PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
WILDLIFE
CONSERVATION FUND

Fall 2024
Summary Report

(For Public Distribution)

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Introduction

The Wildlife Conservation Fund was established in 1998 to provide funding for not-for-profit groups participating in Wildlife Enhancement projects in PEI.

Revenue for the Fund is collected by the province through two established sources, the Conservation Fee associated with the sale of Angling, Hunting, and Trapping licences. The second revenue source is through the revenue collected with the purchase and annual renewal of motor vehicle licence plate registrations.

The Wildlife Conservation Fund operates under the direction of an Executive Committee made up of volunteers from across PEI and an Application Evaluation Committee that reviews, scores, and recommends funding levels based on applications in one of the five categories:

- Habitat Restoration and Enhancement
- Natural Areas
- Education
- Research and Monitoring
- Other

The following Summary Report lists the funded organizations and their project outcomes for the Fall of 2024.

Tignish and Area Watershed Management Group INC

Project Title: Beaver Management Planning
Project Type: Project based: benefit to wildlife and habitat

Project Summary
This project successfully completed a watershed assessment of Skinner's Pond, leading to the development of a comprehensive beaver management plan in consultation with consultants. A detailed work plan has been established for the 2026 work year, outlining specific restoration areas within the watershed, including a culvert replacement and a bridge replacement. Benefits to wildlife include unimpeded fish passage for aquatic species. Furthermore, efforts have been made to educate the community on wildlife conservation, fostering a greater understanding and appreciation for the local ecosystem.

Benefit to Wildlife/Potential to Advance Knowledge/Pedagogy Impact
This project has been completed successfully with a complete beaver management plan for Skinner's Pond and a restoration plan for 2026. The restoration plan will include culvert and bridge replacement in the area along Knox Lane and be a benefit to aquatic species to have an unimpeded passage upstream.

Project Results
List of goals/results

- Have an assessment of Skinner's Pond watershed completed - An assessment of Skinner's Pond has been completed with the new drone and groundwork. Work on restoration will begin in 2026 with a new culvert and a bridge replacement to restore fish passage for aquatic species.
- Consult with Wildlife specialists on beaver management - A beaver management plan is complete.
- Have a completed Beaver Management plan for Skinner's Pond watershed
- Have a work plan created for the 2026 work year entailing restoration areas - Social media posts about wildlife conservation are ongoing and will continue to be posted throughout the year.
- Have an educated community on wildlife conservation - A press release has been completed and published.

Was the project Successfully Completed: Yes
On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the best, how would you rate the success of your project: 10

Winter River - Tracadie Bay Watershed Association

Project Title: Encouraging Healthy Relationships with Nature: Educating Youth and the Public on PEI's Wildlife and Natural Ecosystems
Project Type: Education based: pedagogy & impact

Project Summary
Thanks to the PEIWCF, our organization developed educational tools and resources for the youth and the general public, emphasizing the importance of protecting local wildlife and their habitats while minimizing negative interactions with nature. This project was accomplished through a series of social media posts, engaging animated videos, and two web pages dedicated to youth education that offer access to printable materials.

Benefit to Wildlife/Potential to Advance Knowledge/Pedagogy Impact

Project Results

1) Educate Youth about PEI's Native Wildlife (COMPLETE) - Thanks to this funding, we successfully developed engaging content aimed at educating our younger audience on the diversity of wildlife found on PEI. This includes:A printable document on PEI's native wildlife, available on our website (https://www.wintertracadie.ca/pei-native-wildlife)Three engaging animated videos that showcase PEI wildlife, focusing on invasive species, species at risk, and how to safely interact with nature (links in supporting documents).A series of five social media posts that illustrate the effects of human activities on PEI's native wildlife, covering topics such as impacts on forests, water, and wetlands, as well as pollution and invasive species.
1. Educate Youth about Invasive Species (COMPLETE) - An engaging and informative animated video was created to talk about invasive species and their impact on wildlife in PEI that is both easy for young audiences to grasp and enjoyable to watch. This video is available on our social media platforms and website.
2. Educate on PEI's species at risk (COMPLETE) - An engaging and informative animated video was created to discuss some species at risk on PEI and what we can do to help. We also updated our website's species at risk web page by adding a printable document outlining important species at risk in PEI (https://www.wintertracadie.ca/species-at-risk).
3. Educate on how to safely interact with nature (COMPLETE) - An engaging and informative animated video was created dedicated to educating individuals on how to engage with nature while minimizing negative effects on wildlife and their habitats. Additionally, we designed a printable document that summarizes important information from the webpage, allowing visitors to easily access and print it.
4. Interactive youth education webpage (COMPLETE) - We developed two interactive web pages aimed at youth and the general public to improve our website. One page focuses on the native wildlife of PEI with engaging content and valuable educational resources. Additionally, we created another interactive page that offers guidance on responsible interactions with nature, emphasizing the importance of mindfulness regarding our environmental impact. To promote these new resources, we made two social media posts dedicated to highlighting their features and encouraging our audience to check them out (https://www.facebook.com/reel/622496547294765).

5. Educate youth on PEI's Natural Environments (COMPLETE) - Our organization developed a series of five social media posts to educate the public about PEI's natural environments. We highlighted saltwater, freshwater, wetland, coastal, and forest ecosystems, sharing numerous fascinating facts about each environment and its wildlife. Furthermore, we created a downloadable document summarizing key information about the natural environments featured in our posts, available on our website for visitors to print or download (https://www.wintertracadie.ca/protecting-our-ecosystem).

Was the project Successfully Completed: Yes
On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the best, how would you rate the success of your project: 10

PEI Watershed Alliance

Project Title: Supporting Habitat Improvement and Strategic Planning for Atlantic Salmon Conservation on PEI
Project Type: Research based: potential to advance knowledge

Project Summary
This project explored salmon practices of watershed groups across PEI, shared new salmon-related information with these groups, and identified two future projects. This knowledge will be used to implement salmon habitat restoration projects in 2025.

Project Results
Proposed Activity

1) Examine salmon assessment protocols with the guidance of the Salmon Technical Committee
    a. Anticipated Result (Measure of Success) 1 draft gap analysis report with recommendations for a consistent, province-wide salmon assessment protocol
    b. ACTUAL RESULTS Survey results were compiled, scored, and incorporated into a draft gap analysis report. This draft needs further review by the Salmon Technical Committee.
2) Proposed Activity: Research salmonid-specific pilot projects occurring elsewhere in Atlantic Canada
    a. Anticipated Result (Measure of Success): 1 list of pilot projects for trial on PEI, with well-researched justifications and resources required
    b. ACTUAL RESULTS: 2 pilot projects identified: a) Thermal imaging on Morell River involving an operator will be flying a helicopter equipped with thermal imaging cameras b) CQWF's Riverwatcher pilot project will begin this summer.
3) Proposed Activity: Meet with individual watershed groups to discuss their salmon assessments
    a. Anticipated Result (Measure of Success): Minimum 8 meetings with individual watershed groups
    b. ACTUAL RESULTS: Meetings held with 10 watershed groups (BBEMA, CAWG, CQWF, MRMC, RBWA, RMW, SAB, SEA, TUPCC, PREP/HRA)and two other organizations (UPEI Aquatic Research Laboratory, Abegweit Conservation Society)
4) Proposed Activity: Liaise with partners invested in salmonid conservation (Gov, academia, NGO, etc.)
    a. Anticipated Result (Measure of Success): 1 salmon meeting with all partners hosted by the Alliance in January 2025
    b. ACTUAL RESULTS: Salmon committee meetings: 2024-11-21, 2025-01-27Salmon projects group 2024-11-19

5) Proposed Activity: Establish next steps for the salmon projects coordinator to take in 2025-26
    a. Anticipated Result (Measure of Success): 1 publicly accessible meeting to discuss project results and continuance of the initiative supported through DFO's Habitat Stewardship Program
    b. ACTUAL RESULTS: Due to reduced funding, the salmon coordinator was hired for fewer weeks, and the public meeting has not been completed. Instead, it will be incorporated in a future project

Was the project Successfully Completed: Partial
On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the best, how would you rate the success of your project: 9

University of Prince Edward Island

Project Title: The spread of invasive lung parasites in Prince Edward Island's wild canids
Project Type: Research based: potential to advance knowledge

Project Summary

In Prince Edward Island several parasites have recently been detected for the first time. Among them is the French heartworm Angiostrongylus vasorum, a canid parasite that can cause severe disease. Our goal was to screen PEI wild canids for the presence of A. vasorum and to determine were on the island this emerging parasite can be found. We screened a total of 32 coyotes and 7 foxes so far and detected the parasite in 12.5% of coyotes and 28.6% of foxes. The parasite was found in central and eastern PEI. Other common parasites identified were Crenosoma vulpis (28.1% of coyotes, 71.4% of foxes) and Capillaria aerophila (15.6% of coyotes, 85.7% of foxes). We now know that the risk of lungworm infections, including A. vasorum, is high in PEI and suspect that A. vasorum infection rates will increase in PEI in the future. It remains uncertain whether A. vasorum has a significant impact on the overall health and well-being of wild canids in PEI. Further research is needed to determine the extent of any potential negative health effects.

Project Results

A total of 83 carcasses were received for necropsy from October 2024 to March 18th, 2025. 74 were coyote carcasses and 9 were fox carcasses. The carcasses were provided by hunters and trappers from various locations across PEI, providing a representative sample of PEI wild canids. We necropsied all 83 carcasses and removed plucks (lungs and hearts) and the small intestine (intended for another study). Out of the 83 collected plucks, 39 underwent necropsies so far, focusing on parasite recovery. The three major parasites recovered were Angiostrongylus vasorum (A. vasorum), Crenosoma vulpis (C. vulpis), and Capillaria aerophila (C. aerophila).

1) Angiostrongylus vasorum - Angiostrongylus vasorum was found in 12.5% (4/32) of coyotes. In foxes, the infection rate for A. vasorum was higher at 28.6% (2/7). We, however, have only screened 7 foxes, compared to 32 coyotes. Due to the small sample size for foxes, additional screening will be needed to more closely evaluate the infection rate in the fox population. Considering that A. vasorum was not present on PEI until recently (approximately 5 years ago), a prevalence rate of 12.5% and 28.6%, respectively, suggests a rapid spread of this parasite in the wild canid population in PEI. In the examined wild canid population the parasite was most prevalent in canids from central and eastern PEI (see attached map and legend below).
2) Crenosoma vulpis - Crenosoma vulpis was found in 28.1% (9/32) of coyotes. In foxes, C. vulpis had a much higher prevalence of 71.4% (5/7). This high rate in foxes indicates that C. vulpis is a prevalent parasite in the PEI fox population. This parasite had been previously reported at similarly high rates in Maritime foxes. Crenosoma vulpis may be less common or have a lower impact on coyotes. Differences in habitat or behavioral ecology between the two species could explain this disparity in infection rates. Crenosoma vulpis was detected in all areas of PEI.
3) Capillaria aerophila - Capillaria aerophila was detected in 15.6% (5/32) of coyotes. In foxes, C. aerophila was found to be much higher at 85.7% (6/7). This high prevalence makes C. aerophila a parasitic threat to foxes in the region, with the parasite primarily affecting the respiratory system, potentially leading to coughing, nasal discharge, and difficulty breathing

in foxes. While the prevalence in coyotes is lower than the prevalence observed in foxes, it still suggests that the parasite is present in the coyote population. The respiratory impact of C. aerophila in coyotes is likely less pronounced than in foxes, possibly due to either increased resistance or lower exposure. Capillaria aerophila was detected across PEI.

Summary of Findings

Our results suggest distinct patterns in parasite prevalence between foxes and coyotes. In general, foxes exhibited higher infection rates for the examined parasites compared to coyotes, particularly for C. vulpis and C. aerophila. The differences in prevalence could be due to various factors, including differences in habitat use, behaviors, diet, or exposure to environmental conditions conducive to parasite transmission. However, the small sample size of examined foxes should be taken into account, as it may skew the prevalence numbers.

We were able to show that the emerging parasite A. vasorum has reached a high infection rate in both foxes and coyotes since its initial detection approximately 5 years ago. This suggests that A. vasorum is rapidly spreading across PEI and through both the coyote and fox populations. This will lead to increased infection risk of wild and also domestic canids in PEI. We suspect that A. vasorum infection rates will increase in PEI coyotes and foxes in the future. It remains uncertain whether A. vasorum has a significant impact on the overall health and well-being of wild canids in PEI. Further research is needed to determine the extent of any potential negative health effects.

Outlook - We intend to continue the screening process until all plucks have been screened. We will conduct additional mapping and statistical analysis to further analyze the obtained results. Data will be presented at conferences and to the public and published in a peer-reviewed journal.

Was the project Successfully Completed: Partial
On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the best, how would you rate the success of your project: 8

Trout River Environmental Committee

Project Title: Hope River Osprey Nesting Post
Project Type: Project based: benefit to wildlife and habitat

Project Summary
This project provides safe nesting habitat for Osprey in the Hope River area and improved public awareness of impacts to Osprey populations through informational brochures.
One Osprey perch was installed at Raspberry Point Oyster Co. Tours: 9539 Cavendish Rd, Cavendish, PE C0A 1M0 and will be highlighted during boat tours through informational brochures and visibility of the perch at this location.

Project Results
The results of our project align directly with our initial goals and objectives, successfully contributing to both habitat enhancement for Ospreys on Hope River and increased public awareness of their conservation.

First, the installation of the Osprey nesting post on Hope River directly addressed our primary objective of providing additional nesting opportunities for Ospreys in the area. Given the historical population decline due to DDT use and the limited number of existing nesting perches in the TREC watershed, this new perch plays a crucial role in improving breeding habitat. By adding this structure in a location where Osprey sightings have been reported by community members and Raspberry Point Oysters employees, we have increased the likelihood of successful nesting in the region.

Second, our public engagement efforts successfully educated the community about Ospreys and their conservation needs. Through social media posts on Instagram and Facebook, a newsletter to TREC members, and posts on our website we reached a broad audience with key information on Osprey populations, the role of nesting posts, and ongoing threats to the species. This outreach fostered awareness and encouraged community involvement in conservation efforts.

Finally, the creation and distribution of 200 educational booklets enhanced the educational experience of Raspberry Point Oysters' boat tour participants. These materials provided in-depth knowledge about Osprey populations, their historical decline, ongoing recovery, and the importance of habitat protection. By integrating this information into the boat tours as well as sharing a digital copy on our website, we ensured that both tourists and local community members gained a deeper understanding of the species and the broader ecological importance of the TREC watershed.

Overall, the project successfully met its intended objectives by both directly supporting Osprey conservation through habitat improvements and fostering greater awareness through educational initiatives. These efforts contribute to the long-term sustainability of the local osprey population and reinforce the importance of conservation actions in the region.

Was the project Successfully Completed: Yes
On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the best, how would you rate the success of your project: 10

Sierra Club - Wild Child PEI

Project Title: PEI Wild Child Nature Immersion Program (2024/25)
Project Type: Education based: pedagogy & impact

Project Summary
The PEI Wild Child Nature Immersion Program 2024/2025 provided children with immersive outdoor educational experiences in local green spaces throughout Prince Edward Island. The program employed hands-on learning to educate children about the region's wildlife and natural environments, offering them opportunities to explore the diverse and intricate habitats found right outside their doorsteps. Research indicates that repeated exposure to local ecosystems, wildlife, and habitats fosters a more profound sense of environmental stewardship, which often persists into adulthood. This is crucial for ensuring our ecosystems and wildlife's continued protection and preservation.

The Wild Child PEI team focused on tapping into children's natural curiosity and interests, embracing free play combined with educational games and lessons to create an organic learning environment. This approach helped children acquire new skills, such as animal identification and promoted the development of essential soft skills like resilience. We are delighted with the positive feedback received from the participating classes and are excited about the program's continued impact.

Project Results

- Engage 400 children across 25 groups
    - Result: We engaged 600 children across 30 groups, exceeding the 450 children and 25 groups we initially aimed for. This shows that the program really resonated with the community, and we're excited about the higher-than-expected interest. It also means the program has the potential to expand even further, which is encouraging for future planning.
- Evaluate the Nature Immersion Program on an ongoing basis
    - Result: We've kept the evaluation process ongoing throughout the project. One of the key outcomes of this was the creation of the 2025 Nature Immersion Staff Handbook, which reflects everything we've learned and taught. This guide will help new facilitators get up to speed and ensure the program is consistent and effective as it grows. We've been able to revise and improve the experience based on feedback.
- Successfully present programming and foster meaningful connections to the local environment
    - Result: The program has clearly made an impact. 100% of survey respondents said they'd love for us to return to their facility, and every single one also reported an increase in the children's desire to play, explore, and talk about nature after visiting. This shows we've been able to engage them and spark a lasting interest in the environment, which was one of our primary goals.
- Deepening the relationship to the local ecosystem and wildlife via repeated visits to groups
    - Result: Of the 30 groups we worked with, 16 requested additional visits, which is a fantastic outcome. Our approach to building a more profound connection through repeat visits works. Kids had a chance to see changes in the environment over time,

which gave them a more hands-on and meaningful understanding of the local ecosystem and wildlife.

- Communicate WCF's role in funding the nature immersion program and partnership with PEI Wild Child
    - Result: We've clearly and consistently communicated WCF's support for the program. This transparency has helped reinforce the importance of these collaborations and how they've made the program possible. Check out the NI 2024/2025 Communication Document for more details.

Was the project Successfully Completed: Yes
On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the best, how would you rate the success of your project: 10

Wheatley River Improvement Group Inc.

Project Title: Increasing Osprey Nesting Opportunities in the Wheatley River Watershed
Project Type: Project based: benefit to wildlife and habitat

Project Summary
This project took place in the Wheatley River watershed, in the Cymbria region. Two osprey nesting posts were installed on separate properties within the Cymbria/Rustico region, along the Grand-Père Point loop.

The goals of this project were to:

1. Provide additional safe and reliable nesting opportunities for osprey;
2. Record video imagery of osprey nesting habits in a non-invasive way;
3. Improve public awareness, community engagement, and education with respect to wildlife conservation.

As a result, we successfully installed two 30-foot tall wooden posts with large brackets and platforms at the top to provide a safe and secure place for osprey to nest in the spring. Many large trees in the area were lost during hurricane Fiona in 2022, which has reduced options for habitat for some species, such as the osprey.

As a result, a pair had made their nest atop a telephone post in a neighborhood off of Grand-Père Point. This can be dangerous and put the osprey and their nest at risk. This project is of benefit to wildlife as it gives the osprey an opportunity for a safe place to nest. Moreover, the posts/platforms will remain there year-round and for years to come, to serve as nesting opportunities in the future. Another component to this project is the installation of a remote surveillance camera, to monitor the osprey activity in one location. Once installed and running, this will provide video footage of the nest, and we will use the video clips as a public engagement activity. Through WRIG's website and social media, there will be contests and other opportunities for the public to take part in this project and learn more about osprey protection. This will increase public awareness of osprey and other wildlife, while encouraging them to be a part of the project. In turn, we hope this will support public education regarding watershed activities, wildlife conservation and environmental stewardship in the area.

In addition to the engagement component, WRIG will gather information about osprey migration, nesting and behaviour through the surveillance system. This will contribute to our understanding of the species and support our conservation efforts.

Benefit to Wildlife/Potential to Advance Knowledge/Pedagogy Impact
The Grand-Père Point loop in Cymbria, PEI is in prime osprey nesting habitat. A number of successful osprey nests can be found in this area. However, some large trees were lost during post-tropical storm Fiona in September 2022, and as a result, at least one osprey nesting pair has attempted to build a nest in the powerlines at the top of a nearby utility pole (see attached photo). This surface is not adequate for osprey nesting in the long term and is already threatening to fall apart. This project was of benefit to wildlife by providing a safe nesting area for the osprey which have been displaced, and protecting the birds from future harm. The nesting platforms that were installed can also continue to be used on an annual basis. In addition, we have a unique opportunity to capture some

live osprey nesting video imagery with this project. We are not aware of any osprey nest camera installations by watershed groups yet on PEI and this project could provide some very interesting and potentially new information about osprey nesting habits. In other areas, these types of camera installations have been used for research and have been successful in engaging the public. This part of the project will also benefit wildlife by promoting awareness of PEI's birds to the community at large, highlighting PEI's dedication to habitat enhancement, and providing an excellent educational opportunity.

Project Results

1. Provide additional safe and reliable nesting opportunities for osprey. Two 30-foot posts with very large and sturdy nesting platforms were successfully installed in the selected locations (one at each site on the Grand-père point loop) on November 7, 2024, well before the ground froze. These will provide ideal nesting sites for 2 returning osprey pairs in the Cymbria area. Now, osprey no longer have to resort to nesting in unsafe locations such as power lines.
1. Record video imagery of osprey nesting habits in a non-invasive way. We have not yet recorded video imagery of osprey nesting habits as we don't expect the osprey to return to the area until early to mid-April. A brace/bracket for the camera was installed prior to post installation. The platform is now equipped for camera to be installed. A solar-powered video surveillance camera was purchased and we plan to have the camera installed before the osprey return, as long as the weather permits safe access up to the platform.
2. Improve public awareness, community engagement, and education with respect to wildlife conservation. We have already shared information about this project in a few places for the public, including social and print media. We also plan to provide osprey photos and video snapshots on WRIG's website and other social media outlets when the osprey return. Providing real and local footage has a way of engaging the community in a lasting way. We also plan to use some fun engagement tools such as an online contest to get followers guessing on occurrences captured on the osprey camera and to hopefully encourage new members to follow our posts.

Was the project Successfully Completed: Partial
On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the best, how would you rate the success of your project: 8

Morell River Management Cooperative

Project Title: Improving Salmonid Populations on the Morell River
Project Type: Project based: benefit to wildlife and habitat

Project Summary
The project successfully provided native brook trout and Atlantic salmon broodstock from the Morell River to the Abegweit Biodiversity Enhancement Hatchery for the PEI Fish Stock Enhancement Program. The project also ensured that trout and salmon could reach natural spawning areas in the fall of 2024 by removing barriers throughout migration routes. A complete Atlantic salmon redd survey was accomplished to monitor spawning locations and to estimate the number of returning adult salmon. This information was provided to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada to help make informed management decisions.

Benefit to Wildlife/Potential to Advance Knowledge/Pedagogy Impact
This project provided benefits to Atlantic salmon and brook trout by ensuring that successful spawning in all branches of the Morell River occurred in fall of 2024. This project also successfully provided brook trout and Atlantic salmon brood stock for the PEI Fish Stocking Program through the operation of Leard's fish trap. The eggs provided by the brood stock will be monitored and cared for by staff at the Abegweit Biodiversity Enhancement Hatchery over the winter. In spring and summer of 2025 juvenile fish will be released back into the Morell River to increase their population.

Unrestricted access to spawning areas was ensured by notching beaver dams blocking upstream migration. This activity will not only benefit Atlantic salmon and brook trout but all other species of migratory fish including American eel, rainbow smelt, and alewife by allowing migration in spring of 2025. In total, five beaver dams were removed on the Morell River in the fall of 2024 to allow migration to spawning sites.

For the first time since 2020, MRMC staff were able to survey the entire Morell River for Atlantic salmon redds. Each branch of the Morell River was walked or paddled to count and GPS Atlantic salmon redds. A total of 288 redds were counted during the fall survey. Redd survey data is important to collect annually as it is provided to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to assist in their species management decisions. This survey is important to help estimate Atlantic salmon populations and determine the most important spawning areas for future enhancement work.

Healthy populations of Atlantic salmon and brook trout are important for the overall health of the aquatic ecosystem. They benefit larger wildlife by providing a food source and benefit all inhabitants of the river by bringing marine-derived nutrients to the freshwater ecosystem during their migration upriver. This project provided benefits to native salmonids by increasing their populations and ensuring natural spawning could take place.

Project Results
- Remove barriers to fish migration on the Morell River
    - A total of five beaver dams were removed on the Morell River in the fall of 2024 to ensure that brook trout and Atlantic salmon could reach preferred spawning areas.

Three beaver dams were removed on the east branch, one on a tributary to the west branch and two on the south west branch.

- Collect broodstock for the PEI Fish Stocking program through the operation of Leard's Pond fish trap
    - Through the operation and maintenance of Leard's fish trap, MRMC provided the Abegweit Biodiversity Enhancement Hatchery with 5 Atlantic salmon and 4 brook trout for the PEI Fish Stocking Program. In addition to the fish trap, MRMC staff assisted the Department of Fish and Wildlife and Abegweit hatchery staff with collecting brood stock through other methods.
- Gather data on fish movement through Leard's Fish trap to compare with historical numbers.
    - The Leard's Pond fish trap was installed on October 1st and was operated for 51 trap days. A total of 12 Atlantic salmon and 148 brook trout moved through the trap.
- Assist the Abegweit Biodiversity Enhancement Hatchery with the spawning of brook trout and Atlantic salmon
    - MRMC staff assisted with spawning Atlantic salmon at the Abegweit Hatchery on November 6th and brook trout on November 13th. On November 12th, MRMC staff assisted with the release of Atlantic salmon back into the Morell River at Leard's Pond. Approximately 10,000 brook trout eggs and 50,000 salmon eggs were collected during the spawning process. The eggs will be cared for by hatchery staff over the winter until they are ready to be released as fry in the spring/summer of 2025.
- Complete Atlantic salmon spawning (redd) surveys on the Morell River to compare with historical data
    - MRMC staff accomplished a complete Atlantic salmon redd survey of the Morell River for the first time since 2020. The coordinates of each redd were recorded to compare the sections of the river that were used for spawning with historical maps. Survey information was provided to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada to help with management decisions.

Was the project Successfully Completed: Yes
On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the best, how would you rate the success of your project: 10

Hunter-Clyde Watershed Group

Project Title: Barred Owl Nest Box Workshops and Survey Walk
Project Type: Education based: pedagogy & impact

Project Summary
Our project was designed as a comprehensive, multi-faceted initiative that combined the hands-on construction of Barred Owl Nest Boxes with educational opportunities aimed at fostering environmental awareness and conservation. At each workshop, participants were supplied with all the materials and tools necessary to build their own nest boxes and received informative leaflets about barred owls, which provided insight into their behaviour, habitat, diet, and general characteristics. These materials encouraged active engagement, all while directly contributing to habitat enhancement efforts. The project was delivered through four distinct workshops: one with students from Gulf Shore Consolidated School, another with residents of Rosewood Residence Community Home, and two that were open to the general public at the Hunter River Community Centre.

The workshops created an interactive and creative learning environment, which led to insightful discussions and numerous questions regarding barred owls and broader conservation issues. Step by step, participants put together their very own nest boxes. When completed, participants had the option to either take them home to install or donate them back to the project for placement within the Hunter-Clyde Watershed. Those who chose to donate their boxes will remain involved in the long-term success of the project, receiving updates on the overall impact and, for example, whether an owl chooses to nest in their box. Additionally, participants were invited to complete a survey to share their workshop experience, including what they learned, what they enjoyed, and suggestions for improvement. This feedback will be instrumental in assessing the success of the workshops and identifying opportunities for enhancement in future initiatives. Wildlife will benefit from this project through increased nesting habitat from the 20 nest boxes that were built, and the increased awareness of island wildlife and wildlife habitat.

Benefit to Wildlife/Potential to Advance Knowledge/Pedagogy Impact
Students at Gulf Shore Consolidated School actively participated in building Barred Owl Nest Boxes, making a meaningful impact on their local environment. This hands-on project not only promoted teamwork and improved listening skills, but also provided an

Project Results
Anticipated results: 20 grade one students learned about the importance of native wildlife, habitat, and how owl boxes can help provide nesting sites in areas lacking suitable habitat. One barred owl nest box built. Results: 14 grade one students learned about the importance of native wildlife, habitat, and how owl boxes can help provide nesting sites in areas lacking suitable habitat. Six students were absent from school on the day of the workshop. Two barred owl nest boxes built.

Anticipated results: 15 community members learned about the importance of native wildlife, habitat, and how owl boxes can help provide nesting sites in areas lacking suitable habitat. 15 barred owl nest boxes built. Results: 21 community members learned about the importance of native wildlife,

habitat, and how owl boxes can help provide nesting sites in areas lacking habitat. 17 barred owl nest boxes built.

Anticipated results: 10 residents of Rosewood Community Care Home learned about the importance of native wildlife, habitat, and how owl boxes can help provide nesting sites in areas lacking suitable habitat. Four barred owl nest boxes built. Results: 15 residents learned about the importance of native wildlife, habitat, and how owl boxes can help provide nesting sites in areas lacking suitable habitat. One barred owl nest box built.

Anticipated results: 15 participants joined Hunter-Clyde Watershed Group and a professional on an owl survey at the end of March 2025. Results The owl survey walk did not happen during the funding time period.

Anticipated results: Update ~ 5 participants who donate their owl box via email on the success of the nest boxes. Results: Update ~ 6 participants who donated their owl box, via email on the success of the nest boxes that they made.

Anticipated results: Prepared and printed material on owls, owl boxes, SARA and COSEWIC to hand out at workshops. Distribute ~ 40 leaflets. Results: We decided to focus more on the barred owls so the leaflet contained only information on barred owls and we did not include information on SARA and COSEWIC. 45 leaflets were printed and distributed.

Anticipated results: Provided an optional survey to 17 participants to fill out after the project is completed via email, to gauge the success of the project through increased knowledge, and participant satisfaction. Results: Provided an optional survey to 21 participants to fill out after the project is completed via email, to gauge the success of the project through increased knowledge, and participant satisfaction.

Was the project Successfully Completed: Partial
On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the best, how would you rate the success of your project: 8

Wheatley River Improvement Group Inc.

Project Title: PEI Winter Woodlot Tour 2025
Project Type: Education based: pedagogy & impact

Project Summary
The Winter Woodlot Tour is an event planned collaboratively by 4 watershed groups: the Wheatley River Improvement Group, Hunter-Clyde Watershed Group, Trout River Environmental Committee, and Central Queens Branch of the PEI Wildlife Federation. This year's event took place on January 25, 2025 on a private property on the Rustico Road in North Milton.

One goal for the event was to educate the public about sustainable woodlot management practices including promoting stewardship and sustainable use of forests on PEI. We had exhibitors from the Forest Enhancement Program, PEI Woodlot Owner's Association and the Sustainable Forest Alliance to teach visitors about sustainable woodlot use. There were also exhibitors who have expertise in forests, wildlife, and land-use management practices. These included chainsaw maintenance with MacPhail Woods Ecological Forestry Project, maple syrup production, Women Shooters of PEI, PEI Trappers Association and more.

Through the participation of exhibitors at the Winter Woodlot Tour, we had the opportunity to demonstrate to over 600 visitors the significance of forest habitats for wildlife, even in winter months, and the unique relationships and interactions that occur between forest organisms, the environment, and people. This was shown through winter nature walks, and from PEI Untamed talking about island wildlife.

The hope for the Winter Woodlot Tour is to display the great environmental organizations across PEI. This event is a way to showcase each group's purpose and help islanders find an environmental organization they can relate to and be involved with. For example, we had staff from the PEI Invasive Species Council talking about their work managing invasive species, and PEI Wild Child giving parents and children ways to have fun getting outside.

The Winter Woodlot Tour benefits wildlife through education and outreach. The event promotes many environmental organizations and what they are doing to protect island wildlife and their habitat. We had a booth demonstrating the work watershed groups do to benefit wildlife and how people can get involved, and where nest box and bat box building templates were given out. The hope for the event is to foster a greater appreciation for PEI's forests and wildlife, in turn encouraging local conservation action.

Benefit to Wildlife/Potential to Advance Knowledge/Pedagogy Impact
The Winter Woodlot Tour gave both adults and children a reason to get outside during the winter months. With the participation of 20 unique environmental organizations setting up information booths, we were able to give a well-rounded learning experience

Project Results

1. Educate the general public about sustainable woodlot management practices including promoting stewardship and sustainable use of forests on PEI.
    a. We were able to educate the general public about sustainable woodlot management practices by having three groups whose main focus is in sustainable forestry. These groups talked about sustainable woodlot management, and different programs that are available to woodlot owners. The woodlot groups who attended the event were the Forest Enhancement Program, PEI Woodlot Owners Association, and the Sustainable Forest Alliance.
2. Provide expertise on a variety of subjects related to forest, wildlife and/or land-use management practices and methods, including safe chainsaw operation and maple syrup harvesting.
    a. Exhibitors that have expertise in subjects related to forest, wildlife and land-use management practices were also in attendance. One booth had maple syrup samples and discussed the processes of making maple syrup. We had another booth put on by MacPhail Woods Ecological Forestry Project where they talked about proper chainsaw maintenance and courses.
3. Demonstrate (i) the significance of forest habitats for wildlife, even in the winter months, and (ii) the unique relationships and interactions that occur between forest organisms, the environment, and people.
    a. Hosting the Winter Woodlot Tour outdoors offers a truly unique opportunity for visitors to deeply engage with their learning experience. Our event welcomed diverse groups like the PEI Trappers Association, who shed light on the critical role forest habitats play in supporting island wildlife. The Association showcased taxidermy displays of PEI's native wildlife, providing insights into the trapping industry and the life histories of fur-bearing animals. Moreover, we collaborated with organizations passionate about educating visitors on the significance of birds of prey, including Forest, Fish, and Wildlife, and PEI Untamed.
3. Highlight the importance of environmental organizations on PEI (such as watershed groups, Island Nature Trust, and/or the Invasive Species Council), including how their work is enhancing and restoring our natural ecosystems.
    a. Over 600 visitors attended the event this year; they engaged with 20 environmental groups and learned about interactions with the natural world and how even in winter, island forests are full of life. The event also had sleigh rides, as well as opportunities for people to try snowshoeing. Each of these activities were popular for both children and adults to take part in.

Was the project Successfully Completed: Yes
On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the best, how would you rate the success of your project: 10

Island Nature Trust

Project Title: Exploring the importance of coastal ecosystems in Prince Edward Island.
Project Type: Education based: pedagogy & impact

Project Summary
INT delivered in-class presentations to grade 7 classes across PEI, with the goal of increasing knowledge of beach-dune ecosystems. INT staff were able to engage with 325 grade 7 students across the island, and provide an interactive educational experience to increase understanding and awareness of coastal ecosystems, the threats they face, and what you can do to help protect this sensitive ecosystem.

Project Results

- Create a three-dimensional model of PEI's coastal beach-dune ecosystem:
    - A three-dimensional model of the beach-dune ecosystem was created, displaying the ocean, intertidal zone, embryo dunes, primary dunes, secondary dunes, and mature dunes. The model includes illustrations to represent the expansive root systems present beneath dunes. Wildlife figurines, including fox, bald eagle, and smooth green snake, were also added to the model.
- Procure models of wildlife that utilize the beach-dune ecosystem in PEI:
    - Three coastal bird models were commissioned by a local artist and brought to the in-class presentations. The models include a piping plover, bank swallow, and sanderling.
- Update the in-class presentation to facilitate a more discussion-based approach to learning:
    - The PowerPoint was altered to reduce speaking time and allow for more interaction with the students.
- Questions were added to encourage critical thinking and conversation with students.
    - At the end of the presentation, 5 to 10 minutes were designated for an activity where students would attempt to correctly label the different components of our beach-dune model.
- Deliver in-class presentations to Grade 7 students in at least 6 schools across PEI:
    - INT staff presented and engaged with 325 grade 7 students at 8 different schools in 2025.
- In-class presentations focused on coastal ecosystems, ecological succession, traditional ecological knowledge, and best practices for beachgoers.
    - The interactive beach-dune model helped visually represent the presentation content and reinforced the student's knowledge.
- Repair/upgrade equipment used during field trips and purchase new equipment for future field trips:
    - New equipment was purchased to replace aging field trip equipment, including waders and erosion model bins. Additional equipment was also purchased to help with the organization and transportation of field trip equipment, including a sled and storage bins.

Was the project Successfully Completed: Yes
On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the best, how would you rate the success of your project: 10

Nature PEI -- The Natural History Society of Prince Edward Island

Project Title: Celebrating Discoveries from Community Science to Promote More Participation
Project Type: Education based: pedagogy & impact

Project Summary
Our educational project increased the profile of community science by creating engaging stories gleaned from observations on the nature-sharing online platform iNaturalist. iNaturalist workshops engaged small groups and allowed participants to understand the wide range of functions of the online iNaturalist program. They were enthusiastic about the expanded program found on the home computer versus the cell phone.

Benefits to Wildlife: People have been introduced to or deepened their relationship with nature due to attending the workshops and reading the iNaturalist stories. Many said they would spend more time on their laptops now that they have learned how to use the search functions and see for instance, the distribution of coyotes on PEI. We hope they become more motivated to learn more about nature, to protect it, join iNaturalist projects and start making observations on iNaturalist. A number of users already use the App, but expect to make better use of it now that they know what it and they can do. When we consider the definition of wildlife under the 1995 Wildlife Policy for Prince Edward Island, we realize that INaturalist is a special tool for monitoring wildlife. This means all wild creatures: fish, birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, invertebrate animals such as insects and molluscs, wild plants, fungi, microorganisms, and all their different habitats. It includes wildlife that is native or exotic to the Island. As of March 31, 2025, the number of PEI species monitored on iNaturalist stands at 6163.

Project Results
- We inspired many people to discover interesting aspects of wild species on PEI, to learn hands-on about using iNaturalist, and to use it for the first time or with renewed abilities. This last part is particularly important
- Interaction with the iNaturalist Stories covered the entire Island, and focused on Prince County primarily, and Eastern Kings to a lesser extent. Three workshops were held in March (O'Leary, Summerside and Souris) and the participants were generally intrigued with INaturalist as a source of information and as a good leisure time occupation.
- The following INaturalist stories involving 4 authors were published with captivating photographs on Facebook, then with staggered dates on Instagram, in our quarterly Island Naturalist newsletter, and on our website. Stories included: Where is the Mustard White?
- Hunting for Hemlocks, Aiming for Ash, with PEI Invasive Species Council The Possible Future of a Vagrant Butterfly Squids of PEI (includes a first record) Meadow and Woodland Jumping Mice Western Conifer Seed Bug Longhorn Red-footed Beetle Western PEI has the Most Poison Ivy Willow Pinecone Gall Midge and Willow Hosts: PEI Puzzle
- As promised we had a story in the West Prince Graphic, page 3, titled "Online nature tool could use more from western PEI" by the editor, Melissa Heald. It takes up about 80% of the page.
- Our results were people coming to workshops (25), reading postings on social media (over 5000 viewing), commenting and sharing. Twenty-five is not a big number, but the smaller number allowed a lot of one-on-one time which in some cases participants needed to

download iNaturalist.ca and to get assistance using the app. As well, participants were in areas where there are fewer online observations, and even two or three star observers will make a big difference in Island coverage. We are not certain that we properly earned our grant money, but we will continue to add to the work we did. As a result of the Summerside workshop, Nature PEI will put on a workshop for the Belfast Area Watershed Group. And, likely because of our lobbying, the PEI Watershed Alliance plans a contest among watershed groups to see which group can post the most observations on INaturalist. We hope to do some more stories in conjunction with the PEI Invasive Species Council. In short, we at Nature PEI love INaturalist and will continue to promote it.

- Four stories were chosen to be on bookmarks to be handed out at events and libraries. These are the "Western Conifer Seed Bug", "Where is the Mustard White?", "Longhorn Red-Footed Beetle" and "Hunting For Hemlocks, Aiming for Ash". Bookmarks can introduce more people to use the app and to get out and take part in iNaturalist. In all stories and printed material, we contacted photographers for permission to use their photos as shown on iNaturalist.

Was the project Successfully Completed: Yes
On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the best, how would you rate the success of your project: 8

Souris and Area Branch of the PEI Wildlife Federation

Project Title: Atlantic Salmon Population Monitoring in Northeastern Prince Edward Island
Project Type: Project based: benefit to wildlife and habitat

Project Summary
Souris and Area Branch of the PEI Wildlife Federation (SAB) successfully conducting extensive Atlantic salmon redd count surveys in North Lake Creek, Cross River, Hay River, Naufrage River and Cow River to evalute population trends in our local salmon rivers. These surveys helped us to count, GPS and map salmonid spawning nests in these rivers, and this data will be added to a years long data set and it will also be used to estimate spawner abundance and to assess spawning habitat conditions for Altantic salmon and Brook trout as part of future, and pinpointed restoaration work in the Souris and Area Branch of the PEI Wildife Federation management area.

Project Results
Unfortunately, our redd counts were down this year. Our surveys were done between November 18th and December 20th, 2024. Our 2024 Atlantic salmon redd count surveys were difficult to conduct this year. We started out our redd count surveys pretty good with low water conditions and good visibility to identify redds but the persistent and ongoing rain that we got during our survey time meant that the water levels got higher, the water got darker (murkier), and flashier and viewing redds (new and old) got to be very difficult very quickly. Souris and Area Branch of the PEI Wildlife Federation will continue to work meticulously to ensure good fish passage (using best beaver management practices), to restore and maintain suitable habitat areas for Atlantic salmon, preserve water quality and to always mitigate threatening factors that could limit our fish from spawning and thriving in our northeastern cluster of Atlantic salmon rivers.

Was the project Successfully Completed: Yes
On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the best, how would you rate the success of your project: 8

Bedeque Bay Environmental Management Association (BBEMA)

Project Title: Project Watershed - Building Natures Bridges
Project Type: Education based: pedagogy & impact

Project Summary
This project's incorporated fun interactive hands on learning opportunities to connect with varied community members (youth, seniors, newcomers/immigrants,general residents) to increase understanding of how their decisions and actions affect the environment. Building the knowledge and skills (through hands on learning activities) necessary to address complex environmental issues, as well as ways stakeholders can take action to keep PEI's environment healthy and sustainable for the future.

Project Results
IRSA PD Day -- Learn About PEI Wildlife PD Day - November 3/2024 - BBEMA Climate Change Coordinator and Project Assistant provided a 2 hr. interactive workshop (hosted at the Wilmot Community Center) for IRSA (PE Immigrant and Refugee Services Assoc). for 30 newcomer youth (ages 8-12) and 4 IRSA Coordinators. The workshop included an interactive talk about PEI Winter wildlife and how to ID winter birds - the workshop included native mammal/bird mounts from PEI Dept. of Fish and Wildlife.

Winter Trail Walk - January 11/2025 - BBEMA Climate Change Coordinator and BBEMA Environmental Projects Coordinator hosted a 2 hr. educational nature walk (Rotary Friendship Park, Summerside) - the walk was attended by 12ppl (Newcomer youth/family members/general public) - topics discussed included identifying winter birds, winter mammal trach ID and winter twig ID.

IRSA PD Day - Feeding Winter Birds February 1/2025 - BBEMA Climate Change Coordinator and Project Assistant provided a 3.5 hr. interactive workshop (hosted at the Wilmot Community Center) for IRSA (PE Immigrant and Refugee Services Assoc). for 28 newcomer youth (ages 8-12) and 9 IRSA Coordinators/staff. The workshop included an interactive talk about the importance of feeding winter birds, what types of wild bird feed to offer, how to ID different birds that visit feeders - the youth were provided with the materials/supplies to make homemade bird feeders to take home: Suet cookie and peanut butter pine cone feeder,. Additionally the youth were also given a bird color by number ID book to take home as well.

Winter Trail Walk - March 15/2025 - BBEMA Climate Change Coordinator and BBEMA Environmental Projects Coordinator hosted a 2 hr. educational nature walk (Baywalk Boardwalk, Summerside) - the walk was attended by 8ppl (general public) - topics discussed included winder wildlife ID and nature tracks.

Bird Feeder Painting Summerset Manor - March 24/2024 - BBEMA partnered with facility managers/staff to help initiate a winter bird feeding program for the residents of Summerset Manor. BBEMA Climate Change Coordinator and Project Assistant visited the Manor to help the residents paint wooden bird feeders (cut/built by BBEMA Environmental Project's Coordinator). The wooden bird feeders are designed to be suspended outside the residents' windows, offering residents the joy of observing birds indulging in seeds from their very own bedrooms. BBEMA staff lent a helping hand

by assisting the residents in selecting their preferred paint colors and providing them with paintbrushes. Residents with limited hand mobility were assisted to paint by BBEMA staff/resident care workers

- a total of 15 bird feeders were painted and brought back to the office to be covered in a clear protective coat before being taken back to be installed/filled with bird feed by Summerset Manor facilities r 11 seniors and 4 staff participated in the activity day. Participating seniors were given a Feeder Birds of PEI Flip Book -(created by BBEMA Climate Change Coordinator) to help them ID the birds visiting their new window feeders.

Spring Trail Walk - March 29/2025 - BBEMA Climate Change hosted a 2 hr. general nature walk for the Western Region 4H club members (attended by 27 4H youth and 4 4H leaders).

Was the project Successfully Completed: Yes
On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the best, how would you rate the success of your project: 10

Cascumpec Bay Watershed Association Inc.

Project Title: Dual purpose utility trailer
Project Type: Project based: benefit to wildlife and habitat

Project Summary
Located a locally manufactured trailer and purchased said trailer.

Benefit to Wildlife/Potential to Advance Knowledge/Pedagogy Impact
The project will allow CBWA to bring equipment and supplies to the work site efficiently and safely.

Project Results
The trailer is/will be used as intended. This trailer is aluminum a much lighter yet sturdy trailer.

Was the project Successfully Completed: Yes
On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the best, how would you rate the success of your project: 10

Pisquid River Enhancement Project Inc

Project Title: PREP Inc. Beaver Management for the Maintenance of Fish Passage in the Hillsborough & Vernon River Watersheds + Spring/Summer Tool & Safety Gear Replacement & Maintenance (Phase 2)
Project Type: Project based: benefit to wildlife and habitat

Project Summary
Between October 1st, 2024 and March 31st, 2025, PREP removed seven obstructive beavers between the Clark's Creek Main Branch at the Cape Breton Road crossing, the Head of Hillsborough Main Branch at the Barr Road crossing, the Pisquid River Main Branch at Leard's Pond, and the Pisquid River East Branch at the Dunphy Road crossing. Dams were minimally breached where necessary to attract beavers for the purpose of trapping. By undertaking beaver management measures in the vicinity of these key fish spawning and rearing sites, PREP eliminated and/or reduced future fish passage blockages, allowing fish improved upstream access for spawning and rearing. These measures are particularly important for the conservation of the endangered Atlantic salmon. Also, in collaboration with the provincial Forests, Fish, & Wildlife Division, some of the beavers trapped were provided to the Atlantic Veterinary College for ongoing trapping ethics studies. It should be noted that the trapping was undertaken by the Island's eldest and most experienced trapper - Clarence Ryan - who operates according to the strictest code of ethics.

Project Results
The trapping of beavers and the breaching of beaver dams in beaver management areas: Between October 1st, 2024 and March 31st, 2025, PREP removed seven obstructive beavers between the Clark's Creek Main Branch at the Cape Breton Road crossing, the Head of Hillsborough Main Branch at the Barr Road crossing, the Pisquid River Main Branch at Leard's Pond, and the Pisquid River East Branch at the Dunphy Road crossing. Dams were minimally breached where necessary to attract beavers for the purpose of trapping.

The purchasing of replacement waders, work gloves, hearing protectors, safety glasses, etc.: Due to our only having been awarded $900 of the $1729.97 we applied for - a difference of $829.97 - we deferred purchasing most of the Materials & Supplies included in our application (with the exception of seven pairs of White River Fly Shop Three Fork Lug Sole Chest Waders).

Was the project Successfully Completed: Yes
On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the best, how would you rate the success of your project: 10