



# CUB REPORTER



**By Abigail Hadden**

*Abigail is a grade 7 student who lives in Calgary. She loves nature and especially exploring forests. Abigail is an avid rock climber. She also spends a lot of her time with her dog Poppy and they are a dynamic agility duo. She hopes that when she is adult that there will still be forests to enjoy and hidden waterfalls to find.*

## Coots, Red Winged-Blackbirds and Cattails, Oh My!

**I**wish I could include a sound-bit for this story. The call of the coot, the trill of the red-winged blackbird and the “cheeeeeeezburger” call of the chickadee all create a beautiful wetland symphony

Spring is finally here, marked by the arrival of oodles of wetland birds and animals. When Edgemont was being developed in the 1980s, the first man-made wetland, Edgemont Ravine Park and Wetlands, was designed as a pilot project in the City of Calgary. Today, that project remains a huge success. Not only does it provide storm water storage and water quality treatment, but it also creates a habitat for wildlife, beautifies the neighbourhood, and adds another place to learn about how different animals make this place home.

Through all seasons, this wetland serves as a corridor for a multitude of wildlife. Wildlife needs a corridor to move through the busy city. Our ravine allows movement from Nose Hill Park all the way down through the communities of Dalhousie, Varsity and Silver Springs to the Bow River. We have spotted fauna such as bobcats, coyotes, white-tailed deer, red foxes, crows, owls, downy woodpeckers, robins, house finches, Canada geese, magpies, muskrats, salamanders, bumblebees, dragonflies and butterflies. When we are walking along the paths we also find elegant, native flora such as wild rose bushes, crocuses, wild buffalo beans, cattails, aspen forest, spruce trees, brown-eyed susans, and even yellow lady’s slipper orchids.

As our city grows, there are many pressures being put on wildlife. But wildlife can adapt, survive and thrive if we do our part. There are all sorts of seemingly small things we can do that help wildlife in a big way. Ensuring that



*We know it is really springtime at our wetland - the red-winged blackbirds have returned and they are singing their hearts out. Photo © Dan Olson*

our garbage, recycling and compost are properly stowed, creating native plant gardens, building bee boxes, picking up litter, taking pictures of wildflowers – not picking them – walking with our dogs on

a leash (and picking up their poo AND packing it to the nearest garbage bin) and letting wildlife have space are just a few ways we can demonstrate respect to all urban wildlife.

Urban wetlands are unique places that are safe havens for wildlife. In Calgary, we are very lucky to have places such as Bowmont Park, Nose Hill Park, Fish Creek Provincial Park, Edgemont Ravine Park, Pearce Estate Park, Inglewood Bird Sanctuary and Carburn Park, just to name a few. Each place provides habitat for urban wildlife and spaces for learning and recreation.



*I am at the Edgemont Ravine Park and Wetlands sign. As I was observing the pond, a mallard drake in full beautiful colours, came in for a landing! He was so majestic! Photo © Heather Hadden*

I hope that sometime soon you will get to go to an urban wetland near you!

