Pollination is Sweeping the Nation!

That buzzing sound is one of the most important ecological processes on the planet! Did you know that without pollination — the transfer of pollen within flowers or from one to another — we wouldn’t have apples, tomatoes or even chocolate?

This spring, join the Canadian Wildlife Federation and its partners as we pay homage to the age-old process of pollination and to the pollinators, that tireless army of insects, birds and other animals that make it happen.

As part of National Wildlife Week (April 6 to 12), we are releasing our 26th teacher’s kit in the Learning About Wildlife series. The program’s slogan is “Pollinators — from flowers to food to our future.” This year we’ve revitalized the kit format, and have unveiled a brand-new website, www.nationalwildlifeweek.ca, which will feature exciting online exclusives, a teacher’s guide and activities for students.

Order Your Kits Today!

If you’re a teacher, educator or even just plain curious, order your NWW and ROW kits, available in April and June, respectively, by calling 1-800-563-9453 or by e-mailing us at info@cwf-fcf.org.

Take a Fantasy Dive with ROW

The lucky students who dive into our underwater lesson plans this year will get a chance to discover what makes aquatic ecosystems so special. From the continental shelf to the deep ocean floor, the latest kit in CWF’s new Learning About Watersheds series illuminates the mysteries of nature found in different watery worlds. And later this year, we’ll be launching a new Rivers to Oceans Week website.

Otters in Action

Find out what kind of factors are influencing the way sea otters are repopulating the B.C. coastline on page 4. If you have some ideas on how to help sea otters, e-mail the editor at wild@cwf-fcf.org, or send a letter to:

Bulletin
c/o Canadian Wildlife Federation
350 Michael Cowpland Dr.
Kanata, ON K2M 2W1
Meet the President

Pat Doyle is the president of the Canadian Wildlife Federation. He’s employed at the University of Prince Edward Island as a biologist, and also works full-time as a parent with his wife to their three kids. For 11 years, Pat has held various roles behind the scenes on CWF’s volunteer board. For him, it’s a pleasure to be the current president of Canada’s largest conservation organization. As a member of the board, he’s one of the people who set policies based on the one passion that unites everyone in CWF’s family — a connection to wildlife.

Sincerely.

Wade Luzny
CWF’s Executive Vice President

New Caption Contest

Help us spread a little laughter by sharing your Wittiest, most creative captions for this photo of an Arctic hare. You can send your entry by using the form on our website www.cwf-fcf.org or via e-mail to info@cwf-fcf.org with “Bulletin Caption Contest” in the subject line. Submit as many entries as your imagination allows! We’ll publish a selection of winning captions in the next issue.

Your Connection to Wildlife

Welcome to the new and improved CWF! It’s my pleasure to present our new logo and tagline. They’re just a first look at a larger renewal that’s taking CWF in a fresh direction. We’re not just introducing a revitalized look and feel, but a completely redesigned approach to conservation, where our goal is to be “your connection to wildlife.” You can learn more about our renewal on page 6.

The plan we’re setting in motion is one that we’ve developed in consultation with you and other members of the CWF family, like the people featured in this Bulletin. When I first met 10-year old Morgan Young, for example, I was honoured that she chose CWF to help the peregrine falcon (page 8). And I can’t say enough about the importance of Jason Fisher’s sea otter research that CWF has helped fund (page 4).

Morgan and Jason are two examples of how CWF has helped Canadians to connect to wildlife. But before I sign off, I’d like to introduce you to another person doing equally amazing things for habitats and species. His name is Pat Doyle and he’s one of CWF’s volunteer board members. He’s also working hard on CWF’s goal for the future — to bring you closer the world of wildlife.

Sincerely.

Wade Luzny
CWF’s Executive Vice President

Winning Northern Gannet Captions

Thanks for sending in your gannet captions! We received 267 submissions in all, so you can imagine how hard it was to make a short list. In fact, we have more favourites than those we could fit here in the Bulletin, so be sure to go online to www.cwf-fcf.org to see the full list!

Hey! My eyes are up here ...
Kristina Block | Geyonggi-do, Guri-si South Korea
You and your “No, I don’t need a map.”
Ernie Nimchuk | Redwater, Alta.
So then I said ... hey Frank, are you listening?
Gaynor Powell | Winnipeg, Man.
You’re hot, Baby, and it’s not just climate change I’m referring to!
Eileen Perry | Maccan, N.S.
Private beach ... no one knows about it ... the only ones here. HUH!!
Margaret Ransome | Jasper, Ont.
Tu me gênes avec tes vociférations!
Jean-Louis Boivin | Trois-Rivières, Que.
No, not dinner with the Gannetsteins again!
Ingrid D.
Saving Wildlife at 16

At the age of 16, Canadian Wildlife magazine subscriber Jeff Howard has done more for wildlife than most people will accomplish in a lifetime. The teen, from Innisfil, Ont., is locally renowned for his involvement in everything from encouraging anglers to use lead-free tackle, to invasive species surveys, and loon and swan rescues.

Most recently, Jeff was honoured with an Education Award from the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority. “It was a real shock,” he said. “I never imagined getting an award in my life!”

What made that moment even more special was being honoured the same night as his mentor, Bob Bowles, a volunteer naturalist whom Jeff has worked with since he was 10 years old. “Bob inspires me because he is basically a one-man army,” he said. “He took on Orillia’s city council against developing a recreational facility on a magnificent wetland. Unfortunately he lost, but we were given the chance to save whatever we could find in the wetland, and we rescued 50 midland painted turtles.”

This year, Jeff is going to pick up where he left off volunteering in a stream stewardship project. He also hopes to get a summer job working for wildlife again. “I’m going to continue my loon survey, too, and my “get the lead out” program. I’m also going to do an invasive species survey, watch out for turtles and continue to educate people.”

Jeff’s mom, Jennifer Howard, shares his love of birds and nature. Together they worked at creating a CWF-certified backyard habitat that now boasts one of the best birding hotspots in their area.

Jeff’s motivation for his outstanding body of work is simple but inspiring: “Wildlife can’t help themselves, so someone has to help them and protect their habitats.”

New Bird Bag

Wherever your needs take you, we hope you’ll take pleasure in bringing along CWF’s beautiful new bird bag.

This biodegradable, environmentally friendly tote combines form and function with a gorgeous design. The elegant illustrations pair some of Canada’s most widespread birds, such as the hummingbird, waxwing and downy woodpecker, with the native perennials and shrubs they use as food sources.

With some thoughtful planting, you, too, can create a native plant garden that turns your property into a natural aviary. To find out how, point your browser to www.wildaboutgardening.org.

Call 1-800-563-9453 or visit www.cwf-fcf.org to order your bird bag today!

New Gardening E-News

Subscribe to Wild About Gardening’s Seasonal Gardening Guide, CWF’s free e-newsletter about backyard habitats, and your best source for news on the Wild About Gardening website, creature features and green-thumb gardening tips. Register at www.wildaboutgardening.org, and we’ll deliver it four times a year, right to your inbox. It’s fun, FREE and fabulous!
CWF recently donated $4,000 to the University of Victoria to fund sea otter research led by PhD candidate Jason Fisher. Fisher’s team is working out how food, habitat and predation are influencing the way sea otters are recolonizing Vancouver Island’s coastline after an absence of 60 years.

You Otter Know!

CWF has been very proactive in recent years lobbying various levels of government to pass an amendment to the Migratory Bird Act, which also happens to help sea otters. Passed in 2005, the amended act now levies serious fines against vessels that deliberately dump bilge water or spill oil at sea. For more on that act, read our article Oil Spills, from the spring 2005 issue of the Bulletin, online at www.cwf-fcf.org.

Living on the Edge

Sea otter populations in British Columbia have come a long way. Their status as a species at risk has run the gamut from extirpated in the 1900s after centuries of over-hunting to endangered, to threatened and now to special concern as of 2007. Although their new status in the lowest category of risk recognizes that they are making a comeback, sea otter populations on the recolonization frontier are still small and vulnerable to single catastrophic events, such as summer storms and oil spills.

Otter Ghost Towns

Oddly enough, there are lots of seemingly ideal habitats off the coast of Vancouver Island that are simply overrun with sea urchins, but with nary an otter in sight. Conversely, there are also several areas full of otters, but devoid of urchins and clams. What’s going on? Fisher and his team suspect that a bountiful supply of food is just not enough, and that calm-water shelter is an equally important ingredient in the recipe for an ideal sea otter habitat. He is currently looking for evidence to suggest whether this may be happening off the coast of Vancouver Island.
Urchin Barrens

Lots of food definitely ups the real estate value for sea otters that are looking for a home. Urchin barrens are deserted areas where sea urchins have eaten all the kelp. When sea otters move in, they gorge on the urchins until the urchin populations decline. Then the otters switch their attention to shellfish. At the same time, the kelp forests are allowed to regrow and support kelp-forest fishes once more. And once urchin populations rebound, the otters then have a balanced diet of urchins, shellfish and kelp-forest fishes. In this way, otters are a keystone species — without them, entire kelp forest ecosystems would just fall apart.

Where Fisher’s Research Fits

There’s a big knowledge gap right now about how critical habitat factors, such as food, habitat and predators, help or hinder sea otter survival off the Vancouver Island coast. Fisher hopes that his research will identify which factors are associated with successful recolonizations, so that biologists can predict where sea otters will move to next. Armed with this information, governments could create coastal management plans that would protect current and future prime sea otter habitats — which would be a very proactive step in sea otter recovery!

Killer Appetites

A sea otter is no more than a piece of popcorn to a killer whale, but these hungry cetaceans aren’t finding enough of their preferred prey of seals and sea lions. As a result, sea otters seem to have become the alternative food source for killer whales, perhaps because of a chain of events started by over-fishing. Fisher’s team is also investigating whether the places that sea otters are choosing to recolonize are free of killer whales, or at least far away from seals and sea lions.
It’s the Bees’ Knees!

You might not think of bees as particularly creative creatures — until you order CWF’s new Wild About Bees poster, that is!

The latest in our famous Wild About … poster series, Wild About Bees will open your mind to the great diversity of Canada’s native bees.

You’ll get to know 16 of Canada’s bees and bee families, including the masons, the nomads and the plasterers, and why they have such interesting names. You’ll also discover answers to mysteries like why our native bees aren’t as aggressive as more social species like honey bees.

Organized by the ingenious ways in which bees create their nests, Wild About Bees will show you how, from flower oil to plant peach fuzz, there’s nothing in nature that these resourceful insects can’t harvest for their homes.

Wild About Bees was produced in consultation with a bee specialist, Laurence Packer from York University, and it’s a great gift for educators and enthusiasts alike.

Call 1-800-563-9453 or e-mail info@cwf-fcf.org to order yours today!

Bateman Contest 2008

We’re searching for young artists and writers across the country to enter the Robert Bateman Writing and Art Contest and show how much they care about Canadian wildlife.

Art entries should depict a native plant or animal that can be found in your neighbourhood, and writing entries should focus on your ideas about sustainability. This year there are also two new categories for both art and writing: amphibians and pollinators!

Winners will receive prizes, the chance to go to special events, and the chance to see their work published in many places — including CWF’s WILD magazine, two contest calendars and the www.gettoknow.ca website.

Entries must be postmarked no later than April 22, 2008. Visit www.gettoknow.ca for entry forms and more information.

We’re Wild About Our New Site!

We’re launching a brand-new redesigned website this spring at www.cwf-fcf.org. After two years of intensive work behind-the-scenes, you’ll notice that we’ve made many changes! The quality and credibility of our content remains the same, but the look and feel is fresher, more modern and more confident. The new site also puts a greater emphasis on highlighting new and changing content on all of the Canadian Wildlife Federation’s websites, thus acting as a hub to bring you the information you’ve told us you want.

You’ll find a more comprehensive section about CWF and our values, for example. We’ve also added new areas to keep visitors up-to-date about the news and issues affecting wildlife and habitats, and provide people with clearer opportunities to take action.

We’ve improved the “findability” aspect by creating a Web Exclusives section where readers can follow up on stories originating in our print publications, such as the Bulletin. A similar area, Special Promotions, follows up on calls for action in our mailings and electronic campaigns.

We’ve also worked hard to foster a sense of community and interactivity. We’ve added a self-service centre, where you can choose to change your own address, and a toolbar at the top right for visitors to share content with friends, make every page printer-friendly and also change the font size. In addition, people who like to use social networking tools can now add us to their Facebook page, tag us in their del.icio.us or Digg accounts and add us to their e-readers through an RSS feed.

We hope that you have a great experience on the new and improved CWF website. E-mail us at webmaster@cwf-fcf.org or call us at 1-800-563-9453 to tell us what you think. Comments and suggestions are also welcome by regular mail to our mailing address on page 8.

CW Magazine

CWF’s beautifully illustrated Canadian Wildlife is published six times a year. A one-year subscription costs only $29.00 (plus applicable taxes). You’ll be impressed with the stunning photography and informative features.

The theme for this year’s July/August special issue is urban wildlife. Inside you’ll find articles on urban forests, an urban heron colony in Vancouver, how cities become homes to animals, and a field guide on city-dwelling bees.

Subscribe today by calling 1-888-687-6247, or visit our website at www.cwf-fcf.org to order a subscription online.
HWW’s Pollinators — Busy Doing What?

Tune in to the HWW website (www.hww.ca) this month to watch the exploits of Jody Gienow, the English-language host of HWW’s wildlife videos, and her young friends Connor and Jenny, as they get the buzz on bees and butterflies and other Canadian pollinators on the go.

Later in the year, Jody, Connor and Jenny will return to investigate the ways we can share our urban world with wildlife, and they’ll show us the adventures that can happen when you get out of the house and get to know the plants and animals in your backyard.

You’ll find lots more on the HWW website about things you can do to help protect pollinators in the new 30-second and 60-second videos. Visit HWW online and tell us about your ideas and experiences, because we want to hear how you share your world with wildlife, too!

New Issues of Interest for CWF

When CWF staff members meet with the board of directors twice a year, we devote an entire day to exploring current problems affecting wildlife and the environment in a session known as “The Issues Forum.”

CWF staff members update directors about areas where we have taken conservation action, and local experts talk about issues they are encountering in their work. These are important forums — in the past, issues of the day first introduced during these sessions have inspired new programs at CWF.

At last year’s fall meeting, we took advantage of the wealth of knowledge from experts in and around the Montreal region. One of the invited speakers was Guy Fitzgerald from the Union québécoise de réhabilitation des oiseaux de proie (UQROP) in Saint-Hyacinthe, Quebec. UQROP rehabilitates injured birds of prey, many of which are species at risk. CWF recently facilitated a donation of $420.65 to UQROP by 10-year-old Kanata, Ont., girls who raised the money to help peregrine falcons (page 8).

Other speakers included David Green, a herpetologist from McGill University, who talked about the precarious position of amphibians in response to environmental changes. David Bird from the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) was also invited to explain the link between human pollution and blue-green algae blooms. In addition, Daniel Martineau from UQAM in Saint-Hyacinthe came to talk about the contamination problem in belugas in the St. Lawrence Estuary.

In subsequent issues of the Bulletin, we will keep you informed about current problems faced by wildlife as they are presented by local experts at The Issues Forum.

For more information about the various conservation issues that we are following, such as climate change and species at risk, and to find out what you can do to help, visit our website at www.cwf-fcf.org.

Monarch Conservation

Best known for its incredible migration from the summer breeding grounds in Canada to overwintering areas in Mexico, the monarch butterfly faces a variety of threats to its habitat. CWF is part of a three-country working group — Canada, Mexico and the United States — that is currently developing a conservation strategy for the monarch. Read a Web Exclusive about the initiative at www.cwf-fcf.org.

Mistaken Identity

At around dusk, when the sky was not quite dark, we were sitting in our dining room having a family meal when we noticed a hummingbird sipping from our petunias. We thought it strange that a hummingbird would still be out this late. We also noticed an extremely long "beak." We all walked out onto the deck and stood right beside the strange bird. I put my hand out and it did not fly away. We realized quickly that this was not a hummingbird. It flew like a hummingbird but had this long feeding tube and beautiful colouring. We watched it for several minutes as it sampled several flowers and then disappeared. I have since found out it is the hummingbird clearwing moth. What a beautiful creature.

Grace Dorion
Thornton, Ontario

Grace’s encounter is just one of many charming wildlife stories that we get at Hinterland Who’s Who. You can read more of them online at www.hww.ca. If you have a wildlife story that you’d like to share, we’d love to hear it. Drop us a line at stories@hww.ca.
Fifth-Graders Raise Dollar$ for the Peregrine

They’re only 10 years old, but Morgan Young and Claire Butler have already done something wonderful for their favourite Canadian species at risk. Last fall, the Grade 5 students raised $420.65 for the peregrine falcon by selling hockey tickets and plush toys at their school in Kanata, Ontario.

“I’ve always liked eagles, but I wanted to fundraise for a bird that I didn’t know much about,” said Morgan. “I also wanted to help a Canadian species close to home.” After much deliberation and research, including seeing a raptor show at Parc Oméga in Montebello, Que., Morgan decided to support the peregrine falcon.

Once she and Claire got the green light from their principal to do the fundraiser, Morgan said it wasn’t hard to persuade their other friends to help make posters and design raffle bins. “My girlfriends Claire, Abby, Veronica, Jenna, Megan, Mariella and Davina helped a lot, and so did my teacher, Miss Hardie,” said Morgan.

Morgan used her allowance and money contributed by her parents to buy the prizes. “I thought it would be nice to offer people Ottawa Senators tickets and Webkinz,” she said, adding that most people in her school, including kids, staff and parents, donated money for the cause.

In early December, Morgan, accompanied by her parents, Sharon and Dave Young, came to CWF’s office in Kanata, Ont., to make her donation in person. “I read about CWF on the web, and I thought you were the best choice because you help all endangered species, not just one,” she told us while presenting her cheque. “People here know about peregrines, so I thought you’d be the best.”

CWF gave Morgan a one-year subscription to WILD magazine and gave her donation to the Union québécoise de réhabilitation des oiseaux de proie, a Quebec-based rehabilitation facility that takes in about 300 injured raptors a year. Veterinary staff and volunteers work to rehabilitate and then release the raptors back into the wild.

Morgan plans to continue her fundraising work, but her next campaign will be in support of a different species. “I think I’m going to do a bake sale with my friends’ help again,” she said. “I don’t know yet which animal, but another Canadian one.”