

# 2025 Report of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development to the Parliament of Canada on behalf of the Auditor General of Canada

## Canada is not meeting its commitments to protect and conserve land and inland water

**Ottawa, November 6, 2025**—A report released today by Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development Jerry V. DeMarco on behalf of the Auditor General of Canada concludes that Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) and Parks Canada were not on track to establish protected and conserved areas covering 25% of terrestrial land and inland water by 2025. Furthermore, the organizations had not developed plans to achieve the 2030 target of conserving 30% of these areas in ways that ensure ecological representation, connectivity, and support for biodiversity and ecosystem functions.

The federal government had committed to protect and conserve 25% of terrestrial areas by 2025 and at least 30% by 2030. By the end of 2024, however, less than 14% of Canada's land and inland water had been protected and conserved. The audit found that ECCC and Parks Canada had not met their targets for federal protected and conserved areas.

Establishing protected and conserved areas helps create certainty with respect to infrastructure planning and decision making as the federal government seeks to expedite approvals for projects of national importance. The system of protected and conserved areas is stronger if it achieves 4 qualitative goals: it is well-connected, representative of Canada's ecological diversity, promotes biodiversity and supports key ecosystems. The audit found, however, that ECCC and Parks Canada did not consistently consider or track progress on meeting these qualitative goals, which would help them prioritize areas for protection. The 2 federal organizations also did not specifically track progress or report on the conservation of inland waters.

“In responding to the biodiversity crisis, the federal government needs to accelerate efforts to establish a strong, national network of protected and conserved areas,” Mr. DeMarco said. “Meeting the 2030 target will require the federal government to work cooperatively with provincial, territorial, Indigenous, and other partners.”

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The 2025 Report of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, Establishing Terrestrial Protected Areas, is available on the Office of the Auditor General of Canada website. This audit is 1 of 3 reports focused on protected and conserved areas across Canada. The 2 other audits are Establishing Marine Protected Areas and Federal-Indigenous Management of Protected Areas.

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