

Keep Cats Safe and Save Bird Lives



By April Stampe

Rufous Hummingbird

By Sarah Cooper

Nature Canada's Keep Cats Safe and Save Bird Lives initiative has achieved a lot since we launched in February 2016. Our website at catsandbirds.ca has had more than 100,000 views, showing the value of our positive messaging about the risks to cats, birds, and people of the common practice of letting cats roam unsupervised. Our collaborative network has grown to include

national partners Bird Studies Canada, Earth Rangers, FLAP, and the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies, as well as more than 35 provincial nature groups, wildlife rehabilitation centres, cat rescues, land trusts, and bird observatories.

Our new partner map shows a concentration of campaign activity in British Columbia, where we're grateful for the participation of the Stewardship Centre for British Columbia (SCBC), BC Nature, NatureKids BC, and the BC SPCA, as well as local partners and individual volunteers. The Stewardship Centre made a major contribution to the national campaign by developing resources for municipalities on recommended policies and bylaws. Adapted for national use, these resources are used to advocate for municipal action in dozens of communities across Canada. Nature Canada gave the SCBC the 2017 Conservation Partner Award in recognition of their contributions to the campaign.

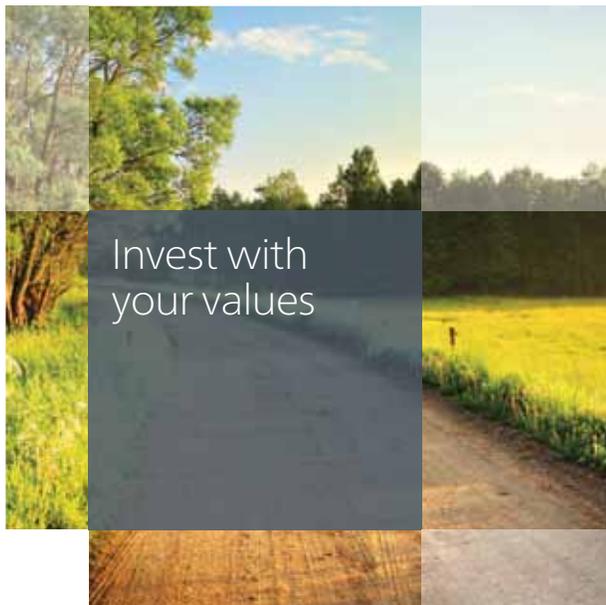
NatureKids BC is running a cats and birds citizen science project, Bird Aware Cat Care, to help youth learn about the environment, have a conservation impact, and connect them to their community – all while being outdoors.

Subject to financing, we plan to expand our local action initiative to two communities in BC, Vancouver and Qualicum Beach, in collaboration with our BC partners. The initiative builds on a pilot we did in Guelph, Ontario, and explores how best to mobilize local support for the issue to create lasting change.

One of the interesting things we learned in Guelph was that many nature-lovers tend to let their cats outdoors, wanting to provide their cats with the same experience of the outdoors that they themselves enjoy. Volunteers are trained in responding to those concerns with messages about balancing the needs of cats with the needs of the rest of the nature.

Those volunteers – more than 50 of them across Canada, not including our partner organizations – are encouraging people to take the pledge to make Canada a safer place for cats and birds by recruiting local partners; distributing brochures, bookmarks, and posters; lobbying their local governments; writing guest blogs; giving presentations; and having displays at local events.

Our research shows that 59% of Canadians and 43.8% of BC residents already keep their cats from roaming unsupervised. You can help increase those numbers: Join the movement! Everyone has a role to play, cat-owner or not. Please take the [pledge](http://catsandbirds.ca) at catsandbirds.ca. Volunteer. Advocate. Share our posts on Facebook and Twitter. Help Keep Cats Safe & Save Bird Lives!◇



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