

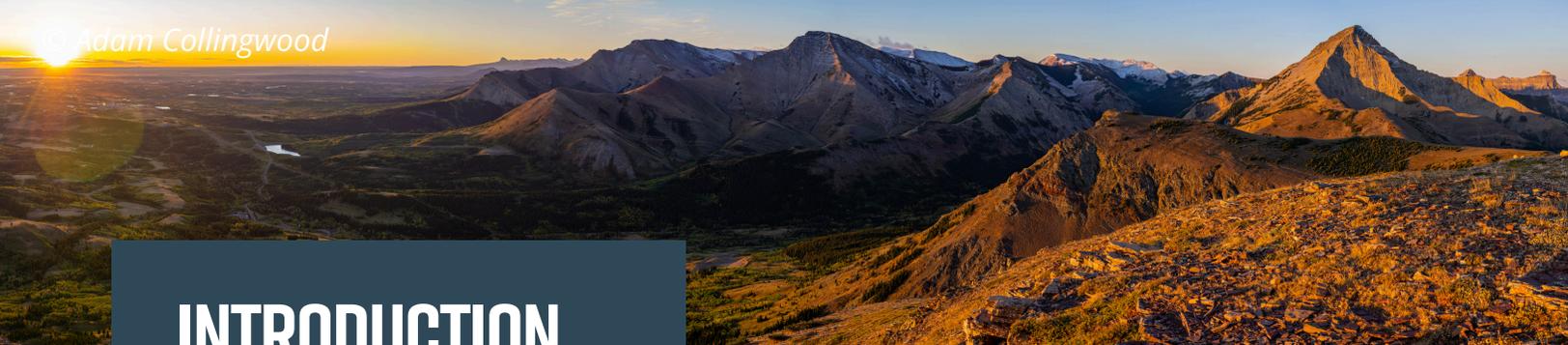
KBA CANADA

STRATEGY



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INTRODUCTION

Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) are sites that contribute to the persistence of biodiversity. No tool like this has existed before in Canada and the resulting KBA sites and underlying information have these unique characteristics:

- **Comprehensive coverage:** KBAs represents a broad set of important biodiversity sites across Canada, in freshwater, terrestrial and marine systems, for all species and ecosystems.
- **Biodiversity significance:** KBAs capture a set of biodiversity values, including sites crucial to the persistence of species and ecosystems at risk, rare species, areas where species aggregate, and sites of high ecological integrity.
- **Data-driven approach:** KBAs are identified based on recent observations and expert interpretation of data, rather than models, providing robust and trusted information.
- **Collaborative foundation:** KBAs are the product of a large collaborative effort, leading to broad acceptance and support across the conservation community.
- **Many conservation applications:** KBA designation can inform protected-area and land use planning, stewardship, biodiversity monitoring, and regulatory approaches to conservation.
- **Continuously updated:** KBA information will be updated regularly, which can be done easily and quickly when new data become available.



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The Global KBA Standard was developed through a global consultative process led by the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) - World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) Joint Taskforce on Biodiversity and Protected Areas and adopted by the IUCN in 2016. It uses quantitative thresholds to identify sites that host significant proportions of specific biodiversity elements. Canada adapted this Global Standard to identify both national and global KBAs across the country and was the first country to develop a national adaptation of the Global Standard (2021).

KBAs reflect the richness of Canada's biodiversity, including its vast landscapes, significant habitats, and the homelands of Indigenous Peoples, whose stewardship and knowledge are integral to the biodiversity and cultural significance of many KBAs. Identifying KBAs in Canada is a highly collaborative, 'bottom-up' process that often involves various levels of government, Indigenous Nations and communities, environmental NGOs, academic institutions, and many other knowledge holders.

Relationship building and collaboration with Indigenous communities on KBA identification, description, and eventually stewardship, is a prioritized element of the work of KBA Canada, with the acknowledgement that the global standard is rooted in Western science and values and may not be a priority to all Indigenous Nations and communities. Many of these collaborators participate formally in the Canadian KBA Coalition, united by the goal of protecting nature in the country by recognizing and communicating the significance of KBAs.

While KBAs signal a site's importance, they do not mandate specific management actions. Instead, they inform the strategic placement of protected areas, land use planning, impact assessments, and community-based conservation initiatives. The process of identifying KBAs involves gathering, synthesizing, and organizing complex biodiversity data to ensure that it is credible, actionable, and accessible. By providing robust, place-based information, KBAs empower communities, partners, and decision-makers with reliable resources and tools to protect critical habitats and guide effective conservation efforts.



KBAS AND CANADA'S 2030 NATURE STRATEGY

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), adopted at COP15 in December 2022 under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), sets an ambitious course to halt and reverse global biodiversity loss by 2030. As the host country for this landmark event, Canada played a pivotal role in the framework's adoption. The KMGBF outlines four overarching goals and 23 urgent targets for action over the next decade. KBAs are directly or indirectly relevant to nearly all of the goals and targets of the Framework.

In June 2024, Canada released a national biodiversity strategy – 2030 Nature Strategy – as an initial step toward implementing the KMGBF domestically, incorporating all 23 targets into its approach. KBAs are recognized as central to Canada's commitments, focusing conservation efforts where they will have the greatest impact on halting and reversing biodiversity loss.

KBA CANADA GOVERNANCE

KBA Canada operates through a structured governance framework to identify Key Biodiversity Areas across the country and manage KBA information. The KBA Canada Secretariat, comprising staff from Wildlife Conservation Society Canada, Birds Canada, and NatureServe Canada, coordinates the national initiative by leading or supporting KBA proposal development, coordinating activities among Coalition members, and liaising with the global KBA Partnership.

Oversight is provided by the Steering Committee, which convenes monthly and includes representatives from member organizations and experts in conservation planning. This committee reviews and accepts KBA proposals at the national level, with global KBAs also requiring acceptance by the global KBA Secretariat. The broader KBA Canada Coalition encompasses organizations and individuals dedicated to identifying and utilizing KBA information, fostering collaboration across various sectors. Accepted sites are documented in the KBA Canada Registry, a publicly accessible database that serves as a comprehensive resource for conservation efforts nationwide.



VISION

Across Canada, there is a robust network of sites essential to the persistence of Canada's biodiversity, called Key Biodiversity Areas. These places are stewarded through care, knowledge, and collaboration across generations. Their long-term sustainability is supported through the shared commitment of the public, Indigenous communities, governments, and private partners.

MISSION

KBA Canada will identify and maintain a robust network of KBAs that support the abundance and uniqueness of biodiversity across the country.

Through collaboration grounded in diverse ways of knowing - including transparent science, Indigenous knowledge, and local knowledge - these places are valued, cared for, and used to guide effective conservation action.

Sustained efforts to identify, steward and celebrate KBAs are fundamental to halting and reversing biodiversity loss in Canada.

WHY KBAS MATTER

Key Biodiversity Areas represent Canada's most important places for halting biodiversity loss, concentrating rare and threatened species and ecosystems. Identified using globally standardized and transparent criteria, they provide a scientifically credible, nationally adapted foundation for aligning conservation efforts - from Indigenous-led stewardship to provincial land-use planning to federal biodiversity policy.

Their spatial precision and ecological importance make them a practical tool for biodiversity monitoring, whole-of-government collaboration, and meeting national and global biodiversity targets. KBAs are where Canada's commitments to nature can find common ground.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- 01** Comprehensively identify all KBAs in Canada, against all criteria and using all available data, for terrestrial, freshwater, and marine systems.
- 02** Finalize and disseminate a comprehensive suite of tools and accessible data products to support KBA identification and advance biodiversity conservation.
- 03** Raise awareness of KBAs and the value of KBAs for Canadian conservation, across all audiences and potential end-users.
- 04** Integrate KBAs in Canadian public policy, corporate strategies and industry guidelines, and conservation financing frameworks, to strengthen the role of KBAs in decision-making.
- 05** Support effective local stewardship and conservation of Canadian KBAs through dedicated caretaking efforts and area-based conservation initiatives.
- 06** Establish and maintain consistent and long-term monitoring of KBAs in Canada.
- 07** Secure the long-term sustainability of the KBA Canada initiative.

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1. COMPREHENSIVELY IDENTIFY ALL KBAS IN CANADA, AGAINST ALL CRITERIA AND USING ALL AVAILABLE DATA, FOR TERRESTRIAL, FRESHWATER, AND MARINE SYSTEMS.



SUB-OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

1.1. Reassess all previously-designated Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) against global and national KBA criteria in Canada.

Outcome: All Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) are either brought up to the requirements of the global or national KBA Standards or delisted from the World Database of KBAs (WDKBA), as appropriate.

1.2. Identify any new sites meeting global and/or national KBA criteria for species.

Outcome: A comprehensive set of global and national KBAs exists in Canada for available information on all taxa in terrestrial, inland water, and marine environments.

1.3. Identify any sites meeting global and/or national KBA criteria for ecosystem types.

Outcome: Sites important for the persistence of rare and threatened ecosystem types will be identified and become targets for conservation, also leading to the development of greater understanding and improved information and data for Canadian ecosystems.

1.4. Identify large sites with high ecological integrity in Canada (global Criterion C KBAs).

Outcome: A map of ecological integrity will be available for Canada, with 2 sites of the highest ecological integrity identified for each relevant ecoregion.

1.5. Conduct all site assessments and reassessments in a manner that is inclusive, participatory, evidence-based, transparent, and supports the rights of, and reconciliation with, Indigenous Peoples.

Outcome: Broad and inclusive participation in the KBA identification and review process by experts, stakeholders and rights-holders.

1.6. Build relationships with Indigenous nations to foster inclusive collaboration for KBA identification and management, provide opportunities in capacity building and rights assertion of Indigenous managed lands.

Outcome: Increased understanding of and engagement with the KBA identification process by Indigenous knowledge holders, and better understanding of how biodiversity elements captured by KBA Standard interact with Indigenous conservation values.

1.7. Document and retain any work conducted on areas, species and ecosystems that were not incorporated into KBAs, whether due to insufficient data or criteria not being met.

Outcome: Future KBA proposers in Canada have access to and are guided by the legacy of work conducted by the KBA Canada initiative

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2. FINALIZE AND DISSEMINATE A COMPREHENSIVE SUITE OF TOOLS AND ACCESSIBLE DATA PRODUCTS TO SUPPORT KBA IDENTIFICATION AND ADVANCE BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION.



SUB-OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

2.1. Maintain (updating as needed) the National Standard and guidelines for the Identification of KBAs in Canada.

Outcome: The National Standard and guidelines for the Identification of KBAs in Canada incorporate learnings from the work of KBA identification in Canada.

2.2. Finalize and document the KBA Canada data infrastructure and tools.

Outcome: The KBA Canada data infrastructure and tools, such as data pipelines, scoping tools, species lists, guidelines about technical processes, etc, are effective, secure, stable, well documented, and maintained through a sustainable infrastructure requiring minimal staff capacity.

2.3. Continue to make KBA data accessible via the KBA Canada website and expand its distribution through existing Canadian and regional biodiversity data hubs.

Outcome: The KBA Canada website is user-friendly and equipped with essential

functionalities, enabling broad access to KBA data, which becomes widely recognized as a critical resource for biodiversity conservation and regularly integrated into Canadian and regional biodiversity initiatives and platforms.

2.5. Make auxiliary data products produced by the KBA Canada initiative publicly accessible, where feasible.

Outcome: Accessible tools and data products such as species database, range maps, Area of Occupancy Maps, scoping results, lists of species with insufficient data, etc, are available to all Canadians for conservation purposes.

2.6. Play an advisory role in the Global KBA Partnership.

Outcome: Learnings from the KBA Canada initiative help improve global standards, guidelines, tools, and approaches to supporting National Coordination Groups, while ensuring that Canadian tools and outputs continue to meet global standards.

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3. RAISE AWARENESS OF KBAS AND THE VALUE OF KBAS FOR CANADIAN CONSERVATION, ACROSS ALL AUDIENCES AND POTENTIAL END-USERS.



SUB-OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

3.1. Develop a long-term KBA Canada communication strategy.

Outcome: Messaging around KBAs is targeted, effective, and supports all strategic objectives. Audiences will include decision-makers, scientists, NGOs, land trusts, rights holders (Indigenous Nations and land owners), among others.

3.2 Produce Canadian and subnational KBA reports when identification is complete, along with other reports aimed at building awareness and understanding of KBA tool.

Outcome: Users gain a clear understanding of the KBA identification process and the underlying biodiversity data, enabling informed interpretation and application of KBA information.

3.3. Produce peer-reviewed publications documenting the KBA Canada process, lessons learned, and outcomes.

Outcome: Learnings and findings from the KBA Canada initiative are shared with knowledge-holders and decision makers in Canada and internationally, supporting diverse applications.

3.4. Share knowledge, tools, and lessons-learned with other National Coordination Groups.

Outcome: Knowledge and tools developed through KBA Canada inform and improve KBA identification processes global, demonstrating the globally-perceived quality of the Canadian KBA initiative to Canadian end-users.

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4. INTEGRATE KBAS IN CANADIAN PUBLIC POLICY, CORPORATE STRATEGIES AND INDUSTRY GUIDELINES, AND CONSERVATION FINANCING FRAMEWORKS, TO STRENGTHEN THE ROLE OF KBAS IN DECISION-MAKING.



SUB-OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

4.1. Increase understanding of KBAs, their importance, and their applications among federal, provincial/territorial, municipal, and Indigenous government decision makers.

Outcome: Key actors within federal, provincial/territorial, municipal, and Indigenous government agencies recognize, value and understand the significance and potential uses of KBAs.

4.2. Promote the inclusion of KBAs in Canadian and subnational plans and indicators to guide implementation of and track progress towards Canada's 2030 Nature Strategy and the KMGBF.

Outcome: KBAs are actively used as a critical tool for implementing and monitoring progress towards the goals and targets of Canada's 2030 Nature Strategy and the KMGBF.

4.3. Advocate for the integration of KBAs into relevant laws, regulations, guidelines, and policy actions at all levels of government.

Outcome: KBAs are integrated into relevant Canadian public policy frameworks, including laws, policies and guidelines.

4.4. Highlight the significance of KBAs and the associated reputational risks and

opportunities for private sector actors, particularly those operating in or near KBAs, as well as for industry associations.

Outcome: Private sector actors and industries (mining, forestry, agriculture, utilities, energy, etc.) incorporate KBAs into project-level planning, company-wide strategies, and industry guidelines, fostering more sustainable practices and decision-making processes.

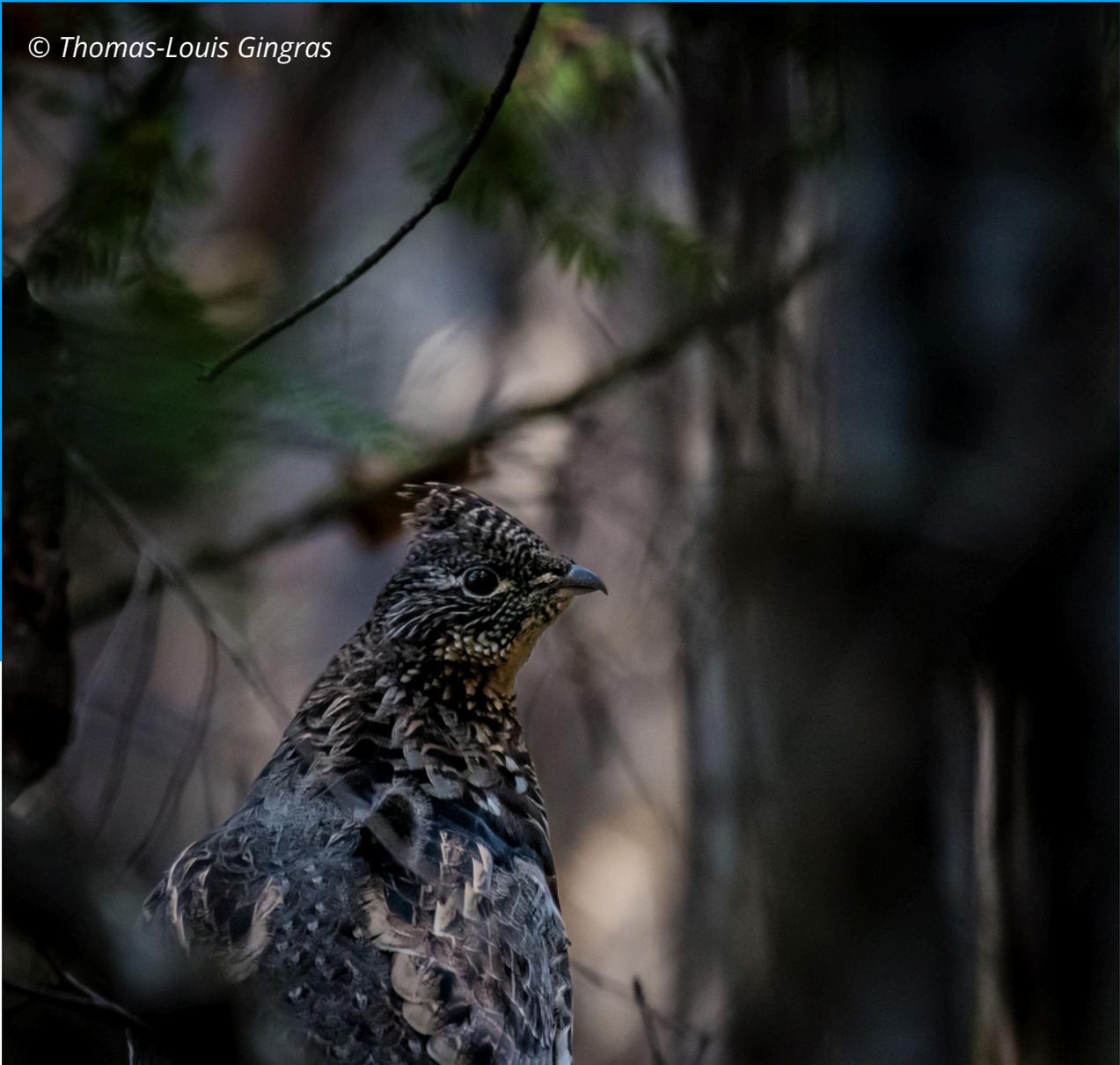
4.5. Encourage donors and funding organizations to prioritize projects that make use of KBA data and support conservation initiatives within KBAs.

Outcome: Conservation initiatives within KBAs receive increased support and prioritization from donors and funding organizations.

4.6 Promote the safeguarding of KBAs as part of sustainability standards within the Canadian investment community.

Outcome: KBAs are incorporated as a key consideration within Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) and other relevant investment frameworks, influencing decision-making across the Canadian investment sector.

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5. SUPPORT EFFECTIVE LOCAL STEWARDSHIP AND CONSERVATION OF CANADIAN KBAS THROUGH DEDICATED CARETAKING EFFORTS AND AREA-BASED CONSERVATION INITIATIVES.



SUB-OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

5.1. Establish, cultivate, mobilize, and retain a Canadian KBA caretaker network, including regional coordinators and site caretakers.

Outcome: Canadian KBAs benefit from an active and well-resourced caretaker group conducting stewardship activities tailored to the threats, needs, and context of each site.

5.2. Support Indigenous stewardship of KBAs, where there is interest

Outcome: Indigenous communities and Nations associated with specific KBAs are aware of KBAs and are supported in efforts to steward them.

5.3. Encourage and support non-government organizations, including private land trusts, conducting area-based conservation

initiatives to develop and strengthen projects within KBAs.

Outcome: Non-government organizations develop area-based conservation projects, including conservation easements and acquisitions, within Canadian KBAs.

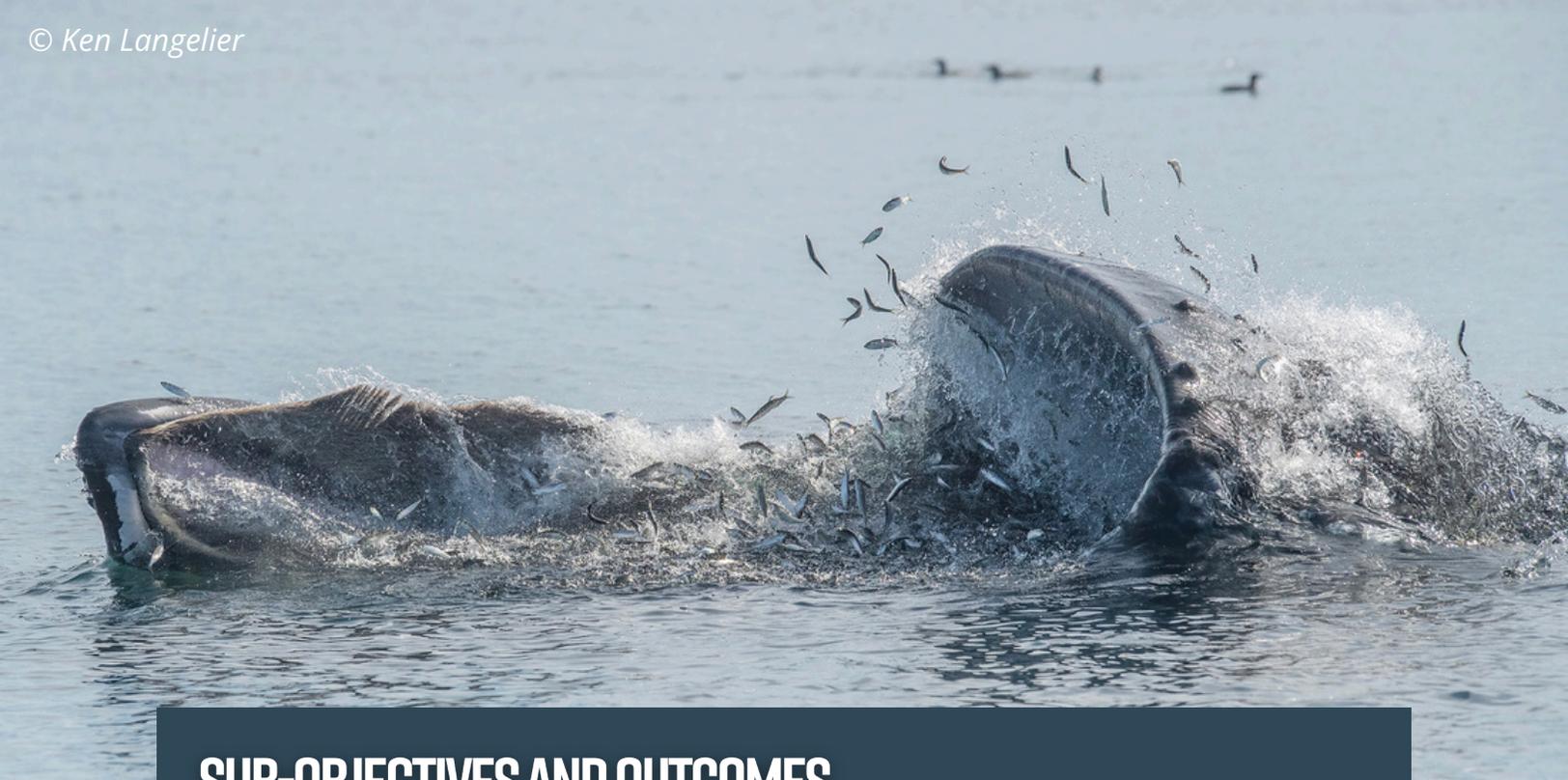
5.4. Develop and implement a KBA Red Flag initiative (for KBAs that are at significant risk of losing their biodiversity values due to current or potential threats) in Canada.

Outcome: KBAs at high risk of near-term conversion are identified and recognized and the KBA Canada Coalition mobilizes rapidly to support caretakers in safeguarding these sites.

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**6. ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN
CONSISTENT AND LONG-TERM
MONITORING OF KBAS IN CANADA.**



SUB-OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

6.1. Develop a KBA monitoring strategy for Canada.

Outcome: A comprehensive KBA monitoring strategy for Canada, with clear goals, methodologies, and implementation frameworks that integrate remote and in-situ monitoring.

6.2. Embed KBA monitoring within existing or emerging Canadian biodiversity monitoring initiatives and the KBA caretaker network.

Outcome: KBA monitoring is integrated into relevant Canadian biodiversity monitoring initiatives, creating synergies and avoiding duplication of efforts.

6.3. Develop a set of measurable, representative, and Canadian-appropriate indicators for biodiversity monitoring within KBAs, including a “Status of KBAs” metric (complementary indicator in the KMGBF).

Outcome: A set of measurable and representative biodiversity indicators for

KBAs, including a “Status of KBAs” metric, is adopted and integrated with relevant jurisdictional biodiversity programs and initiatives

6.4. Equip, mobilize and empower KBA caretakers and others to conduct in-situ monitoring activities.

Outcome: KBA caretakers have the necessary skills, resources, and support to conduct in-situ monitoring activities, forming a connected network and actively contributing to consistent, long-term biodiversity monitoring and stewardship efforts.

6.5 Update KBAs on a cyclical basis using information from changes in status, taxonomy or the results of monitoring activities.

Outcome: KBA information from all sites is updated at least every decade with some updates occurring on a rolling basis.

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**7. SECURE THE LONG-TERM
SUSTAINABILITY OF THE KBA CANADA
INITIATIVE.**



SUB-OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

7.1. Establish and maintain a team capable of managing KBA datasets, infrastructure and tools, and that can regularly and successfully conduct key tasks such as answering queries, supporting KBA proposers, and updating KBA assessments.

Outcome: KBA datasets and the KBA website remain trustworthy, complete, accessible, and up to date.

7.2. Establish capacity within KBA Canada Coalition for expanding KBA Canada activities to KBA stewardship, caretaking, and monitoring, and of ensuring that KBAs are embedded within conservation decision-making in Canada.

Outcome: There is sufficient capacity to carry out strategic objectives of KBA Canada for the conservation of biodiversity in and around KBAs.

7.3. Secure long-term funding for the KBA Canada program.

Outcome: KBA Canada activities and staff are adequately funded into the future.

7.4. Establish a process, responsibilities and timelines for KBA reassessment, in as much conformance as possible within 10-year timelines.

Outcome: A plan for KBA reassessment is in place and adopted by all Coalition members.

7.5. Ensure co-ownership and responsibility sharing between KBA Canada Secretariat and KBA Canada Coalition organizations, for the long-term sustainability of the KBA initiative.

Outcome: KBA Canada objectives are incorporated into the strategic and action plans of all KBA Canada Secretariat organizations and as many KBA Canada Coalition members as possible, with roles, responsibilities, priorities and commitments clearly identified for Coalition organizations, including for long-term maintenance functions.

MORE INFORMATION

This document is a product of the KBA Canada Coalition. [Visit our website](#) for a full list of Coalition members.

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