

Wildlife Week a time for looking back

BY ART BRIGGS-JUDE
 With National Wildlife Week having just passed, I thought it appropriate to review the history of wildlife conservation in our own province. While Sir John A. Macdonald set the pattern on June 8, 1887 by establishing Saskatchewan's Last Mountain Lake Sanctuary, National Wildlife Week was really established by Order-in-Council in 1984 in commemoration of famed Canadian wildfowl

conservationist, Jack Miner. Yet even before Jack Miner started the first goose sanctuary at Kingsville in 1908, laws and measures were evolving to conserve Ontario's wildlife. As early as 1762 for example, General Thomas Gage, military governor of Montreal, proclaimed a cross country closed season for ruffed grouse from March 15 to July 15. In 1821 the first game regulation

for the preservation of deer within this province was instituted. Deer were not to be taken between Jan. 10 and July 1 with a penalty of 40 shillings for violators. This legislation was followed by 1839 with the passing of the first general game law for Upper Canada and contained a clause banning Sunday hunting. Another set of closed seasons, this time for wild swans and all other waterfowl, was initiated in 1845. By 1860 statutes were in the books to protect furbearers from trapping between May 1 and Nov. 1 in any year. Four years later birds beneficial to agriculture were given, along with their young, a protected season from March 1 to Aug. 1. By 1867 under the new Confederation's British North America

Act, all wildlife became a provincial responsibility. The federal government retained jurisdiction over all of the fisheries however. Ten pair of English sparrows, were introduced to this province in 1870 at Ottawa to bolster the population of those alien birds released in Brooklyn, New York 20 years before. In 1873 the Insectivorous Bird Act was amended to protect all song birds year round. In 1890 ring-necked pheasants were released in Ontario's southern agricultural areas. The first resident deer licence (\$2) was established in 1896. In 1897 members of the Ontario Provincial Police were given authority to enforce the Game and fish Act. The first recorded release of Hungarian (gray) partridge was

made a Brantford in 1909. The European hare (jackrabbit) escaped from Bow Park Farm near Brantford in 1912 and established an Ontario population of these big bunnies. In 1914 the first starlings were observed near Niagara Falls. The Ontario Federation of Anglers was formed in 1927 and the Federation of Ontario Naturalists in 1931. In 1936 eagles and ospreys became protected species and two years later Ducks Unlimited was formed in this country. In 1947 The Canadian Wildlife Service was organized, the Ontario Trapper's Association was formed, and hunters joined the anglers to form the Ontario Federation of Anglers & Hunters. The first Canadian National Sportmen's Show was held in 1948.

An outbreak of rabies occurred in this province in 1954, the first in which wild mammals were the principal hosts. In 1957 Hunter Training Programs were being set up. In 1962, hawks, owls, and kingfishers were added to the protected list. In 1969 the Hawk Cliff Raptor Station was established near Port Stanley on Lake Erie and the Endangered Species Act for Ontario was passed. The Department of Lands & Forests became the Ministry of Natural Resources in 1972 with an increase of district offices from 21 to 49. In 1978 the Peregrine Release Project was initiated which has resulted in over 100 peregrines having been released up till now. The Selective Harvest Program for deer was implemented in 1980 along with a new moose management policy. Mandatory Trapper Education Courses were also introduced that year. In 1981 the Long Point Observatory initiated the Ontario Lakes Loon Survey and in 1982 a program to reintroduce the trumpeter swan to this province was begun. By 1983 bald eagles were being raised and released in southwestern Ontario. In 1984 wild turkeys were reintroduced into this province at five release sites and a year later the Community Wildlife Involvement Program (CWIP) was created. A cooperative agreement was signed in 1986 between the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ducks Unlimited, and Wildlife Habitat Canada to provide \$1-million annually to protect Ontario's wetland habitat.

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