



NATURE LIBRARY

WORKING FOR WILDLIFE: THE BEGINNING OF PRESERVATION IN CANADA

JANET FOSTER, 1978. University of Toronto Press, Toronto. 283 pp. \$19.95.

Janet Foster's doctoral thesis at York University dealt with the history of the conservation movement in Canada. She dug deeply in archives in Ottawa and Washington and studied the appropriate background literature. Her research forms the basis of this book.

Each topic in turn is developed in a logical and cohesive way, though with overlapping chronology. This is a story of important events and of forgotten men — and much of the early action was in Western Canada.

Foster begins by telling of the pioneer belief in the 'Myth of Superabundance,' challenged as early as 1860 by the drastic decrease in buffalo numbers. We learn of the first National Park at Banff in 1885-87, enlarged as a result of the surveys of George Stewart, who became its first superintendent. We meet Howard Douglas who, as the next superintendent at Banff and later as the first Commissioner of all six parks, introduced the concept of wildlife preservation to our national parks. We learn how Douglas, with the help of a Canadian immigration officer in

Montana, "out-Yanked the Yanks" in purchasing 703 bison from a Mexican halfbreed for \$200.00 a head.

In 1909, a Commission of Conservation was established by the Laurier government and Clifford Sifton was chosen as its chairman. Sifton understood the need for conservation, recognizing that resources were already becoming limited.

The first Forest Reserves and Parks Act was passed in 1911 and resulted in formation of a Parks Branch, headed by James Harkin, who had a mystical belief in natural beauty and wilderness values that was half a century ahead of his time. Heading his Animal Division was Maxwell Graham, who enlisted the help of Ernest Thompson Seton before establishing three small parks for the protection of antelope in 1914 and 1915, and Wood Buffalo National Park for the protection of wood buffalo in 1922.

The appointment of Gordon Hewitt as Dominion Entomologist in 1909 marked the advent of the professional scientist and ushered in a new era of conservation. Bird protection was considered an important part of the Department of Agriculture's work in controlling insects. In 1916, Hewitt negotiated with the American government and with the provincial governments for an international bird protection treaty. He used his contacts with his counterparts in the United States Biological Survey to good advantage. After many delays,

frustrations, near-failures and compromises, agreement was finally reached. With proclamation of the Migratory Birds Convention Act (printed in full in the appendix), Hoyes Lloyd was appointed as Dominion Ornithologist and then as Supervisor of Wild Life Protection. Robie Tufts and Harrison Lewis (and later Dewey Soper) were appointed as migratory bird officers.

With the support of Percy Taverner, who had been appointed as the National Museum's staff ornithologist in 1910, it became possible to achieve federal migratory bird sanctuary status for Bird Rocks, Bonaventure Island, Roche Percee, and Point Pelee, and a country-wide system of sanctuaries. The book ends with this achievement and with the dissolution of the Commission of Conservation by the new Conservative government, soon after the posthumous publication in 1921 of Hewitt's book, *The Conservation of the Wild Life of Canada*.

The problems faced by wildlife today are "far more dangerous and complex than the guns of yesterday." We have made progress but in Canada the early impetus was almost entirely the result of a small coterie of dedicated, enlightened, and far-sighted civil servants. Without the propelling force of men like Stewart, Douglas, Harkin, Graham, Sifton, Hewitt, Lloyd and Taverner, who were far in advance of the public and the politicians, the conservation problems today would be much worse than they are. These are nearly forgotten men, and their achievements and difficulties well deserve the documentation so expertly provided by Janet Foster. — Reviewed by C. Stuart Houston, 863 University Drive, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 0J8.

WILD GEESE

M. A. OGILVIE with illustrations by CAROL OGILVIE. 1978. Buteo Books. Box 481, Vermillion, South Dakota. 350 pp. \$25.00.

This book covers the geese of the world, including their ranges in North America, Europe and Asia, with the exception of the Ne-Ne or Hawaiian Goose.

The chapters within are devoted to classification, identification, ecology, breeding, distribution, migration and more.

While well written and easy to understand, it is also very scientific (as a book of this nature should be) and I would guess that the average reader would find some of the chapters on "ecology" and "population dynamics", etc. rather heavy reading unless one were looking for specific information.

Wild geese have always held a fascination for most people. This book which reveals the many marvelous ways that these birds have become adapted for their survival in their often harsh environment, cannot fail to arouse the admiration of the reader even more.

I did not check the charts and maps for accuracy but did notice in the description and distribution of the Pacific White-front that the dot on the map which was supposed to indicate the Kindersley area was actually placed near Estevan. Also the system of using various dashed lines on a map to indicate the distribution of the various species became very confusing where ranges of different subspecies, as with the Canada Goose, overlap.

The black and white illustrations by Carol Ogilvie are beautifully done; in them she has portrayed the charac-

teristics of geese with an accuracy that very few artists achieve. However, the colour illustrations are disappointing, especially of the goslings; it is hard to believe that they were done by the same artist. — Reviewed by *Fred W. Lahrman*, Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History, Regina, Saskatchewan.

1978 CONSERVATION AWARD

Several years ago, a group of farmers who owned parts of a marsh complex near Wawota in southeastern Saskatchewan, known locally as Whitetail Marsh, petitioned the Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture for financial assistance to drain these wetlands. Dumas Flood Control Project, as this drainage

proposal was called, was duly processed by the Department and was well on its way to approval. Fortunately, about one year ago members of the Wawota Wildlife Federation learned of this drainage proposal and resolved to halt it. They wrote to the Minister of Tourism and Renewable Resources demanding action to preserve the marsh for wildlife, and urged their members to do the same. They enlisted the town's support by pointing out that drainage might lower the water table and reduce the water supply to the town wells. They also sent a delegation to appeal to each farmer who had petitioned for drainage.

These approaches were successful. Because of the wildlife values of the marsh, the Department of Tourism and Renewable Resources took a strong stand against drainage. This forced the Department of Agriculture

Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation President Tom Motta receives SNHS Conservation Award for Wawota Wildlife Federation from Dale Hjertaas Sheina Wait

