

# WILDLIFE '87: GAINING MOMENTUM



Joy Finlay received a plaque from Prince Philip for her work. Photo credit: Environment and Climate Change Canada, 1987.

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The federal government designated 1987 as “a year of wildlife conservation” to mark the centennial of the establishment of the first bird sanctuary in Canada at Last Mountain Lake, Saskatchewan on June 8, 1887. Although the provincial and territorial wildlife ministers endorsed the idea, it was the non-government conservation groups that took the initiative and played a lead role in making *Wildlife '87* a success. Joy Finlay (nee Barton) of the Canadian

Nature Federation chaired the initiative, taking on the huge task of coordinating participating nature, wildlife, and conservation groups across the country.

More than 160 conservation initiatives took place across Canada under the *Wildlife '87* banner. They included the establishment of new naturalist clubs, protecting new natural areas, giving the Boy Scouts of Canada a World Conservation badge, naming the Atlantic Puffin Newfoundland and Labrador's official bird, and choosing Steller's Jay for BC's provincial bird.

## POETRY

### Almost Dawn

The ascending sun just begins  
To colour the western horizon  
While high above a paring  
Of ivory white moonlight  
Is Mars alone, shining sun-bright.  
Some stars, less than a handful,  
And steadily going to darkness,  
In the ebony, yielding to blue sky,  
Feature in a pre-dawn  
That even with one ambitious  
Needlessly crowing cockerel,  
Still burn in silent, piercing,  
And so lonesome splendour.

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Finlay's remarkable enthusiasm and dedication made *Wildlife '87* a truly national celebration. She was presented with a plaque for her work by Prince Philip at the Last Mountain Lake Centennial event, and received the Order of Canada for her passion for outdoor education and wildlife conservation. Audrey Joy Finlay was born in Davidson, Saskatchewan. She died on May 27, 2021 in Victoria, BC. More details of her life can be found here: <https://edmontonjournal.remembering.ca/obituary/audrey-finlay-1082605021>

For additional information, please see the December 1987 edition of *Blue Jay*. 🐦