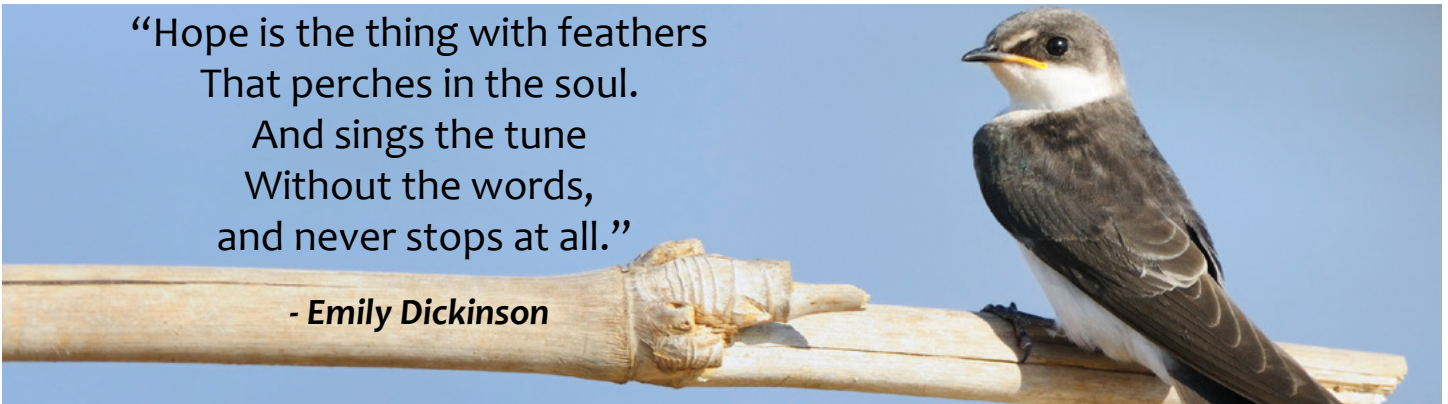


AT-RISK BIRDS IN CANADA



“Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul.
And sings the tune
Without the words,
and never stops at all.”

- Emily Dickinson



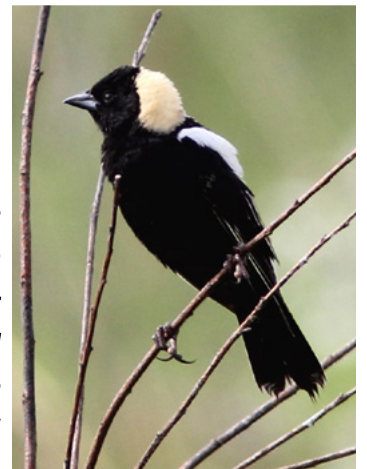
Do we need birds? Do birds matter?

Birds fascinate the human mind in ways that other animals cannot – their flight inspires us; their songs enliven us; their beauty and diversity transfix us; their presence often soothes us.

Birds matter and likely you also believe that we **do** need birds. Birds are very important environmental indicators, helping us see the environmental impacts, negative or positive, of human activities that are either visible or undetectable to the human eye. The expression “canary in a coal mine” speaks directly to birds’ value as indicators of environmental quality. Changes in the health of individual birds, or in the health or size of entire populations of birds, provide us with important signals of environmental change.

What’s more, because bird watching and collection of detailed bird observations have been common hobbies for many decades, we have the ability to see trends in environmental change by looking at changes in bird populations over time.

Birds matter also because they are all around us – as Sir Attenborough suggests, they are perhaps our best, universal connection to nature for this reason. *Can you imagine describing a spring morning to anyone without mentioning singing birds?* We thought not. There are of course many other reasons why birds matter. But what really, truly matters is this: Why do birds matter to you? If you don’t yet know the answer, let us help you explore the question within our series of e-Books.



Bobolink

What you will learn in this e-Book

This e-Book will introduce you to fun audio vignettes of several bird species found in eastern Ontario, and in some case many other parts of Canada, that have been grouped together according to a certain theme. You’ll learn each species’ English and French common name, as well as a few fun facts, anecdotes or historical points about

them. In addition you'll get a photo and verbal description of what each bird looks like, with some added tips to help you differentiate some lookalike species that are easily confused 'in the field'. Perhaps most importantly, an example of the song or call of each species and a description of its basic life history are provided in each audio vignette.

What types of birds they will learn about in this small e-Book

This e-Book highlights select At-Risk birds in Canada: *(you can click on a bird's name to learn more)*

- *Bank Swallow*
- *Chimney Swift*
- *Peregrine Falcon*
- *Barn Swallow*
- *Common Nighthawk*
- *Purple Martin*
- *Bobolink*
- *Eastern Whip-poor-will*
- *Rusty Blackbird*

At-Risk Birds

Bird watching and collection of bird observations have been common hobbies for many decades and these hobbies have provided us with the ability to see environmental changes through the changes in bird populations over time. We can reflect on how those changes may be related to human activities and the associated pressures we place on the natural environment.



Barn Swallow

For example, it has been noted that many populations of aerial insectivores (birds that eat flying insects) have been falling at troubling rates. In the past 40 years, the Bank Swallow's population has decreased 8.9% annually and the Purple Martin population has been decreasing 4.1% annually.

Nature Canada and partners work to raise awareness about the need to protect bird species and to find solutions for bird species at-risk. You can help us get these species added to the Species at Risk Act by signing our [petition here!](#)

As well, our Purple Martin Project works with Purple Martin landlords to geo tagging these birds and do research to better understand the risks they encounter on their annual migration and how we might protect against them. Most recently, Nature Canada participated in the development and release of the State of North American's Birds report which provides a comprehensive review of bird populations across the continent and along the North American Flyway.

Birds truly represent some of the most accessible wildlife with which people can interact and enjoy in nature. In this way, birds are a kind of 'gateway' creature to get more people interested in the wildlife – and its habitat – that's found all around us. Birds remind us that we are not alone on this planet and that how we live can either hopefully help, or unfortunately hinder, our wild neighbours.

Its terrific you want to learn more about Canada's birds – thanks so much for caring!



Bank Swallow © John Reaume

Bank Swallows are so wide spread that they have three different English names. One is Sand Martin which speaks to its preference of nesting in burrows on vertical banks near water.

Characterized by its velvety blue posterior and long forked tail, the **Barn Swallow** is one of the most widespread species in the world that can be found on every continent except for Australia.



Barn Swallow



Male Bobolink. © Kenneth Cole Scheider

When was the last time you heard the Star Wars robot R2-D2 in a field? What you actually heard was probably a singing male **Bobolink**.

Chimney Swift is rarely seen except in flight since they can't perch like other birds. Instead they use long claws to cling to vertical surfaces, including the insides of chimneys and air ducts where they nest and roost, which is where they get their name.



Chimney Swift. © Greg Lasley



Male Common Nighthawk

The **Common Nighthawk** is crepuscular, meaning it is active around dusk and dawn. It is a master of camouflage that roosts invisibly by day either on the ground, on a perch or in a tree.

This nocturnal bird, the **Eastern Whip-poor-will**, is seldom seen, but can be heard in cottage country and some forested parts of our region.



Eastern Whip-poor-will



Peregrine Falcon

Since being very nearly wiped-out in the 1950s and 60s due to the widespread use of the pesticide DDT, the **Peregrine Falcon** has made a dramatic comeback across North America.

Purple Martins are found locally during migration and breeding between mid-April and early July, and gather in large flocks and move through the region throughout August, vanishing by Labour Day.



Purple Martin



Rusty Blackbird. © Jeff Nadler

As its name suggests, the **Rusty Blackbird** can be considered rusty in two respects: first because of its metallic song and second because of the rust-coloured plumage of the female and non-breeding males.

Thank You!



It's wonderful that you care about nature and are keen to learn about the many bird species nearby you.

Our NatureHood program inspires Canadians like you to seek out and learn about nearby nature. Likely you've already discovered that spending time in nature is good for your heart, mind and soul.

Perhaps you would like to use one of our handy [NatureHood Tour](#) brochures to visit green spaces close by and discover more backyard birds and other critters. And we hope you might add your bird or wildlife sightings to our [NatureHood app](#) which helps us monitor wildlife populations.

About Nature Canada:

For over 75 years, Nature Canada has been your voice for nature. Together we defend wildlife and protect wilderness in your province and across the country – places so you can spot wildlife and experience the joys of nature. And we inspire more Canadians to connect and value nature in our lives.



Chimney Swift

With the support of caring people like you, we've helped preserve 63 million acres of parks and wildlife areas and protect countless, cherished species that depend on this habitat -- from butterflies to birds to bears.

You can help protect animals, plants and many special areas that all make up our beautiful country with a donation to Nature Canada today.

Give Today!



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