

by Parliament in 1973, provides the federal government and the CWS with a legislative basis for undertaking joint federal-provincial management programs. Under the act, the CWS has initiated a rare and endangered species program. Continuing studies on the wood bison, whooping crane and peregrine falcon are to be augmented with new projects on other species. The International Agreement on the Conservation of Polar Bears came into effect on May 26, 1976. Canada was the first of the five signatories to ratify it. As administrator of the Migratory Birds Convention Act the CWS, in consultation with provincial wildlife agencies, recommends annual revisions of the regulations which govern open seasons, bag limits and hunting practices. The RCMP with CWS and provincial co-operation enforces the act and regulations.

The national wildlife area program was begun by CWS in 1966 to preserve and maintain important or unique lands for wildlife. Originally, it was restricted to migratory bird habitats, but now includes land for other wildlife. Today more than 40 national wildlife areas exist across Canada and more are planned. A number of co-operative wildlife areas have also been established; these are managed jointly with the provinces. The land, its vegetation and the wildlife it supports are the main concerns. In addition, over 80 key nesting areas for migratory birds, many privately owned, have been declared sanctuaries under the Migratory Bird Sanctuary Regulations; in these areas hunting is prohibited.

The CWS conducts two annual surveys of waterfowl hunters, selected from the over half million purchasers of the Canada migratory game bird hunting permits, to obtain estimates of the species taken and the kill of migratory game birds by hunters. Other continuing projects related to migratory game birds include a national goose harvest survey, annual surveys of crop damage in the Prairie provinces and of waterfowl populations and habitat conditions in Western Canada and a program to reduce hazards caused by birds flying near airports. Bird-banding provides valuable information on migration and biology of birds, and is especially useful in waterfowl management. CWS headquarters in Ottawa keeps sets of continental banding records and controls the activities of banders operating in Canada.

Special attention is given to species greatly reduced in number or in danger of extinction. The program in which 21 young were raised from whooping crane eggs taken from the breeding grounds and incubated at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Maryland is continuing. Eventually, progeny from these chicks will be released into the wild but only after a sufficiently large supply of breeding birds has been developed. Another aspect of this program is the use of sandhill cranes as foster parents to hatch whooping crane eggs. By 1979 the population of whooping cranes in the world had reached 109 — 83 in the wild and 26 in captivity.

Research continues on the effects of toxic chemicals on wildlife at various sites across the country. In Alberta, a study continues on the effect of herbicides on wildlife habitat. Field work on the relation between chemical contamination of the lower Great Lakes and the breeding success of fish-eating birds was continued under a Canada-United States Great Lakes water quality agreement. A long-term study of the breeding biology of lesser snow geese at La Pérouse Bay, Man. was begun. A research program on the effects of forest sprays on song birds in New Brunswick was continued.

Studies continued into the health of game and fur-bearing animals and rodents in Northern Canada and into parasitism in these mammals as well as in birds. Measures were taken to control anthrax among bison in Wood Buffalo National Park and in the Northwest Territories.

Under the interpretation program, the CWS operates five wildlife centres across Canada. Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre at Midland, Ont. interprets the northern hardwood biotic region; Cap Tourmente and Percé wildlife centres, both in Quebec, focus on the habitat of the greater snow geese and the natural and human history of the Atlantic gulf coast, respectively; the Prairie Wildlife Centre near Swift Current, Sask. focuses on the prairie grassland biotic region and the Creston Valley Wildlife Centre highlights the Columbia biotic region.

Research on use of the wildlife resource is a growing concern. The CWS has participated in several projects to shed light on the role of wildlife in the social and economic spheres in Canada.