

1 DELIVERING ON NATURE COMMITMENTS



In 2019, Canada made a leadership commitment to protect 30% of land and ocean by 2030, and in 2021 put in place significant investments to support implementation through the Enhanced Nature Legacy and Marine Conservation Targets programs. With the adoption of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) in December 2022, and the recent release of Canada’s 2030 Nature Strategy which includes all the GBF targets, Canada now has a broader suite of commitments to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030. This year’s feature Nature recommendation will ensure foundational progress towards achieving 30% protection of land and ocean continues, including through long-term investments in Indigenous-led conservation, while also advancing implementation of broader commitments on ecological restoration, planning,

Photos: left, TEDA; right, Victor Adam

and subsidy reform. Other critical investments to more fully implement the GBF and Canada's 2030 Nature Strategy are provided as complementary recommendations.

Total Recommended Investment:

- Renew and build on Enhanced Nature Legacy and Marine Conservation Target programs: **\$4.6 billion over five years then \$1.1 billion per year, ongoing.**
- Advance other key elements of Canada's 2030 Nature Strategy: **\$885 million over five years, then \$15 million per year, ongoing, plus redirecting \$2.5 billion in existing funding, and accelerating efforts on subsidy reform.**

Renewing and Building on the Enhanced Nature Legacy and Marine Conservation Targets Programs

Recent significant federal investments have had enormous positive impacts for nature and Canadians, putting us on a hopeful path towards delivering on the commitment to protect at least 30% of land and ocean, contributing to Canada's reconciliation and climate goals, as well as supporting nature and culture-based economies which provide good, local jobs and support community prosperity. To ensure this positive progress continues across Canada, renewal of the Enhanced Nature Legacy (ENL) and Marine Conservation Targets (MCT) investments is critical, along with further advancing on implementing Canada's new 2030 Nature Strategy.

ENL and MCT funding has already resulted in major progress, including:

- Support for Indigenous-led conservation initiatives across Canada, including Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) and Guardians programs
- A fourteen-fold increase in marine protected and conserved areas in the past eight years
- A vast increase in land and ocean protection initiatives underway, led by Indigenous Nations, local land trusts, and other community-based organizations⁵
- Nature Agreements with BC, NS, and YT, leveraging provincial and territorial investments and commitments
- Development of pan-Canadian protection standards (ocean and terrestrial) for protected and conserved areas
- Ecological corridors identified and community-based projects supported to enhance connectivity across the landscape
- Increased investment in protecting species at risk and their habitats

⁵ A 2022 report found that existing initiatives, in particular Indigenous-led conservation initiatives, if supported and fully implemented, could deliver the quantitative 30% land and ocean protection target. CPAWS 2022 Roadmap, CPAWS. <https://cpaws.org/our-work/roadmap2030/>

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUDGET 2025

Building on the ENL and MCT programs, enhanced investment is also needed to deliver on the federal government's signature commitment to create 10 new national parks, 14 national marine conservation areas (10 in the ocean and 4 freshwater), and 15 national urban parks by 2030, in partnership with Indigenous Nations. While funding has been allocated to move park proposals through the feasibility phase, federal investment to establish and steward these parks with Indigenous partners once negotiations are complete is still urgently needed. Providing certainty upfront that long-term funding will be available to support stewardship, jobs and economic prosperity is critical to build trust, negotiate in good faith, and meet community expectations.

Evidence shows that investing in protected natural areas generates a significant return on investment. For example, in 2022-23 every dollar spent by Parks Canada resulted in a 4.2 dollar contribution to Canada's GDP and Parks Canada and resultant visitor spending supported 38,000 full time equivalent jobs across Canada, many in rural and remote communities.⁶ Select programs also attract matching investment from the private sector, charitable foundations and other levels of government to maximize overall investment in conservation.

⁶ <https://parks.canada.ca/agence-agency/bib-lib/rapports-reports/impact-economique-economic-impact/impact-economique-2022-2023-economic-impact>

Photo: Brandon E.



Advancing Canada's 2030 Nature Strategy

In June 2024, the federal government released Canada's 2030 Nature Strategy, which includes the 30% land and ocean protection target as well as a broader suite of important actions to deliver on the full Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity. The GBF reflects the urgency for transformational change to halt and reverse nature loss and establishes ambitious targets that Canada must meet by the end of this decade. Expanded and longer term investment is needed to support new conservation initiatives identified in the Strategy to ensure we reach all our national and international biodiversity targets by 2030. Designed well, this investment can result in the added benefit of engaging and mobilizing Canadians from coast to coast to coast in efforts to protect and restore our country's beloved natural heritage—a core value of Canadians—and contribute to resilient, diversified economies and community well-being.

In addition to protecting land and ocean, restoration of plant and animal communities is also critical to reverse biodiversity loss in areas where ecosystems have been degraded. Restoration benefits both people and nature, providing ecosystem services such as water purification, flood protection and resilience, recreational values, and climate change mitigation through the restoration of blue carbon ecosystems as well as the forests, grasslands and wetlands that sequester carbon. Restoration activities are also a great way to engage Canadians in activities that support Nature. Robust efforts and an ambitious plan are required to meet Canada's ecological restoration commitments which include Target 2 of the GBF, commitments under the Freshwater Challenge, and the initial pledge of restoring approximately 19 million hectares of terrestrial ecosystems under the Bonn Challenge.



Photo: Living Lakes Canada

Over the past decade, Canada has shown leadership on Nature both domestically and internationally. However, more is required to follow through on ambitious commitments to tackle the urgent crisis of biodiversity loss. The stark realities of biodiversity loss are increasingly evident across Canada and pose existential threats to our society, environment, and economy. Studies show that more than half of global GDP, amounting to \$44 trillion, depends on nature.⁷ The World Economic Forum has identified biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse as a top global risk.⁸

Much of the work to protect, connect, restore and sustainably manage biodiversity hinges on an integrated effort across and among federal, provincial, territorial and Indigenous governments and sufficient long-term and consistent funding. The cost of not adequately investing in maintaining and restoring healthy ecosystems will far outweigh the investments required now to halt and reverse biodiversity loss.⁹

Corporate nature-positive commitments and finance initiatives such as the Task Force on Nature Related Financial Disclosure are building a strong case for private sector investment in nature. However, this private investment will often rely on partnerships and financing initiatives that are blended with public money. To leverage greater private investment, the federal government needs to double down on its investments into nature, not retreat.

Target 18 of the GBF and 2030 Nature Strategy requires Canada to reform subsidies that harm nature, offering an opportunity for the federal government to not only reduce harm to nature but also to invest more in supporting nature protection and restoration priorities. This, combined with a greater emphasis on developing incentives, tools, and strategies to encourage and enable the private sector to invest in nature, as called for in Target 19, could help to raise additional resources to meet biodiversity goals through innovative conservation finance opportunities.

To help ensure implementation of the GBF commitments, a new Nature Accountability law has been tabled in Parliament and is expected to establish a nature advisory committee to help guide implementation of the Nature Strategy. Ensuring this Committee is well resourced will also be important.



Photo: Living Lakes Canada

⁷ World Bank, Securing Our Future Through Biodiversity, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/immersive-story/2022/12/07/securing-our-future-through-biodiversity>

⁸ World Economic Forum (2023). Global Risks Report 2023, <https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-risks-report-2023/digest>

⁹ The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review, 2021, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/final-report-the-economics-of-biodiversity-the-dasgupta-review>

Recommendations:

Renew and build on the Enhanced Nature Legacy and Marine Conservation Target programs:

- **\$1 billion over five years and then \$200 million per year ongoing** for Marine Conservation Targets (Targets 1, 3, 22) [DFO, PC, ECCC, TC, NRCan, CIRNAC]
- **\$2.9 billion over five years and then \$500 million per year ongoing** for protecting and connecting land and freshwater (Enhanced Nature Legacy), with a priority on supporting Indigenous-led conservation initiatives, encouraging action by provinces and territories, building Canada's National Ecological Corridors Program and supporting other implementation partners (Target 1, 3, 4, 22) [ECCC, PC, HICC]
- **\$675 million over five years and then \$400 million per year ongoing** to establish and manage the promised 10 new national parks, 14 new NMCAs, 15 National Urban Parks, in partnership with Indigenous Nations. (Target 3, 12, 22) [PC]

Advance other key elements of Canada's 2030 Nature Strategy:

- Marine spatial planning: **\$75 million over five years, then \$15 million per year, ongoing** to complete collaborative marine spatial planning processes in all ocean bioregions [DFO, ECCC, PC, NRCan, TC]
- Ecological restoration: **\$810 million over five years of new investment, and directing existing funding (estimated at \$2.5 billion)** to focus on delivering on international and national restoration commitments [NRCan, ECCC, DFO, AAFC]
- Subsidy reform: Accelerate efforts to identify federal subsidies that harm nature and reform them to support nature-positive actions. [FIN, ECCC, DFO, AAFC, NRCan]

More detail about these and other important investments required to implement Canada's 2030 Nature Strategy are provided later in this document, in the *Delivering on Nature Commitments – Detailed and Complementary Recommendations* section.

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