



A couple of young caribou are special attractions at the Shubenacadie Wildlife Park.

(Curwin photo)

Wildlife park offers camps

By Lynn Curwin

This summer children have the opportunity to not only visit the Shubenacadie Wildlife Park, but to attend day camps to learn about the animals and their surroundings.

"Children will be able to see animals being fed, and go into the woods to explore and learn," said Sue Penney, an education coordinator at the park. "Camps run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and there will be at least two crafts a day. Camps will include park tours, games, crafts, and learning about what is here at the park."

There are five themes for the camps. Exploring Wetlands includes bird watching, exploring the pond, touring the park, using microscopes and magnifying glasses, experiments simulating pollution, games designed to encourage the understanding of the water cycle, and crafting frogs and dragonflies.

Who is at the Top of the

Food Chain? begins with observing the animals being fed. Campers learn what the animals eat, take part in a scavenger hunt, have a campfire, explore composting, construct a food chain mobile, make puppets to perform a prey and predator puppet show, and play games related to ecosystems.

Children attending If I Were a Bird of Prey will use binoculars to imitate eagle vision, play a game of feeding baby owls, explore owl pellets, learn about feathers, learn about flocking, and make a craft. They will watch the birds of prey at the park and learn about them.

Incredible Adaptations involves touring the park and learning about how adaptations help animals survive. Campers will make a walking stick and talk about having a third leg. They will be able to create weird adapted animals with papier mache, and create camouflage for a particular environment.

How Habitat and Species at Risk Connect

involves exploring habitats, tracks and traces; and reproducing tracks with plaster casts. The piping plover will be used as a model for a simulation game about animals at risk. Ways of helping animals at risk will be discussed, campers will make their own habitat and learn about keeping it balanced, and they will plant a tree.

"Children bring their own lunch, but there will be healthy snacks available," said Penney. "Camps run rain or shine, but activities will be adjusted to the weather."

Camp dates for ages 7 to 9 are July 18 to 22, August 1 to 5, and August 22 to 26. Dates for those aged 10 to 12 are July 25 to 29, August 15 to 19, and August 29 to September 2.

The cost of the camps is \$30 per day or \$135 per week.

More information can be obtained by calling Sue Penney at 758-5316 or emailing susan.penney@ns.sympatico.ca



Nine-year-old Edward Fisher of the First Stewiacke Beavers and Cubs peers into a nesting tube the troop built for Shubenacadie Wildlife Park.

(MARY ELLEN MACINTYRE / Truro Bureau)

Shubenacadie's lucky ducks

By **MARY ELLEN MacINTYRE**
Truro Bureau

SHUBENACADIE — Some lucky ducks will soon be laying eggs in cushy nesting tubes made by little boys with a keen interest in nature.

First Stewiacke Beavers and Cubs spent more than two weeks coiling hen-house wire and stuffing it with straw to make four nesting tubes, as a way of saying thank you to Shubenacadie Wildlife Park.

"It's very much a part of Cubs and Scouts that when we receive something

we give something in return," said leader Scott Gibson.

"During March break we went on a nighttime tour of the park and the boys really enjoyed learning about wildlife and habitat, so we wanted to give back to the park," said Mr. Gibson.

The nesting tubes will be mounted on steel posts and anchored at inaccessible spots near the ponds at the Greenway Legacy project in the park.

"The ducks would find them easy to get in and out of, but predators wouldn't have an easy time," he said.

Within a few hours of the ducklings

hatching, they'll be able to jump from the nest and plop into the water.

"We'll bring the kids back to see the ducklings — that will be a great experience for them," he said.

Sue Penney, who heads up the Greenway Legacy project at Shubenacadie Wildlife Park, said she was thrilled to see the nesting tubes.

"The kids put a lot of work into them and this kind of project helps them to appreciate wildlife and habitat — important subjects for children," she said.

(mmacintyre@herald.ca)

Shubenacadie man dedicated to wildlife

By Ellen McFetridge
SHUBENACADIE

For years, Eldon Pace's name was synonymous with the provincial wildlife park in his home community of Shubenacadie.

Even before he became its director, Pace was known for his remarkable understanding of animals and their needs.

He recalls that prior to the park opening, stray fawns, bear cubs and other wayward animals would be adopted by well-meaning folks that may, or may not, have been able to care for them properly.

"In 1948-49, we had all these animals gathered up," says Pace. "Mr. Art MacKenzie of Noel, was the minister of Lands and Forests then. He mentioned it at legislature that there were enough for a park."

After exploring a number of options around the province, the Department of Lands and Forests

negotiated to purchase land that was owned by the Priest brothers in Shubenacadie.

"We had 28 deer and kept them in a pen made with chicken wire," Pace remembers, smiling. "Every night, I'd take them out for a walk."

It was probably his unconventional approach to nature that allowed Pace to become a leader in many ways in wildlife preservation.

"I was the first person that raised Brants in captivity," says Pace. "They nest in the Arctic and winter in the south. They were on the extinct list at one time. I wanted to see if I could raise some, so I used my vacation time and brought back 12 eggs. Some of them started hatching on the plane," he says, laughing at the memory.

Another first for Pace was his success raising ring neck ducks, and releasing them into the wild. "I raised 22,000 of them. That's why we

have wood ducks in the province today."

When asked to detail his many accomplishments, Pace merely shrugs and says, "There's a number of other ones, but I keep forgetting them."

One that he'll likely remember for years to come is represented by a bronzed red head duck frozen in flight atop a trophy base.

On Oct. 24, 1998, Pace's contributions to the preservation and conservation of wildlife were rewarded when he was inducted into the International Wild Waterfowl Association, Waterfowl Breeder's Hall of Fame, in Warwick, Rhode Island.

"I'm the only Canadian to be in that," he says modestly. "I'm pretty proud of that one."

Pace's innate ability to somehow communicate with animals has allowed him, throughout his life, to approach nature with a unique understanding and insight.

When others at the park were reluctant to approach a bull moose that was captured in the Debert area one time, it was Pace that successfully coached the injured animal into the back of an open half ton truck and brought it to the park to recover.

"I called him Amos," Pace says. "I wasn't a bit scared of him. He didn't like people except for me. It's a gift I guess."

During his 35 years as the park's director, one of Pace's fondest memories is of a bear cub called Norma.

"She only weighed

nine ounces (255 grams). At night, I brought her right into the house and took her to bed. Through the night, I'd feed her and burp her, just like a baby," he recalls.

Even though he retired from the Department of Natural Resources in 1988, he continues to care for and nurture an assortment of wildlife at his home.

His 20-year-old pet African Grey parrot, Charlie, is a constant reminder to Pace of his years at the wild life park, and the rewards of being patient.

"The fellow at the pet

store told me it would be a waste of my money," he recalls shaking his head.

Although the first few months together proved to be frustrating at times, Pace successfully nursed the parrot back to health and gained its trust. The retired director points out that Charlie spent as much time in the office as he did and after a while, he could mimic whoever answered the phone.

"How many people can work all their life, doing what they love to do?" he wonders aloud. "Not many. I'm one of the lucky ones."



The Weekly Press

Serving East Hants and its surrounding communities since 1986

Volume 15
Issue 6
Publications Mail
Registration No.07661

Price \$1.07 - .93¢+HST • Wednesday, February 9, 2000

And the expert says...

Shubenacadie Sam became Canada's senior groundhog with last year's demise of Wiarton Willie. The frisky rodent didn't let the public down when everyone from media to school children showed up to see him exit his burrow at 8 a.m. on Feb. 2. Unfortunately, his prediction of another six weeks of winter weather was not exactly what his fans wanted to hear. See exclusive Weekly Press interview with Sam on page 9 and photo spread on page 10.

(Laurie Papineau photo)



Shubenacadie Sam predicts an early spring

by Lynn Curwin

SHUBENACADIE

Spring will come early, according to Shubenacadie Sam.

The weather predicting groundhog made an appearance at 8 a.m. on Feb. 2, and did not see his shadow.

The morning was overcast with snow flurries when Sam dashed out of his home, much to the pleasure of the crowd gathered around his pen.

Sam's arrival was heralded by bagpiper George MacIntosh, East Hants Town Crier Bob Raoul and Gary Joseph performed a native ceremony.

Sam made several rounds of his pen after being released from his wooden house, and children

squealed with delight as Sam ran up to the fence and looked at the faces of those who had gathered to witness his prediction.

Now that Sam's big day is over he will spend the rest of the winter indoors, where he often receives special treats.

"He will stay in the building for a while, and then will go in with the other groundhogs when they come out of hibernation," said Barry McCarthy, park attendant.

He said they would not try to get Sam to hibernate now because it would confuse him.

Sam spends much of the year inside an enclosure with about four other groundhogs. The rodents have dug several burrows

inside their enclosure at the park. Sam has been microchipped so that he can be identified and removed from the pen before hibernation begins.

McCarthy said they prepare Sam for his big day by handling him and letting him hear people talking a lot, but he can never be prepared for bagpipes.

He said Sam, who is ageless, has been predicting the weather for about 10 years at the Shubenacadie Provincial Wildlife Park. Before that, reporters were often calling the park on Groundhog Day and asking if the animals were coming out.

Punxsutawney Phil, of Pennsylvania, and Wiarton Willie, of Ontario, also predicted an early spring.



Children had their faces painted and made crafts while visiting the wildlife park on Groundhog Day. One of the children who made a special groundhog craft was Reece Zandbergen, of Enfield. While waiting for Sam to make his appearance, many people looked at the displays inside the Greenwing Legacy Interpretive Centre. Along with being Groundhog Day, Feb. 2 is also World Wetlands Day.

(Curwin photos)



Moose calves enjoy new home

by Lynn Curwin

SHUBENACADIE

The moose calf stands quietly among the trees as the truck approaches, but his eyes follow the movements of the vehicle he knows will be carrying a meal for him.

Raz is one of two orphaned moose calves who are currently being cared for in a secluded section of the Shubenacadie Wildlife Park.

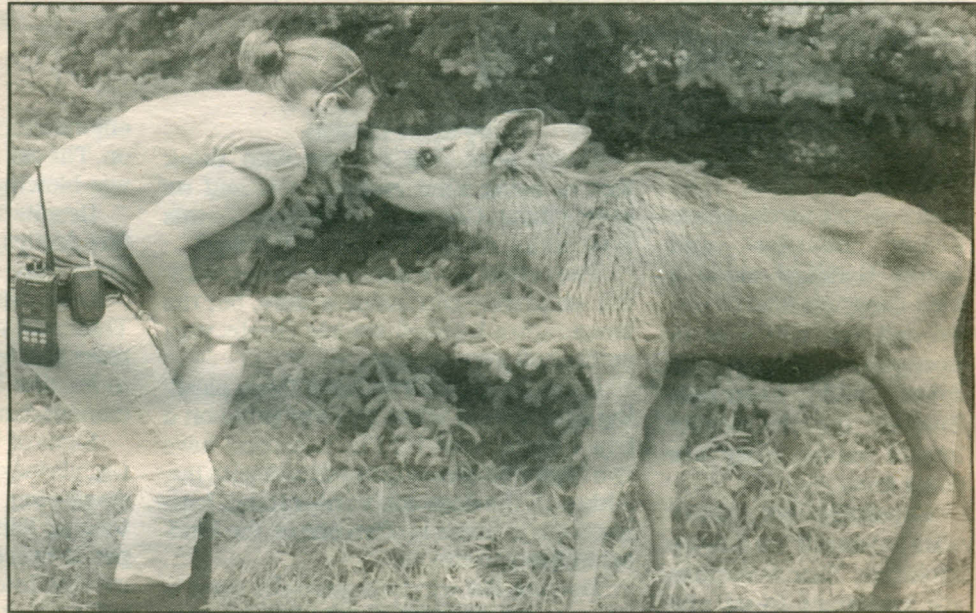
The two youngsters are being fed a special formula and are very fond of their caretakers.

"They are currently in quarantine," said park manager Bert Vissers. "Canadian Food Inspection Agency regulations prevent them from coming into contact with park animals. They can see one another and are in a natural setting. They are being bottle fed three times a day, and come right over for feeding."

The male calf came from New Brunswick, after his mother was killed. Someone began feeding the animal, and he was then taken to the wildlife park. The animal is extremely friendly and will follow its caretakers around like a dog.

The female, who is a little more cautious around people, was one of two moose that came from the Cape Breton Highlands.

"The mother had an



Raz, one of two young moose at the Shubenacadie Wildlife Park, gets up close and personal with caretaker Amy Bent. Raz is an orphaned moose calf which is currently being cared for in a secluded section of the wildlife park. The calves are not on display for the public to view and once old enough, they will be relocated to other parks.

(Curwin photo)

injury, likely caused by a motor vehicle accident," said Vissers. "She was unable to walk far. Her condition deteriorated and she had to be euthanized. The young were brought here."

The smaller, weaker calf did not survive.

The calves cannot be placed on view at the park, which already houses adult moose; and they will not be able to be released into the wild because they will have no fear of humans. Plans are for them to be placed in a suitable park when they are old enough to be relocated.

Calves usually weigh between 11 and 16 kilograms when born, and less if they are one of twins, but they gain weight very quickly. During its first month a calf may gain more than half a kilogram a day, and later in the summer may gain more than two kilograms a day.

The moose is the largest member of the deer family, with bulls weighing up to 600 kilograms. Adult males may weigh about 600 kilograms.

Calves are helpless when they are born, but after just a few days they

can outrun humans and are good swimmers. In the wild, they remain with their mothers until they are about a year old.

Moose eat a variety of plants and will dip their heads underwater to feed on water plants. They have poor eyesight, but good senses of smell and hearing.

Moose are listed as endangered species on the mainland of Nova Scotia. Some of the factors that have resulted in their decline are hunting, climate change, parasitic brainworm, and the construction of roads in moose habitat.

Baby moose cute, but he's no pet

Wildlife officials seize orphaned calf from N.B. family

By CHRIS MORRIS
The Canadian Press

FREDERICTON — An orphaned baby moose named Baz has been seized from the northern New Brunswick family that was raising him and sent to a wildlife preserve in Nova Scotia.

Peter Cousineau and his mother, Alaine, found the newborn calf lying on the driveway of their Pokemouche, N.B., home three weeks ago and nursed him back to health.

Cousineau said Friday he was heartbroken when provincial game wardens executed a warrant and took the baby bull moose into custody, citing provincial laws that make it illegal for people to keep wild animals.

"We were very sad to see him go," Cousineau said.

"We thought this was the most perfect place he could have been. We have a large farm here with open woods and meadows. It's a natural place for a moose to live wild and free."

Cousineau said he is petitioning the New Brunswick government, hoping officials will have a change of heart and allow Baz to return to the only home he has known.

"We haven't heard back," Cousineau

said of his request. "But I like to think there's always a chance."

However, Brent Roy, spokesman for New Brunswick's Natural Resources Department, said there is no chance.

Roy said the province takes a very dim view of people who adopt wild animals.

"We don't condone this sort of thing at all," Roy said.

"Anyone who takes a wild animal into captivity could be charged under the Fish and Wildlife Act. It is always best to leave the wild in the wild."

Roy said Baz was checked by a veterinarian before being transported to the Shubenacadie wildlife preserve on Friday.

He said the moose is in good shape, but the trip and the changes will be very hard on him.

"People should let nature take its course," he said. "Once there's human intervention, it usually doesn't turn out well."

Cousineau said there was no way he and his mother could simply turn their backs on the pathetic, abandoned moose he found dying in his driveway three weeks ago.

He said Baz was born in a ditch alongside a highway near his home, and the mother became spooked by the

traffic and curious onlookers.

People passing by put the newborn moose in the woods in hopes the mother would return. But more than a day later, the calf appeared on the Cousineau driveway, unable to stand, dehydrated and apparently close to death.

"He couldn't even cry anymore," Cousineau said. "He was finished. We took pity on him, brought him into the kitchen and started feeding him with a baby bottle."

Cousineau said everyone fell in love with the sweet-natured moose.

"People came from all over to see him and help feed him," he said.

"He was a real people moose. He kissed everyone and wasn't scared at all of human beings."

Cousineau said his 83-year-old mother, Alaine, developed an especially close relationship with Baz, who liked to curl up next to her.

He said that in the three weeks Baz lived with them, he gained about 10 kilograms and grew 15 to 20 centimetres taller.

"He was on his way," he said. "He was adapting and coming along, eating small spruce buds. I thought things were going well. But that's not what the Natural Resources people wanted."



Alaine Cousineau, 83, and a friend bottle-feed a baby moose at her home in Pokemouche, N.B. Game wardens have taken the orphaned calf to a wildlife preserve. (CP)