



WCS Canada



Dan Kraus – Director of National Conservation



This is our decision decade

Like many of you, my passion for wildlife began at an early age. Growing up in the country outside of Waterloo, Ontario, I was fortunate to have nature in my backyard. It was here that I discovered the richness of the natural world and found wonder in my first encounters with yellow-spotted salamanders and pileated woodpeckers. It was also where I first experienced the loss of nature. I can still remember the sense of sadness I felt when I saw part of the forest, a place where I had once caught salamanders and watched woodpeckers, bulldozed to make way for a gravel pit.

For most of my life, I have worked in conservation. A few months ago, I took an exciting next step by joining Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Canada as its first National Conservation Director. Although new to the organization, I have been a long-time admirer of the science-based approach — and impact — of WCS Canada's work.

But it wasn't just the past impact of WCS Canada—like setting the stage for a huge expansion of Nahanni National Park — that inspired me to join. It's the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to secure a better future for wildlife that I am so excited about making the most of in this new role.

This is such a pivotal time for wildlife conservation here in Canada and around the world. Last month's [Glasgow Climate Pact](#) recognized for the first time the importance of protecting and restoring nature as part of the strategy to achieve climate security. Now the hope is that countries will finally gather this spring to draft a new [Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#) and strengthen commitments to protect nature, an urgent process that has been badly delayed by the pandemic — a crisis that has also brought home to many of us the critical need to protect nature.

Canada and many other nations have already agreed to protect 30% of lands and oceans by 2030. This means



that Canada will need to more than double the area of its protected lands and waters in just the next 10 years — an area larger than South Africa. As I've told my students at the University of Waterloo, the upcoming decade will be the most exciting and important decade for nature — ever.

I joined the WCS Canada team because there is no other conservation organization like it in Canada that can create bridges between science and policy to influence and direct conservation. No other organization that can help ensure our new commitments to nature and the next generation will be strongly rooted in science and achieve the goal of bending the curve on biodiversity loss.

Our northern community-based field program in Ontario is working to protect [some of the planet's largest storehouses of carbon](#) in the Hudson Bay Lowlands. [In the Yukon](#) and [Arctic](#), we are helping wildlife adapt in ecosystems that are rapidly warming. In key places across Canada, we are working to support [Indigenous-led conservation efforts](#) that will protect some of the last wild places on Earth. Our [Key Biodiversity Areas \(KBAs\) program](#) will help us target the places in Canada that are critical for meeting national and global biodiversity goals. KBAs are already being used to guide protected areas establishment and are an essential blueprint to ensure that our ambitious targets to conserve 30% of Canada's and waters are being directed to the right 30% for nature.



To make the most of this opportunity, [I hope you will continue to support the work of this unique organization](#) and help extend the great scientific work it is doing to help conserve globally important wild species and spaces.



This is our decision decade. These decisions about conservation will have profound and lasting impacts on Canada. Halting and reversing the loss of nature is not just about benefitting wildlife and wild places. It's renewing our collective relationships with the natural world and deepening our personal connection to the nature around us. It's uniting ecology and economics to choose new paths and policies of sustainability that protect and restore the diversity and abundance of our environment. And it's a cultural coming of age where we come to the realization that that without nature, there is nothing else.

It's going to be a busy year at WCS Canada. We need to double down on our efforts to conserve our last wild



places, ensure our natural storehouses of carbon are protected, and realize the opportunity for Canada to be a global leader in protecting biodiversity. [I hope you'll continue to be part of our efforts](#). By creating a better world for wildlife, we create a better world for everyone.

Wishing you all the best for the new year,

Dan Kraus | Director of National Conservation



Photos: Releasing murre at Cape Perry – WCS Canada; Caribou – Susan Morse; Matt Scrafford holding wolverine – WCS Canada; Blackpoll warbler –Jukka Jantunen; Jacob Seguin releasing sturgeon – WCS Canada; Hoary bat – Jason Headley. Cougar in logo: Susan Morse.

Support our work to save wildlife!

At WCS Canada, we stand for wildlife and are in the field every day working to save wildlife and wild places. You can support our work by [making a secure donation](#) right now!

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