

AN EXPRESSION OF CONCERN

prepared by Dan McAskill

On November 13, 1984 the Minister of Environment for Canada, Hon. Suzanne Blais-Grenier announced that the Canadian Wildlife Service budget would be cut by \$3.8 million and 84 person years. Further investigation and analysis revealed that this represents a cut of roughly 22% of the staff in this agency whereas the overall average across government is approximately 1%. The cuts are being carried out through the elimination of programs and their associated staff. The losses included:

- toxicology studies which were monitoring the levels of insecticides, herbicides and other contaminants in various birds and insects in New Brunswick, the Great Lakes, the Prairies, the Fraser River Valley and the St. Lawrence Estuary (these include the studies which identified the presence of dioxin and mirex in the Great Lakes);

- rehabilitation projects on endangered species including the reintroduction programs on the peregrine falcon (Quebec and New Brunswick), on the pine martin (Newfoundland), and on the swift fox, black-footed ferret and Greater Prairie Chicken (Prairie Provinces);

- veterinary, pathology, and bioelectronics services which support many of the other programs;

- studies on the Porcupine (Yukon and Alaska) and George River (Quebec and Newfoundland) Caribou herds;

- long terms studies on the environmental impact of intensive forest management and the control of browse damage to plantations;

- the closure of the 5 interpretive centers operated by the CWS (Perce and Cap Tourmente in Quebec, Wye Marsh in Ontario, Webb in Saskatchewan, and Creston Valley in B. C. These centres will be offered to the provincial governments or private enterprise);

These cuts are disheartening to most naturalists as they have been arguing for increased work on many of these programs as well as new initiatives to promote wildlife conservation and enhancement. At the December meeting of the Prince Edward Island Natural History Society a resolution calling for the Society to express its concern on the severity of these cuts received unanimous consent. You can assist both the NHS and the Canadian Nature Federation in reducing the severity of these and future cuts to the conservation of our natural resources by writing the Minister of Environment and/or your Member of Parliament to express your concern. The Minister's address is Hon. Suzanne Blais-Grenier, Minister of Environment, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ont., K1A 0A6

NOTE: Since the cuts were announced the public response has already led to some changes with the re-instatement of the Great Lakes Herring Gull studies, the forestry spraying bird response studies in New Brunswick, and the Porcupine Caribou herd studies. Your letters can make the difference, please write today.