

Saturday, May 29, 1965

Biggest Maternity Hospital

Cougars To Caribou, The Perpetuation Of Species Goes Forward

By FRANK W. DOYLE
Executive Editor

Even though this is a story about a visit last cold, wet Thursday to the wild life park at Shubenacadie, it starts elsewhere. After all, there should be something other than a description of what, at the moment, is probably the biggest maternity hospital in Nova Scotia. Certainly it is the only one set in the woods along winding woods paths. Births of one kind of creature taking place in customary fashion at the wrong hours of the day and night with veterinarians and devoted public servants in attendance. Anyway . . .

Honey-colored bears are so friendly that they try to nuzzle little boys, dog fashion, when they and their keepers are encountered suddenly as they lunch in grass so tall as almost to hide them.

One boy learned a nature lesson before he was old enough to be plagued by school. Later he found that if a captive buffalo's poll is scratched he backs away, perhaps three inches, then tries to crash through the end of his stall. That was in a Quebec zoo.

PUZZLE NO. ONE

Puzzlement really began years later at New York's Central Park. A certain monkey there spits at the crowd when laughed at. The crowd then laughs more

loudly. Soon there comes a still unanswered question: On which side of the bars are the simians?

That's puzzle number one and here comes another, Nova Scotian schoolboys wounded a deer with a "22". They found the animal; it was taken to the wild life park, nursed until its head wound had healed—but one eye had been lost. A pet and a rare white deer, it was kept and mingled with the herd.

A group of school children arrived—they come almost every day, four busloads of them on Thursday, cold and wet as it was. The children saw the park, its neat paths and ponds, and its animals, and went on their way. So did their teacher. They did not write back. She did — to complain.

Outraged, she asked: Weren't the park authorities ashamed to show to children of such tender years the hapless victim of needless cruelty, the one-eyed doe?

Actually, it is said, there was nothing unsightly about the animal.

Might not that teacher better have spoken to her charges about the pain that had been inflicted on a helpless animal by other children into whose untrained hands had come an inoffensive-looking, but deadly 22 calibre weapon?

PUZZLE NO. TWO

How she managed to miss that object lesson is puzzle number two. There are many others. Why, for instance, do not critics apply to wild life facts known to every housewife, notably that even sheltered dogs lose hair in spring, whether it be scottie or Irish setter, leave it on rugs and furniture.

Because caribou and deer and even domestic cats at the park do exactly the same thing and for a time look piebald and unattractive, they are called mangy and lousy and other things. Because hens moult are they said to be neglected? Are wild ducks?

Pregnancy has its effects, not usually beautiful. Never though is it suggested that the one involved should be shot between the eyes because of not uncommon awkwardness.

Giving birth has a slenderizing effect. (A female caribou even sheds its horns to celebrate its return to normal girth!) Only in a zoo or park is this attributed to starvation, as has been said falsely of Shubenacadie.

Even fathers of the human kind would appreciate this, no waking in the middle of the night for bottle feeding and burping. Unimaginable yet that's the way with some creatures.

INDEPENDENT

An offspring, less than 20 hours old, stands up on his feet, walks around and finds his seventh or eighth meal of the day, eats till satisfied. Then he walks out of the barn into the rain, instinctively makes his way to shelter under trees though he has never seen one before. Mother follows, determined not to be deserted so soon. That is exactly what happened on Thursday at the wild life park.

There was nothing new in that, except to the baby caribou to whom, of course, everything was new. There is something new, though, in the discovery that a caribou almost always loses her first calf. There isn't milk enough to feed it and it perishes — if in the wilderness.

In the park it's different. Watch is kept. The baby is plied with a milk mixture supplied in the most natural way possible lest it be spit out. That is taken care of too and so the colt lives.

The park staff is proud of that achievement, as they are of the fact that they have been the first to bring along certain foxes, housed like the others in big, unsmelly enclosures. Wild cats, as well, though most people could stand going without that. They even have induced Canada brant hatched from eggs laid on Southampton Island in the Arctic to nest here in Nova Scotia. They have done much the same with other creatures.

LOST HIS SEAT

At that, there are fewer bird around than there should be. When the park-hatched birds built nests elsewhere, "sportsmen" discovered the fact, scooped up the adults, killed them and carried away the young. Hopes that they would eventually become naturalized thus have been set back.

Not so serious was the case of the 67 pheasants, snatched from their pens by night, bagged and carried off. On his return, however, the known thief lost the seat of his pants and something of what lay beneath. He hasn't made a third try — yet.

Neither has another individual who killed three deer, including the one-eyed blonde mutilated by children with a gun. He explained so humbly that he did not know where he was nor what he had been shooting at that the park staff almost sympathized with him. Almost, that is.

SHOOTING THERE

There was a different reaction when another stopped at the park entrance.

"Where are your deer," he asked.

Since he carried a "sporting rifle and was stylishly garbed in sportsmen's raiment, the park employee was a little startled by the question, fear, perhaps, the slaughter was about to start then and there.

The attendant stalled with a question of his own.

"Why," he asked, do you want to know that?"

"Well," the sportsman nonchalantly replied, "I'm going hunting for the first time. I've never seen a deer and I'd like to know what I'm supposed to shoot at."

Obviously the man was telling the truth. Deer, unrecognized as such, were standing a few feet away. They were pointed out to him.

Satisfied, the "sportsman" blithely sped away in his car.

10,000 IN MAY

Not all visitors to the park are so bloodthirsty. That's fortunate because a million, young and old, have visited the park in the ten years or so since it was founded. There were 200,000 visitors last year. By the end of the month the May visitors will total over 10,000, more than a third of them last weekend.

The animals don't seem to mind being stared at by these throngs. Thursday a big bobcat lazily nuzzled the face of the director and a mink came from the back of its cage to lick his fingers. (Strangers are warned not to try either.)

A wild turkey strutted placidly among the peahens and took off on a mission of her own. (Annapolis Valley "sportsmen" shot several a few years ago and strung them up as scarecrows.)

Deer, undisturbed, either stared curiously or munched at food in the manger. Even a moose came out of his wallow to poke forward stubby antlers still in the velvet stage. Another, not so friendly, his hair bristling, munched at what may have

been lily roots torn from the pond in the long and wide preserve. Their feminine companion had shyly retired into a spruce thicket.

Almost the only restlessness was among waterbirds which seemed to be practising landings and take-offs, perhaps showing off a little. The porcupines, by way of contrast, simply stayed asleep. One was pure white and, amazingly it was almost pretty, if that can be imagined.

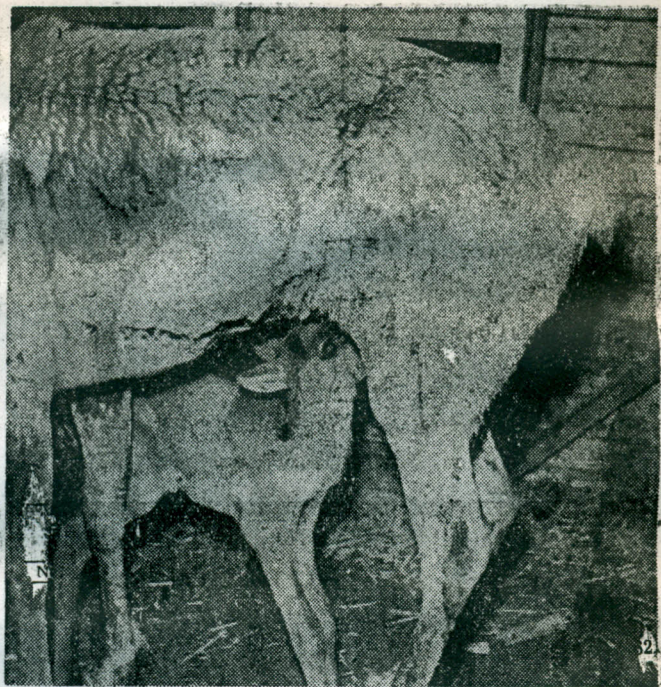
The bears, though, were an exception as they paced up and down their quarters. Though big the enclosures still are admittedly too small and are to be replaced on a larger scale elsewhere in the park this summer.

The general air of contentment, perhaps arose from the fact not generally known, that many of the park animals always have had restricted lives. Born in captivity in many cases, so were their parents and grandparents.

RIGHT BACK IN

In truth, most would not know how to fend for themselves were they freed — no more than could a dog or a canary or a budgie or a hen. They would not be happy either with wild fare they had to hunt for in place of the balanced rations brought to them.

A deer which made its way through a hole in the fence found that out. Fresh field fodder and browse soon lost their lure when fragrances from a kitchen were wafted his way. He followed this scent right through an open door. Before the housewife could turn to welcome her unbidden visitor, he had eaten two apple pies and was munching in a third. Her rage, expressed in a waving apron, sent the deer flying out



After supper, though less than a day old, he'll walk several hundred feet through the rain and find shelter for himself under the trees. (Fulton Martin)

Love Of Animals Became Vocation

As a boy he made pets of almost all living things that came his way — muskrats and squirrels, rabbits and other four-footed beings. A hen and a rooster sat by his side, waiting for playtime, after school books had been studied. That's the sort of life that Elden Pace lived; down by the Atlantic shore—God's country, he calls it. Then came the war and end to academic training. Out of the service and a job, he looked for one in Halifax, was told of the rangers school, passed first class, entered the civil service at Truro, got attached to the travelling exhibits arranged by the Department of Lands and Forests. First thing he knew he had charge of the few animals when the exhibition circuit was over. They were

kept on what was little more than a mud patch at Shubenacadie.

Long since, they have been moved across the road to where the preserve now covers 55 acres and can be extended back over the hill for nearly a mile.

Mr. Pace is proud of that, looks forward to the day when there will be that enlargement, and certain conveniences, too, such as piped water. It now has to be hauled from a small lake in a tanker and pumped by hand, all this when gravity could do the job better.

But that calls for money—more than so far has been available, even though a able 50,000 cars make a

least, to visit 200,000 miles

cents a gal

the door — right back into the park. He decided it was safer there. Just as it has been safer in recent days when fires trapped deer and even birds, rabbits and many other of the wild folk that inhabit the wilderness.

A bear hug for the Hatts

By Gerrie Grevatt

Edgar Hatt of Beech Hill and his 13-year-old son, Otho, deserve a friendly bear hug. Thanks to them, Norma the cub will probably pull through.

Last Saturday, Mr. Hatt and Otho were clearing a snowmobile trail in the woods behind their home when they heard a frightening sound. It was a growl.

A large black bear appeared from behind a felled tree, and spotting the two, ran off in the opposite direction. After she had disappeared, the Hatt's heard a whine, but fearing the bear's return, quickly headed for home.

When they related their story to Mr. Hatt's father, a

long time woodsman, he told them to go back. He said the whine probably came from young cubs. As a bear, once disturbed, will not return to her young, he assured them that the animals would perish.

Back they went. They found a den behind the fallen tree, looked in, and saw two very young cubs. One of them was dead. The other, barely alive. She was no more than six inches in length with umbilical cord still attached and weighed less than a pound.

When they took the cub home, she was given milk through an eye dropper. It worked. Delighted with her revival, the Hatts contacted the Department of Lands and

Forests to see what to do next.

Charles Baker, chief ranger, instructed the family to take the cub to the New Ross ranger depot the following morning. This they did, and was later transferred to the Shubenacadie Wildlife Park.

According to Elvin Pace, Park supervisor, the young animal is doing well.

"We were initially concerned that she might have pneumonia, but she seems fine now," he reported Monday afternoon. "However, the next week or two will be her most critical time. If she did not nurse before her mother left, she has missed out on some very important vitamins and

minerals. Without them, she has only a 10 per cent chance of survival."

Norma, so-named by the park attendants, is presently living in an incubator. She is being bottle fed, her food consists of Esplac, a tinned formula especially prepared for young animals. According to Mr. Pace, she is the youngest bear cub they have ever treated. He estimates she is less than one week old.

If Norma survives, her future looks bright. She will either be invited to stay at the Shubenacadie park or taken to the wildlife park soon to be opened in Cape Breton.

Whatever the choice, let's all 'bear' with her.

Friday, October 13, 1967

156 Acres Added To Shubenacadie Game Sanctuary

Lands and Forests Minister E. D. Haliburton has announced that 156 acres have been added to the Shubenacadie game sanctuary. The addition will form part of the Provincial Wildlife Park.

"We have had incidents in the past when persons have gone into the area to shoot, despite the fact that it was posted against hunting," said Mr. Haliburton.

"DETRIMENTAL"

"This practice is detrimental to the work done by Park Superintendent Eldon Pace, who has spent years building up a breeding population of waterfowl."

"The department is trying to establish colonies of nesting Canada geese. The dead waters of St. Andrew's River affords the birds a resting and feeding place.

"When they fly out of the area they are, of course, legal prey of the hunter."

"The new area has been posted and we will strictly enforce the law. I am sure that all law-abiding persons will understand our concern in this matter."

Mr. Haliburton said that Kejimikujik National Park has been declared a game sanctuary by Order-in-Council. The 140 square mile area will be patrolled by federal park wardens who, by the same order, have been given authority to enforce the provisions of the Lands and Forests Act with respect to sanctuaries.

Tuesday, July 30, 1968

Stocks Shubenacadie Park With Birds From N. W. T.

SHUBENACADIE, — If you have bad nerves don't go to the North West Territories in search of birds eggs, is the advice of Eldon Pace, superintendent of the wild life park at Shubenacadie. Mr. Pace recently returned from an excursion over the ice and brought back eggs from the Atlantic and Pacific brant, whistling swan, Perry River white front goose, Perry River Canada geese and the king eider duck.

Mr. Pace and party left Edmonton by plane, for Victoria Island, Cambridge Bay in the Queen Maud Gulf, where they got the Pacific and Atlantic brand and king eider duck eggs. They picked up the other eggs on nearby islands in the bay and then started a 16-hour trek back to civilization.

From Edmonton, Mr. Pace took Air Canada to Montreal and when he got there he found the plane for Halifax gone and he was left to babysit all night in a hotel with hatching eggs. Only the king eider duck eggs remained to hatch when he got home. By the next morning most of them were hatched and they nearly finished the job as he sat along on the plane for home accompanied by the squawks of little geese.

He described the ice conditions in the gulf as "horrible". They were flying a Cessna 180 with floats and going into the small lakes the pilot had to hit the ice and then go into

the water. Likewise to start away he had to pull the plane to the ice and start off into the water.

Last year, Mr. Pace, who is world famous for breeding birds and animals in captivity, brought back what he is certain is the Lawrence brant, believed to be extinct. This year he exploded a popular theory that the Atlantic and Pacific brant does not nest together — he found them nesting together. They also saw many "old squaw" ducks but despite their intensive search could not find a nest.

As one walks through the park, a loud "shoop" will almost startle you, and Mr. Pace explains that it is the "cyrus crane" whooping to warn all oncomers to head in another direction until his mate produces little ones from the two eggs she is sitting on. Cyrus is about four and a half feet tall and has a wing spread of about seven feet. Mr. Pace says he will kill, if possible, anything that bothers her and one little "pea hen" found out to her sorrow she couldn't even nest within 100 yards of him.

On one of his treks around

his lady he saw the nest, tore it to shreds and would have got the hen if she had not got out of his reach. Mr. Pace did not disclose how he intends to do it, but by hook or by crook he wants to get those eggs from under mother crane two days before they are due to hatch and put them in the incubator.

If the hen hatches them she will only raise one and the strongest little cannibal will kill the weaker. She lays her eggs on alternate days so the first egg laid usually produced the strongest little monster and he will kill his brother or

sister. Another reason Mr. Pace must get the eggs is that the cranes are from India and have not yet adapted to Nova Scotia so they will nest again, thinking its spring, (providing mother does not hatch these eggs) and this is exactly what Mr. Pace has planned for her.

A prize at the park are four caribou babies, bred in captivity with no problems this year.

The Mouflon sheep, natives of Corisca, were not so lucky as no young have appeared.

So far this year there have been 108,986 visitors to the park. Last year at the end of July there were 100,000.





Monday, November 29, 1965

Wildlife Park Head Wins Fame

The superintendent of Nova Scotia's Wildlife Park at Shubenacadie has received six international awards for his achievements in propagating and raising wild waterfowl.

Eldon R. Pace, a native of Glen Margaret, Halifax County, received the awards at the annual meeting of the Atlantic Section of the Canadian Society of Wildlife and Fisheries Biologists held at Acadia University, Wolfville.

Howard L. Mendall, leader of the Maine Co-operative Wildlife Research Unit made the presentations.

Pace received the outstanding achievement award for wild goose propagation in 1965 from the international Wild Waterfowl Association.

He was particularly cited for raising Atlantic brant geese, "the first time this species has been raised in captivity in the western hemisphere and perhaps the world."

IN HALL OF FAME

The American Game Breeders' Co-operative Federation elected Pace to its Avicultural Hall of Fame — "for his outstanding contributions to the establishment and preservation of game birds in captivity."

His citation reads that he was the first to raise ringneck duck and Atlantic brant in captivity as well as raising many other rare species of waterfowl.

The same association presented Pace with its award for outstanding game bird propagation in 1965 stating that the propagation and establishment of game birds in captivity insures their perpetual existence.

He received two "first-breeding" certificates of merit from the Federation naming him as the first person to raise Atlantic brant and ringneck duck in captivity and in recognition of his outstanding avicultural achievements and important contribution to establishment and preservation of wildlife.

Superintendent Pace received the top award of the American Pheasant and Waterfowl Society — a plaque nam-



ELDON R. PACE
Winner of six
international awards

ing him the master breeder of waterfowl in 1965.

The Department of Lands and Forests established the Wildlife Park in 1954. Since that time Pace has successfully raised 34 species of wild waterfowl, some are extremely rare species.

He is also the first person on mainland North America to successfully raise woodland caribou in captivity.

In 1960 Pace made a 4,000 mile trip to Canada's north-land. He was accompanied by Bob Elgas of Big Timber, Montana. They journeyed to Bear Cove on Southhampton Island. There Pace obtained 17 young Atlantic brant and brought them back to Shubenacadie.

From this stock he was successful in raising young brant for the first time this year.

Pace is a graduate of the Maritime Forest Ranger School in Fredericton. During the Second World War he served as an asdic operator in the Royal Canadian Navy.

He joined the Lands and Forests Department in 1947 and worked on moose surveys, forest fire suppression and as a radio operator before the Wildlife Park was established.

In the future he hopes to journey north again and obtain other rare species of waterfowl and attempt to raise them.

Confer Honor On E. R. Pace

WOLFVILLE—Membership in the "Aviculture Hall of Fame" was one of several high honors received by Eldon R. Pace of the Shubenacadie wild life park staff at the recent annual meeting at Acadia University of the Atlantic Section of the Canadian Society of Wildlife and Fishery Biologists.

Presentation of the Hall of Fame scroll was made by H. L. Mendall, director, Maine Co-operative Wildlife Research Unit, Orono, Maine.

The honor from the American Game Bird Breeders Co-op Federation was bestowed for Mr. Pace's "outstanding contribution to the establishment and preservation of game birds in captivity." Specifically cited was "the raising of the Atlantic Brant and Ringneck Duck in captivity for the first time in North America."

Protected Paradise At Shubenacadie

Photos by Bert Beaver
Weekend Magazine

TWO HUNTERS once drove up to Nova Scotia's Wildlife Park at Shubenacadie and asked Superintendent Eldon Pace to show them a deer. Leaving their rifles in the car, they followed the puzzled Pace to a clearing where a young buck fearlessly returned their gaze.

"So that's a deer," one of the men marvelled. "We had to know," said the other. Then they drove off, presumably better able to distinguish between their quarry and the traditional target of rookie hunters, the domestic cow.

One hundred and eighty thousand visitors clicked through the turnstiles last year to enjoy the 35-acre park, off the Trans-Canada Highway 40 miles from Halifax. They saw, and photographed, all species of wildlife native to Nova Scotia, from moose and deer to mink and rabbits, together with some that are not native, including a strutting peacock.

The big animals — among them an imported caribou from Newfoundland named Joey — roam contentedly through their woodland

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setting. The rest of the 1,500 birds and beasts in the park, to which admission is free, live in cages.

Unlike some of the animals — a mischievous raccoon once filched a \$20 bill from an unsuspecting American tourist's pocket — most of the human visitors to the park behave themselves. "But some tease the animals," says park attendant Gerald Dickie. "Adults are just as bad as the children. We've had to warn some and even put others out of the park."

The idea for the wildlife haven came from G. W. I. Creighton, deputy minister of lands and forests, whose department operates it. "The park has proven a valuable aid in teaching conservation to both children and adults," he says. "It has come a long way since we set up a few pens at Shubenacadie 15 years ago."

Cyril Robinson
Weekend Magazine

Thousands visit annually

By ROGER EDGE

SHUBENACADIE —It's a known fact, 46-year-old Eldon Pace, supervisor of the provincial wildlife park here, is a busy man.

He has to be. With anywhere from 70 to 190 different animals and birds to care for, to see that they're fed, that their cages are kept clean, that people don't feed the otters, and bandaging up fingers belonging to people who tried to feed them, there just aren't enough hours in the average day.

"We're busy all the time" he says smiling. The busiest time of the year is when the young are arriving, when the incubators are running and hatching is going on. The busiest time of the day could be anytime. Partly it depends on how many people are in. Then again, you never know what will happen to one of the animals. It could be feeling fine now and an hour from now it could be sick."

That about sums up what he and his trained keepers have been doing almost every day since 1954 when the wildlife park and sanctuary first opened its gates and rambling wooded areas to the hordes of people the government felt it would attract.

And for once a government made a decision that appealed to everyone or at least everyone who has ever visited the wildlife park.

Last year, on Nov. 30 when the wildlife park "went into hibernation" for the winter, officials found that a staggering 228,000 people, one third of them from outside the province, had clicked through the turnstile.

Although it wasn't a record number (the park has seen 233,000 visitors in one year) it gives a good indication of the popularity the 1,600 acres of meadows, pond and marsh dotted woodland has experienced.

The park was the brainchild of G. W. I. Creighton, a former deputy minister of lands and forests who decided to do something about cutting down on the number of wildlife pets being kept by individuals. It began on a small patch of land next to the main highway. Animals, people were keeping as pets, finding in the woods, and orphaned by forest fires were turned over to the Department of Lands and Forests.

Before long the number had swelled to such an extent that

new quarters had to be found immediately.

The present park, located back from the main road and in a secluded wooded area was discovered one evening by the park supervisor while he was out exercising a herd of deer. Pens in the first park were too small for deer and other animals to get the proper amount of exercise during the day.

He had his first look at the area, decided it had everything in the way of natural woods environment the department needed for a new park and urged the government to carry out the expansion.

From then on it was relatively simple, if taking care of that many wild animals in captivity could be termed simple. The government purchased the land and moved the birds and animals into their new home.

Today there are more than two dozen different kinds of animals, most of them native to the province, ranging the acres of woods. The list included more kinds of animals than most people ever see in a lifetime and some, like the Mouflon sheep, the Fallow deer and the East and West African Crowned cranes, the average person would never see.

Included are: white tail deer, moose, caribou, Mouflon sheep, Barbados sheep, Barbary sheep, Harbor seals, Gray seals, mink, martin, fisher, wolverines, badger, black bear, bobcat, lynx, cougar, porcupine, raccoon, skunk, domestic rabbits, grey squirrels, Arctic fox, red fox, cross fox, kit fox, cossack fox, 36 varieties of geese, 32 of ducks, six varieties of swan, eight varieties of cranes, eight of pheasant as well as peafowl.

The park has more kinds of waterfowl than any other single collection in the whole of Canada and many of the species are rare. It was here that many of them were first raised in captivity.

In all there are about six dozen species of ducks and geese in the park plus the hundreds of migrant waterfowl that drop in uninvited to visit and feed on their travels north and south each year.

With the exception of the waterfowl and peafowl, all the animals and birds are kept in pens to prevent them from escaping. Despite them being

in a park, they are still wild animals much to the dismay of visitors who stick their fingers through the wire mesh cages.

"We use a lot of bandages" says Mr. Pace smiling. "Record so far is 25 bites in one day. One of the worst offenders in the park, he says, is the otter who also happens to be the tamest. Perhaps that's why people feel com-

pelled to stick their fingers in to touch them.

"People who visit the park are 'fairly' considerate of the animals, but I use the word loosely," he said.

Larger animals, such as the moose and caribou don't present the same temptation for visitors. Although easily visible most of the time, they can range over 10 acres of woodland and meadows in

their travels and still stay within the confines of their pens.

"You should see the children sometimes. One day we had 36 busloads from all over the province in here. What a day!"

The park is expanding, but budget restrictions are presenting a few problems which have come to the forefront fairly recently.

Many of the pens, built when the park was first opened, are beginning to rot and will have to be renewed before long, says the supervisor.

Budget for the park, although it hasn't been reduced, hasn't been increased appreciably over the years, or at least enough to carry out major improvements. There could be an expansion program carried out, but the existing pens have to be replaced first, he feels.

As for the value of the park to the province and the possibility of similar parks being set up in other areas, he feels there is always the need for more parks where people can go to relax and watch the wildlife.

However, he says, the province just can't afford another similar park even though there might be a need for one.

CAPTIVE WILDFOWL REARING A BOOST TO CONSERVATION

SHUBENACADIE — On the shore of a typically spruce-shrouded Nova Scotian lake a pair of Cape Barren Geese, a rapidly disappearing species of New Zealand wild waterfowl, bow to one another.

The keeper of the geese, Eldon Pace, superintendent of the Provincial Wildlife Park at Shubenacadie, freezes in his tracks, then backs carefully away from the honkers' captive run and comments:

"It's a good sign. They just might mate. They might at that."

Mr. Pace's concern with the captive propagation of waterfowl whose natural habitat lies halfway around the world is not

whimsical. Rather it is an excellent illustration of a world-wide co-operative movement, dedicated to the conservation of wild waterfowl, as the birds' natural feeding and breeding grounds, the wilderness areas of the world, give way to steadily encroaching urban development.

The main organizational frame for this world-wide conservation movement is the International Wild Waterfowl Association. As an active member, Eldon Pace is in a position to exchange waterfowl specimens and, more important, information concerning their propagation and conservation in wild or captive states. It was via this medium that the pair of New Zealand Cape Barrens came to Shubenacadie.

NO LIBERTY

Mr. Pace hastened to explain that the New Zealand geese were not intended for liberation here. "Rather than this, you might call it an experiment along the lines of pure science," he said. "In other words you set out to propagate the species in captivity and whether you succeed or not is incidental to the knowledge gained; knowledge that is often useful in the propagation of species native to Nova Scotia."

Thirteen years ago Mr. Pace began operations by trading off two pairs of Canada geese for other species and sub species of ducks and geese. Now propagation has flourished to the point where liberated birds are numbered by the hundred. Most of these return each year during migration to the Shubenacadie sanctuary that fostered the life-giving processes, from tiny embryos to swift, high-flying members of Canada's migrational bird life.

On his fingers Mr. Pace counted 15 species and sub species of wild geese and 33 wild duck types that he and his staff have bred successfully in captivity.

In the case of the Atlantic Brant Goose and Ring-Necked Duck, the park keeper, who is not a professional biologist, won four international awards. The awards noted the fact that Pace had chalked up a world-wide first in breeding Atlantic Brant Geese in captivity and that he was first to breed a captive Ring Necked Duck in the Western Hemisphere.

LONG JOURNEY

One of the highlights of his naturalist's career was a trip to Southampton Island in Hudson Bay, mystical nesting place for millions of Western Hemisphere

waterfowl; where permafrost persists the year-round a foot or two beneath the nests and nights and days are measured in months.

The hunt for a nest containing freshly pipped eggs or undried young; the use of hot water bottles to warm the birds to natural nesting temperatures; feeding and otherwise fanning the tiny sparks of life into thriving fledglings; all of this done under canvas in the Arctic wilderness was a remarkable adventure in itself.

Should the New Zealand birds in captivity at Shubenacadie mate, in the face of nine to one odds that they won't, a step forward, but only a step, has been made, the park superintendent explained.

The big test of a naturalist's ability to foster propagation comes next: the creation of a nesting place in near harmony to mother and father geese's instinctual demands for a safe and secure place to bring forth their young. Otherwise artificial incubation is a not so desirable alternative calling for more and more artificial means of restoring the young fowl to a state of natural harmony.

One of the strangest aspects of incubation, artificial or natural,

is "imprinting," the process of insuring that the bird's earliest sight is concerned with subjects with which it will be most intimately associated in later life. If the fowl is to join the wild flock, man objects are usually kept in the background and the bird's first sight is centred on parents and other members of its own species.

Imprinting in this manner has been known to produce some weird after effects. For example, recently in the Western United States, a large flock of captive Greater Sand Hill Cranes pipped their shells, poked out their heads and took a long, loving look at their keeper, the first object to meet their future-association-tuned-eyes.

Later, when fully grown, the birds were liberated. They were supposed to join their kind in the flock's habitual breeding place some distance away. Instead of this, the "man-conditioned" birds flew into a nearby army camp, where they upset the theories of their conservation minded liberators and contributed nothing to the army's staid ideas of good order and military discipline.

Among the hundreds of wild geese and ducks which come home to the Wildlife Park to feed and breed in the place of their origin is a similarly man-oriented Dusky Canada Goose. Man-imprinted at birth and made a pet of by one of the park attendants, the goose has developed alarming tendencies. Now, at mating time, instead of getting on with the job of perpetuating the species, the goose cuts the flirtatious females dead and concentrates solely and soulfully on his friend of long standing, the keeper — a form of attention the attendant is not at all sure that he likes.

Much of the success chalked

up by the Wildlife Park in propagating wild waterfowl Superintendent Pace attributes to backing from his bosses in the province's Department of Lands and Forests, Hon. E. D. Haliburton and Dr. G. W. I. Creighton, minister and deputy respectively.

Be this as it may, Eldon Pace has a remarkable way with wild creatures of all kinds. A quick illustration of this might include smooches from the park's deer down to bare-handed handling of Lotta, the Otter, 35 pounds of amphibious fighting fury, with jaws that could snap off a finger

like a twig. In the superintendent's hands Lotta is docile lamb.

Whatever the quality it takes to win the confidence of wild things, it would seem Superintendent Pace is a naturalist. Perhaps the true naturalist, more mature being than the fellows. Certainly Eldon displayed none of the hubbub and puffing and posturing that mark not a department head in sophisticated industry. Well, it is, it's a good thing, and Mr. Pace has the will and the ducks to prove it.

Protected Paradise At Shubenacadie

Photos by Bert Beaver
Weekend Magazine

TWO HUNTERS once drove up to Nova Scotia's Wildlife Park at Shubenacadie and asked Superintendent Eldon Pace to show them a deer. Leaving their rifles in the car, they followed the puzzled Pace to a clearing where a young buck fearlessly returned their gaze.

"So that's a deer," one of the men marvelled. "We had to know," said the other. Then they drove off, presumably better able to distinguish between their quarry and the traditional target of rookie hunters, the domestic cow.

One hundred and eighty thousand visitors clicked through the turnstiles last year to enjoy the 35-acre park, off the Trans-Canada Highway 40 miles from Halifax. They saw, and photographed, all species of wildlife native to Nova Scotia, from moose and deer to mink and rabbits, together with some that are not native, including a strutting peacock.

The big animals — among them an imported caribou from Newfoundland named Joey — roam contentedly through their woodland

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setting. The rest of the 1,500 birds and beasts in the park, to which admission is free, live in cages.

Unlike some of the animals — a mischievous raccoon once filched a \$20 bill from an unsuspecting American tourist's pocket — most of the human visitors to the park behave themselves. "But some tease the animals," says park attendant Gerald Dickie. "Adults are just as bad as the children. We've had to warn some and even put others out of the park."

The idea for the wildlife haven came from G. W. I. Creighton, deputy minister of lands and forests, whose department operates it. "The park has proven a valuable aid in teaching conservation to both children and adults," he says. "It has come a long way since we set up a few pens at Shubenacadie 15 years ago."

Cyril Robinson
Weekend Magazine



Placid pond is home for Canada Geese and week-old goslings.

The park, which opened 15 years ago, has been valuable in teaching conservation. ◀

Special Care For Animals At Shubenacadie Park In Winter

By HATTIE DENSMORE
Staff Writer

A question which one often hears is "what happens to the animals at the Shubenacadie Wild Life Park in Winter?"

The bears are fast asleep in their cozy den and due to awake around the last of this month. Also deep in their den are the ground hogs. If you dug them out and brought them to the heat, they would awake, but left alone they will sleep until the warm powerful sun shines on them.

The sleek deer come to the fence to look at visitors and like the other animals are fed a special diet. It includes corn meal, beet pulp, oatmeal and alfalfa mixed with other ingredients and made especially for the Park. There are nine deer, one of which is partly albino. One 14-year-old doe produces twins each year and the other does, two or three young. They rarely touch the bark of the trees as with their diet they have no need of it.

As you near the park entrance, on the slope of the hill are a pair of mouflon sheep which are natives of Corsica. Superintendent Eldon Pace said he got them from Blackstone Park, Mass., on a trade basis which is the way he obtains many of the birds and animals that has built up the large variety at Shubenacadie. The sheep are beautiful animals and the male has a horn which, as he grows, forms a massive curl around his neck. They have been used in the U.S. as a game animal with some success Mr. Pace said. They are nearly two years old now and are expecting young in late March. They will possibly have one or two. Their rock house on the hill keeps their feet in shape. Although this pair isn't too friendly Mr. Pace is hopeful that the young will be tame.

A firm friend of the superintendents, but not of anyone else is "Lottie" the otter known as "the 35 pounds of fighting fury." Unlike Nellie her female companion otter, Lottie likes her master and likes him to take her out on her harness. She will even give him an affectionate if wiggley kiss. Nellie isn't very tame and officials have to handle her with care. The otters stay in their cages all winter and foresters are hoping to trap a male otter to put in with them this winter.

WORK RECOGNIZED

Mr. Pace has won international recognition for his work at Shubenacadie. He is a member of the aviculture hall of fame and in 1967 added to the list of awards when he won a plaque from the American Pheasant and Waterfowl Society, for breeding seven sub-species of Canada geese. He was the first man in the world to breed the "Atlantic brant" in captivity, along with the ringneck duck. He was also the first on the continent to raise woodland caribou in captivity. In total he has six international breeding awards and a master breeder of waterfowl plaque.

He has been in trouble with airline officials on more than one occasion while flying home from the Arctic with a satchel full of birds eggs, some of which were hatching, some rotting. Once he had to spray his bird box with cologne before he could continue his journey home.

Last year he went to Perry River in the North West Territories, in search of the "Lawrence Brant" which was reported extinct. He got three eggs to bring home and no eggs in the world were ever tended more carefully. Of the three, two hatched. "I am positive this bird is the Lawrence Brant", Mr. Pace said, "but to prove it, it would have to be compared with skins in the American Museum, New York, after it reaches maturity." He pointed the rare bird out to me amid the bevy of birds at the Park as it ate on the shore not at all conscious of its fame.

WILD VISITORS

Not only do the park birds feed there but so do many wild birds who come in to get a free meal. You can detect them by standing by the fence and then going over it where the birds are eating. The wild ones will fly as soon as the human foot hits their side of the fence while the others will stay completely oblivious of company. The ice is always kept open for them.

Another nasty little animal

is the fisher, which came from Maine. There are very few of them and their fame is for porcupine control. With their sharp teeth they bite a hole in the porcupine's stomach, then rip it open. Mr. Pace poked the finger of his glove through the cage and the grizzley black fisher snatched it quickly. "this is why we warn people not to put their fingers near these animals," he said, "as think what that would do to a child's finger, and these are tame compared to some." There are four fishers. The two martins of the same family run around and around on a wheel, much to the delight of the children who watch them.

There are 30 acres of park developed at Shubenacadie, according to deputy lands and forests minister G. W. I. Creighton, but Nova Scotia owns about 400 acres of land running back to St. Andrew's River. Mr. Creighton said there is no hunting allowed on any of the 400 acres, is a protection to the valuable birds which had in the past been shot as they flew over the park line. Mr. Creighton said there are no plans "in the immediate future" for more land to be developed.

WATER NEEDED

One of the obvious needs at the park is water. The supply is limited and the ever-present danger is that one of the 184,000 persons who visited the park in 1967 might flip a cigarette and start a fire.

Attendants often have to truck water down from a lake a mile away as the ponds are just local ponds. They also pump water in from this lake.

An ideal set up would be a pumping station at the lake, Mr. Pace said. He expressed his pleasure to see the park enlarged as the number of animals grows.

Another requirement is about a mile of caribou fence which will probably go up this year for the four caribou which were brought from Newfoundland about seven years ago. One of the department men went to Newfoundland and flew back with them when they were just babies. They have raised their young and traded nine with other parks.

The caribou breed at about a year and a half old and after the first calf they rarely have a milk problem. A good example of their contentment at the park is that their young are often oversized when born and have to be helped into the world. They are now decreasing the mother's diet in an effort to control this. Mr. Pace says the public doesn't always understand why they are not rolling in fat, but pregnancy presents more than one problem and they must cut their weight down.

As we approached the pond where the seals are they popped their slippery heads above a hole in the ice to see who was coming but before the camera was ready they disappeared. Curiosity got the best of them and one would pop its head up, then go under and the other one would do the same. As we

turned away Mr. Pace suggested "They will hear footsteps leaving and both come up to look." This is just what they did with their heads and necks above the water. They came last year from P.E.I. on a trade. For the first while they had to be fed a milk replacer formula with a tube down their throat. At about two months they learned to eat the fish which is now their sole diet. The fish which are mainly herring are bought from fishermen on the Eastern Shore.

The Arctic foxes, kit, red and cross foxes are in their pens and the Richardson ground squirrels have a large pen from which they come out each day. Also penned is the owl, three wildcats, two badgers, two lynx, two skunks, two cougars and two wolverines. The cougars are fierce and demand care both by the men who handle them and by the general public.

There are \$20,000 worth of cranes there, some of which require heat. The pelicans also require a heated building. The five species of swans stay in the water and it is kept open with an air hose. There are 35 species of ducks and 29 species of geese. The peafowl roost high in the trees.

EASY ON LAW-BREAKERS

Mr. Pace said, "It is very hard to protect the birds in the wild from illegal hunting," and quoted a story from an American newspaper where one of the almost extinct whooping cranes was shot and the hunter was only fined \$10 and costs. He said in Canada with a conviction the minimum fine is also \$10 and it is conceivable a hunter could wipe out the last known specie of any bird from the face of the earth and only pay \$10 and costs.

He said the harlequin duck has been virtually wiped out of Nova Scotia and the bald eagle is on the way. This, he feels, is because of illegal hunting. He says the penalty for illegal hunting of game birds and animals should be more severe and brought in line with stealing from an individual which usually brings a heavy fine. He says that illegal hunting is stealing from future generations and contends that unless we build up our bird population we could all become "walking spray cans" from the amount of insecticide consumed in the body from its use to control insects.

A great deal has been done at Shubenacadie since the park began in 1954 with deer, racoon and a few small animals. Each year brings more knowledge, more animals and more enjoyment to the general public of Nova Scotia and its visitors to the Park.