

What's Ontario's favourite animal? The case for the blue jay

This may not be the World Series, but the blue jay is ready to step up to the plate and contend for the title of Ontario's Unofficial Official Animal.

Alberta has the bighorn sheep. Manitoba has the plains bison. Yukon has the raven. So what's Ontario's official animal?

We don't have one — yet.



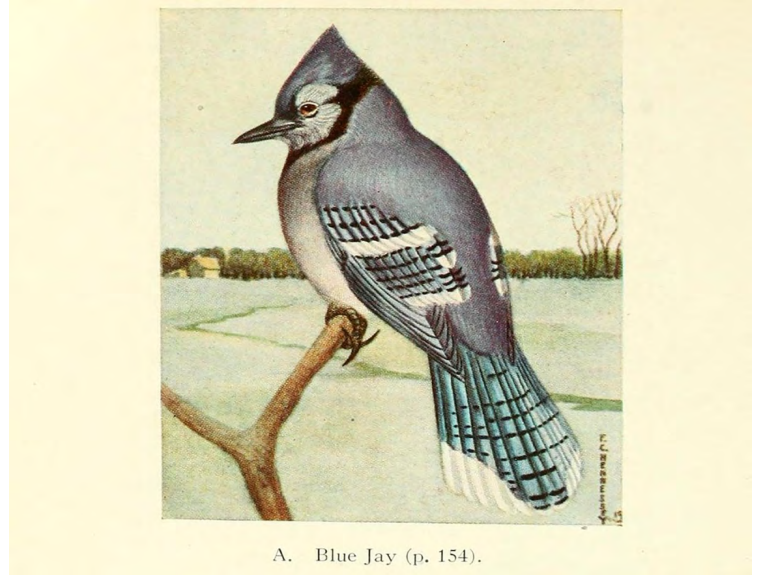
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The loon is our official bird, but we can't help but think that Ontario's other furry and feathery (and slippery and leathery) denizens haven't been given a chance to compete.

That's why, over the next eight weeks, TVO.org will be giving 16 Ontario animals their turn in the spotlight.

If you live in Ontario, there's a good chance you're already familiar with the blue jay. At the very least, you know that Toronto's baseball team shares its moniker with this charming songbird, which is found throughout southern Ontario and can be seen as far north as the upper reaches of Lake Superior. And while blue jays are known to be aggressive — bullying other birds at feeders, eating other birds' eggs and chicks, and just generally being loud and territorial — their bad rap hasn't prevented them from becoming one of Ontario's favourite birds.



The blue jay is perhaps most famous for its bright and beautiful blue plumage, which is why many people are often surprised to learn that blue jays aren't really blue at all: their feathers are actually brown but contain specialized cells that scatter light in a way that reflects the blue back to us.

