The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) is a fresh face on the Canadian conservation scene. WCS Canada was established as an independent arm of the larger WCS global conservation family just nine years ago. But we have already scored some significant achievements, including a massive expansion of Nahanni National Park, a ban on oil and gas development and mining in the upper Flathead Valley, and the development of strategies for the recovery of threatened woodland caribou.

We didn’t achieve these results alone, but WCS Canada played an important role in each of these accomplishments by providing critical scientific evidence for the need for conservation action, and by mapping the best way forward to achieve positive results.

WCS Canada’s Dr. John Weaver, for example, demonstrated through years of field research that Nahanni National Park was simply too small to protect wide-ranging caribou and other big mammals and he showed us where the park needed to be expanded to accommodate wildlife.

Similarly, Dr. Don Reid helped the Peel Watershed Commission determine that 81% of this pristine — and very large — watershed deserved protection. In Ontario, Dr. Cheryl Chetkiewicz is modelling potential development impacts on wildlife while Dr. Jenni McDermdid is studying how climate warming will affect fish such as lake sturgeon and trout.

The wildlife we focus on are now facing some of the biggest challenges they have ever faced. A changing climate, rapidly spreading resource development — including roads, transmission lines and pipelines — and an ever larger human footprint threaten to push these creatures to the limits of survival. Now, more than ever, we need a clear picture of how we can best sustain Canada’s wildlife and wild spaces.

As scientists, we know that healthy ecosystems provide critical services necessary for human survival, and we understand that more sustainable approaches to resource management will be good for our economy and our society. But most of all, those of us who are lucky enough to spend weeks deep in the boreal forests lying in wait for a wolverine, hours crammed in a tiny airplane flying over caribou in minus 30 degree temperatures, or months walking the banks of Yukon rivers searching for songbirds know the sheer magic of wild places. Our goal is to preserve that magic for all Canadians through the power of science.

I hope you enjoy this special review of WCS Canada’s conservation approach and achievements and I hope you will join us in saving wildlife and wild places.
WCS Canada takes a unique approach to the critical issue of protecting wildlife and wild places. We focus on gathering the scientific evidence needed to understand what is happening in wild ecosystems and to assess both local and global threats to wildlife survival.

Whether it is the impacts of climate change in the North or the effects of road development on fish habitat, we head out into the field to get answers. By developing a scientific understanding of wild places, we can begin to build a picture of the likely impacts of development and other changes — from the fragmenting of previously intact areas to the tipping of predator-prey balances.

We then use this detailed information to help make better decisions on important issues such as resource development and access routes, protected areas and wildlife corridors. WCS Canada plays a crucial role by bringing detailed scientific knowledge to the table and working with academics, governments, other conservation organizations, and First Nation communities to put this information to use in protecting wilderness and wildlife.

To make sure that the wealth of scientific evidence we collect impacts decision makers, we also directly advise governments and other decision makers. WCS Canada Executive Director Dr. Justina Ray, for example, was a member of the federal government’s Science Advisory Group that assessed

**Mission** WCS saves wildlife and wild places worldwide through science, conservation action, education, and inspiring people to value nature.

**Vision** WCS envisions a world where wildlife thrives in healthy lands and seas, valued by societies that embrace and benefit from the diversity and integrity of life on Earth.
Dr. John Weaver looks for claw marks on tree to assess animal activity.

from resource development on wild places almost every day. That is why we also try to work with industry to shape development plans to reduce their impact on wildlife and ecosystems. Recently, WCS presented a standing-room-only session at the annual meeting of the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada — a major international mining industry meeting that drew more than 30,000 participants. The two-hour session explored the business case for biodiversity-friendly practices and featured three companies at various stages of design and implementation of corporate biodiversity strategies.

Similarly, WCS Canada works with First Nations to share conservation knowledge and to help advance our mutual objectives for conservation. WCS has, for example, held workshops and shared scientific information about climate change and freshwater fish with First Nations, while in Yukon, we have worked with numerous communities on their land-use planning initiatives.

We believe this kind of integrated research and policy work is key to protecting Canada’s tremendous natural heritage. That’s why with every trip into the forest or up a mountain slope, we always keep the big picture in mind.
Roads and utility corridors can badly fragment wild areas.
While doing field work in Yukon’s Tintina Trench I fell in love with the floodplain of the Pelly River. Ponds and wetlands, mudflats and willows, old-growth spruce forest, and patches of tall poplars collectively provide shelter and food and nest sites for at least 50 bird species, including several threatened species. I realized early on that I want to come back to this place. I want to know the birds here. I want this place to be on the map. This is a place of beauty and life and wonder. —Dr. Hilary Cooke

WCS Canada is studying the impact of everything from climate change to invasive species on northern fish populations. And that means going fishing in all kinds of weather. View this short clip of a day in the field from one of our researchers.

video
Looking at the big picture

In one of the largest countries on Earth, it can sometimes be hard to figure out where to start when it comes to protecting wildlife and wild places. We are fortunate here in Canada to still have wild rivers, old-growth forests, rich valley bottoms, delicate tundra, extensive northern wetlands and high mountains that provide the snowmelt that is a fountain of life for people and wildlife. But without effort on our part, even Canada’s vast natural heritage could slip away.

That’s why WCS Canada is focusing on some of the largest and most ecologically rich regions of the country. From Ontario’s northern boreal forests to the mountains of northern British Columbia and southern Yukon, we have identified areas where, as Aldo Leopold put it, we can still find all the pieces of the puzzle and a copy of the plan.

Our scientific experience tells us that by securing greater protection for these areas — including developing more sustainable development approaches — we can create vital core areas that can help us conserve and restore the broader Canadian landscape. This is also a chance to maintain natural areas large enough to accommodate the full sweep of nature’s power — from big wildfires and storms to a wide range of large predators on the hunt for abundant prey. It’s nature at its finest on a scale that is both globally rare and vitally important.

The Yukon’s Peel Watershed remains truly wild — for now

Finding safe passages in the Crown of the Continent Ecoregion

The Crown of the Continent Ecoregion of British Columbia and Alberta contain some of our most world-renowned landscapes, including Banff and Jasper National Parks. But what caught Dr. John Weaver’s attention was the landscape outside of these protected areas. As Dr. Weaver describes it, this intervening landscape boasts “sky-piercing mountains, broad river valleys, and verdant forests. It supports one of the most diverse communities of carnivores and ungulates anywhere in North America — including grizzly bears and wolverines, mountain goats and bighorn sheep.” But resource development, intensive recreation and even urban development is pressing in from all sides. That’s why Dr. Weaver developed a comprehensive conservation plan for an integrated system of protected areas, special management areas and wilderness areas that could balance a variety of uses while keeping critical ecosystem functions intact.
Looking at the big picture

Here are some sketches of our current priority areas:

Ontario’s Northern Boreal

North of 51 degrees latitude lies one of the most extensive intact boreal forests in the world. This is a critical refuge for woodland caribou, wolverines, lake sturgeon, and polar bears. Intact forests, vast wetlands, and thousands of lakes dot a landscape that has changed little since the last ice age.

But development is coming quickly, in particular a major push to develop mineral resources throughout the region. There are also plans to introduce all-weather roads, forestry, and new hydro developments. Meanwhile, there are large gaps in our ecological knowledge of this region, gaps that WCS Canada scientists are racing to fill while urging the provincial government to implement a comprehensive planning program for the region.

Today, there are 34 First Nation communities in Ontario’s northern boreal and these mostly remote communities maintain a close connection to the land and water. WCS Canada shares our scientific knowledge with these communities to support land-use planning and environmental assessment work.

Northern Boreal Mountains

A huge diversity of habitats is what drew WCS Canada’s attention to this rugged region straddling the B.C.-Yukon boundary. With everything from boreal and subalpine forests to grasslands and tundra, the diversity of the area leads to a rich mosaic of wildlife. Clear, cold waters in large salmon-bearing rivers and numerous lakes and wetlands add to the area’s rich tapestry.

Twenty herds of northern mountain caribou, an abundance of Dall sheep, moose, elk, bison, mountain goat, beaver, and snowshoe hare along with most of the world’s population of Stone’s sheep support top predators including gray wolf, wolverine, Canada lynx, grizzly and black bear.

WCS Canada is looking at the impacts of everything from climate change to invasive species on fish populations. Have a look at life in the field — or in this case, on the lake.
One of the reasons we look at the big picture in these areas is because others don’t – governments and industry give too little attention to the cumulative impacts of many different land uses, such as forestry, and development projects on ecosystems. WCS Canada is working hard to change that by drawing attention to the interconnections between our environment and the economy and the need to think big when it comes to securing our natural legacy for future generations, particularly in northern landscapes. To learn more about some of our areas of focus, please visit our website. www.wcscanada.org

Western Arctic

The Canadian Arctic is a vast and relatively untouched area, but it is being transformed by climate change, which is happening faster here than in any other region. This creates new challenges for many Arctic wildlife species, and also for the ability of northerners to harvest food and maintain traditional practices.

Dr. Donald Reid is leading WCS’s efforts to better understand just what climate change will mean for Arctic species. A big focus of our Arctic work is understanding the combined impacts of everything from a changing climate to rapidly accelerating resource development activities like oil and gas exploration, mining, new roads, and pipelines. Recently, WCS Canada has also begun to study the impacts of retreating summer ice on marine mammals.

To help decision makers better understand the fragile Arctic environment, Don has participated in a groundbreaking international study of Arctic food webs and authored a chapter on mammals for a study of Arctic biodiversity status and trends for the intergovernmental Arctic Council.

There are 12 First Nations that have traditional territories in the region and many have settled land claims that recognize their right to manage resources in their territories.

Mineral, oil and gas, and recreational development — combined with the effects of climate change — all threaten to change this wilderness. In 2009, WCS Canada completed a Strategic Conservation Assessment of the region that outlines what must be done to protect its ecological integrity. Now we are working with governments and First Nations to apply this knowledge to various land use and resource planning efforts.
Here at WCS Canada we love all wildlife, but certain creatures really grab our attention. For example, species such as caribou and wolverine tell us a lot about the condition of the areas we are studying. Caribou, for example, need large areas of undisturbed forest to thrive — forests where they can elude predators and find food, such as the lichens they eat over the winter.

When roads, clearcuts or mine sites are punched into previously intact forests, this dynamic of remote and inaccessible wilderness quickly changes and caribou lose key habitat. So how caribou are faring in the boreal forest tells us a lot about the state of the forest.

In fresh water, lake sturgeon help to tell a similar story. These ancient fish migrate to spawning areas each spring and need rivers and lakes that have not been contaminated by pollution, altered by the introduction of alien species or blocked by dams. The presence of lake sturgeon tells us a lot about the health of watersheds and surrounding ecosystems.

In other cases, it is a suite of species that grabs our attention. In the Crown of the Continent Ecoregion, for example, we have used the combined habitat use patterns of grizzly bears, wolverines, native trout, mountain goats and bighorn sheep to map out critical connections and to identify core conservation areas.

Right now, we are working to identify a similar suite of “indicator” species for the old spruce forests that line many valley bottoms in southern Yukon, with a particular focus on the songbirds that use these forests and river otters that create overland corridors to move between different lakes and rivers.

Focusing on wildlife with big habitat needs or suites of species that are the backbone of important wilderness areas is how we create a useful scientific measuring stick for the health of ecosystems and the impacts of development on wild places.
2013: Based on our ongoing Arctic field research, WCS Canada made major contributions to the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment report, a document that helped inform international negotiations among Arctic nations at the Arctic Council meeting in May 2013.

2012: WCS Canada played a major role in guiding the development of the National Recovery Strategy for Boreal Caribou, including authoring a report on “Biological Considerations for Recovery Objectives for Boreal Caribou.”

2010: Our Dr. John Weaver received the Wilburforce Foundation’s Conservation Leadership Award for his many years of field research and conservation efforts across North America.

2010: Research conducted by WCS Canada on the ecological importance of the Flathead River Valley, which straddles the B.C.-Montana border, led to a decision to ban mining and oil and gas exploration in the valley’s upper basin.

2009: A recommendation to protect 81% of the pristine Peel Watershed in Yukon was released by the Peel Watershed Planning Commission after four years of WCS Canada involvement in the development of this plan.

2009: Many years of WCS Canada research on habitat use by caribou, grizzly bear and Dall sheep demonstrated the need to expand Nahanni National Park. The federal government followed our recommendations and increased the park size sevenfold.

2005: WCS Canada completed the world’s first study on the boreal forest wolverine, which helped contribute to Ontario’s recovery strategy for the species.

2003: WCS Canada was a founding member of the Two Countries, One Forest bi-national initiative to help conserve, restore, and connect wildlife habitat in the eastern Canada-northeastern U.S. transboundary area, one of the wildest remaining areas in eastern North America.
Dr. Justina Ray  Executive Director and Senior Scientist

In addition to serving as WCS Canada’s Executive Director, Justina takes a hands-on role in both research and conservation policy development. Justina has studied the impacts of landscape changes on caribou and wolverine and used her findings to help inform her work with official bodies ranging from the Ontario Wolverine Recovery Team to the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. Justina has also provided key insights into caribou ecology for the federal caribou recovery effort. She has pioneered new non-invasive wildlife monitoring techniques, and has co-authored a popular book on the fate of Canada’s caribou, *Caribou and the North: A Shared Future* (Dundurn Press, 2008).

Dr. John Weaver  Senior Conservation Scientist

Recently, John has been mapping out wildlife habitat in the Crown of the Continent area in the Southern Canadian Rockies and northern Montana. With a focus on six key species, his report on the region lays out how this relatively intact area can be managed to mitigate the impacts of climate change and development on keystone species. John has focused extensively on large carnivores in his 40+ years of conservation research in the western U.S. and Canada. John’s research on wildlife movement in the Nahanni region led to a seven-fold expansion of this protected area, making it much more suited to meeting the needs of species such as caribou and grizzly bears.

Dr. Donald Reid  Northern Boreal Mountains Landscape Leader

Currently leads WCS Canada’s conservation research efforts in the Northern Boreal Mountain region of B.C. and Yukon and led the development of a Strategic Conservation Assessment of the region that is guiding WCS’s work in this focal area. He was also a special advisor to the Peel Watershed Planning Commission in Yukon, which recommended extensive protection for this largely pristine area. In his 30-year career as a wildlife biologist, Don has studied everything from the effects of forest harvesting on snowshoe hares and their lynx predators to pandas in Sichuan, China. Don has also closely studied the interrelationship between lemmings and their predators, including Arctic and red foxes, and the impact of climate change on this vital Arctic food web.
Dr. Cheryl Chetkiewicz
Ontario Northern Boreal Landscape Leader

Cheryl is leading WCS Canada’s efforts to better understand the ability of wildlife to withstand development activity in Ontario’s northern boreal region. Understanding the degree to which populations of caribou or wolverine can remain resilient in the face of mining, logging, or other resource extraction activity is critical at a time when such activity is quickly pushing north into one of the world’s most intact boreal regions. Cheryl has focused extensively on carnivore conservation in her career, which has involved everything from tracking jaguars in Amazonia to improving grizzly bear management in Alaska.

Dr. Jenni McDermid
Associate Conservation Scientist

Jenni is fascinated by what goes on beneath the surface of our lakes and rivers. As WCS Canada’s lead scientist on fish conservation research, Jenni is an expert in freshwater fish. She is also very concerned about what will happen to coldwater species like lake trout in a warming climate and how development activities and increased harvest pressure will impact species and their aquatic ecosystems in some of our most intact forest regions. She is working to better understand the best way to protect these species and to keep freshwater ecosystems balanced and healthy.

Dr. Hilary Cooke
Associate Conservation Scientist

Hilary works towards WCS Canada’s conservation efforts in the Northern Boreal Mountains of B.C. and Yukon. She is focusing on wildlife use — including by migrating birds — of important valley bottom habitats, such as wetlands and old spruce forests. Using innovative new tools, Hilary is also mapping out key areas for conservation to better inform ongoing resource and land-use planning processes in this spectacular wild place. Hilary has a long-standing interest conserving bird habitats and managed landscapes. She has used field science to develop recommendations for forestry and grazing management to protect key habitats for songbirds, such as species that nest in tree cavities.

Dr. Stephen Insley
Arctic Research Associate

Stephen is WCS Canada’s Arctic Research Associate, and is a member of the WCS Arctic Beringia program. His geographical focus is the western Canadian Arctic spanning the Arctic Beringia region including Alaska and northeastern Russia. Drawing on his experience working with marine mammals and community based monitoring, Stephen is building a marine conservation program focusing on various aspects of changing Arctic ecosystems and northern communities (especially those in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region) in the Beaufort Sea region.
A map is worth a thousand words
Maps are a key way that WCS communicates conservation challenges and solutions. Whether it is mapping wildlife distributions across northern Ontario, habitat connections in the southern Rockies, or the human footprint in the northern Appalachians, maps tell a story about where fish and wildlife can be found, and where they face threats from human activities. For example, as part of our efforts to protect northern Ontario’s vast boreal forest, WCS Canada is using a landscape modelling tool to examine the combined impacts of changes in natural land cover and human land uses (footprints) on fish and wildlife populations in the region. Creating maps of possible future landscapes allows us to visualize how change due to development and climate change may affect this wild area, which includes some of the world’s most intact watersheds. Bringing these maps of future scenarios to decision makers in an area that still has relatively little development creates a strong incentive for conservation planning, adaptation to climate change, and discussion about limits to industrial development.

With the generous support of The W. Garfield Weston Foundation, WCS Canada is harnessing some bright young minds to advance our understanding of wild ecosystems. Our W. Garfield Weston Fellowship program helps graduate students get into the field, get their boots muddy and explore a huge variety of topics. These fellows are selected, in part, because the research they are doing helps WCS advance our conservation goals.

Each year we help to train a new generation of field researchers who can carry on the vitally important on-the-ground research that makes WCS unique. By exploring questions like how an increase in biting insects may affect caribou habitat use and survival, or collecting valuable baseline data on previously undisturbed northern lakes, these students provide us with important insights.

Rachael Derbyshire is looking at how winter food availability affects the breeding success of gray jays.

To learn more about our current and past fellows and their research visit our website.

Watershed Impact Score

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©Janet Foster
As a part of the larger international WCS organization, WCS Canada benefits from the knowledge and resources that have been developed while operating roughly 500 conservation projects in 60 countries.

WCS began in 1895 with a mandate to help bring back bison from the brink of extinction on the North American plains. Today, its focus is much broader and WCS scientists are now working around the globe to protect everything from gorillas in the Congo, and tigers in India, to ocean giants, such as whales.

WCS Canada works closely with the WCS North America program to address cross-border conservation challenges, such as protecting wildlife corridors in the Crown of the Continent Ecoregion and restoring habitat in the Appalachian mountains of eastern Canada and the northeastern United States.

Thinking global

As part of one of the world’s largest on-the-ground conservation organizations, WCS Canada is on the cutting edge of conservation science and part of a network that is making a vital contribution to protecting wild species and places around the globe.

Helping bats

Dr. Cori Lausen is leading groundbreaking efforts to understand the impacts of white-nose syndrome in bats. She has developed a multi-faceted project, featuring everything from aerial tracking surveys to getting citizens involved in monitoring bat activity to better understand bat hibernation and migration patterns. The goal is to locate and protect over-wintering bats in western Canada before the spread of the devastating fungus that has decimated bat populations in eastern North America.

The Wild East

Despite one of the longest histories of European settlement on the continent, the area where the Appalachians — North America’s second-largest mountain chain — cross the border between the northeastern United States and eastern Canada is a hotbed for biodiversity. It also boasts many important and relatively large wild areas. Through the Two Countries, One Forest initiative (2C1 Forest), WCS Canada developed the Northern Appalachian Conservation Planning Atlas, an online Atlas containing interactive maps, information and GIS data about areas of conservation importance. Our Assistant Director, Gillian Woolmer, has led the development of this tool, which plays a vital role in supporting the information sharing and mapping needs of conservationists in the region.
Where we work

WCS Canada focuses on areas with big conservation opportunities.
# 2013 Financial Results

## ASSETS

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## LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

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**TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS**

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<td><strong>1,748,649</strong></td>
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## REVENUE & EXPENSES

### REVENUE

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### EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES

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<td><strong>259,152</strong></td>
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* Support from the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Global Conservation Program.

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**Where our funding comes from**

- Wildlife Conservation Society*
- Foundations
- Individuals
- Government
- Other

**How we use your donation**

- Administration
- Fundraising
- Programs to save wildlife and wild places

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Support our work!

You can be a valuable partner for Canada’s leading wildlife researchers by supporting the work of WCS Canada. Your financial support will help advance our understanding of wildlife and wilderness and will help drive the science needed to protect these wild treasures. Help us save wildlife and wild places by making a donation at wcscanada.org!

We would like to thank the following for their generous support for conserving Canadian wildlife and wild lands:

**Foundations and Organizations**
- Alberta Conservation Association
- Leon Judah Blackmore Foundation
- CAFF – Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna
- Canadian Wildlife Federation
- The Dunemere Foundation
- Earth Rangers
- Edmonton Valley Zoo
- The EJLB Foundation
- Forest Products Association of Canada
- Ivey Foundation
- K.M. Hunter Charitable Foundation
- Alan and Patricia Koval Foundation
- The Kresge Foundation
- Labrador Innu Nation
- LaSalle Adams Fund
- Limited Brands Foundation
- The McLean Foundation
- Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC)
- Open Space Institute
- Helen McCrea Peacock Foundation
- PREDICT Program (USAID)
- The Reverie Foundation
- The Schad Foundation
- T-Gear Charitable Trust Canada
- Tides Canada
- The W. Garfield Weston Foundation
- Wilburforce Foundation

**Governments**
- Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program - British Columbia
- Environment Canada
- Government of Alberta
- Government of Yukon Territory
- Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada
- Parks Canada
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources

**Individuals and Corporations**
- Saamis Memorial Funeral Chapel
- Heather Reppen
- Suzanne Ivey Cook
- Peter and Lois Turk
- The Winfield Family

**In Memory of...**
- Scott Arthurs
- Lisa MacMillan
- Edward Allan Patey
- Mitchell James Morgan Pogue
- Euan Russell
- Richard “Dick” Waterous
- John Thorbjarnarson

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