

International Day for Biological Diversity, May 22, 2009

Theme: Biodiversity and Invasive Alien Species

Canadian Activities Report

The following report summarizes events and activities which took place across Canada in celebration of the 2009 International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB). This report responds to notifications (2009-042 and 2009-057) from the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity which invited Parties to share information about activities organized to celebrate IDB.

NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

1. [Canadian Biodiversity Information Network](#) – IDB 2009 Web Site

Environment Canada's Ecosystems and Biodiversity Priorities Division hosts the National Focal Point to the Convention on Biological Diversity. In honour of IDB 2009 this Division developed content focussed on "Invasive Alien Species" on the national biodiversity clearing-house mechanism (www.cbin.ec.gc.ca). The content includes thematic pages on the "Four P's":

- Prepare... by learning about invasive alien species in Canada;
- Protect... ecosystem health by keeping invasive species out;
- Promote... naturalization using native species where possible; and
- Participate... in Canadian Biodiversity Day events and activities.

These pages present a drawing contest for kids, links to a wide variety of information resources, including the CBD's Green Wave web site, and a 'Biodiversity Event Planning Guide' to encourage site visitors to get involved in IDB activities and celebrations.

2. [The Canadian Environmental Network \(RCEN\)](#)

Environment Canada partnered with the Canadian Environmental Network (RCEN) to develop a Biodiversity Day outreach strategy for engaging Canadians in IDB activities across Canada. The partnership resulted in a wide variety of activities, events and the dissemination of educational materials on the "biodiversity and invasive alien species" theme.

RCEN selected environmental non-government organizations in all 10 provinces and the Yukon Territory, and created a 2009 [IDB web page](#) promoting activities in each of these locations across Canada. The RCEN [May 6th 2009 E-Bulletin](#) promoted International Day for Biological Diversity and planned IDB 2009 celebrations.

PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL ACTIVITIES

YUKON

3. [Bringing Youth Towards Equality](#) – Biodiversity Day Workshop

Bringing Youth Towards Equality (B.Y.T.E) held a workshop in the Yukon Territory's capital city, Whitehorse, on the importance of biodiversity, how human behaviour can be a threat to biodiversity and, more specifically, the effects that exotic species have on Yukon biodiversity.

This event was part of the nationwide outreach strategy by the Canadian Environment Network for Environment Canada, and was advertised on the RCEN web site, and the Canadian Biodiversity Information Network web site.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

4. [The Land Conservancy](#) - Control of Himalayan Blackberry using San Clemente Island goats

The Land Conservancy demonstrated control of the invasive Himalayan blackberry using San Clemente Island goats, a critically endangered breed of North American origin. Landscape management using traditional livestock breeds is increasingly common in Europe, but little known in North America. Goats can also be used to control a number of other invasive alien species, for example Giant Hogweed, English Ivy, Scotch Broom.

This event was part of the nationwide outreach strategy by the Canadian Environment Network for Environment Canada, and was promoted on the RCEN web site, and on the Canadian Biodiversity Information Network web site.

5. [The Lagoon Society](#) - Sunshine Coast BioBlitz

The Lagoon Society was pleased to present its second annual [Sunshine Coast BioBlitz](#). A BioBlitz is a 24-hour count of everything that grows, creeps, crawls, hops, flies or slithers. The event took place on the weekend of May 23 - 24, 2009 to coincide with the worldwide International Day for Biological Diversity. The survey began at noon on the Saturday and concluded at noon on Sunday. Community members interacted with scientists at the BioBlitz Base Camp and joined them out in the field as they undertook a variety of sampling activities. The fun, family friendly event also featured music, food and children's activities.

6. [Biodiversity BC](#) - The Biodiversity Atlas of British Columbia

The Biodiversity Atlas of British Columbia takes a broad look at the province's range of terrestrial and freshwater biological diversity and provides a window to B.C.'s diverse ecosystems, the species that live in them, and the elements of British Columbia's biodiversity that make it globally significant. The Atlas also presents a visual perspective of a number of human-induced threats, including climate change, affecting biodiversity in B.C. today.

The Atlas was the subject of a [May 21, 2009 press release](#) issued by Biodiversity BC, and was promoted by local media on the BC Local News web site May 24, 2009 at [Atlas tracks B.C.'s biodiversity](#).

ALBERTA

7. [Edmonton Naturalization Group](#) – Wildflowers and Weeds

In Alberta, the Edmonton Naturalization Group (ENG) put on a “Wildflowers and Weeds” awareness day at Edmonton’s Arch Greenhouse on May 22nd. They also coordinated a native wildflowers planting in a local natural area.

This event was part of the nationwide outreach strategy by the Canadian Environment Network for Environment Canada, and was advertised on the RCEN web site, and on the Canadian Biodiversity Information Network web site.

8. [Government of Alberta](#)

In honour of International Biodiversity Day, Alberta’s provincial government provided information about biodiversity and why it is important; the impact of invasive alien species on Alberta’s biodiversity; and Government of Alberta initiatives to conserve Alberta’s biodiversity.

SASKATCHEWAN

9. [Saskatchewan Boreal Forest Learning Centre](#) – Urban Awareness

In Saskatoon, members of the Saskatchewan Boreal Forest Learning Centre's Partnership Network delivered presentations to students at a local school. The presentations were followed by a storytelling workshop. A forest experience session was held including a hike along a network of trails in the area.

This event was part of the nationwide outreach strategy by the Canadian Environment Network for Environment Canada, and was included on the RCEN web site, and on the Canadian Biodiversity Information Network web site event listings.

10. [The Meewasin Valley Authority](#) – Tree Planting Event at Cosmopolitan Park

The Meewasin Valley Authority partnered with Tree Canada in the Irving’s-Majesta “Trees by the Shore” program. A tree planting event in Saskatoon took place on Friday May 22nd to recognize International Biodiversity Day. Welcoming remarks were provided by Brad Trost, Member of Parliament for Saskatoon-Humboldt.

MANITOBA

11. [Living Prairie Museum](#) – Native Species Butterfly Gardens

The Living Prairie Museum in Winnipeg, Manitoba partnered with the St. James School Division to plant butterfly gardens using native plants at four area schools. Presentations were made to ensure students gained an understanding and appreciation of the garden, as well as biodiversity and the plight of the tall grass prairie ecosystem. Over 600 native

prairie plants, spanning 10 species, were planted by grade three students in an effort to create islands of butterfly habitat where, in the past, annual flowers were planted.

This event was part of the nationwide outreach strategy by the Canadian Environment Network for Environment Canada, and was advertised on the RCEN web site, and on the Canadian Biodiversity Information Network web site.

12. [Oak Hammock Marsh](#) – International Biodiversity Day

Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre invited visitors to find out about the many invasive species that are harmful and destructive to wetlands. A variety of activities were offered, including: a wetland biodiversity presentation at select times throughout the day; wetlands surveys of bird, fish and frog species; a canoe adventure; critter feeding at the interpretive centre; and face painting by an artistic nature interpreter.

13. The Winnipeg [Assiniboine Zoo](#) ran a biodiversity day event on Saturday, May 23, in conjunction with World Turtle Day, with a successful educational display at the Tropical House from 10 am to 3 pm. It focused on turtles, biodiversity and the invasive species that can be found at the Assiniboine Park Zoo. They also posted related articles written by Dr. Wrigley at the following site: zoosociety.wordpress.com, under the heading of Biodiversity. The Winnipeg Zoo also prepared a Biodiversity fact sheet for their summer camp participants, and interpreted a Biodiversity message into their camp programs.

14. [The Manitoba Museum](#) set up an interpretive biodiversity display representing different kingdoms. Some of the mounts and specimens were interactive touchable display pieces.

ONTARIO

15. [Biodiversity Education and Awareness Network](#) – International Biodiversity Day

This year for International Biodiversity Day, the Ontario Biodiversity Education and Awareness Network promoted a day of local action around invasive species. These actions included the removal of Garlic Mustard, an invasive plant choking out local woodland species across southern and eastern Ontario, and monitoring the presence of Rusty Crayfish, an aggressive aquatic species moving into Ontario streams and rivers.

27 events attended by over 600 people took place related to the IDB, and BEAN would like to thank the dedicated volunteers and coordinators that made them happen. Of those events, 24 engaged people with Garlic Mustard in some way, and 499 bags of Garlic Mustard were collected. At conservative estimates, the bags weighed almost 8 tonnes, equivalent to 6.5 Honda Civics! More importantly, people came away with a better understanding of the challenges that invasive species represent to Ontario's biodiversity. Details and images from each individual event are available by clicking the Garlic Mustard 2009 and Rusty Crayfish 2009 links on BEAN's [Past Events](#) webpage.

In addition, BEAN:

- produced a media kit for event coordinators that included a press release, BEAN backgrounder, media how-to's and a list of Questions and Answers;

- provided t-shirts and certificates of appreciation;
- guided the actions of local groups through development and distribution of a Garlic Mustard protocol and similar plants key, and the distribution of a Rusty Crayfish protocol and key to Ontario's crayfish;
- provided its own press release through a province-wide distribution list; and
- developed an education program on invasive species management that is available on its [website](#) as well as through the [EcoMentors](#) Program (EcoMentors were trained in its use).

16. [Royal Ontario Museum \(ROM\)](#) - Schad Gallery of Biodiversity

Nature Week at the Royal Ontario Museum began with the May 16 grand opening of the Schad Gallery of Biodiversity at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. The ROM's International Biodiversity Day celebrations included events such as 'Global Biodiversity Up Close - Elephant at the ROM!', 'Partners in Protection: Invasive Species', and Earth Rangers 'Power of One' multimedia shows.

These activities were promoted on the Attractions Ontario web site. Admission to the museum was free from 4:30pm to 9:30pm as part of the annual "Doors Open Toronto" event.

[The Daily Planet](#), a Canadian daily television series with a science focus, broadcast a [Biodiversity Special](#) at the Royal Ontario Museum. On May 15, the day before the Schad Gallery of Biodiversity opened at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, Daily Planet host Jay Ingram visited the Gallery to present this special. The ROM's leaf-cutter ant colonies, living coral reef exhibit, exhibit model-making and construction techniques, and the 'armadillo cam', are among the features of this episode.

17. Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH) - [Invading Species Awareness Program](#)

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH) are partners in the Invasive Species Awareness Program. In May 2009, OFAH issued two media releases related to invasive species and International Biodiversity Day:

- [Stop invaders - look before you leave!](#); Invasive species the focus of province-wide efforts, World Biodiversity Day
- [World Biodiversity Day to be spent battling 'aliens'](#); Volunteers invited to help fight invasive species in province-wide effort

18. [The Green Wave](#) – International Biodiversity Day Tree Plantings

In Ontario, eight groups organized tree planting events for International Biodiversity Day.

- In Kakabeka Falls, the Kakabeka Falls School 'Learning with Nature' Project planted a hardy, long-lived native Bur Oak which will provide shade for the school grounds, and food for wildlife and butterflies.

- Evergreen trees such as spruce were planted by two Green Wave participating groups in Thunder Bay: the Sir Winston Churchill Collegiate & Vocational Institute, and the Northern Nishnawbe Education Council (NNEC)
- Students at Gardiner Public School and Stewarttown Middle School in Georgetown planted maple trees.
- ‘Green Team’ Volunteers at the Canada Centre for Inland Waters in Burlington, Ontario planted six locally sourced native Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*) trees provided by the Hamilton Harbour Remedial Action Plan.
- Chemong Public School in Bridgenorth planted a Black Cherry tree as part of a planned graduation forest.
- The Eco Club at Sacred Heart Catholic School in Batawa planted a native silver maple tree provided by the provincial Ministry of Natural Resources.

19. [Plenty Canada](#) – Aboriginal Awareness Week and International Day for Bio-Diversity

On May 22, 2009, Algonquin Nation Elder Grandfather William Commanda invited participation in a day-long workshop focused on the theme ‘Sustainable Relationships: Reconciliation and Integration’. The agenda included a presentation by Plenty Canada on the International Day for Bio-Diversity and Global Indigenous Environmental Initiatives.

This event was part of the nationwide outreach strategy by the Canadian Environment Network for Environment Canada, and was advertised on the RCEN web site, and on the Canadian Biodiversity Information Network web site.

20. [Royal Botanical Gardens](#) – Annual Bio-Blitz

To celebrate International Day for Biological Diversity, the Royal Botanical Gardens held its annual BioBlitz on May 23. Highly skilled staff shared knowledge with volunteers in a joint effort to collect species data on species in four distinct habitats. A story about this event appeared in the May 25 edition of local newspaper [The Hamilton Spectator](#).

The Royal Botanical Gardens’ Spring/Summer 2009 issue of its [E-Connections newsletter](#) focused on the subject of Invasive Species, including:

- Nature in the News and Feature Articles
 1. A Fresh Look at Invasives
 2. Exotic Invasive Species and Local Biodiversity Protection
 3. Invasive Insects ... the buzz on some unwelcome guests
 4. The Green Invasion and RBG
 5. 5th World Environmental Education Congress
- Classroom Activities and Resources
 1. Garlic Mustard Invasion: A simulation for Grade 4 and up
 2. RBG Staff Picks — recommended books, websites and resources
- Ask the Naturalist:
How do invasive species spread over long distances?

QUÉBEC

21. [The Green Wave](#) – International Biodiversity Day Tree Plantings

In Québec, three groups celebrated International Biodiversity Day with a Green Wave tree planting event. In Hudson, Mount Pleasant Elementary School planted a rare native tree species, the Hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*) which had been donated by a local farmer. At John Paul I High School in St-Léonard, students planted hardy, low maintenance cedar trees, while at Collège Ahuntsic native maple trees were planted.

22. [Regroupement national des conseils régionaux de l’environnement du Québec](#) (RNCREQ) – Biodiversity Kiosks

In Montreal, Regroupement national des conseils régionaux de l’environnement du Québec (RNCREQ) and its partners hosted [four kiosks](#) on biodiversity during the annual Great Gardening Weekend held at the Montreal Botanical Gardens, from May 29th to May 31st.

This event was part of the nationwide outreach strategy by the Canadian Environment Network for Environment Canada, and was advertised on the RCEN web site, and on the Canadian Biodiversity Information Network web site.

23. [Montréal's Nature Museums](#) – Biodiversity Day Activities

Montréal's Nature Museums put together a [special line-up of activities](#) to mark the International Day for Biological Diversity, for everyone who cares about the environment. Themes included aquatic and terrestrial invasive species, and participation in native species restoration.

24. [City of Montréal](#), Québec - Biodiversity Website

The City of Montréal maintains a [Biodiversity web page](#) which offers an electronic source of information, news and events related to Biodiversity, the City of Montréal and Canada on a broad scale. The site provides information on the City's commitment to biodiversity and subsequent actions, along with what citizens can do and links to biodiversity policies and reports. Biodiversity-related events and news items have been posted on the website to inform interested stakeholders. The City of Montréal updated its online biodiversity content this year to incorporate the 2009 theme Invasive Alien Species.

25. [Radio Canada](#) - Journée internationale de la biodiversité

“Les espèces exotiques envahissantes menacent la diversité biologique, prévient l'Organisation des Nations unies (ONU) à l'occasion de la Journée internationale de la biodiversité.

Dans un message diffusé par l'organisation, son secrétaire général, Ban Ki-moon, a soutenu que les espèces non indigènes nuisaient aux moyens de subsistance et à l'économie des pays du monde entier. En terme économique, la prolifération d'espèces coûterait à l'économie mondiale pas moins de 1400 milliards de dollars par an...”

[Pauline Vanasse discute avec Raphaël Billé](#), de l'Institut du développement durable et des relations internationales.

NEW BRUNSWICK

26. [Conservation Council of New Brunswick](#) – Spot the Alien

The Conservation Council of New Brunswick (CCNB) challenged New Brunswickers to “Spot the Alien” through the production and distribution of postcards, the use of organizational websites, e-newsletter, and media outreach in both French and English.

This action was part of the nationwide outreach strategy by the Canadian Environment Network for Environment Canada, and was advertised on the RCEN web site, and on the Canadian Biodiversity Information Network web site.

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

27. [Memorial University of Newfoundland Botanical Garden](#) – Biodiversity Day

Memorial University Botanical Garden organized a variety of events leading up to the 2009 International Day for Biodiversity, including presentations, lectures, public displays, school programs, and radio promotion.

These events were part of the nationwide outreach strategy by the Canadian Environment Network for Environment Canada, and were advertised on the RCEN web site, on the Canadian Biodiversity Information Network web site, and in the Newfoundland and Labrador Environment Network's [May 11 E-Update newsletter](#).

NOVA SCOTIA

28. [Ecology Action Centre](#) – Ocean Treasures and Alien Invaders

The Ecology Action Centre of Nova Scotia brought researchers, community groups, seafood producers, and interested participants together for a panel discussion and networking reception in celebration of International Biodiversity Day. Topics included the origins, status, and potential strategies for dealing with marine invasive alien species and their impacts on coastal livelihoods.

Ocean treasures such as newly discovered giant Horse Mussel Reefs were presented as a globally unique opportunity for biodiversity conservation. The famous "[Stitchin' Fish](#)" exhibit, a hands-on handcrafted Atlantic seafloor display, was also there for all to enjoy.

This celebration was promoted at the Canadian Environment Network, Canadian Biodiversity Information Network, and Ecology Action Centre web sites, and was listed in the Halifax free alternative weekly newspaper "The Coast".

29. [Nova Scotia Nature Trust](#) – Countdown 2010 Declaration

The Nova Scotia Nature Trust is a non-government charitable organization at the forefront of biodiversity conservation in Nova Scotia. This organization's Biodiversity Day celebrations included signing the Countdown 2010 Declaration, a pledge to support, encourage, and commit to efforts directed at achieving the 2010 Target to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss.

The Nature Trust's commitment has been recognized in an [online article](#) at the Countdown 2010 web site.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

30. [ECO PEI](#) – International Biodiversity Day Events

During the week leading up to International Biodiversity Day, ECO PEI engaged in a variety of activities, including:

- assisting students at West Royalty Elementary School with native plant schoolyard naturalization;

- hosting a native plants and biodiversity ‘walk and talk’ at the Macphail Woods Ecological Forestry Project; and
- sponsoring a volunteer day aimed at removing invasive alien species and planting native species at Victoria Park in Charlottetown.

These activities were part of the nationwide outreach strategy by the Canadian Environment Network for Environment Canada, and were promoted on the RCEN web site, on the Canadian Biodiversity Information Network web site, the [ECO PEI web site](#), and on the web site for the [Macphail Woods Ecological Forestry Project](#).

ENVIRONMENT CANADA ACTIVITIES

PROGRAM

31. Environment Canada’s [Invasive Alien Species Partnership Program](#)

This program provides funding to organizations tackling invasive species issues nationwide. Over \$800,000 has been provided to 32 initiatives under the 2008/2009 program.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

32. [Ministerial Statement](#)

Canada’s Environment Minister Jim Prentice marked International Biodiversity Day 2009 with a statement highlighting Canada’s achievements in environmental protection and conservation.

MEDIA RELEASE

33. [Government of Canada Invests in Sustaining Atlantic Wetlands](#)

On International Biodiversity Day, \$3 million in Government of Canada funding for the five-year \$9 million Atlantic Habitat Partnership Initiative was announced.