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Ministry, Halton Sportsmen's Association team up Program re-introduces wild turkey to Halton

Local district staff of Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR)'s Aurora office, in partnership with the Halton Sportsmen's Association

are doing their part to re-introduce the wild turkey into Halton.

To date, they have released 24 of the birds into good local habitat. The species were native to the area

until the beginning of this century, when diminished habitat and indiscriminate hunting contributed to its disappearance.

Ontario's wild turkey recovery

program is a provincial partnership between The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters and the MNR. The success of the recovery program depends on local cooperative projects like the Halton Sportmen's Association-MNR Aurora District releases.

The latest Halton release in March involved eight birds captured from flocks in other areas. An important feature of re-introducing species is ensuring the genetic diversity of stocks.

Thanks to the fund-raising efforts of the Halton Sportsmen's Association, ministry staff were able to live-trap wild turkeys for transfer to other areas and to acquire wild turkeys for Halton Region. Club members themselves transported the new birds in crates to a farm near Speyside where they were released back into the wild.

"The transfer was a big success and we anticipate the turkeys will begin to establish themselves and reproduce as early as this year," John Bennett said, senior allocation technician from the Ministry's Aurora district. "The more birds we are able to release, the better chance they have of establishing a strong population in the region," he added.

The public is asked to help monitor the progress of wild turkeys in Halton Region by reporting sightings to MNR's district office in Aurora at 905-713-7400. Biologists need information on the number of birds sighted, details of location, including habitat type and the behavior of the birds, if possible.

Wildlife Management Units in Halton Region are not open for turkey hunting at this time.

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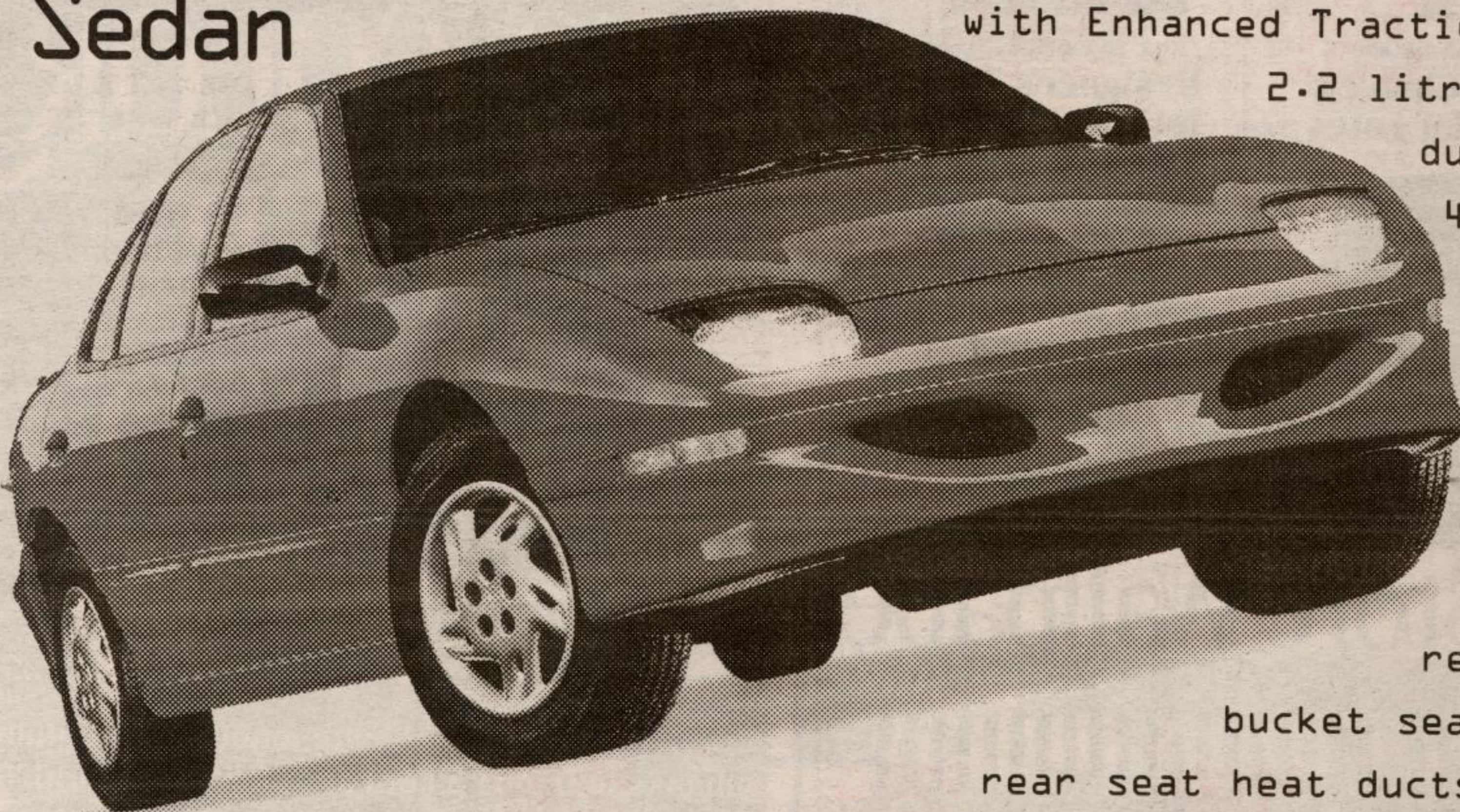
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