

So far this year, only four mother-and-calf pairs Northern Right Whales have been sighted by whale researchers studying the right whale along the eastern seaboard according to Laurie Murison who has been studying the whale. "That's an all-time low," said Ms. Murison, director of a whale and sea-bird-research station on scenic Grand Manan island in the Bay of Fundy. "The nineties have been a decade of concern for the right whale. The reproductive rate seems to be decreasing. We don't know why this is happening." (Chris Morris, Canadian Press, June 19, 1999) Adapted from Weekly Media Analysis by CNF June 19-25).

The unparalleled number of grey whales washing up on shore this year has baffled scientists. "It's alarming to the locals who live in the areas that they are washing up on the shores," said Clint Wright, curator of mammals for the Vancouver Aquarium. The deaths have puzzled both Canadian and US marine researchers but one thing that most agree on is the whales didn't get enough to eat in the Bering Sea last summer before they began their migration south in September. The number of grey whale carcasses that have been discovered along the North American coast this spring range in estimate from 80 to 100. A researcher with the Cascadia Research Center in Olympia, Washington, said 50 per cent of the dead whales died of starvation. (Greg Heakes, Agence France Presse June 18, 1999) from adapted from Weekly Media Analysis by CNF June 19-25)

A study in the May 20th issue of Nature suggests that Monarchs and several other species of moths and butterflies could be at risk from genetically altered corn which produces *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt). Laboratory experiments by Cornell professor John Losey and his colleagues showed that this Bt laden corn pollen when sprinkled on milkweed leaves could killed 44 percent of monarch larvae feeding on this plant which is its essential food. A \$60,000 two-year study has been funded by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Environment Canada. The study will be headed by Mark Sears, Chairperson of the University of Guelph's Environmental Biology Department, will help scientists determine strategies to further reduce potential risk to butterflies and other beneficial insects. The Bt corn was developed to control European corn borer, a pest that inflicts hundreds of millions of dollars damage each year in North American corn fields. The Ontario Corn Producers' Association estimates that Bt varieties make up about a third of the 1999 Ontario crop, up from 15 per cent in 1998. (adapted from July 15/99 Conservation News by Tom Balaint)

The University of Guelph's campus in Alfred, about 65 kilometres east of Ottawa, now features an ecological garden of wildflowers and weeds for butterflies. Mr. Pierre-Alain Blais, a biologist-agriculturist at the French-language Alfred Agricultural College, started raising monarch butterflies in an attempt to control the invasive common milkweed. He ended up designing and creating an 80-square-metre public butterfly garden which officially opened June 19. It is open to visitors and was built in co-operation with the Prescott-Russell Stewardship Council, part of an Ontario-wide program of volunteer groups that helps with environmental projects.. Butterflies generally feed on wildflowers, shrubs and trees. They cannot obtain nectar from many flowering hybrids. The destruction of their natural habitat as urban sprawl and landscaping removes former meadows reduces butterfly habitat. (Adapted from CNF's July 16 Conservation News)

The Environmental Youth Corp (EYC) provides non-profit group, businesses and public institutions with money for an intern. See their web page for more details: <http://www.cchrei.ca/eyc.html> (From: "Sandro Di Cori" <sandro@cen.web.net>, 13 Jul 1999)

The Friends of the Environment Community Fund provides funding support for community-based initiatives that make a positive difference to the environment. Contact Paul Carmichael, Canada Trust Branch Manager, 139 Queen St, Charlottetown at (902) 566-3777 for an application and more information. (From: st.louis.roger@canadatrust.com, Date: 12 Jul 1999 PEIEN E-NEWS 99-07#1)

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