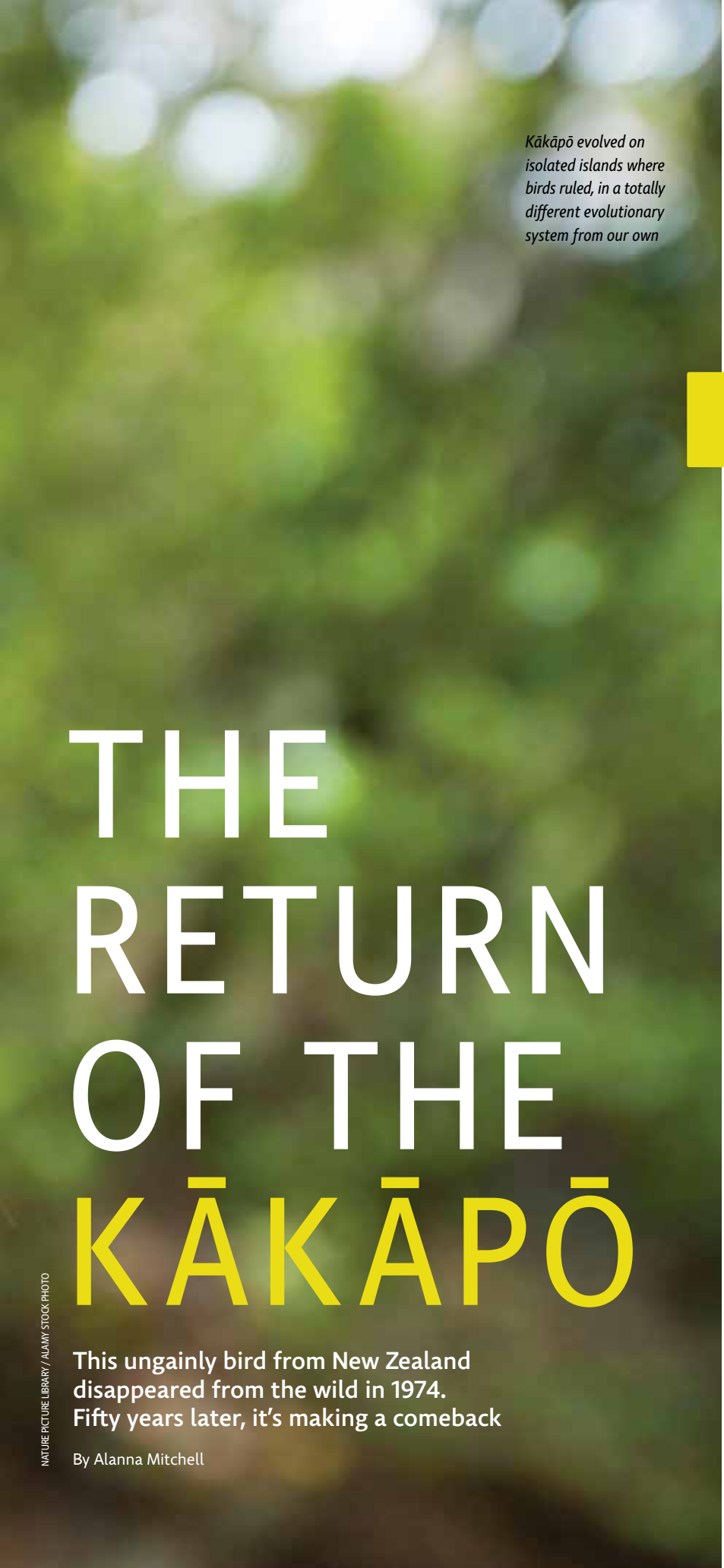
CONSERVATION STATUS
Least concern

WHY SO SPECIAL?
Canada's greatest mushroom muncher

THE RED SQUIRREL IS ONE OF THE most conspicuous animals in the northern forests of Canada. In late summer, the russet-coloured rodent begins to hoard for winter. The cached food will help it survive the many months of cold and privation. It's common to see the squirrel racing through the treetops, nipping off the cones of different coniferous trees to store in scattered piles throughout its territory. But conifer cones are not the only foods the industrious rodent squirrels away. It also loves mushrooms and commonly stores dozens of different kinds. In fact, the red squirrel eats a greater variety of mushrooms than any other forest mammal, including voles, mice, lemmings, shrews, flying squirrels, and snowshoe hares.

Mushrooms are 70 to 90 per cent water, so the squirrels initially dry them out to prevent them from decaying. A squirrel may try three or four different locations before it finds just the right spot to dry a mushroom. The ideal drying site seems to be the sunny side of a spruce tree on the outer half of a bushy limb, one to 10 metres off the ground. Once the mushrooms are dry and shrivelled, the diligent squirrel stores them inside a tree cavity or an abandoned woodpecker nest. Researchers have found as many as 300 mushrooms in a single stash.—**WAYNE LYNCH**





Kākāpō evolved on isolated islands where birds ruled, in a totally different evolutionary system from our own

NATURE PICTURE LIBRARY / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

THE RETURN OF THE KĀKĀPŌ

This ungainly bird from New Zealand disappeared from the wild in 1974. Fifty years later, it's making a comeback

By Alanna Mitchell

OF ALL THE WEIRD BIRDS TO EVOLVE OVER THE EONS IN New Zealand, it's difficult to imagine a weirder one than the kākāpō. These chubby green fellows are the only parrots in the world that are both flightless and nocturnal.

Their eyes are close set. Their beaks, as prominent as buck teeth. They waddle with their heads down, almost parallel to the ground, keeping the stumps of their wings close to their bodies as they go, struggling for balance. But they're champion climbers, both skilled and determined. They can live to the ripe old age of 90.

True, weighing in at about four kilograms, they're not as massive as the ostrich-like moa, all types of which are now extinct. Some moa tipped the scales at 250 kilos and towered over humans. Moa, kākāpō and a raft of other birds evolved in New Zealand in the absence of land mammals, apart from a couple of tiny bats. That led to an island archipelago where birds ruled, in what has been called a completely different experiment in evolution from the rest of the world.

And that meant they were unprepared when land mammals finally arrived 800 years ago. Along with weapons-bearing humans who had a taste for fowl, the newcomers included rats, cats and stoats.

For the kākāpō, it was disaster. They are already one of the slowest-breeding birds on Earth. Notoriously solitary, they mate only every two to five years, and only during seasons when the podocarp tree, a fruit-bearing evergreen, has an especially productive year.

The mating system itself is not particularly geared for success. The males create dancing grounds, or leks, on ridges where they try to attract females by making loud,



Notoriously solitary, kākāpō mate every two to five years if, and only if, local podocarp trees are especially fruitful

SNATCHING A SPECIES BACK FROM THE BRINK IS NO MEAN FEAT. CAN WE REPEAT THE RESULTS ELSEWHERE?

booming sounds as they inflate and deflate air sacs on their chests. They perform every night through the late summer and fall for as long as four months. Often, it comes to naught.

Even when it works, the risks for the next generation are legion. Kākāpō nests are on the ground. That means their contents are especially accessible to hungry rats and cats. Baby kākāpō are helpless and, like their parents, can't fly to escape predators. Female kākāpō are solo parents, so when they roam away from the nest for food, they leave the tasty baby parrots unguarded.

After mammals arrived, kākāpō swiftly vanished from most of their original range on New Zealand's two main islands, pushed into small remnants of forest and scrubland. The first attempts at conservation began in 1894 but failed. Captive breeding has been a bust because the birds need their complex lek performance. It's not as simple as just putting a male and a female in proximity.

By 1974, kākāpō were declared extinct in the wild. Intensive searches uncovered a few survivors and during the 1980s, all were removed from the two main islands and placed on some of New Zealand's tiny mammal-free islands. In 1995, the global population was 51, only 20 of which were female. So the national government launched an intensive recovery program, with each bird individually managed and monitored.

Fast forward to today. The global total is 249 at last count, spread across several small islands. Rather than extinct in the wild, it's now designated critically endangered. It's still one of the most endangered birds in the world.

Three of those island refuges are at full kākāpō capacity. Any more parrots, and the birds will begin to fight each other for living space and, during the next breeding years (expected in 2026 or 2027), will compete for lek sites. It could get nasty.

Last July, conservation biologists took four young males and put them back on the north island, the first kākāpō to return to the mainland in nearly four decades. They're in a 3,400-hectare reserve, Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari. It's as close to the pre-human New Zealand as it's possible to get, these days, apart from the 47 kilometres of pest-proof fence along its perimeter.

The four males aren't expected to do much except survive. This is a test to see whether the fencing works and whether the habitat is suitable for a larger population later on. Each parrot kitted out with a small backpack containing a transmitter that links to a remote radio network monitoring system. Drones are on site to collect even more intel.

I find something exquisitely poetic about all this. Snatching a species back from the brink is no mean feat. And imagine, in the years to come, the New Zealand mainland may once more ring out with the booming mating calls of the lovelorn kākāpō.

NATURE PICTURE LIBRARY / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



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By creating your legacy to support the future work of the Canadian Wildlife Federation, you can help CWF continue its critical conservation work and education programs without affecting your current finances or financial plans. There are many ways to create a Legacy Gift in your estate planning, allowing you to choose the one that is best for you.

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Canadians deeply value our inspiring wildlife and its natural habitat.

It is our legacy. It defines who we are; it defines who you are.



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Images of a Nation



WE ARE PROUD TO PRESENT THE WINNERS OF CWF'S ANNUAL REFLECTIONS OF NATURE PHOTO CONTEST

More Canadians than ever are spending time in nature, and more of us than ever are bringing our cameras along. In the last decade, in step with a growing awareness of the need to conserve our environment, there has been an explosion in wildlife photography.

The history of nature photography in this country is long and impressive. Toward the end of the 1890s and into the next century, pioneering photographers working for the Canadian Pacific Railway focused on the land's grandeur and vastness. Motivated by the need to create consumer demand, the railway's photographers were directed to focus on "view-making." They made breathtaking portraits of mountains, lakes and forests, carefully composed after arduous expeditions to locate and establish an ideal vantage. The power of these images and others like them in the American West lead to the growth of a movement to conserve nature and create national parks in both countries.

In the 1960s, the best nature photography was no longer simply framing majestic beauty. Instead, disturbing images of oil-drenched seabirds, poisoned fish and forests disfigured by acid rain drew the attention of millions as photographers in the field took on an activist role. Their work inspired a new wave of public enthusiasm for environmental action and conservation. Numerous conservation groups that emerged then are active still today—the Canadian Wildlife Federation was founded in 1962.

The connection between photography and conservation has only grown since.

FOCUS ON FAUNA
Winner

Sheep Shadows
Near Thechàl Dhâl' (Sheep Mountain), Kluane National Park and Reserve, Yukon

About 10 years ago, in high school, I tried a friend's DSLR and was instantly hooked. These days, I'm working on a Dall's sheep photo project, documenting how they cope in harsh alpine environments that are changing rapidly due to climate change. I spent the day with this band of Dall's sheep rams who were completely tolerant of me as they foraged for vegetation beneath an unusually deep late-winter snowpack.

Sonny Parker | *Haines Junction, Yukon*



Today, amazing advances in camera technology allow photographers to capture the micro and the macro, to track an elusive bottom-feeder or fly with a migratory bird. Digital tech provides the tools to store, edit, modify and improve these images. And the web creates opportunity to share them, expanding and amplifying the reach of a powerful image. "Conservation photography" has become a big part of the citizen science trend, with members of the public posting observations to aggregating websites such as iNaturalist. The data gathered will be invaluable to conservation efforts and to mitigate effects of the climate crisis.

Nature photography is the art of capturing, holding and sharing life. It is the attempt to freeze a fleeting and complex moment into a single crystalline image that has the power to amaze, to inform, to inspire.

Congratulations to our award winners for your exceptional images. And thank you to all of you who submitted your photos





MONTHLY PHOTO CLUB

How to Enter the CWF Photo Contest

In addition to the annual Reflections of Nature Photo Contest, CWF's Photo Club contest has winners chosen by popular vote every month of the year.

Your image may be featured in a CWF publication or webpage. And there are prizes too.

To learn more, visit **cwf-fcf.org** and search "monthly photo" to join and enter.



CONNECTING WITH NATURE
Honourable Mention

Kayaking in the Kawarthas
Black Duck Bay, Balsam Lake, Ontario

It was a calm, clear morning, so I decided to launch my drone to get this different perspective. As a novice pilot, I found it daunting to launch from a kayak.

Barb Callander | *Pontypool, Ontario*



GRAND PRIZE
Winner

Egret fluffing
Creek entering Lake Ontario,
Prince Edward County, Ontario

On my walks in Presqu'ile Provincial Park I encountered so much beautiful wildlife, I decided to retire early and take up photography full-time. The area is a wildlife photographer's dream.

I knew that many birds flocked to this creek to fish, and I had seen a great egret there a few times, so I decided to sit by the river and try my best to photograph it. This one had just finished fishing and, perched on a branch, fluffed its feathers to dry off.

Cindy Conlin | *Brighton, Ontario*

CONNECTING WITH NATURE
Honourable Mention

Canoe Sunrise
Near Cranberry Portage,
Twin Lakes, Manitoba

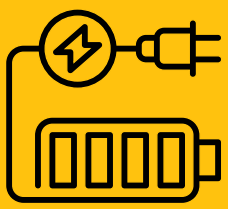
I love how the photo just gives a sense of calm, peaceful tranquility, and the colours look like they are painted across the sky.

Heidi Mote | *Flin Flon, Manitoba*



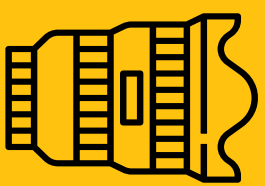
GEARING UP

We asked the pros. Here's what they never leave home without



THE POWER AND THE STORAGE

There is no worse feeling in the field than lining up a great shot only to realize you are out of memory. Given how cheap memory cards are now, inadequate storage really is avoidable. Since you never know how lucky you will be on a given day in the field, always bring plenty of capacity. The same goes for power. Make sure you have backup batteries or an extra power pack so you don't miss a shot because your camera quits on you. Just assume your batteries are going to fail (as they tend to do in colder weather) and have more ready to swap in. For the same reason, a charger that works with your phone is also a good safety measure.



THE LONG VIEW

While every pro will give you a slightly different answer about their favourite lens, all agree that there are a couple of essentials when shooting wildlife. First, a medium to long zoom (minimum 400 mm) is essential for getting that terrific close-up without getting up-close. For a newbie nature photographer with aspirations, there are good-quality affordable zoom lenses available. Read reviews and visit speciality camera shops to learn more — bring your camera so you can try a few out in store. At the other end of the scale, it is always useful to have a wide-angle (around 20 mm) for impressive landscapes and, with a little ingenuity and a remote shutter gadget, playful close-up portraits of inquisitive creatures.



URBAN INTERACTION
Honourable mention

Yellow Warbler
Long Point, Ontario

My friend and I were visiting Long Point in hopes of seeing some migrating warblers. After our walk, when we arrived at the car, we saw this lovely yellow warbler looking at its reflection in the window.

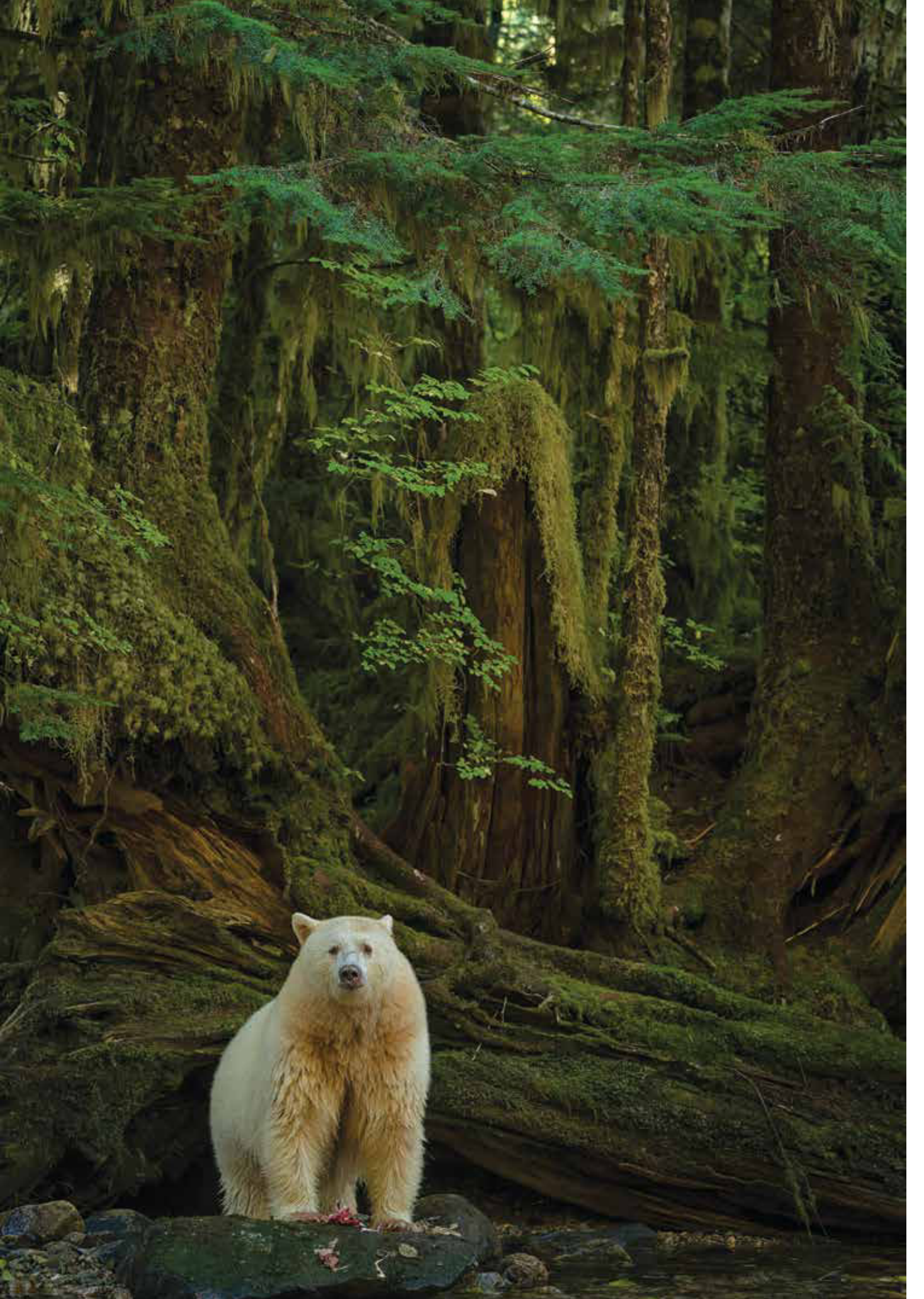
Brenda Doherty | *Ariss, Ontario*

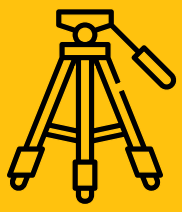
FOCUS ON FAUNA
Runner-up

Kermode Bear
Hartley Bay, Great Bear Rainforest, British Columbia

A Kermode bear (also known as a spirit bear) eating a freshly caught salmon happened to look up as I pressed the shutter button. I love the eye contact — it was a magical moment for me. The rainforest is simply gorgeous in this location.

Robert Postma | *Whitehorse, Yukon*





THREE LEGS BETTER

Hand-holding a longer lens for any length of time is tiring. And while it may work for capturing birds on the wing, for anything else it quickly leads to camera shake, its effect magnified by the longer focal lengths. That will ruin a photo, particularly in the soft light of early morning and late afternoon (times of peak animal activity) when you need to move to a slower shutter speed. A good tripod is essential. The experts say get something light but sturdy and well constructed. Paying a little more for a better quality tripod is a good investment. There are smaller tabletop versions that can be handy and even a few "ground pods" designed to hold your camera steady just inches above the ground. One last support to consider is a photographer's beanbag, a stakeout prop to steady your lens on hard surfaces like rocks, fenceposts and car doorsills.



CARRY ON

Having the right gear on hand when you need it in the field requires a rugged sack to carry and protect it all. Given the weight and the distances carried, a properly fitted backpack is much better suited to the task than a shoulder or sling bag. It needs to be made of a tough waterproof material that works well in the cold, with plenty of useful (and dry) outside pockets. Inside, it should be well padded, highly configurable and big enough to accommodate large telephoto lenses, a folded tripod, cameras, essential add-ons and accessories, food and drink, and, every pro says, at least one pair of dry socks.



LIGHT AHEAD

To get the best shot, you'll want to be in the woods at dawn and dusk when the light is softer and more evocative and the animals tend to be active. You'll likely need illumination at some point. A headlamp is a must.



FINDING FLORA
Runner-up

Fireweed
Near Pressy Lake, British Columbia

Hundreds of thousands of hectares of forest were wiped out by the horrendous 2017 South Cariboo Elephant Hill wildfire in B.C. Years later, the effects are still starkly visible. However, the resurgence of the understorey is the first step to regrowth. I wanted to capture the hope of better things to come.

Warren K. Lowe | *70 Mile House, British Columbia*



URBAN INTERACTION
Runner-up

Night Skyline with Heron
Vancouver, British Columbia

To achieve this image, I lay down along the beach as the sun set, waiting in the hope of lining up a shot that included both great blue heron and city skyline. Miraculously, one heron remained still for a few seconds right in front of my lens, which allowed me to create this image. It shows a resilient, charismatic animal finding a way to survive in one of Canada's most populated areas.

Liam Brennan | *Carp, Ontario*





CONNECTING WITH NATURE
Winner

Climbing to the Stars
Athabasca Glacier, Alberta

Two ice-climbing friends of mine, Adam Keirle and Thomas Garchinski, ascend a frozen waterfall inside an ice cave. A team effort, we shot during the nighttime to allow the headlamps to light up the cave. I had the climbers "freeze" for two seconds as I took the picture to allow as much light in as possible to illuminate the ice cave and their suspended figures.

Peter O'Hara
Canmore, Alberta





FOCUS ON FAUNA
Honourable mention

Giant American Millipede
Awenda Provincial Park, near Midland, Ontario

I've been shooting macro photography for just over three years. I couldn't be happier than when I find myself getting up at 3:30 a.m. on summer weekends to look for insects. As a defence, giant American millipedes curl themselves to protect their vulnerable underbellies. This was helpful since I need a very still subject when working this close.

Evan Van Zeumeren | *Norval, Ontario*



CONNECTING WITH NATURE
Runner-up

Lion's Mane Jellyfish
A sea cave near Torbay, Newfoundland and Labrador

The North Atlantic Ocean is absolutely beautiful, and I am grateful for every breath taken or held while in it. This photo contains some of the things I care most about: the ocean, my dive partner and wildlife.

Jill Taylor | *St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador*



CANADIAN LANDSCAPE
Winner

Mighty Wave
Lake Erie, near Port Stanley, Ontario

I have been photographing the natural world for more than 40 years and have been fascinated by the awesome power of the Great Lakes since I was 12 and learned about the wreck of the SS *Edmund Fitzgerald* on Lake Superior in 1975.

I was on my annual trek in November to photograph storm waves on Lake Erie with my friends and fellow photographers when I caught this image. I love the way, when shooting at high speed with a long lens, waves take on a fantastical appearance.

Gerhard Kaiser | *Windsor, Ontario*





CHOOSE YOUR FORMAT

Shoot it RAW, and perfect the images later

The format you save your photos in comes down to a choice between convenience and excellence, the short-term ease of JPEG versus the creation in RAW of your best photo possible. Of course, it is not either-or. There are times when squeezing off a few snaps is all you need to capture the moment. But for those times that are special, that demand greater care and effort, a simple setting on your camera will help you take the best possible photograph.

DSLR cameras have two basic shooting formats, JPEG and RAW, which determine how much data is stored when you press the shutter. RAW typically captures either 12-bit or 14-bit files, meaning they can represent billions of colour hues and tones. JPEGs (limited to 8 bits) reproduce about 16 million colour variations — plenty for a good basic shot, but when shooting for something special, it's always better to have more colour, more light and more control.

It is in the editing that you discover RAW's edge. After uploading to your computer, tablet or phone, the images can be "developed" in a basic photo editing program. (Many good and inexpensive editing apps are available online.) It doesn't take long to learn to fine-tune the images. Even under- and overexposed images can be enhanced to enliven shadows and highlights without any of the graininess that comes with inadequate light. Once edited to your standard, the image is easily shared as a JPEG or TIFF. Because the editing process is "lossless," the original RAW file is unaffected by your edits and can be stored or manipulated anew for a different effect.

To make sure you don't run out of space to store all that data, bring along lots of memory cards that you can swap in to your camera as you go. They are cheap and light, so there's no need to ever run out.

Wondering how to get started? Dig into your camera or smartphone settings to change format and explore RAW. Take a few shots in both JPEG and RAW. Then it's time to play. In a flash, you'll see just what a difference you can make to your photos.

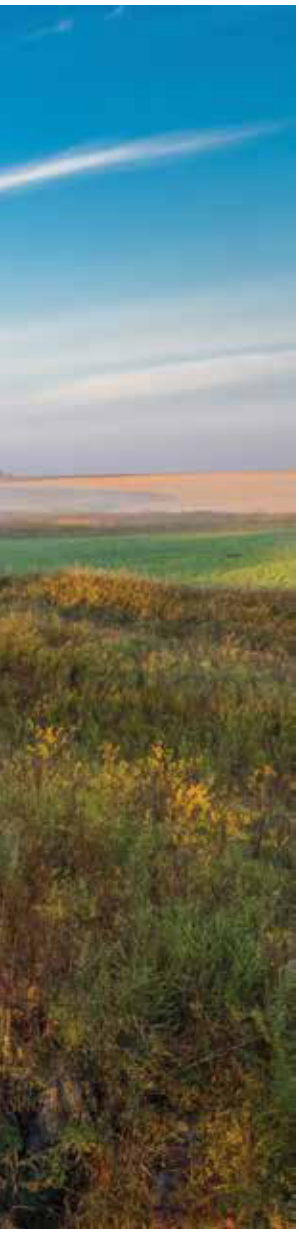
CANADIAN LANDSCAPE
Runner-up

Prairie Creek with Tree
Cornwallis, Manitoba

I photographed this tree in all seasons and weather conditions. On this morning, I arrived before the sunrise, hoping for a bit of mist off the stream and an interesting sky. I got both. Those high, wispy clouds are a bonus. This tree was felled in a storm a few years back, which brings a certain poignancy to the picture, I think.

Peter Lindsay
Brandon, Manitoba





GRAND PRIZE
Runner-up

Common Green darner
Rattray Marsh,
Mississauga, Ontario

I was sitting by the edge of the water near some lily pads at a marsh and enjoying observing these dragonflies in flight as they chased small insects that were flying low over the water.

Todd Clustivik
Etobicoke, Ontario

FOCUS ON FLORA
Honourable Mention

Budding Cone Flower
Wheatley, Ontario

Mervyn Sequeira | *Oakville, Ontario*



URBAN INTERACTION
Winner

Ermine
L'île Saint-Bernard, Châteauguay, Quebec

I like the combination of urban and animal elements in this composition and the way the light highlights the ermine. Something about it reminded me of the film *Ratatouille*.

Mathieu Labrosse | *Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines, Quebec*





FOCUS ON FAUNA
Honourable Mention

Anna's Hummingbird
Richmond, British Columbia

While I was walking along the Fraser River boardwalk, where there's always a possibility of shorebirds and bald eagles, an Anna's hummingbird perched on a bush along the path and "flashed" me a couple times.

Geoff McDonell | *Richmond, British Columbia*



TAKING IT WELL

Wild animal welfare is *always* more important than your photograph

With the explosion in interest in outdoor photography and with helpful locating technologies (including GPS and online sharing), more people than ever are in the field with their cameras, all in pursuit of elusive, charismatic wildlife. Keep these principles in focus to minimize your impact.

- **Maintain a respectful, safe distance.** If the animal moves away, you are too close
- **No baiting** or feeding
- **Limit intrusions**: no flashes, no drone harassment, no recorded calls
- **Obey regulations**, customs and the informal etiquette that protects photographers from one another
- **Take special care** with breeding animals
- **"Leave no trace"** of having been there

To learn more about ethical nature photography, visit conservationphotographers.org.



FINDING FLORA
Winner

Bloodroot
Along the Shediac River, New Brunswick

Bloodroot is one of the first wildflowers to bloom in the spring. They are a signal of nice weather to come. I was out fishing with my boyfriend when we came across a bunch in full bloom. It was my first time seeing one.

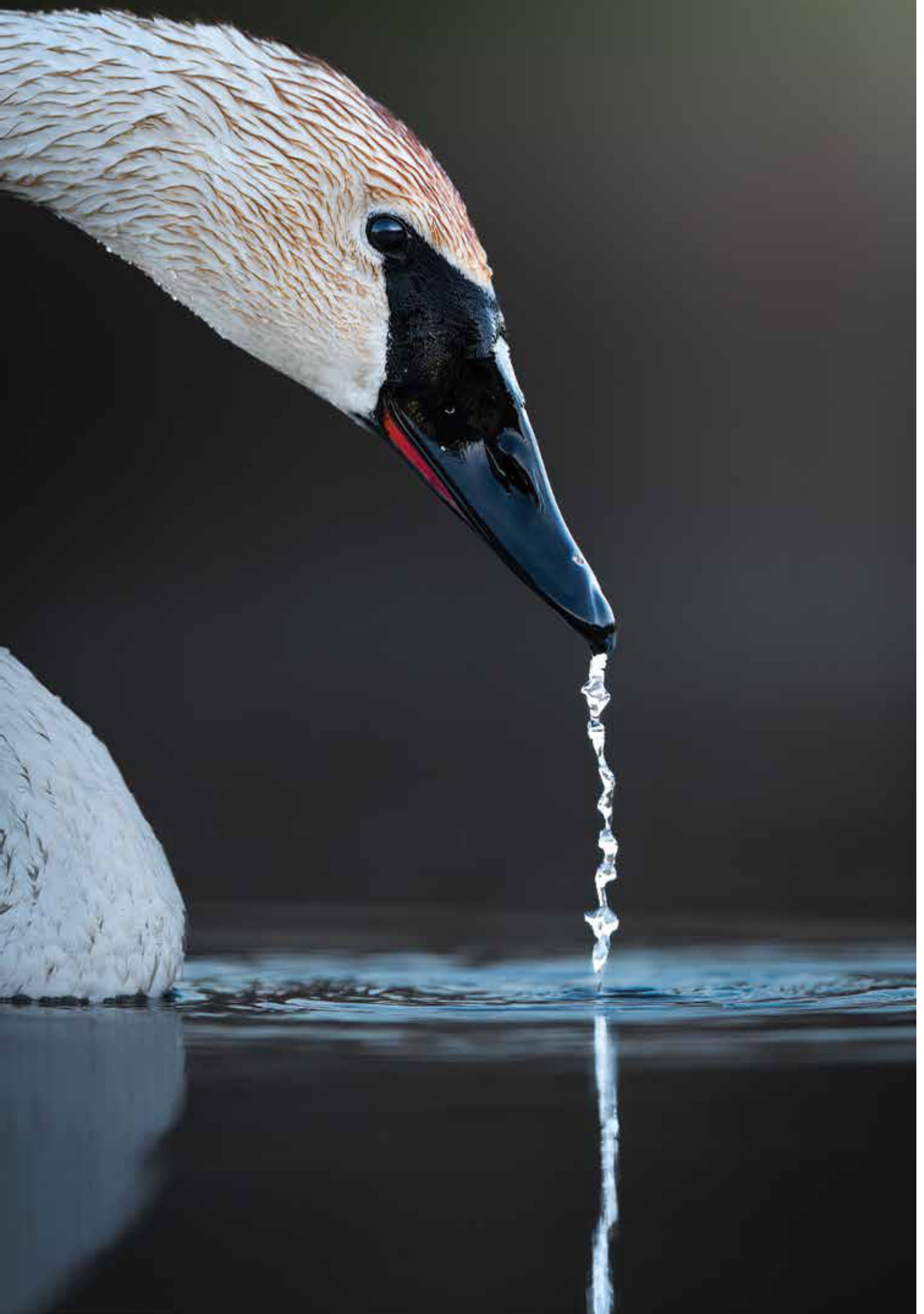
Brittany Crossman
Riverview, New Brunswick

FOCUS ON FAUNA
Honourable Mention

Trumpeter Swan
Near Milton, Ontario

I was lying on the shore of a small pond under a camouflage blanket photographing waterfowl. Several swans were interested in the lump that was moving on the shore. They came so close that this image was full frame.

Joe Rousseau
Milton, Ontario





CANADIAN LANDSCAPES
Honourable Mention

Wildfire Smoke
Kootenay National Park, British Columbia

The picture depicts the aftermath of a wildfire, captured early morning. No more raging fire, just remnants: wispy smoke blankets the ground and trees like a shroud, and burnt tree trunks resemble mere sticks.

Denise Hoffgaard
Fairmont Hot Springs, British Columbia









CANADIAN LANDSCAPES
Honourable Mention

Cloud over the St. Lawrence
Charlevoix, Quebec

What I like most about this picture is the colours in the sky. The shape of the cloud makes me think of a cat jumping over the river.

Jonathan Franchomme | *Quebec City, Quebec*

FOCUS ON FAUNA
Honourable Mention

Red Fox Kits
Near Fort Macleod, Alberta

I noticed them in a field from the highway and pulled over. They quickly retreated to their den, so I set up my camera and waited quietly. Curiosity got the better of them; one by one, they came out and sized me up. I was able to capture this brief moment of them all looking at me before they got back to playing.

Kyla Black
Lethbridge, Alberta

Outdoors

Birding + Field Guide + Urban Wildlife



GETTY IMAGES



GETTY IMAGES

BIRDING

In the pink, eh?

Southern roseate spoonbills have been moving north to Canada

IF I HAD TO CHOOSE ONE BIRD THAT created a lot of buzz among North American birders in 2023, it would be the roseate spoonbill. At least two showed up last summer in southern Quebec, and another appeared in Wisconsin — the last time a roseate spoonbill (*Platalea ajaja*) was seen there was in 1845.

Roseate indeed. While juveniles are whitish to a faded pink colour overall, the adults are blessed with a brilliant rosy-pink colour, particularly on their wings and flanks. Like flamingos and scarlet ibises, these strikingly colourful waders acquire their reddish pink plumage by consuming shrimp and related creatures that contain pigments known as carotenoids. But the most striking feature of all in the spoonbill is its bill, which looks like a lengthy heron bill with the end flattened into the profile of a wooden spoon or a spatula.



Standing about 75 centimetres high on longish legs, these wading filter-feeders, with football-shaped bodies and lengthy necks, bend over horizontally to forage for food. They wave their spatula-like bills, which are heavily endowed with sensory endings, from side to side while wading in shallow water. They are feeling for crustaceans, small fish, frogs and other tasty food in the water to snag. Like a flamingo's, their bills act as a filter allowing water to drain away while trapping their next meal inside.

Spoonbills normally breed throughout Florida and the Carolinas, but over the last few decades, they are being seen farther north, mostly from June to September; 10 to 15 specimens have been recorded from Trois-Rivières, Que., to Saint John, N.B., and even a few as far west as Hamilton. A journey of roughly 3,000 kilometres from Florida to southeastern Canada does not seem to faze these birds much.

What is driving the birds northward? The usual thought with such vagrants is that their navigation systems have somehow malfunctioned or perhaps storms blew them northward. But climate change may be implicated. Rising levels of heavily salinated coastal water in their usual southern habitats may be making it hard for the birds to find food, sending them farther afield. Some experts speculate the waywardness might also be due to a series of exceptionally productive breeding seasons: the massive numbers of fledged youngsters simply must head farther and farther to avoid intra-species competition amid the shrinking availability of decent foraging habitat.

While occasional sightings in the north outside the normal range of this species provide excitement and pleasure to birdwatchers, the growing number of roseate spoonbills being recorded in Canada each year is meaningful in other ways. It is a testament to the utility of citizen science: amateur birders contributing data to eBird, an app created by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology in Ithaca, New York, is used by ornithologists to map out changes in distribution patterns of various bird species. As the editor of the Dorling Kindersley reference book *Birds of Canada* (and several spinoffs), I will be paying rapt attention to these eBird records to determine whether to include the roseate spoonbill as a bird in Canada in the fourth edition.—**DAVID BIRD**



Clarrie Frankton, all-season athlete, beloved botanist and weed lover



Your garden-variety orache, popular in Canadian plots

FIELD GUIDE

Frankton's Saltbush

It is so rare, we couldn't find an image

THIS IS ONE TOUGH ORACHE. IT SURVIVES the wind-abraded, wave-lashed winters typical of Atlantic Canada coastlines to bloom again each spring. It literally soaks up the salt that kills most every other type of plant. *Atriplex franktonii* thrives here in these harsh conditions and only here, nowhere else.

Atriplex is a genus with some 250 or 300 mostly tough-as-nails species nearly ubiquitous globally, from subtropical to subarctic, desert and seashore plants among them. The genus's taxonomy is extremely difficult: judging by the number of papers published recategorizing countless variants every decade over the last 100 years; its identity is always in flux. Today, specialists still have trouble certifying individual specimens, because there are so many minor variations. What members of this disparate group have in common is they all thrive in oceanside environments with salty soil and sea air. Many even retain salt — you can taste it in the leaves.

Frankton's saltbush is an annual that grows up to 50 cm, sometimes erect but also found sprawling or decumbent. That is, if you can find it on the beach: it is often obscured, covered with sand, seaweed and algae. Olive with red stripes, the scurfy stems are punctuated by non-opposing, triangular leaves, about 2-cm long with saw edges. Its modest green flowers, delimited by leafy bracts only at the base, appear in late July into August. These ball-like glomerules (dense clusters of flowers) atop short bare spikes mature earlier than its closest *Atriplex* cousins. Also atypically, the few tiny seeds produced will germinate immediately on planting. Both facts suggest an opportunistic adaption to accommodate short growing periods and the nasty conditions of this corner of the Earth.

The Latin name *Atriplex* is not Linnean in origin; it has been in use since Roman savant Pliny the Elder gave the name to his favourite salty snack, an edible orache, just about 2,000 years ago. In Italy over the centuries since, the green leaves have been used to add colour and flavour when making pasta. Today you will find garden orache (*A. hortensis*) in many Canadian kitchen plots. It is part of the same goose-footed sub-family (*Chenopodioideae*) of shrubs and herbaceous species that includes beets, spinach and chard. The leaves can be eaten raw in salads, boiled or roasted with meats, or dried and ground for seasoning. Gardeners tend to see the plant as a warm-weather substitute for spinach because it is tolerant of heat and less likely to bolt.

As to our featured plant, the variation endemic only to Atlantic Canadian coastal areas, it is named after one Clarence Frankton. He sounds like a character. Born in 1906 in Nottingham, England, "Clarrie" grew up to be a gifted "all-season" runner (twice world snowshoe champion in the 1930s) and self-taught math whiz. When he had to quit high school in Montreal for lack of money, he worked as an office boy while continuing his studies. Eventually, he earned himself enough knowledge and enough savings to enter McGill University, where he discovered a love of weeds while doing forage studies in Quebec's Eastern Townships. After completing his PhD, he was hired by the federal Department of Agriculture's botany unit to join the weed survey team. (Quick aside: the name of the man who hired him, the Canadian government's top botanist, was named *Herb Groh*. Really!) Frankton went on to author *Weeds in Canada*, an unlikely hit in almost continuous print between 1963 and 1987.

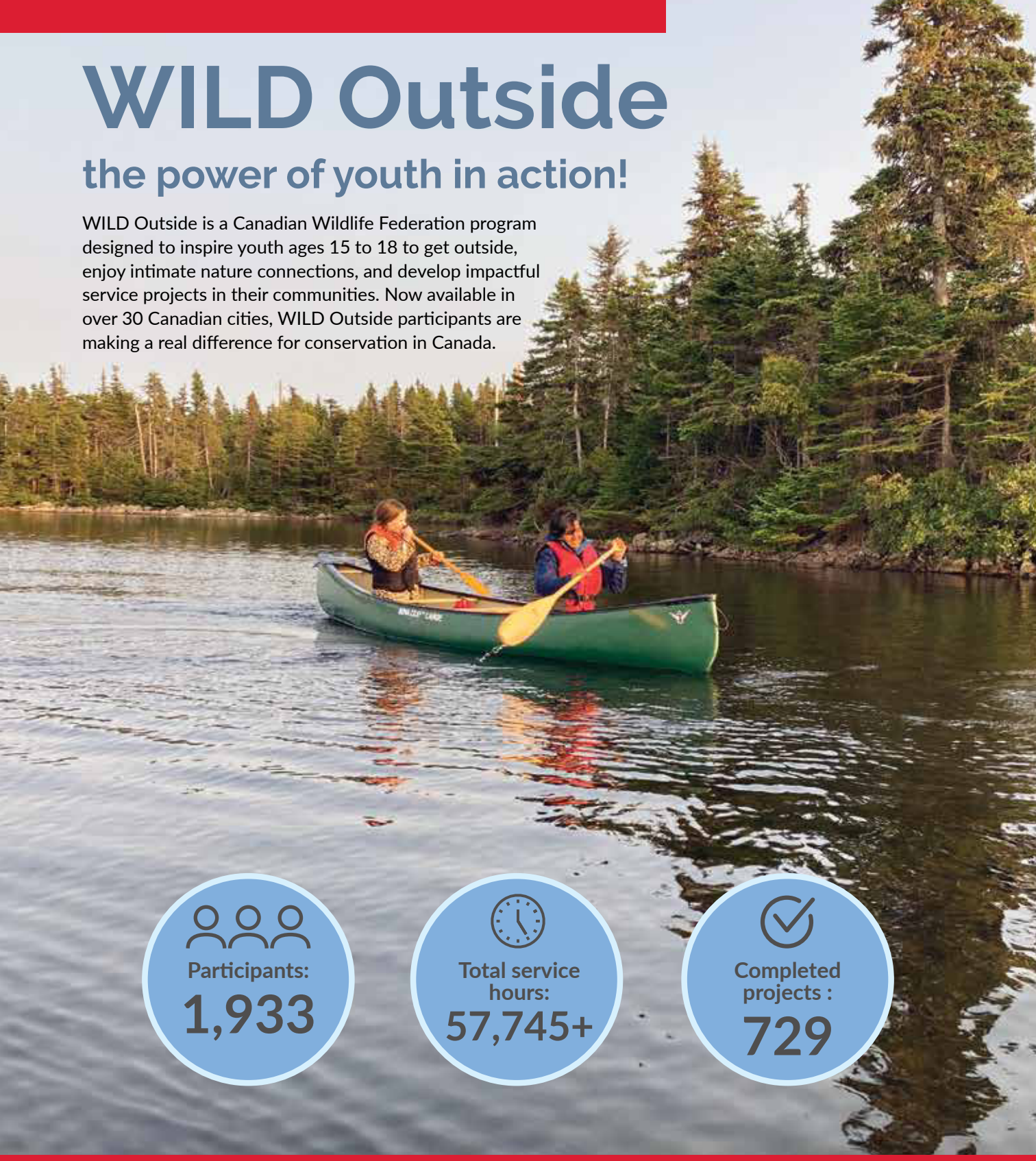
A humble man by all accounts, Clarrie Frankton valued the intellectual challenge of his scholarship while keeping his feet planted firmly in the soil. "His natural sciences research was no ivory tower occupation," said one of the many botanists in this country whom he trained and mentored. His weed work "was of direct economic value to ... Canadian farm families." Frankton made many significant contributions over his long career at the federal government's experimental farm, including categorizing *Atriplex* in Canada. His eponymous Atlantic coast saltbush, so hardy, endemic only to this country and little known, is a fitting tribute.—**MEL WALWYN**

BOOK WORM / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO. HELIOSPHILE / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO.

WILD Outside

the power of youth in action!

WILD Outside is a Canadian Wildlife Federation program designed to inspire youth ages 15 to 18 to get outside, enjoy intimate nature connections, and develop impactful service projects in their communities. Now available in over 30 Canadian cities, WILD Outside participants are making a real difference for conservation in Canada.



Participants:
1,933

Total service hours:
57,745+

Completed projects :
729

Become a youth participant or a volunteer program leader.
Learn more. Visit WILDOutside.ca.

WILD OUTSIDE

CANADIAN WILDLIFE FEDERATION

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URBAN WILDLIFE

A Focus on Feral

A captivating YouTube video series explores urban Canada's wildlife underworld



WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE wildlife we share our cities with? What creatures are out there, where do they live, what do they do? It is all a bit of a mystery to most city-dwellers, which is not nearly good enough if we are to support urban biodiversity.

Still, there is reason for optimism: appreciation for nature in the city has grown in the last decade, accelerated by the sight of so many feral creatures roaming pandemic-emptied streets. And gifted storytellers are looking to build on that interest. Consider the novel and engaging YouTube video series called "Edge of Frame," created by Andrew Budziak, an experienced wildlife lensman based in Toronto. He had an idea for a web-series. He would visit six cities across the country to explore their natural sides and capture photographs of local icons of urban wildlife. The result is a series of six episodes in which he takes viewers with him on a video adventure in search of local fauna.

"It's only in the last couple of years that the light went on for me," says Budziak, 38, a longtime professional photographer. "I realized that this was my thing, the kind of storytelling I want to be doing. At some point I created a list of all the urban mammals locally and decided to see just how many species I could get, how many stories I could tell." Then, on a lark, he asked a friend and colleague to come along and videotape the night search. "We ended up editing a video of me finding the coyotes, and then a few more with other animals, each about five minutes.... They got a lot of traction." Using these as proof of concept, Budziak received funding from the Bell Media Fund to create the series of 20-minute videos about wild fauna in Vancouver, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Toronto, Montreal and St. John's. Narcity was their media partner.

The project is opening Canadians' eyes to what is out there. "During the pandemic, having to stay home got people so hooked on being outdoors and seeing local wildlife. Now that the dust is settling on that a bit, people are still outdoors, still into urban birding or tree spotting or local horticulture," he says. "We've only scratched the surface of this. There's so much life and so little that's known. It's more than squirrels and seagulls. Coyotes and deer are in cities. Whales are urban animals on both coasts parts of the year. In Vancouver, seals are urban wildlife."

Watching Budziak tracking his photographic prey is like a masterclass in finding and photographing wildlife, showing viewers how to research and choose a location, how and when to stake it out, how to conceive the shot and establish the right vantage and angles, and how to do it all while respecting the wildlife all around.

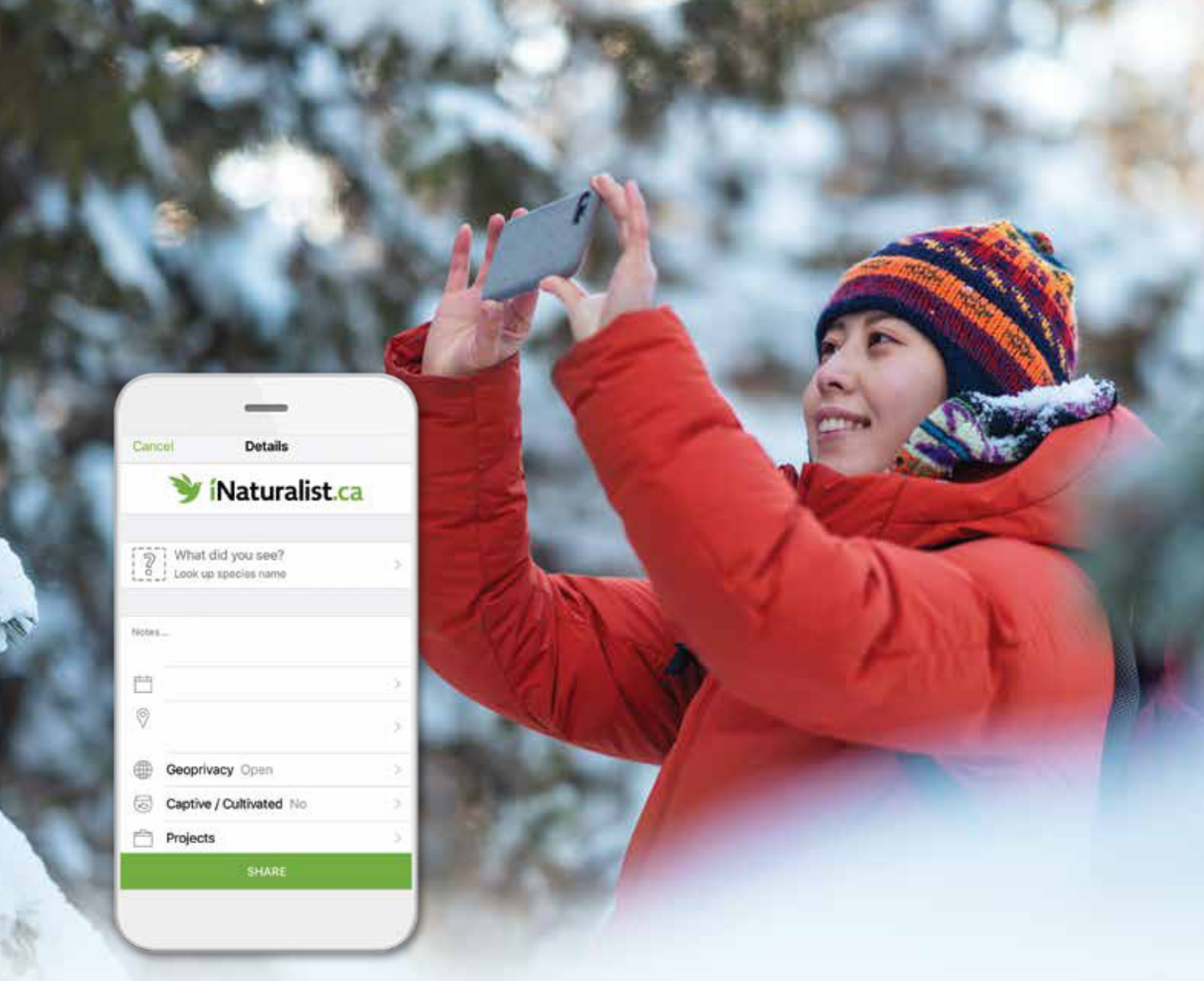
The videographers' work, like the photos we see Budziak capturing, is top quality, akin to something in a Netflix nature series. "People don't expect this level of quality in a web-based series," he says. "But I want my environmental and wildlife work to be free; people don't need to pay to see it."

The series concludes with an homage to the invisible wild side of Toronto, often forgotten amid the commotion, pollution, noise and bustle. It includes an exquisite scene shot in an autumnal ravine, focused on an expressive American Sign Language signer interpreting Budziak's voiceover as he waxes poetic about urban nature. It is compelling. "This is a culmination of a lot of things I have wanted to do," he says, "not just exploring urban wildlife, but telling stories."

Recently, Budziak received a grant from the Trebek Initiative, a prestigious new funder honouring the memory of the beloved *Jeopardy*! host and nature advocate, Alex Trebek. Budziak says he's not done: "We've only scratched the surface of this. There so much life and so little that's known." —**MATTHEW CHURCH**

To view the series, visit the YouTube channel "@andrewbudziak1"

ANDREW BUDZIAK



This is one wildlife app that doesn't hibernate

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iNaturalist.ca | CANADIAN WILDLIFE FEDERATION

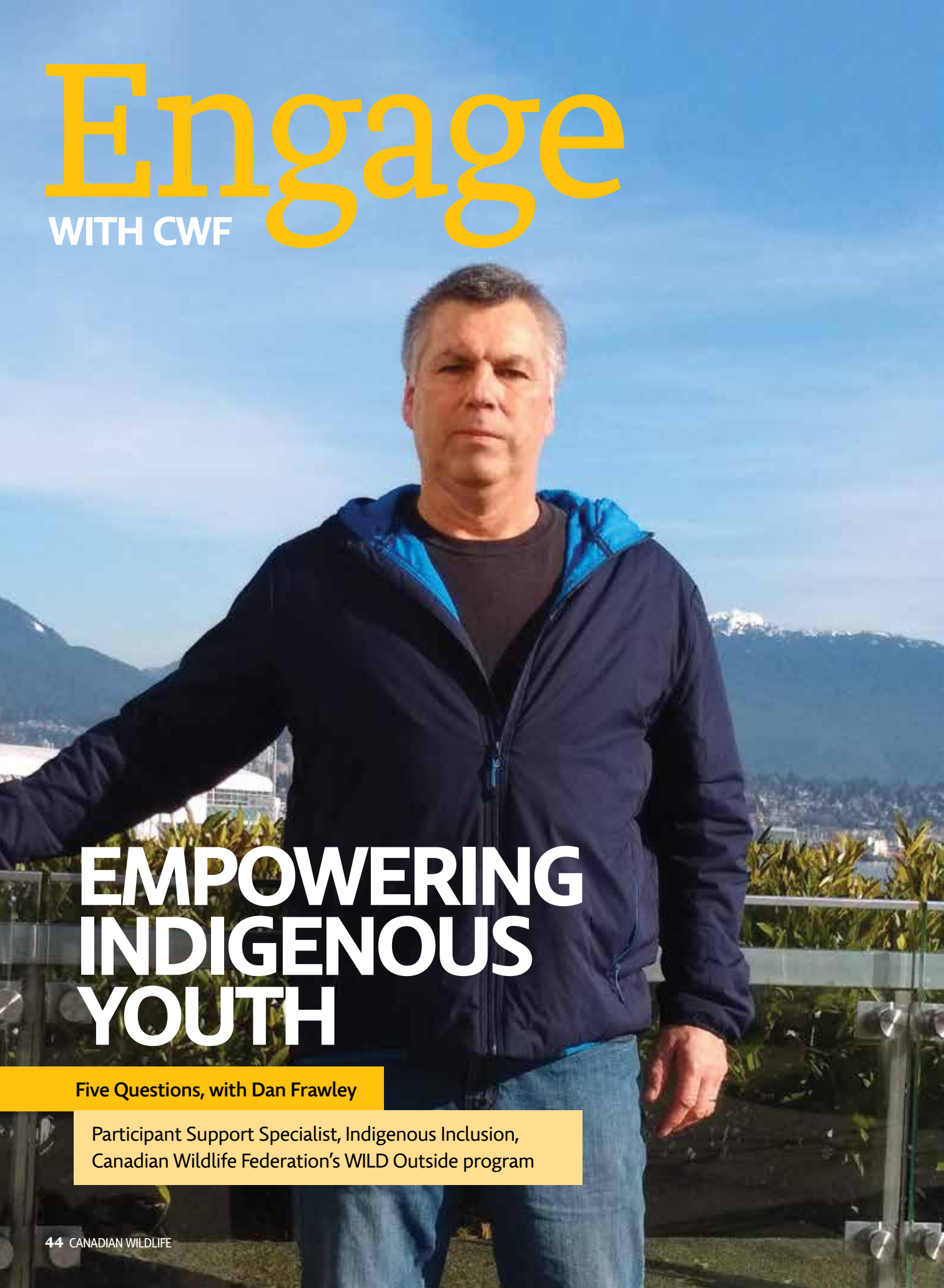
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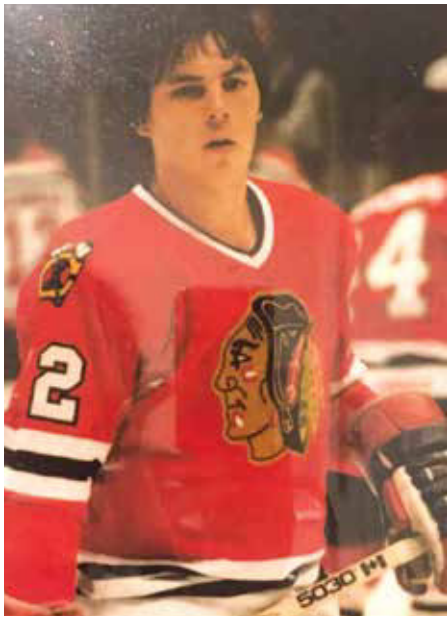


EMPOWERING INDIGENOUS YOUTH

Five Questions, with Dan Frawley

Participant Support Specialist, Indigenous Inclusion, Canadian Wildlife Federation's WILD Outside program

Dan Frawley is Ojibway from Nipissing First Nation in northern Ontario. He is also a former NHL hockey player who spent six seasons with the Chicago Blackhawks and Pittsburgh Penguins. He is now the Participant Support Specialist, Indigenous Inclusion for the Canadian Wildlife Federation's WILD Outside program.



1. CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE CANADIAN WILDLIFE FEDERATION'S WILD OUTSIDE PROGRAM AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR INDIGENOUS YOUTH IN CANADA?

Certainly! The WILD Outside program is a national conservation-based community service and leadership program designed for youth aged 15 to 18, funded in part by the Government of Canada through its Canada Service Corps program. It aims to engage young people in conservation activities, build their awareness of the natural environment, and foster a deeper appreciation for wildlife. What's unique about this program is that it's now extended to Indigenous youth in remote and rural communities. These communities often lack opportunities for organized outdoor activities, so WILD Outside is perfectly suited to help them connect with nature without any financial burden. It's all about empowering Indigenous youth to become stewards of their environment.

2. HOW DOES WILD OUTSIDE CATER TO THE SPECIFIC NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES?

We recognize that Indigenous communities have a deep connection to the land and a unique set of interests and conservation needs. That's where our volunteer Indigenous leaders come in. They work closely with each community to design programs tailored to their specific interests and conservation goals. The flexibility of the program allows us to engage kids in various activities that resonate with their cultural traditions and values.

3. AS A FORMER PRO HOCKEY PLAYER AND A MEMBER OF THE NHL INDIGENOUS ALUMNI TEAM, HOW HAS YOUR BACKGROUND INFLUENCED YOUR WORK WITH INDIGENOUS YOUTH IN PROMOTING OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES AND COMMUNITY SERVICE?

As a member of the NHL Indigenous Alumni Team, I had the privilege of traveling across Canada. I saw the need for more activities for kids, especially in remote communities. When I learned about the WILD Outside program, I was excited. Both the NHL Indigenous Alumni Team and the WILD Outside program encourage young people to take part in outdoor activities and explore opportunities to be of service to their communities. My being part of the alumni team has helped open doors to communities where I can talk to young people about the program. The response has been very positive.

4. CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN WILD OUTSIDE AND FIRST ASSIST AND HOW IT BENEFITS INDIGENOUS YOUTH?

First Assist, founded by former NHL player John Chabot, is a charity that delivers sustainable programming for youth in remote Indigenous communities. The partnership between WILD Outside and First Assist aligns perfectly with our shared objectives. It provides an opportunity for youth to reconnect with their cultural traditions through outdoor activities, including fishing and other experiences that may have been disconnected due to various challenges, including the pandemic. It's a win-win situation for First Nations, WILD Outside, and the communities involved.

5. CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT SOME OF THE SUCCESSES TO DATE AND HOW INDIVIDUALS CAN GET INVOLVED AS VOLUNTEERS AND PARTICIPANTS?

Aamjiwnaang First Nation is located just outside of Sarnia, Ontario. With a small population of 2,500, the community has embraced this program. We have been meeting with the elder, environmental and youth councils and many people have been doing outreach to schools both in the community and surrounding region. This high level of collaboration is leading to a broad range of service projects that include indigenous cultural elements. It's a great example of how the program can thrive and help bring people together to engage with the outdoors and do valuable service. Adult volunteers play a crucial role in supporting these efforts: they can get involved by visiting WILDOutside.ca to register. That's also where young people aged 15 to 18 can sign up to participate in the program. Ultimately, our goal is to together create a positive and lasting impact on participating youths and on their communities across the country.



45° 32' 12.1" N
78° 32' 49.6" W

Head Creek, near the Highland Backpacking Trail, Algonquin Provincial Park, Ontario
Photo by Aastin Curtis-Atkins

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Simone Engels | Winner of September's Theme: "Migration"



Linda Down | Winner of October's Theme: "Playful Moments"

CANADIAN WILDLIFE FEDERATION

For more information, visit CanadianWildlifeFederation.ca/PhotoClub.



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