

Environment Canada's Protected Areas

2005-2006 Annual Report





To contact us for more information

Canadian Wildlife Service
Environment Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0H3

Telephone: 819-997-1095
Weekdays 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Eastern Time) except holidays

Fax: 819-994-4445
Orders may be faxed to us, but no publications will be faxed back.

E-mail: Canadian Wildlife Service
cws-scf@ec.gc.ca

For general information on the programs, services, and publications of Environment Canada

<http://www.ec.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=84AA050D-1>
Inquiry Centre
70 Crémazie Street
Gatineau, Quebec
K1A 0H3

Telephone: 819-997-2800 or 1-800-668-6767

Fax: 819-994-1412

E-mail: enviroinfo@ec.gc.ca

Cover photos and credits

Main photo: Columbia National Wildlife Area, Blair Hammond
Small left: Long Point National Wildlife Area, Ian Parsons
Small centre: Kendall Island Migratory Bird Sanctuary, Troy Marsh
Small right: Last Mountain Lake National Wildlife Area, Jennifer Neudorf

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ENVIRONMENT CANADA'S PROTECTED AREAS NETWORK

ANNUAL REPORT 2005-2006



Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Environment Canada's Protected Areas Program	2
National Accomplishments	3
Regional Accomplishments	5
Pacific and Yukon Region	5
Prairie and Northern Region	6
Ontario Region	7
Quebec Region	8
Atlantic Region	9
Summary	11



Introduction

This report presents the first Annual Report for Environment Canada's Protected Areas Program.

Environment Canada's Canadian Wildlife Service

The term "Canadian Wildlife Service" is formally used for a component of Environment Canada's National Headquarters and informally for the department's wildlife programs throughout the regions. The name is well recognized worldwide to denote Canada's wildlife conservation agency and has enormous value both within and beyond the department for its connotation of a long history of scientific expertise, commitment, leadership, and partnerships. The Mission of the Canadian Wildlife Service is to conserve wildlife and the ecosystems of which they are a part, with a particular focus on migratory birds and species at risk.

The use of "Environment Canada" throughout this document refers to Environment Canada's Canadian Wildlife Service.

Legislative Responsibilities

Environment Canada's wildlife conservation mandate is derived largely from the *Migratory Birds Convention Act*, the *Canada Wildlife Act*, the *Species at Risk Act*, the *Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act*, and components of a range of federal environmental legislation and commitments such as the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and the *Canadian Biodiversity Strategy* (1995). It is also driven by international treaties such as the *Migratory Birds Convention* (1916) with the United States, the *Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat* (the Ramsar Convention, 1971), the *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora* (1975), and the *Convention on Biological Diversity* (1992). The *Parkville Protocol*, which

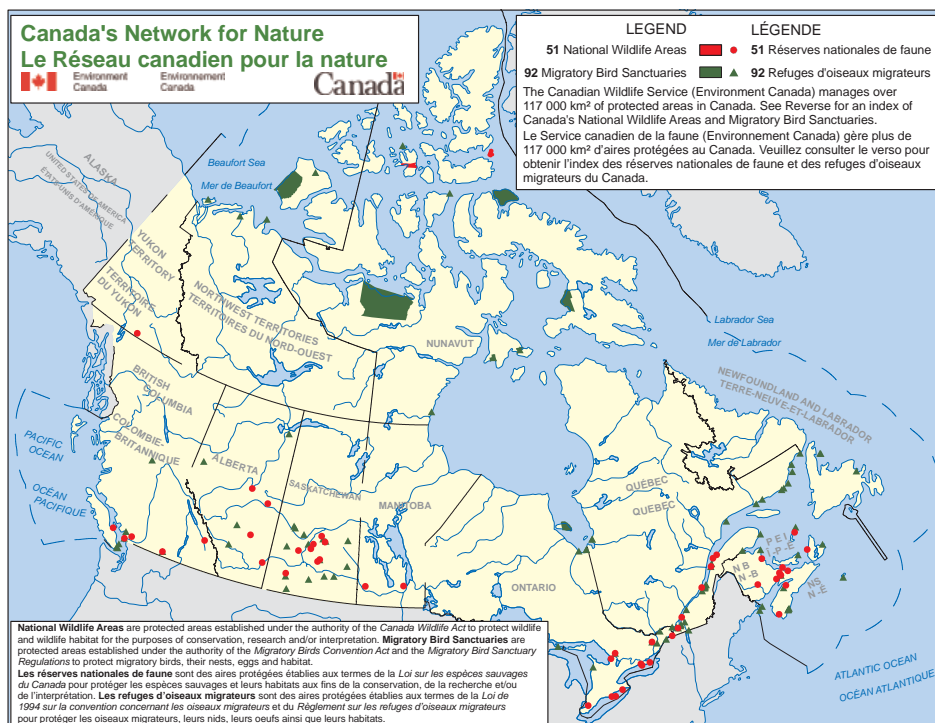
amended the *Migratory Birds Convention* in 1999, clarifies and expands the department's obligations in relation to migratory birds.

Environment Canada's Protected Areas Network

Environment Canada administers a network of protected areas, an estimated 11.8 million hectares of wildlife habitat, an area more than twice the size of Nova Scotia. The components of the network are National Wildlife Areas, Marine Wildlife Areas and Migratory Bird Sanctuaries. These sites contain a wide diversity of species and habitat of national and international importance.

There are 51 National Wildlife Areas and 92 Migratory Bird Sanctuaries. Some of these National Wildlife Areas and Migratory Bird Sanctuaries extend beyond land, incorporating freshwater and marine areas, thereby helping to safeguard 1.5 million hectares of Canada's aquatic habitat. In addition, there has been one Marine Wildlife Area proposed for the Scott Islands in British Columbia.

The vision for the Network, as stated in the *Environment Canada Protected Areas Manual* is: ***A comprehensive protected areas network that contributes to the conservation and protection of Canada's wildlife and the ecosystems of which they are a part.***





Because National Wildlife Area, Marine Wildlife Area, and Migratory Bird Sanctuary sites are selected based on their ecological importance for wildlife populations, several sites may be located in one region, for example the St. Lawrence valley. Sites may also be added to or removed from the Network as their importance for wildlife changes. The *Species at Risk Act* expands the scope for creating National Wildlife Areas and Marine Wildlife Areas to also protect wildlife habitat. The Act also amends the *Canada Wildlife Act* to allow the Minister of the Environment to give other federal ministers the power to name and manage National Wildlife Areas and Marine Wildlife Areas.

Migratory Bird Sanctuaries

In 1916, Canada and the United States signed the Migratory Birds Convention which obliged both countries to preserve migratory birds and protect them from indiscriminate slaughter. Canada implemented the Convention through the *Migratory Birds Convention Act* of 1917. The Migratory Bird Sanctuary Regulations prohibit disturbance of migratory birds, their eggs, and their nests within a Migratory Bird Sanctuary. The regulations also prohibit disturbance of migratory birds' habitats when Migratory Bird Sanctuaries are established on federal Crown land. In most Migratory Bird Sanctuaries, visitors must not carry firearms or allow their pets to run at large. However, in northern Canada Sanctuaries, Aboriginal people have the right to carry firearms for traditional hunting and trapping purposes.

National Wildlife Areas

The *Canada Wildlife Act* (1973) was passed to authorize the establishment of sites known as National Wildlife Areas in which migratory birds and other wildlife, particularly species at risk and more importantly, their habitat, now receive protection. In 1994, the Act was amended to include the creation of Marine Wildlife Areas. The purpose of National Wildlife Areas and Marine Wildlife Areas is to conserve essential habitats for migratory birds and other wildlife species, especially endangered wildlife. Under the *Canada Wildlife Act*, public education and research are also goals of National Wildlife Areas. In most National Wildlife Areas there are some opportunities for public use. In others, research and protection of sensitive natural resources take precedence. All education and research activities are regulated to prevent declines in wildlife populations and deterioration of habitats. The *Canada Wildlife Act* can also be used to designate protected areas that would highlight the longstanding interaction of Aboriginal peoples with Canada's natural spaces.

International Recognition and Responsibilities

Many National Wildlife Areas and Migratory Bird Sanctuaries have also received international recognition. These include:

- The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (the Ramsar Convention) recognizes internationally important wetlands. Of 36 sites in Canada, 17 are National Wildlife Areas or Migratory Bird Sanctuaries.
- The Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network links sites in the Americas that are essential to large numbers of shorebirds as they complete their yearly migrations. Five sites are Environment Canada protected areas.
- The Important Bird Areas Program is a global effort of BirdLife International. Eighty of 597 Important Bird Areas in Canada are located partially or wholly in National Wildlife Areas or Migratory Bird Sanctuaries.
- The international UNESCO biosphere reserve program aims to conserve biodiversity while taking human development into account. Four of the 12 biosphere reserves in Canada are part of Environment Canada's protected areas network.

2005-2006 Annual Report

This is the first annual report that documents activities as they pertain to Environment Canada's Protected Areas. The intended audience is protected areas practitioners, Environment Canada management, conservation partners and the public.

Environment Canada's Protected Areas Program

The Protected Areas Program is an integral component of Environment Canada's activities in support of wildlife conservation. Through a mix of policy and programs for protected areas and habitat conservation, the Protected Areas Program supports and advances the full range of Environment Canada's migratory bird and species at risk conservation goals, objectives and responsibilities. Responsibilities for managing the Network are shared between national and regional personnel of Environment Canada. For the most part, national staff are responsible for broader policy issues and program support and coordination. This involves ensuring consistency in policy and program goals, supporting national communication



activities, and fostering linkages with other federal, provincial, municipal and international program initiatives. The regions are responsible for the planning, implementation, monitoring, and reporting of Environment Canada Protected Area programming. This includes on-site management activities, science and research, education and training initiatives, enforcement, building relationships with adjacent communities/landowners, and building the capacity for stewardship initiatives.

Objectives and Targets

The mission and core strategies of the Protected Area Program are outlined under the *Habitat Conservation component of the Canadian Wildlife Service Strategic Plan 2000-2010*. Under that Plan, Environment Canada's Canadian Wildlife Service has a key role in the conservation, protection, and rehabilitation of habitats of significance to migratory birds and species at risk in Canada. Activities will be directed to meet the following objectives or targets for habitat conservation:

- Habitats are conserved, protected, and rehabilitated to meet the objectives of Environment Canada's Canadian Wildlife Service for migratory birds and species at risk conservation plans within 15 years.
- Ecosystem approach principles are used when making resource management decisions.

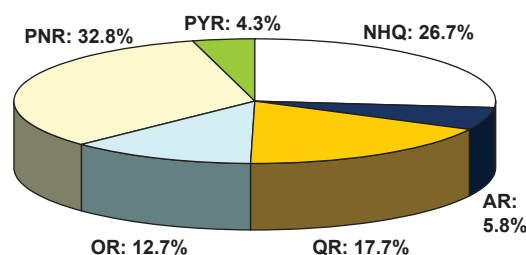
The successful achievement of these objectives and of the Protected Area Program will rely upon the skills, knowledge, and development of Environment Canada personnel tasked with its delivery. Program success also relies on the informed support of key decision-makers and the public, as well as close collaboration with Aboriginal groups, other wildlife management and natural resource agencies, non-government organizations, and private property owners.

Allocation and Accomplishments

The 2005-06 fiscal year was a pivotal year for Environment Canada's Protected Areas Program. The program established national guidelines and management standards through the development of the Environment Canada Protected Areas Manual. As per the Manual, Environment Canada will produce its first national protected area work plan in 2006-07, which will allow reporting on specific project outcomes.

While a work plan was not developed for 2005-06, this current report highlights some of the major achievements of both national headquarters and regional level within Environment Canada's Habitat Conservation Section over the past years.

The 2005-06 fiscal year allocation of Environment Canada Protected Areas annual operations and maintenance and salary budget is presented below. Allocation generally reflects the number and proportion of protected areas managed by the regions.



AR: Atlantic Region
QR: Quebec Region
OR: Ontario Region

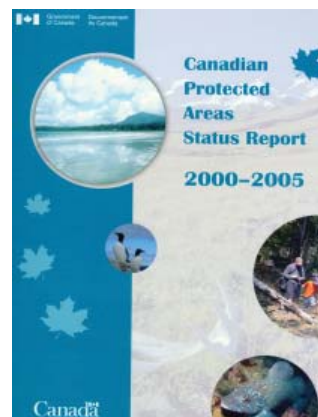
PNR: Prairie and Northern Region
PYR: Pacific and Yukon Region
NHQ: National Headquarters

National Accomplishments

Canadian Protected Areas Status Report

Environment Canada coordinated the development of a National Protected Areas Status Report that examines the current state of protected areas design, planning, establishment and management in Canada. The Status Report will assess efforts to date

in establishing and managing both terrestrial and marine protected areas, and will help to identify emerging opportunities and priorities regarding the important role of protected areas in conserving Canada's natural capital. The Status Report will constitute a "self-assessment" by Canada's various federal,





provincial, and territorial protected areas agencies, using a standardized questionnaire as a primary means to gather information. It will be tabled for consideration by Canada's Deputy Ministers responsible for parks, wildlife, forests, fisheries and endangered species at their June 2006 meeting. The Report will also serve as a means for Canada to examine and report on its commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity Programme of Work on Protected Areas.

Oceans Action Plan

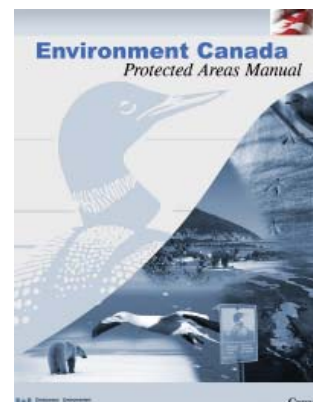
In June 2005, Environment Canada along with Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Parks Canada released a joint Federal Marine Protected Areas Strategy. The Strategy is a key deliverable under the Health of the Oceans pillar of the Oceans Action Plan and has four objectives: to establish a systematic approach to marine protected areas planning and establishment; to enhance collaboration for management and monitoring of marine protected areas; to increase awareness, understanding and participation of Canadians in the network; and to link Canada's network of marine protected areas to continental and global networks.

As per a joint Federal Marine Protected Area Strategy work plan, Environment Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and Parks Canada hosted two events in April 2005. A Social Science Research Priorities Workshop was held to discuss what social science research needs to be undertaken in order to move forward the establishment of marine protected areas in Canada. The second event, the Federal Marine Protected Areas Network Planning Workshop, brought together marine protected area practitioners to begin the process of coordinating a federal marine protected areas network. Follow-up activities for both workshops are underway.

Environment Canada Protected Areas Manual

For many years, Environment Canada's protected areas network lacked national standards for site selection, management, and enforcement. To improve the operation and management of sites, Environment Canada initiated the development of an Environment Canada Protected Areas Manual in 2002. The purpose of the Manual is to provide a comprehensive set of national policies and procedures to guide the establishment and management of National Wildlife Areas, Marine Wildlife Areas, and Migratory Bird Sanctuaries at the working level. The Manual is based on existing policies and is derived from the combined knowledge and experience of Environment

Canada's protected area practitioners and National Headquarters staff (Environment Canada Protected Areas Policy Working Group). EC completed the development of this manual in 2005. It is now going through the final stages of the approval process.



Environment Canada Protected Areas Management Review

As a further step towards meeting its policies and procedures requirements, Environment Canada has undertaken a Management Review in order to determine whether it is currently meeting its management obligations as set out in the draft Environment Canada Protected Areas Manual. Through this analysis, a significant number of challenges were highlighted: the majority of the protected sites are not actively managed and enforced; there are significant public/employee health and safety liabilities for Environment Canada as a landowner/employer, including some contaminated sites; the ecological integrity of many sites is at risk, and site management is not integrated with surrounding landscapes. This will be followed up with a more detailed study in 2006-07.

Contaminated Sites Management

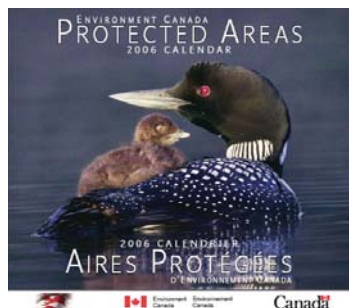
A 2002 study identified contaminants as an existing or potential stressor to a number of National Wildlife Areas and migratory bird sanctuaries across Canada. Environment Canada has therefore initiated a process to assess the presence and extent of contamination within its protected areas network. In 2005-06, Environment Canada undertook a number of Phase I and Phase II contaminated site assessments at National Wildlife Areas deemed to require priority attention.



Geomatics and Spatial Information Management

Environment Canada has strongly supported the ongoing development of an Internet-based, cross-jurisdictional protected areas mapping system called "Conservation Areas Tracking an Canadian Council on Ecological Areas CCEA published a "made-in- Canada" version of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) international protected areas classification scheme. As part of this initiative regional practitioners reclassified the National Wildlife Areas and Migratory Bird Sanctuaries under their management.

Public Awareness of Environment Canada's Protected Areas



Generally speaking, government agencies, conservation partners and the Canadian public have little knowledge of Environment Canada's protected areas network. In order to increase their awareness, Environment

Canada has been leading efforts to standardize existing communications tools, as well as creating new ones. Again this year, Environment Canada has produced its popular protected areas calendars. Other important communications projects include the creation of a series of six posters featuring some National Wildlife Areas and Migratory Bird Sanctuaries across the country.

International Activities

Ramsar Convention

Environment Canada attended the "Wetlands and water: supporting life, sustaining livelihoods" conference in Uganda, which was the 9th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971). The Canadian delegation participated in several committees, and chaired the Credentials Committee and the Finance and Budget Committee. Prior to the COP, Canada had chaired the Standing Committee Subgroup on Finance.

Canada/Mexico/US Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management

In May 2005, the Trilateral Committee established a Resolution for the Recognition of Sister Protected Areas (SPA) among the three countries. The intent of this initiative is to link protected areas that share common species/ecosystems and to enable managers to share information, link land management expertise and habitat conservation efforts, and explore opportunities for collaboration. The Monarch Butterfly Sister Protected Area partnership is the first Sister Protected Area Network proposed under this initiative, and has been endorsed by the Trilateral Executive Committee at the XI Annual Meeting of the Trilateral Committee in San Diego, California.

Regional Accomplishments

PACIFIC AND YUKON REGION

The Pacific and Yukon Region (PYR) manages six National Wildlife Areas and seven Migratory Bird Sanctuaries across British Columbia and the Yukon. This region is also the site of the first proposed Marine Wildlife Area in Canada, the Scott Islands.



Grizzly bear - Photo by Gary Anweiler

Nisutlin NATIONAL WILDLIFE AREA, Yukon

The Canadian Wildlife Service manages this National Wildlife Area in partnership with the Teslin Renewable Resource Council, the Teslin Tlingit Council, and the government of Yukon Department of Environment. The National Wildlife Area partners developed a management plan for the National Wildlife Area in 1997 and completed a review and revision of the plan in 2004. Regional



Nisutlin River Delta National Wildlife Area - Photo by Jim Hawking

Canadian Wildlife Service staff have set a goal of completing all outstanding and new management plan activities by the time the plan comes up for renewal in 2009.

All four National Wildlife Area partners met in Teslin in early 2006 to discuss and plan National Wildlife Area signage. As a result, boundary signs will be installed by the Teslin Tlingit Council, the Teslin Renewable Resource Council and Environment Canada staff in early summer 2006. Interpretive and public notice signs are currently being drafted by Canadian Wildlife Service staff, and a prime location for their installation has been provided by the Village of Teslin. Teslin Tlingit Council and Teslin Renewable Resource Council involvement in this process will ensure that the content and placement of National Wildlife Area signage will be both effective and a benefit to the community. Regional Canadian Wildlife Service staff are pleased with how well the National Wildlife Area partnership is working, and hope that our shared management of this National Wildlife Area will promote interest in federal protected areas within other northern communities where National Wildlife Area or Migratory Bird Sanctuary candidate areas exist.

PRAIRIE AND NORTHERN REGION

The Prairie and Northern Region includes Nunavut, the Northwest Territories and the Provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. There are 15 National Wildlife Areas and 33 Migratory Bird Sanctuaries in the region.



Franklin's Gull colony at Stalwart National Wildlife Area - Photo by Kerry Hecker

Last Mountain Lake National Wildlife Area/Migratory Bird Sanctuary, Saskatchewan

Over 175 species of birds pass through Last Mountain Lake on migration, and another 100 species stay to breed. These migrants visit over 30 countries. The first known bird banding at Last Mountain Lake Migratory Bird Sanctuary was by Reuben and Albert C. Lloyd from Davidson who banded Double-crested Cormorants from 1923-1932. Many research projects done at Last Mountain Lake have involved banding birds, including several Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada species at risk. In 1988, the Canadian Wildlife Service began a long term waterfowl banding program at Last Mountain Lake as part of the continental monitoring of prairie duck populations, part of a cooperative program with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The banding is done in July and August of each year when moulting ducks are more easily captured. The total number of birds



Last Mountain Lake native prairie - Photo by Dean Nernberg



caught and banded since the program began is 53,297, with a record 10,000 being banded in a year when duck numbers were particularly high on the National Wildlife Area. In 1989, the Canadian Wildlife Service established the Last Mountain Bird Observatory at Last Mountain Lake to monitor land birds during the spring and fall migrations. This project is conducted with the cooperation of the Last Mountain Lake Regional Park and the Saskatchewan Natural History Society.

East Bay Migratory Bird Sanctuary, Nunavut

Research of common eiders breeding in the East Bay Migratory Bird Sanctuary (Southampton Island, Nunavut) was initiated in 1996. The largest known breeding colony of Northern eiders in Nunavut occurs on a small, offshore island within the Bird Sanctuary. Banding of eiders at this location has shown that many Common Eiders that breed in Nunavut migrate to winter along the coast of southwest Greenland. It had been previously assumed that most Canadian Northern Eiders wintered in Atlantic Canada. These findings had immediate and important management and conservation implications, because until very recently there was a very high annual harvest of eiders in Greenland during winter, and it was believed that this harvest was unsustainable. These predictions helped encourage the Greenland government to impose stricter harvest regulations in 2001, which shortened the hunting season by 4-5 months. The regulations were immediately met with strong political opposition by Greenland residents and as such were subsequently overturned in 2002, but then reinstated once again in 2003. The field site at East Bay has the only banded population of eiders in the eastern Canadian Arctic and therefore is the only location where this "before and after" data could be collected.



Common Eiders – Photo by USFWS

Anderson River Migratory Bird Sanctuary, Northwest Territories

This was the third year of a four year study documenting and evaluating the effects of habitat loss and nest predation by grizzly bears on declining numbers of nesting snow geese and brant at Anderson River Migratory Bird Sanctuary, located in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, Northwest Territories. The study is driven by concerns expressed by the Inuvialuit about declining numbers of geese available for harvest. Possible causes of the decline include increased nest destruction by grizzly bears (which have been sighted more frequently in the goose colony in the past number of years) and loss or degradation of habitat (from salt-water flooding during storm surges, overgrazing by geese, or other causes). The field work carried out in the spring of 2005 (and to be continued in 2006) is evaluating the numbers and success of nesting geese at Anderson River, and the effects of grizzly bears on goose reproductive success.

Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement

Under the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement, the Federal government and the Inuit must complete an IIBA for all conservation areas that existed when the final agreement was completed. This IIBA must be complete before new conservation areas are established. Negotiations for an Umbrella IIBA for EC Conservation Areas in the Nunavut Settlement Area are near completion. The signing of the IIBA will enable the designation of the proposed Iqalituq, Cape Searle and Reid Bay National Wildlife Areas and any future EC protected areas in Nunavut.

ONTARIO REGION

In Ontario Region, there are 10 National Wildlife Areas and 9 Migratory Bird Sanctuaries.



West Side, Long Point National Wildlife Area - Photo by Ian Parsons



Wellers Bay National Wildlife Area, Ontario

Wellers Bay National Wildlife Area is a former air bombing and practice range and has at least eight unexploded bombs known to occur on or in the waters surrounding the National Wildlife Area. As this is a remote site with an attractive sand beach, many recreational boaters are attracted to the site. In the fall of 2004 and summer of 2005 Wildlife Enforcement Division staff carried out compliance operations around the site and issued over 100 warnings and laid 26 charges. Environment Canada must now work against tremendous public pressure to relax restrictions on access to the site. In response to this issue, Environment Canada staff is working with the Department of National Defence to arrange public meetings, to train Environment Canada staff on identifying unexploded munitions, and to continue with a site evaluation as part of the Department of National Defence's national Legacy Site program.



Wellers Bay National Wildlife Area – Photo by Doug Sweiger

St. Clair National Wildlife Area, Ontario

Staff at St. Clair National Wildlife Area undertook a program of habitat management/manipulation at Bear Creek Unit of St. Clair National Wildlife Area to improve conditions for the Eastern Prairie White Fringed Orchid in partnership with Ducks Unlimited and Rural Lambton Stewardship Network. The Orchid is an endangered species, listed on the Species at Risk Act public registry. Initial management consisted of controlling the alien invasive variety of phragmites with controlled burns and herbicide application. Both methods independently increased the numbers of plants, and there was an additive effect when both treatments were used on the site. One area went from "0" plants recorded in 2002 to 255 plants recorded in 2005 following treatment. In the



Rocher Percé in fog - Photo by Benoit Fontaine

late summer of 2005, a dike was built to section off part of the Bear Creek Unit of the National Wildlife Area, which enhanced adjacent wetland habitat and allowed for more effective management of the prairie habitat of the Orchid. The area that was segregated for orchid management is approximately three hectares.

QUEBEC REGION

Quebec Region has eight National Wildlife Areas and 27 Migratory Bird Sanctuaries.



Cap Tourmente hunter – Photo by Robert Vanderkam

Inventories within Environment Canada's Protected Areas in Quebec

As part of a knowledge upgrading exercise, Canadian Wildlife Service teams in the past years have conducted inventories of birds, vegetation, small mammals, amphibians, bacterians, etc. These inventories were conducted through collaboration amongst biologists and wildlife technicians of the Quebec Ministère des



ressources naturelles, de la faune et des parcs. These inventories will allow for a better management of Environment Canada's sites, while providing knowledge of the presence of species at risk in our protected areas.

Cooperation Framework Agreements

Quebec Region has pursued the development of Cooperative Framework Agreements with non-governmental organizations interested in contributing to National Wildlife Area development. To date, two agreements have been signed and two others are close to completion. Through these agreements, Environment Canada outlines relationship guidelines between the organizations. This way of doing business is beneficial to both parties and formalizes their engagement.

Cap Tourmente National Wildlife Area, Quebec

In 2005, the fourth edition of "La Chasse de la Rève" was held at Cap Tourmente National Wildlife Area. This activity offers the opportunity for youth to learn the sport of hunting, accompanied by a mentor. The hunt is organized by Canadian Wildlife Service staff with the cooperation of the Friends of Cap Tourmente National Wildlife Area, the Côte-de-Beaupré Association of Hunters and Anglers, and the Association of Quebec Waterfowl Hunters. This year, 12 young people participated in this event at Cap Tourmente. The hunt always takes place on a Sunday, when regular hunting does not occur, and in areas managed specifically for the hunting program. The hunt provides an opportunity for youth to get involved in a safe and special way. When they arrive at Cap Tourmente National Wildlife Area, the participants are able to practice with clay pigeons before the official training and hunt begins.



Sable Island Winter horses - Photo by Andrew Macfarlane

ATLANTIC REGION

The Atlantic Region includes the provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island. The region's staff manages 11 National Wildlife Areas and 15 Migratory Bird Sanctuaries.

Machias Seal Island Migratory Bird Sanctuary, New Brunswick

Machias Seal Island Migratory Bird Sanctuary is a 10-hectare rocky island located southwest of Grand Manan, New Brunswick, in the Gulf of Maine. Although small, this island supports the largest seabird colony in the Gulf of Maine, with significant numbers of Atlantic Puffin, Arctic Tern and Common Tern. This island is also one of the very few seabird colonies that are open to the public in eastern North America. Every year three tour boat operators, under permit from Environment Canada, bring upwards of 1,000 visitors to Machias during the months of June and July. It is important to note that many of these visitors to Machias come from all over the world, and some have planned years in advance for this unique opportunity. Complicating the administration of this sanctuary is a long-standing dispute with the United States government which contests Canada's ownership of Machias Seal Island. Sanctuary administration by Environment Canada is closely partnered with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans which has an operational lighthouse station on the island as well as with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. On site administration of the sanctuary is conducted by the "sanctuary caretaker". During the seabird breeding season and the height of tourist visitation, this caretaker is the eyes and ears of Environment Canada on Machias Seal Island.

Sunken Island Bog (Tintamarre National Wildlife Area), New Brunswick

Sunken Island is a 150-hectare raised red sphagnum bog, surrounded by a narrow fringe of Black Spruce. Located on the Tantramar Marsh in southeastern New Brunswick, it is one of the last remaining unprotected bogs at the head of Cumberland Basin. Most of the other large bogs are protected within the Tintamarre National Wildlife Area (2,000 hectares) or the Missaguash Marsh Wildlife Management Area (4,000 hectares). For many years, Sunken Island has been frequented by students from Tantramar Regional High School, Holland College School of Resource Management, and Mount Allison University as part of ongoing field studies; however, up until a few years ago the bog was in private hands. As



part of the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture, Ducks Unlimited Canada, with support from Environment Canada, had a narrow window of opportunity to acquire most of the Sunken Island bog (85 hectares). This year, Environment Canada engaged Public Works and Government Services Canada, through a Specific Service Agreement, to review title and survey documentation for Sunken Island. The intent is to exchange a 30-hectare area of dykelands (that presently contain two Ducks Unlimited Canada projects) held by Environment Canada for the Sunken Island bog held by Ducks Unlimited Canada. This exchange would place both parcels more in line with the mandate of the respective organizations and thus reduce administration costs. The bog would eventually become part of the nearby Tintamarre National Wildlife Area.



Sunken Island Bog – Photo by Colin MacKinnon



Summary

Regional and National Headquarters staff in 2005-2006 have been involved with the development of a Canadian Protected Areas Status Report which highlighted progress and opportunities over a five-year period from 2000-2005. Other activities included the completion of the Environment Canada Protected Areas Manual providing guidance to practitioners; a Management Review of the Environment Canada Protected Areas highlighting the challenges and issues within the Network; contaminated site assessments; continued support and development of the Conservation Areas Reporting and Tracking System; completion of numerous communication products, including a protected areas calendar and a series of posters; and representation of Environment Canada Protected Areas at different international forums.

Additionally, practitioners across the country continue to complete numerous projects, manage contentious issues and achieve real progress in spite of the limited resources. Some examples include the negotiation associated with the development of the Inuit Impact Benefit Agreement; the on-going cooperative arrangement between Environment Canada, the Teslin Renewable Resource Council, the Teslin Tlingit Council, and the Government of Yukon Department of Environment for the management of Nisultin Delta National Wildlife Area; Wellers Bay National Wildlife Area on-going management issues; the annual "Chasse de la Relève" at Cap Tourmente National Wildlife Area; and collaborative work

with Ducks Unlimited Canada to protect important habitats in Sunken Island Bog.

Over the past year, Environment Canada staff have been working diligently to maintain the department's network of protected areas with existing resources. These protected areas are diverse in their species and their habitat, and vary in their size and location throughout the country. Proper management of such a network requires sufficient resources. Currently, Environment Canada's biggest challenge is to effectively manage its more than 11 million hectares of habitat on a budget of \$2.9 million a year.

Environment Canada's Protected Area Network continues to provide an important contribution to Canada's national and international conservation and biodiversity commitment.



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Service

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Canada