



## **International Day for Biological Diversity 2026: Statement from the Honourable Julie Dabrusin, Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature**

“Today, the world celebrates the International Day for Biological Diversity. This year’s theme is, “Acting locally for global impact”.

“In Canada, acting locally for global impact begins with recognizing that biological diversity is not only part of our identity, but also one of our greatest responsibilities. From forests and freshwater to coastlines and tundra, Canada holds a significant share of the planet’s remaining intact ecosystems. With 20 per cent of the world’s freshwater, nearly a quarter of the boreal forest, and the longest coastline on Earth, what Canada does at home matters far beyond our borders. Protecting nature locally is not just an environmental choice; it is a global contribution.

“That is why on March 31<sup>st</sup> of this year, Prime Minister Mark Carney announced, ‘A Force of Nature: Canada’s Strategy to Protect Nature’, with an investment of \$3.8 billion. Canada’s nature strategy will protect and restore critical habitats, ensure economic development happens in harmony with our conservation efforts, and mobilize new capital for nature.

“Nature sustains our economy, with nature-based sectors such as agriculture, forestry, mining and fisheries generating roughly 7 per cent of our GDP. Wetlands absorb carbon and reduce flooding, forests stabilize soil and regulate climate, and healthy marine systems sustain fisheries and coastal communities. When these systems are protected, they strengthen food security, climate resilience, and long-term competitiveness.

“The Government of Canada’s vision to protect, restore, and value nature as a foundation of prosperity and well-being translates global commitments into local action. The commitment to protect 30 per cent of lands and waters by 2030 (30x30), aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, is ambitious because of Canada’s scale. Protecting 1.6 million km<sup>2</sup> of land and more than 700,000 km<sup>2</sup> of ocean is equivalent to conserving ecosystems larger than many countries. Each park, marine protected area, and working landscape contributes to global biodiversity outcomes.

“Central to this effort is Indigenous leadership. Indigenous Peoples have stewarded these lands and waters since time immemorial, and Indigenous-led conservation is delivering some of the largest gains toward conservation targets. Initiatives such as the Qikiqtait and Sarvarjuaq Marine Protected Areas and the Northwest Territories’ *Our Land for the Future* Project Finance



for Permanence show how local, rights-based stewardship can protect globally significant ecosystems while creating culturally meaningful jobs. There is no path to 30x30 without Indigenous leadership and no credible global model for conservation without partnership and respect.

“Acting locally also means building wisely. Through nature-based solutions, regional assessments, and science-driven planning, Canada is aligning infrastructure and economic development with conservation. Protecting high-biodiversity and carbon-rich areas reduces risk, safeguards investment, and ensures that growth strengthens rather than undermines natural defenses. This integrated approach demonstrates that economic development and environmental stewardship can reinforce one another.

“Finally, Canada’s local actions help catalyze global change by mobilizing capital for nature. Recognizing that public funding alone is insufficient to close the growing biodiversity finance gap, Canada is seeking expert advice to explore innovative finance models and ways to better take nature into account in decision making processes. This will help further attract private investment in nature conservation, while continuing its financing commitments at home and abroad. These efforts show that protecting nature is not just a cost, it is an investment in the shared responsibility of the stability of our planet and our livelihoods.

“In a fragmented world, Canada’s approach proves that whole-of-government and whole-of-society collaboration can deliver results at scale. When Canada acts locally, grounded in partnership, science, and respect, it generates global impact, helping to secure healthy ecosystems and prosperity for generations to come.”