

In addition to its own programs, the National Capital Commission extends planning aid and advice to municipalities in the National Capital Region but only on request; at no time does the Commission seek to impose its proposals on the autonomous governments concerned with local affairs in the region. Financial aid in the form of grants is made to municipal governments in special circumstances.

The Commission has 20 members, representing all the provinces, and employs between 600 and 800 people, depending on season, in carrying out its development and maintenance programs. It reports to Parliament through the Minister of Public Works.

Section 2.—Wildlife Resources and Conservation

Wildlife in Canada is an important renewable natural resource. In the early days wildlife was, and in remote areas still is, a form of sustenance in the hinterland, and trade in fur determined the course of exploration and settlement. During the period of the opening up of the country, a number of mammals and birds became seriously depleted or extinct. The passenger pigeon, the great auk and the Labrador duck became extinct, the buffalo vanished from the prairies, and elk, prong-horn antelope, and muskoxen were reduced to small fractions of their former numbers. Wildlife habitat has been reduced by the cutting and burning of the forests, the pollution of streams, industrial and urban development, drainage of wetlands, building of dams, and other changes in the land.

Wildlife has been changed and influenced by man to the degree that he has changed and influenced the environment for wildlife. The arctic and alpine tundra, one of Canada's major vegetational regions, has been changed hardly at all; the adjacent subarctic and subalpine non-commercial forests have been changed principally as a result of increased human travel causing more forest fires; the great forest farther south has not lost its real character through being managed for commercial use; cultivable lands, whether originally forest or grassland, have completely changed but often they and the managed forest are better for some forms of wildlife than the original wilderness. There are more moose, deer, ruffed grouse and probably more coyotes than in Indian days. Fur species, such as beaver and muskrat, are easily managed and many small mammals and birds thrive better in fields and woodlots than in the virgin forests, provided that they are not poisoned by pesticides. At the present time, the harvestable surplus of game and fur species across Canada is seldom fully utilized and it is quite clear that wildlife will remain abundant wherever there is suitable habitat and enlightened management.

Thus, Canada today is known throughout the world for the wealth and variety of its wildlife. It maintains most or all the existing stocks of woodland caribou, mountain sheep, wolves, grizzly bears and wolverines, to mention a few. And these animals exist not only because of the vastness of their habitat but also because of man's efforts to preserve them. There is evidence of concern about the preservation of wildlife by the early Canadians; there were game laws in force in the original provinces when all but a few thousand acres of land were still the patrimony of the Indians. In 1885 pioneer conservationists were instrumental in establishing Banff Park in Alberta, and in 1887 a bird sanctuary, the first on the Continent, was established at Last Mountain Lake in Saskatchewan. Concern to preserve Canada's wildlife heritage led to the complete protection of wood bison in 1893 and to the purchase and establishment of a nucleus herd of plains bison at Wainwright in Alberta in 1907. Thus was formed the basis of wildlife conservation efforts, which, for a long time, took the form of protection of certain species from destruction by man or predator. Better knowledge of nature's operations and recognition that many factors combine to cause fluctuation in wildlife numbers are now being reflected in scientifically based hunting seasons and limits. The science of animal numbers is new and sometimes runs counter to popular prejudice but it is well understood that any area will support only so many animals, and species that are highly productive must have a quick turnover. Consideration of wildlife must never be separated from consideration of its environment and