



News Release

Nature Canada recognizes Lieutenant Governor of Alberta as newest member of *Women for Nature* and City of Calgary for their work to keep cats safe and save bird lives

CALGARY, AB—(March 19, 2017)—Nature Canada, Canada’s oldest national nature conservation charity, is hosting a reception tomorrow evening, Monday, March 20, 2017 to recognize the Honourable Lois E. Mitchell, CM AOE, LLD, Lieutenant Governor of Alberta as the newest member of its [Women for Nature](#) initiative.

Nature Canada’s *Women for Nature* initiative brings together women of influence who choose to demonstrate their passion for nature and drive change. The reception is scheduled to begin **at 4:30 pm at the Hotel Arts, 119 12th Ave SW, Calgary**. Media are invited to attend the reception.

As Canada approaches its 150th anniversary in 2017, Nature Canada aims to accelerate its positive impact on the natural world with the collaborative partnership of 150 women of influence including many from Alberta.

“Nature Canada is delighted Her Honour, The Honourable Lois E. Mitchell, Lieutenant Governor of Alberta—a highly influential, respected businesswoman and a proud, longstanding member of Alberta’s dedicated corps of community volunteers— is to become a *Women for Nature*,” says Eleanor Fast, Executive Director for Nature Canada. “Having Her Honour, The Honourable Lois E. Mitchell, Lieutenant Governor of Alberta as an advocate and role model for the important role nature plays will help us to protect our natural heritage and connect more Canadians to nature.”

In addition, tomorrow’s reception also includes a presentation of Nature Canada’s inaugural *Safe Cats Safe Birds Award* to the City of Calgary for its progressive municipal policy that keeps cats safe and saves bird lives.

“The City of Calgary’s Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw is a model for other municipalities to follow,” says Eleanor Fast, Executive Director for Nature Canada. “Our [Keep Cats Safe and Save](#)

[Bird Lives](#) national campaign asks Canadian cat owners to join a growing movement of people who keep their cats supervised if they go outdoors. Unsupervised outdoor cats are at considerable danger from collisions with cars, fights with wildlife, diseases and poisons and are responsible for an estimated 100 to 350 million bird deaths a year in Canada.”

“It is an honour for The City of Calgary to receive Nature Canada’s inaugural Safe Cats Safe Birds Award,” says Naheed Nenshi, Mayor of Calgary. “Our approach focuses on accessible service and education that encourages responsible and accountable pet ownership. The result is a safe and healthy community for pets, and I’m proud of the work done by my colleagues at The City of Calgary to achieve this.”

The *Safe Cats Safe Birds Award* aims to raise the profile of Canadian municipalities and their leaders who, as stewards of their local environment, make an important contribution to bird conservation by adopting animal control bylaws that specifically address and humanely control cats and their threat to birds.

The Calgary bylaw requires both cat and dog owners to license their pets, and to keep animals from roaming at large. The bylaw is an important factor in Calgary’s success, but the strong public education campaign, the ‘I Heart My Pet’ rewards program and the promise to return licensed pets are motivation for pet owners, earning Calgary the highest compliance rates in the country.

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Media are invited to the reception which will take place from 4:30 to 6:30pm (speeches at 5pm) at Hotel Arts, 119-12th Avenue SW, Calgary, AB, T2R 0G8

For more information about Nature Canada’s *Keep Cats Safe and Save Bird Lives* campaign visit catsandbirds.ca. *Keep Cats Safe and Save Bird Lives* is supported financially by: Environment and Climate Change Canada, Fuller Landau LLP, The Crabtree Foundation, The Gosling Foundation, The McLean Foundation, and *The Walrus*.

Cat and bird Images for media are available at <http://catsandbirds.ca/images-for-media/>

[About Nature Canada](#)

Nature Canada is Canadian nature conservation charity. Over the past 75 years, Nature Canada has helped protect over 63 million acres of parks and wildlife areas in Canada and countless

species that depend on this habitat. Today, Nature Canada represents a network comprised of over 45,000 members and supporters and more than 350 nature organizations across the country and with affiliates in every province.

About Women for Nature

Nature Canada's signature "Women for Nature" initiative raises awareness about the need to connect more Canadians of all ages to nature. The *Women for Nature* initiative is comprised of women from diverse sectors and backgrounds who come together to champion the importance of nature in the daily lives of all Canadians and to encourage more Canadians to connect with nature. Our founding members include women of influence such as Her Excellency Sharon Johnston, Senator Diane Griffin (Honorary Chair of *Women for Nature*), Her Excellency Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Madame Sophie Grégoire Trudeau, Minister Catherine McKenna and Margaret Atwood to name a few. Our members champion efforts to inspire youth and families to spend time in nature, to learn and experience our natural heritage and in doing so, ensure the health and well-being of our Canadian society. It also has a goal of being 150 Women Strong by Canada's 150th anniversary.

Cat Myth Tips for Media

Myth: Cats Need Freedom to Be Happy

Fact: What cats need, besides food, shelter & veterinary care, is stimulation. Play is a natural substitute for hunting, and toys, window perches, cat TV and exercise all help provide cats with ample stimulation. Fresh air solutions include cat enclosures, 'catios', or walking them with a harness.

Myth: It's Natural for Cats to Hunt to Feed Themselves

Fact: Hunting is a natural instinct, but pets don't need to hunt to feed themselves. In fact, they hunt for stimulation, not sustenance. Letting cats roam freely puts them in danger from auto collisions, diseases, picking up parasites, toxins, or being attacked by other cats. If the number of cats allowed to roam freely continues to rise it will put bird populations at even greater risk.

Myth: Bells Prevent Cats from Hunting

Fact: Bells and bibs have proven effective in reducing the number of birds hunted by cats, but they don't eliminate hunting entirely. A UK study compared the hunting of cats with no bells, cats with bells, and cats with an electronic sonic device. It found that cats equipped with a bell(s) captured 41% fewer birds, and cats equipped with a bib or sonic device caught 51% fewer birds.

Myth: Cats are a Minor Threat to Birds in Canada

Fact: Climate change and habitat destruction have a significant negative effect on bird populations, but the impact of other human-related activities cannot be overlooked. Environment Canada's list of Bird Species at Risk increased from 47 to 86 between 2001 and 2014. Some species have declined by a staggering 90%. It is estimated that 129 to 433 million human-related bird deaths happen per year in Canada. Cats are estimated to account for 75% of those, or 100 to 350 million incidents. In comparison, window collisions cause an estimated 16 to 42 million bird fatalities per year.

Nationally, 115 of 468 bird species have been identified as vulnerable to cats because of their nesting or feeding behaviour. Forty of these species are common in urban or suburban landscapes. Of note are reports issued by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) that have referenced cats as a risk factor in the recovery plans for at least 10 different bird species.

By not letting cats roam unsupervised we can protect migratory birds and keep cats safe. It's time to take the pledge! Visit: catsandbirds.ca or naturecanada.ca.