

Habitat Conservation Fund 2024 Approved Projects



Non-lead Ammo & Tackle Alternative Education Project

Port Morien Wildlife Association

Awarded \$21,180.00

Our goal is to continue to educate hunters, trappers, and the public about the effect that both lead ammo and tackle has on the bald eagle and other birds of prey. Our goal through education is to show that as responsible hunters and fishers there are alternatives to lead that we can be using that will help with this problem. Education is our best means of protecting these birds and the environment.

Conserving Bank Swallows: Breeding, Habitat Quality, and Stewardship Monitoring

Birds Canada

Awarded \$19,914.00

This project will benefit wildlife habitat conservation by locating Bank Swallow nesting habitat and sharing that information with policy makers and those who enforce the Species at Risk Act and Endangered Species Act. We will also utilize targeted outreach to encourage private coastal property owners with Bank Swallow habitat and (potential Bank Swallow habitat) to manage their coastal cliffs in ways that benefit the species. Finally, we will place signage on a public beach with Bank Swallow colonies to bring awareness to the

species and to encourage behavioral changes of beach-goers that will limit unintentional harm to the nesting colonies.

Municipal Chimney Swift Stewardship and Increased Urban Natural Monitoring

Birds Canada

Awarded \$18,500.00

We aim to expand and improve stewardship for Chimney Swift habitat in Nova Scotia by connecting with volunteers and municipalities. We will present stewardship and monitoring guidelines and benefits to municipal council and staff in towns that have Chimney Swift nests and roosts and host “Swift Night Out” events to build grassroots support stewardship and monitoring by community members and project partners. Survey efforts by staff and volunteers will support our understanding of swifts and our ability to encourage municipal action.

Anthropogenic impacts on vascular plants and at-risk lichens in forested wetlands in Nova Scotia

Saint Mary’s University

Awarded \$15,895.00

This project will clarify the extent and severity of edge influence from clearcut logging on sensitive lichen and understory vascular plant communities of adjacent forested wetlands and thereby help forest managers to define buffer zones that reduce the impacts of clearcut logging. For lichens specifically, it will also (i) clarify the role of interactions between logging and substrate acidification and (ii) assess whether community composition has changed in the forested wetlands adjacent to clearcuts in the 4-5 years since the project started.

Geographic distribution, prevalence, and intensity of brain nematodes in Nova Scotia deer

Acadia University

Awarded \$12,250.00

Brain nematodes are generally benign in white-tailed deer, but often fatal in moose. The prevalence and distribution of brain nematodes has not been evaluated in Nova Scotia for decades and a lot has changed since then (e.g. climate.) One reason mainland moose are endangered may be because of brain nematodes. Thus, one starting point for managing moose populations includes quantifying prevalence and intensity of brain nematodes in deer and mapping hot spots. We are concomitantly relating brain nematodes to COVID.

Assessing fisher demographics and harvest trends in Nova Scotia: should we start a bag limit

Acadia University

Awarded \$15,000.00

Trappers in Nova Scotia currently catch fishers as “incidental take” when setting traps for other furbearers. However, there is a push from trappers to consider setting a targeted bag limit for fishers. NS DNRR has been acquiring carcasses from harvested fishers for 10+ years and has annual harvested statistics. This project seeks to use those data to examine age and demographics in fishers and trends over 10 years to inform management decisions on a bag limit.

Water quality analysis of hydrological stations in Big Meadow Bog to facilitate endangered species recovery and assessment of wetland on Brier Island, Digby County, Nova Scotia

Acadia University

Awarded \$15,000.00

Mercury (Hg) is a toxic contaminant that accumulates in ecosystems, affecting the health of wildlife and degrading habitat quality in Nova Scotia. Our previous research since 2018 indicates that the concentration of methyl mercury (MeHg) in the northern outflow has fluctuated on a seasonal cycle post-restoration and the mean concentration has decreased between 2018-2023. This project expands on the rigor of water sampling with new weir installations that will facilitate a mass balance for contaminants and nutrients into the future. We also plan to develop community involvement in samples and analyses. This research provides fundamental information critical to the recovery and maintenance of a recently restored bog ecosystem that is impacted by thousands of resident herring gulls feeding at mink farms in south-central Nova Scotia.

Advancing long-term conservation of high priority coastal habitats for shorebirds in the inner Bay of Fundy

Birds Canada

Awarded \$11,000.00

This project will test and finalize a standardized field protocol for assessing the health of coastal roost sites upon which thousands of fall migrant shorebirds depend within the inner Bay of Fundy. To build understanding and stewardship of these vital coastal habitats, we will conduct targeted outreach to municipalities that are home to priority roost sites on the Minas Basin, Cobequid Bay and Cumberland and NS Agriculture representatives responsible for dykeland management.

Assessment of Urban White-Tailed Deer Health in Truro, Nova Scotia

Dalhousie University

Awarded \$18,055.00

This project will benefit wildlife habitat by providing novel information about the health of urban deer populations in Nova Scotia. Existing data on rural white tail deer populations. This project will help town officials and ecosystem managers better manage the population of its impact on humans by understanding if the deer's primary diet is wild native plants, or ornamental, vegetable and turf species by Town residents. It will also reveal if residents are providing corn/apple or seeds in deer.

Trappers Mentorship Training Project

Trappers Association of Nova Scotia

Awarded \$18,000.00

This project will increase knowledge and participation of trappers on humane and current trapping methods, trapping safety and dog proof equipment/sets as well as a highly functional hands-on program focusing on natural renewal products from Nova Scotia's fur bearing animals. Students will also gain knowledge and skills on diverse wildlife habitat and the role trappers play in conservation of wildlife habitats.

Reptiles at Risk: Conservation of Snapping Turtles and Eastern Ribbonsnakes

Bluenose Coastal Action Foundation (Coastal Action)

Awarded \$15,000.00

The Reptiles at Risk project will expand on current efforts to conduct research, and education and engage stakeholders in the conservation of three at-risk reptile species, the Common Snapping Turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*), Eastern Painted Turtle (*Chrysemys picta picta*) and Eastern Ribbonsnake (*Thamnophis sauritus*) within Kespukwitk. It will reduce threats by contributing to recovery actions while building on efforts and lessons learned previous years to maximize the impact of project activities.

Tracking Nova Scotia black bears to better inform population management and wildlife rehabilitation

Acadia University

Awarded \$20,000.00

The Government of Nova Scotia is currently examining options for rehabilitation of black bear cubs (rather than euthanasia) but key information on local bear ecology is needed it. We will deploy satellite collars on bears and analyse resulting movement data to establish

habitat use, home ranges and seasonal activity patterns, including use of urban and agricultural habits, all key to developing rehabilitation options, and more robust provincial bear management.

Mainland Moose Conservation Initiative: Engaging Nova Scotian in Citizen Science Action for Moose Conservation

Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists (Nature Nova Scotia)

Awarded \$20,000.00

The updated Recovery Plan for mainland moose emphasizes the need for collaboration with conservation groups and citizen to fill gaps in understanding around behaviour and population trends. The Mainland Moose Conservation Initiative aims to increase public awareness of and engagement around the Endangered mainland moose through educational events and guided citizen science initiative, including moose sign identification training and new trail camera network. We will empower Nova Scotian to actively contribute to moose conservation, improving their awareness of moose conservation issues and enhancing data availability for informed conservation decision-making.

Wetland Education and Stewardship

Ducks Unlimited Canada

Awarded \$23,750.00

DUC's TWNS program and wetland field trips benefit wildlife habitat, specifically wetlands through land stewardship and public education. The TWNS program will choose several wetland sites and work with municipalities, First Nations, and landowners to highlight the diversity of wetlands that can be found throughout the province.

Conserving Habitat for Landbirds at Risk in Forested Landscapes in Nova Scotia

Dalhousie University

Awarded \$20,000.00

This project will conserve breeding habitat for five SAR forest birds (Canada Warbler, Common Nighthawk, Eastern Wood- Peewee, Olive- sided Flycatcher, and Rusty Blackbird) in working forest landscapes in Nova Scotia by finding solutions that support both the forest industry and the birds. Beneficial Management Practices (BMP) will be assessed and revised through a multi-stakeholder collaboration after the field tests of the BMP's on crown land by partners.

