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Extinction of Wild Plants and Animals Important**  
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development in certain areas to protect endangered plants and animals*

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## **Nearly Nine in 10 Canadians (89%) Consider Preventing the Extinction of Wild Plants and Animals Important**

*Most (80%) say that it is necessary for government to prevent industrial development in certain areas to protect endangered plants and animals*

**Ottawa, ON** - Nearly nine in 10 Canadians (89%) agree that preventing the extinction of wild plants and animals in Canada is important, including nearly two in three (64%) who strongly agree. Four in five Canadians agree that land owners have a moral obligation to not harm endangered plants and animals on their property (82% agree, including 48% strongly agree) and believe that it is necessary for government to prevent industrial development in certain areas in order to protect endangered plants and animals (80% agree, including 42% strongly agree). Seven in ten support spending tax dollars on protecting endangered plants and animals in Canada (71% agree, including 33% strongly agree).

These are among the findings of a new survey conducted by Ipsos on behalf of *the Liber Ero fellows*.

Despite wide support for preventing the extinction of wild plants and animals, Canadians are more reluctant to say that government should put limits on private property rights in order to protect endangered plants and animals (62% agree, including 28% strongly agree). Yet, when presented with specific examples of endangered species, Canadians tend to support restrictions on what property owners may and may not do.

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For example, survey respondents were told that the Jefferson salamander is endangered and only found in a few locations in Canada. Half of the sample (n=502 respondents) were asked whether landowners should leave a Jefferson salamander on their property unharmed. The other half (n=502 respondents) were asked whether landowners should have the right to capture, move or remove any plant or animal found on their property, even if it means destroying the plant or animal while doing so. On this basis, 77% agree that landowners should leave Jefferson salamanders found on their property unharmed. Only one in five (21%) agree that landowners should have the right to capture, more or remove any plant or animal found on their property.

Survey respondents were provided the information that the red mulberry is one of the most endangered trees in Canada, found at only 21 sites in southern Ontario. Based on this information, half of the sample was asked whether they agree or disagree that landowners should not be permitted to build, create trails or do other activities that could harm a red mulberry tree on their property; meanwhile, the other half of the sample was asked whether it would be unfair to restrict landowners ability to build, create trails or otherwise develop their property simply because red mulberry trees grew there and might need to be cut down. On this basis, two in three Canadians (65%) agreed that landowners should not be permitted to take actions on their land that might harm a red mulberry tree, while about one in four (26%) said it would be unfair to restrict landowners ability to develop on their property just because red mulberry trees grew there.

Survey respondents were introduced to the greater sage grouse, a bird that lives in the grasslands of southern Alberta and Saskatchewan, and informed that while there are only about 150 sage grouse left in Canada, there are many more birds in the United States.

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Furthermore, respondents were provided information that research has shown that the sage grouse cannot mate and raise their young successfully in areas near active oil wells.

Based on this information, half of the sample was asked whether the federal government was on the right track in recently ordering restrictions on construction and loud industrial noise in part of the remaining habitat of the greater sage grouse. The other half was asked whether, given the economic importance of the oil industry in Canada and the thousands of jobs it provides, it would make sense to continue with oil well development even if it meant that no greater sage grouse could survive in Canada. On this basis, three in four Canadians (75%) agreed that the Government of Canada was on the right track in issuing an order to prevent construction and industrial noise in part of the remaining habitat of the greater sage grouse. One in four Canadians (26%) agreed that it is more important to continue oil well development, given the economic importance of the oil industry and jobs it provides, even if that meant no greater sage grouses could survive in Canada.

When asked who should take primary responsibility for preventing the extinction of endangered plants and animals in Canada, most (60%) say the federal government should, followed distantly by 13% who say that the responsibility primarily lies with environmental NGOs, and 10% who say provincial governments are primarily responsible.

When informed that Government of Canada has spent \$500 million protecting Canada's diverse species since 2006, amounting to approximately \$2 per Canadian per year, respondents are split between those who say this amount seems about right (43%) and those who say it is not enough (45%). Only 5% say it sounds like too much money on this issue.



*These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between August 4 and 6, 2015 on behalf of the Liber Ero fellows. For this survey, a sample of 1,004 adult Canadians was interviewed online via the Ipsos I-Say Panel. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within +/- 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all eligible voters been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.*

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