



Protecting Wildlife Habitat in Canadian Forests

Key Facts

Canadian forests provide habitat for the majority of Canada's wildlife species.

Canada maintains large protected areas to support wildlife habitat in Canada's forests.

- Canadian forests provide habitats for approximately two thirds of Canada's estimated 140,000 species of plants, animals and micro-organisms.
- *Canada's National Parks Act*, in partnership with provinces and territories, creates and manages protected national parks.
- Legally designated parks and protected areas, which limit industrial activities and resource development, are a major part of Canadian forest conservation.
- About 24 million hectares of forest area is protected in Canada – an area the size of the entire United Kingdom. In contrast, Sweden has about 5.4 million hectares of protected forest area.
- About two thirds of Canada's protected forests lie within national and provincial parks.
- Industrial activities such as harvesting, mining and hydroelectric development are prohibited in almost 95% of Canada's protected forests.



Forest land habitat is safeguarded by federal, provincial and territorial laws, regulations and policies.

- Under provincial laws, regulations and policies, all areas harvested on Crown lands are required to be regenerated.
- Canada's *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) contains measures to protect species at risk and the habitat that is necessary for their survival or recovery, including within forest ecosystems. Economic Action Plan 2015 continues to support the implementation of SARA providing \$75 million over three years, starting in 2015–16.
- Canada was also the first industrialized nation to sign the *Convention on Biological Diversity* – a milestone global agreement on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Canada's internationally recognized sustainable forest management practices are science-based and contribute to wildlife habitat conservation.

- Canadian scientists from provincial, territorial and federal governments developed the National Forest Inventory to monitor the sustainable development of our forests and the health of forest habitats.
- These scientists are working with forest managers to adapt harvesting practices that mimic natural disturbances in the boreal forest. These practices directly benefit birds and other wildlife.
- Natural Resources Canada scientists are studying the long-term importance of shoreline (riparian) areas in boreal and temperate forests. These studies influence harvesting practices along streams and rivers and the development of conservation and recovery activities.
- Government scientists are improving our understanding of the impacts of climate change on forest wildlife habitat to help mitigate these effects.
- For example, Natural Resources Canada researchers are studying forests' sensitivity to climate change using on the ground measurements and remote sensing. These tools analyze the role of Canada's managed forests in the carbon cycle and assess how changes in the ecosystem impact forest habitats.