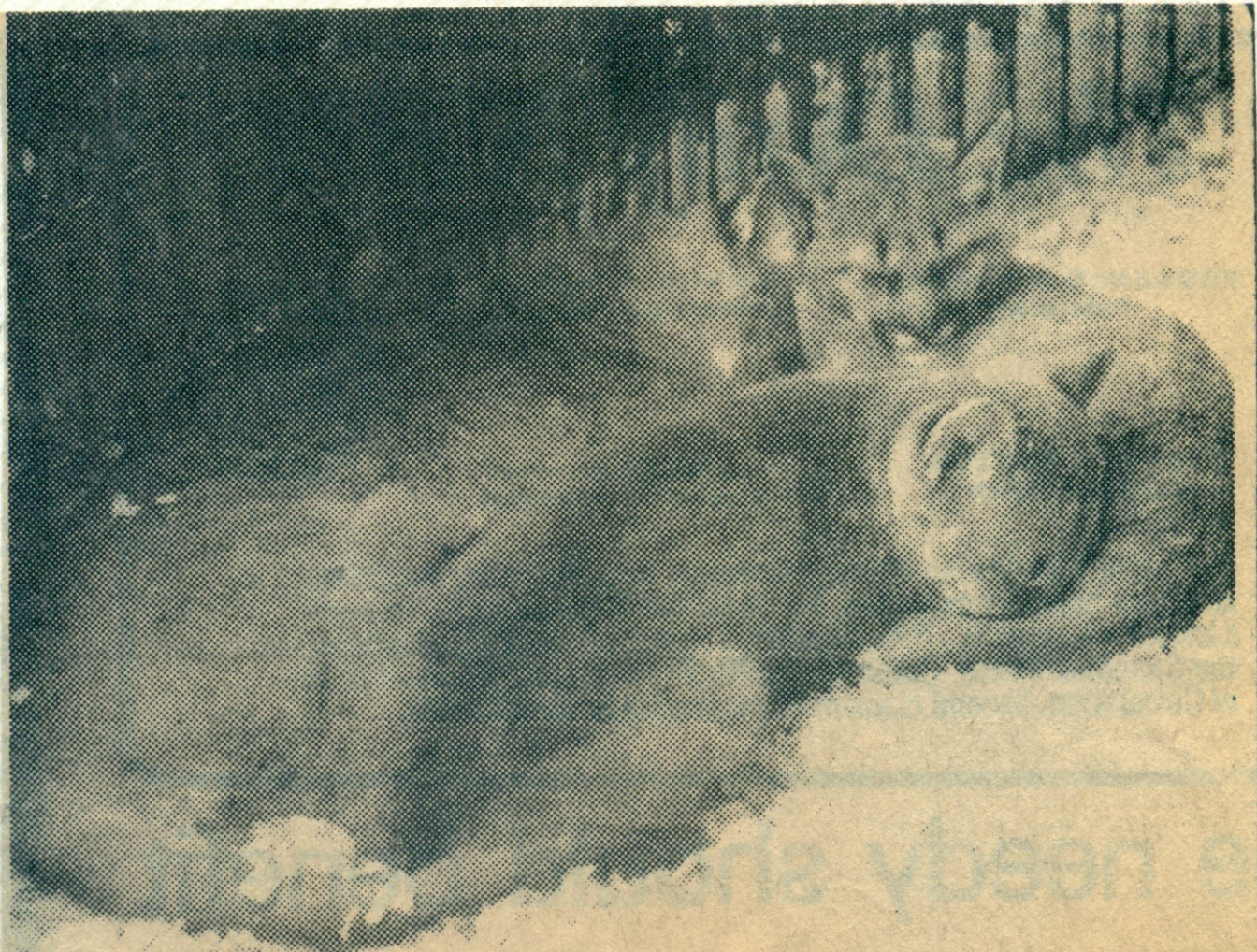




Brian Rau / Truro Bureau

New park resident

Shubenacadie Wildlife Park foreman Brian Whally cuddles a baby red fox, one of five born at the park last month. The foxes and a host of other animals, mammals and birds can be seen at the park which opened for the season earlier this week.



The Shubenacadie Wildlife Park has had great success with its cougars over the past three years. The couple has produced triplets

each year, and here two of the young beat the fall chill by snuggling up to mom.

Things tourists miss

By HAROLD HORWOOD

Telegram Associate Editor

The finest Newfoundland stag I have ever seen, living or dead, was at Shubenacadie wildlife park in central Nova Scotia. This magnificent animal, captured as a fawn in Central Newfoundland nine years ago, grew into the sort of trophy that hunters dream about, but never see. For several years his "points" ran into the 60s, and if he had been taken by a hunter in the wild, he would have provided a world record head.

The stag was called "Joey" after Premier Smallwood (who has a large portrait of the animal in his archives.) The animal died last winter of a heart attack — perhaps from leading too soft a life, getting too much to eat, and having three does in constant attendance, instead of having to chase them across the barrens and fight off all comers to keep them.

But there are still Newfoundland caribou at Shubenacadie, including a younger stag that is Joey's successor — and a worthy one, too, even if not quite so magnificent as the founder of the dynasty. The four fawns shipped from Newfoundland grew to adulthood and produced quite a crop of offspring.

At first they seemed hard to raise, and their mothers, perhaps upset by woodland surroundings quite unlike the wild fawning grounds of Newfoundland, seemed to have no idea how to look after them, but the rate of success in recent years has been high, and many young Newfoundland caribou have been traded to other parks for other species of animals.

This is the principal means by which Shubenacadie park acquires its animals — raising young ones and trading with other parks or zoos that have a surplus of some other species. But some of the native animals, such as white-tailed deer, are so common, and breed in captivity so successfully, that they can be released into the wild. And that is exactly what happens to many of the young creatures born in Shubenacadie park. They can be released with some degree of safety, since the park adjoins a 500-acre game refuge where no hunting is allowed.

The Shubenacadie park, owned by the Nova Scotia Department of Lands and Forests, is the lifetime project of naturalist Eldon R. Pace. He conceived the idea and talked the government into backing it. The park started, back in 1954, as a very small project with few animals, mostly common ones, easily kept in captivity.

It now has 60 acres under development, and is increasing its size steadily as new animals are added. Most Canadian mammals are to be seen there, as well as some exotic species, and many land and water birds in something close to their natural environment.

For Shubenacadie park is not a zoo. Some animals (the predators, for instance) are kept in cages, but many species live in colonies, and the grazing animals, such as deer, caribou and moose, are kept in huge enclosures that include sections of field and forest, pond and marsh — essentially wild habitat.

Mr. Pace has an international reputation as an animal breeder, and has received six awards for his work — especially for breeding rare species. He was the first man in North America to breed and raise woodland caribou in captivity, and the first in the world to breed ring-necked ducks and Atlantic brant.

Rare waterfowl are especially difficult to breed in captivity, Mr. Pace said, since they will only nest in places that look to them like their natural habitat. One must be on the edge of a bog among alders, another requires running water nearby, still another insists on boulders and dwarf willows — and so on.

In order to reproduce these special nesting conditions, Mr. Pace studies his waterfowl in the wild. In the past two years he has made two trips to the Northwest Territories, and is now working on a second subspecies of brant, among other things.

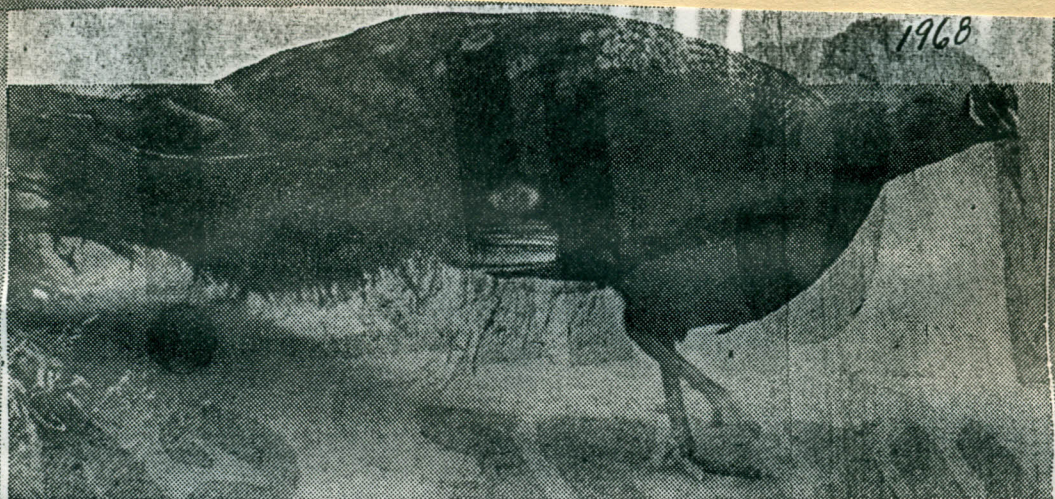
In addition to the hundreds of birds bred and raised in the park, numerous wild birds come to share the park's bounty, for all the birds and animals are offered food supplements, especially in winter. Some of the larger animals hibernate, and so require no winter feeding, but all the members of the deer family need special winter forage. This is supplied by a mixture of grains, meals and beet pulp. The predators, of course, have to be fed some meat, as well as cereal supplements.

Visitors sometimes complain that the animals look miserable and half-starved. As a rule, this is because they are moulting their coats, as most animals do in early summer. The real problems occur because of over-feeding. This happened with the caribou, and caused birth problems. The fawns grew so large before birth that their mothers had delivery problems and often required assistance.

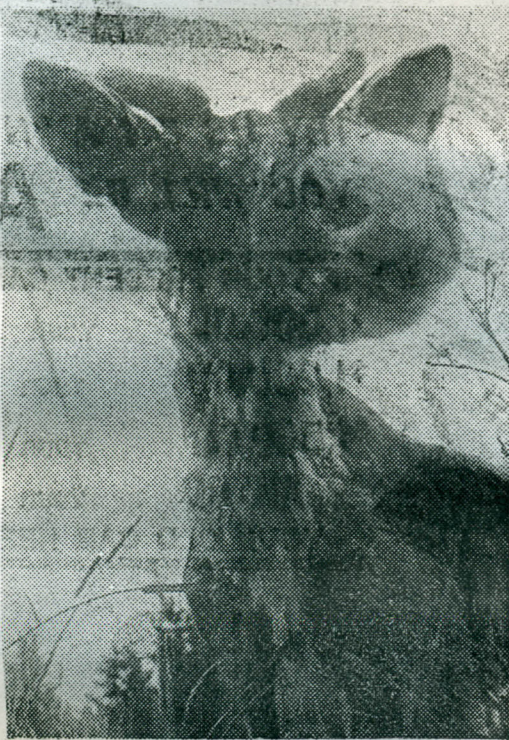
Evening Telegram

St. John's, Nfld.

Friday, July 19,



In this series of articles written en large about Shubenacadie Wildlife route across Canada, Telegram As- Park in central Nova Scotia. In ad- associate-Editor Harold Horwood is dition to the separate articles from concentrating on the less obvious the mainland provinces, he will attractions of our nation — “the continue to write his weekly column things most tourists miss,” such as on the road, and at the end of the this peacock, one of several species trip, will write one or more articles of birds and animals that roam at on touring Canada by car.



This Newfoundland caribou yearling was raised at Shubenacadie from ancestors captured near Mount Peyton in central Newfoundland in 1959.

Wild caribou, less well fed, especially in winter, never seem to have such troubles.

Though the Shubenacadie park is well known in Nova Scotia, and attracts around 200,000 visitors a year (over 7,000 some days) it is not widely known to Canadians in general, and few tourists have ever heard of it before entering the province. It deserves to be better known not only for its obvious merits, and the principles on which it is run, but also because it is one of the few really first-

class attractions that you can enjoy absolute free.

It's about the only place in Nova Scotia where you can go with your wife and all the kids and everybody can have a wonderful time, and you can't spend a cent even if you try. Its attractions don't pall, either. I've been there three times, and expect to go again.

How do you get to Shubenacadie? Fortunately it doesn't take much finding. It is on the road from Halifax to Truro, about halfway between the two. The signs aren't very conspicuous, but you aren't likely to miss them if you know approximately where to look. During my three visits to the park, I saw one other car from Newfoundland.

Not all the park's visitors are tourists, naturalists, or parents with children. Poachers show up from time to time, as well. Most of them are disappointed hunters trying to steal pheasants or deer, either from the park itself, or from adjoining game sanctuary. Some of them, succeeding on their first attempt, return a second or a third time, and eventually get bagged themselves.

But not every gun-toting visitor is a poacher. One man, at the opening of the deer season, showed up in brand new hunting togs straight out of True Magazine, carrying an expensive carbine and demanded to know where the deer were kept.

The park-keeper could only stammer: “What... what do you want to know for?”

“I want to see 'em, of course,” the visitor snapped.

“They're... they're right there,” the park-keeper said, pointing to an enclosure a few feet away.

“Oh,” said the visitor, walking over to the fence, “so THAT'S what they look like. Thank you. Now I'll know what it is I'm supposed to see when I see them in the woods.”

And he turned and walked out through the gate, without so much as a glance at the peacocks or the cougars or the otters sporting in their

A Unique Wildlife Park

FROM THE KENTVILLE ADVERTISER

Of all the attractions Nova Scotia offers to summer visitors, one of the most unique and imaginative is the wildlife park at Shubenacadie.

There are, to be sure, zoos in the world with a larger range of species and a more pretentious layout.

The thing which makes Shubenacadie unique is that the birds and animals are, as far as possible, kept in their natural settings.

Deer and moose wander and browse through extensive woodland enclosures. Many kinds of waterfowl live by choice on the various ponds in the park.

It gives one a start to see a tiny quail jet across the path, almost underfoot.

Such animals as the bear, cougar, lynx, fox and otter must for obvious reasons be caged. How-

ever, even with this restriction, their surroundings are made as comfortable and natural as possible.

The otters have their own swimming pool, with glass walls for the benefit of visitors.

The rabbits have their warren, and the groundhogs their own mound of soil just right for burrowing.

Everywhere it is apparent that the animals are well kept and carefully looked after. They are clean, healthy and just as happy as is possible for animals in captivity.

The visitor is afforded ample opportunity to look amid delightful and perfectly natural surroundings.

The park has many visitors, both Nova Scotian and otherwise. Its popularity is well deserved.

Wildlife, bedded for winter, awaits spring's first visitors

By JIM GUILD
Staff Reporter

SHUBENACADIE — If you ever wondered what happens in the winter to the animals and birds at the Shubenacadie Wildlife Park, you can rest assured that they are well cared for.

Eldon Pace, supervisor of the park, said most of the animals remain in their own cages or pens for the winter, although some requiring special attention are moved to cages in the park's working area.

Extra animals are also brought in from the department of lands and forests' satellite park in Upper Clements, Annapolis County.

The thousands of migrating waterfowl for which the park is well known come and go when they want with the exception of several rare birds such as the trumpeter swan, Cape Barren goose and cereopsis, and the red-breasted goose whose wings are clipped.

Mr. Pace, world-renowned for his success in raising rare and endangered species of waterfowl, says the birds are far too valuable to risk them being killed or lost. Special measures are taken to protect them in the park against natural predators.

The park staff also takes care of a number of injured birds brought to them and restored to health but still unable to fly.

While there may not be any special treats for the birds and animals in the park on Christmas Day, they will receive their regular food and water ration and whatever "housekeeping" is required.

"They'll still have someone to talk to them," Mr. Pace said.

Special efforts are made to accommodate the winter habits of some of the animals. Feeding the bears stopped December 1, in an effort to follow nature as closely as possible as the bears will not hibernate if fed throughout the winter.

The male and female bears are separated for the winter and given extra straw to make a nest or den for the winter.

While bears do not go into a deep sleep typical of the true

hibernators, their respiration rates does drop as they rest during the winter, Mr. Pace said. A winter visitor to the bears' enclosure might only see a large mound of straw with steam coming off it if the weather is chilly.

Bears have cubs every second year and within the next two

months Mr. Pace expects to hear the buzzing of the nine-ounce hairless newborn offspring suckling in the warmth of their mother's long fur.

Noting that he can often tell how many cubs have been born by the different tones of buzzing, Mr. Pace said "you don't go looking to count them or you'll

have 500 pounds of she-bear after you!"

Often asked what happens to the seals when their freshwater pond freezes over, Mr. Pace said the seals react as they would in the wild . . . they keep blowing holes open in the ice to breathe.

They still come out to feed, he said, and will actually lay out on the ice on sunny days, although not too far away from their air holes for a hasty retreat.

The dynamic Canada goose population at the park, which reached a peak of about 6,000 for a six-week period earlier this year, is now down to 80 which will overwinter at the park.

"Many of them were hatched here and knowing they'll get fed they don't want to go," Mr. Pace said.

As rivers and lakes in the area freeze, most of the 3,000 to 4,000 black ducks which frequent the park will move to the Bay of Fundy and the Musquodoboit sanctuary, he said. About 800 of the black ducks are expected to stay in the park all winter.

Convinced that the animals do get a little lonely for the visitors in the regular season, Mr. Pace said each Spring the animals are quite active and seem to be looking forward to seeing the people.

They rush to the edges of their pens excitedly for the first few weeks of each season as if to say "I wonder who'll be coming to the park this year."