

# EDITORIAL

with Traci Gardner

## Remembrance Day - an important lesson for all

It seemed so basic, or natural to learn about war when this writer's generation was in elementary school, but does it make sense for young children of this generation, who probably have not been personally affected by the events behind Remembrance Day to learn about it?

To put it quite simply... yes. Absolutely! There are many benefits to learning about one's history, including that of their country and the sacrifices that were made for us to enjoy the freedom that we do today. How do you explain concepts so huge to a child, such as world peace, soldiers dying, sacrifices for our freedom, it's all pretty grim to be talking about with a child especially when you get into details. How does a child comprehend such things?

Attending Remembrance Day ceremonies with your children is a great way to make an impact on the importance of honouring the men and women who served Canada in times of war. Veteran's Affairs Canada encourages youths to take an active role in remembrance with the Canada Remembers Program offered in schools. The program provides activities, and events and guest speakers. There is no better way for children to understand what it is like to serve for our peace and freedom then to hear first hand from someone who has been there.

Kudos to the Canadian War Museum, who have offered some WWI artifacts to be displayed in Ontario schools to assist grade threes in learning, and provide some hands on lessons. Acton's own McKenzie Smith Bennett Public School have been lucky enough to have access to these artifacts for this week, including Remembrance Day. The artifacts are on display for the students, in their library. Some artifacts can even be touched or tried on. What a great learning experience.

This is a special day of remembrance and we need to teach our children that this is just not another day off, but a day to remember, and reflect on those who have served our country in the past and to support those that continue to protect our nation and our rights.

Let's use Remembrance Day as a reminder to all of us, especially our youth, that for the remaining 364 days of the year, we need to focus our energies into ensuring that our future generations won't have to fight in wars at all.

# SCIENCE MATTERS

By: David Suzuki



## Extinction crisis signals that it's time to change course

Clean air, water and soil to grow food are necessities of life. So are diverse plant and animal populations. But as the human population continues to increase, animal numbers are falling. There's a strong correlation. A comprehensive report from the World Wildlife Federation and the Zoological Society of London found that wild animal populations dropped by 58 per cent between 1970 and 2012, and will likely reach a 67 per cent drop by 2020 if nothing is done to prevent the decline.

The report points to human activity as the main cause. Habitat degradation and destruction, hunting and overfishing, the illegal wildlife trade, invasive species, disease, pollution and climate change are causing an extinction crisis unlike any since dinosaurs disappeared 65 million years ago. Animals worldwide are affected, from African elephants to European dolphins to Asian vultures to amphibians everywhere.

Humans will feel the impacts, the study notes: "Living systems keep the air breathable and water drinkable, and provide nutritious food. To continue to perform these vital services they need to retain their complexity, diversity and resilience."

Although the study, *Living Planet Report 2016: Risk and resilience in a new era*, paints a bleak picture, it offers hope, many solutions and examples of successful transitions. In the introduction, WWF International director general Marco Lambertini writes, "We are entering a new era in Earth's history: the Anthropocene. An era in which humans rather than natural forces are the primary drivers of planetary change. But we can also redefine

our relationship with our planet, from a wasteful, unsustainable and predatory one, to one where people and nature can coexist in harmony."

For the study, researchers measured "biodiversity abundance levels based on 14,152 monitored populations of 3,706 vertebrate species."

The report points out that, beyond the crisis' immediate and direct causes, our mindsets and systems are at the root of the problem. The outdated notions of gross domestic product and unlimited growth on a finite planet, short-term political and business thinking, externalization of social and ecological costs, rampant consumerism, and a failure to understand the connections between actions and consequences and between living systems have put us on an unsustainable course, pushing planetary processes beyond safe boundaries.

To address this, we must find ways to live sustainably, especially regarding energy and food. Rapid renewable energy development and shifting from fossil fuels to clean sources are crucial. So are consuming less animal protein — especially in high-income countries — and reducing waste along the food chain. "Furthermore, optimizing agricultural productivity within ecosystem boundaries, replacing chemical and fossil inputs by mimicking natural processes, and stimulating beneficial interactions between different agricultural systems, are key to strengthening the resilience of landscapes, natural systems and biodiversity — and the livelihoods of those who depend on them."

To a large extent, conserving energy and consuming less of ev-

erything will determine whether we succeed or not. And while overconsumption, especially among the world's most well-off, is a key factor in the breakdown of natural systems, overpopulation can't be ignored. The best ways to address the population problem are to improve women's rights and provide greater access to birth control and education.

Slowing or stopping species extinctions and other human-caused crises are monumental challenges. But we've risen to meet major challenges before. Humanity has progressed in many ways, changing outdated practices and economic systems when they no longer suited our purposes or when they were found to be destructive — from the abolition of slavery in ostensibly democratic countries like the U.S. to expanded rights for women and minorities in many nations. International agencies and agreements have made the world smaller, with greater opportunities for co-operation. Better education, especially in areas like critical thinking and Indigenous knowledge, will help us progress even further.

The challenges may be huge, but a better world is possible. The alternative is to watch as animals and plants go extinct, water becomes scarce, weather hits more extremes, conflicts over land and resources increase, and life becomes more difficult for people everywhere. As we've seen numerous times, once we start to tackle the challenges, we'll see many benefits emerge, from greater equity to better health and more balanced ways of living within planetary limits. Then we can all enjoy the many gifts Earth provides.



**THE NEW TANNER**  
PUBLISHING LTD.

Every effort will be made to see advertising copy, neatly presented, is correctly printed. The publisher assumes no financial responsibility for typographical errors or omissions in advertising, but will gladly reprint without charge that part of an advertisement in which an error may occur provided a claim is made within five days of publication.

All articles, advertisements and graphic artwork appearing in The New Tanner is copyrighted. Any usage, reproduction or publication of these items, in whole or in part, without the express written consent of the publisher of The New Tanner is a copyright infringement and subject to legal action.

**PUBLISHER/EDITOR**

Ted Tyler

**ASSISTANT EDITOR**

Traci Gardner

**EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTORS**

Dawn Brown, Trish Bell, Jane Dougan, Vivien Fleisher, Harry Rudolfs, Les Schmidt, Angela Tyler

**ADVERTISING AND CIRCULATION:** Marie Shadbolt

**PRODUCTION:** Iain Brennan

**TYPESETTING:** Jessica Wilson

Distributed to every home in Acton and area, as well as adjoining communities.

379 Queen Street East  
Acton, Ontario L7J 2N2  
519-853-0051 Fax: 519-853-0052

**ADVERTISING AND CIRCULATION :**

email: [thenewtanner@on.aibn.com](mailto:thenewtanner@on.aibn.com)

deadline: Monday at 5 p.m.

**EDITORIAL :**

email: [tannereditor@bellnet.ca](mailto:tannereditor@bellnet.ca)

deadline: Tuesday at noon