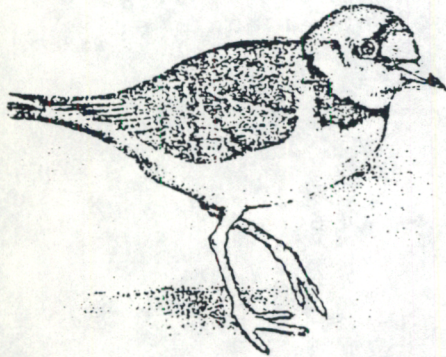


deer population the province has ever seen. There are more bald eagles nesting here than in most of north-east North America because of the abundance of good feeding areas and good nesting sites. Cormorant populations are high because of the good food and nesting sites they find here. Nova Scotia has good habitat for all of them.

Despite these pluses we have some animals with low populations that we should still be concerned about. The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) lists two animals that live and breed here as endangered, the Atlantic or Acadian whitefish which is found only in Nova Scotia and the piping plover which frequents our beaches in the summer. Endangered means it is threatened with immediate extinction or extirpation throughout all or significant portions of its range, owing to the actions of man.

The Atlantic whitefish is the most rare, found nowhere else in the world than the Millipsigate Lake and the headwaters of the Petite Riviere and Yarmouth Harbour. In the past, its numbers have been greatly reduced by hydro-electric dams and heavy fishing pressure. Today, although protected by law, the Atlantic whitefish is still in danger from accidental catches and acid rain. In addition to legal protection, there are plans to transfer the fish to other watersheds and raise fish in hatcheries to reduce the chances of its becoming extinct.



To protect the piping plover, Lands and Forests and the Canadian Wildlife Service erected signs on the beaches where it nests to discourage public use during the birds' breeding season. However, this has met with only moderate success and in some cases, has attracted people to see this rare bird. The present low population is generally attributed to nest disturbance but may also be a result of the few naturally occurring nesting sites - which means the population may always have been small. This plover is rare in all its range which extends along the Atlantic shore of North America and over the prairies of central Canada so there are many jurisdictions that share in protecting its habitat.

(This is the first half of a story excerpted from the Fall 1986 issue of Conservation, published by the Department of Lands and Forests in Nova Scotia. The second half, in the May-June issue will deal with other endangered and threatened species. Tony Duke is the biologist with the department's education subdivision.)

The tough anti-poaching laws that federal Environment Minister Tom McMillan has introduced will serve as a warning to poachers in parks across the country. In a recent press release, Mr. McMillan said "the wildlife in our parks are highly vulnerable to well-organized and well-financed criminals who conduct campaigns of slaughter. In a society where the head of a big horn sheep brings a black market price of \$50,000 and a falcon fetches \$20,000, the current maximum fines of \$500 are little more than a license to profiteer. We intend to send would-be offenders an unambivalent signal: we will not permit our parks' wildlife, a vital part of our country's heritage, to be butchered to feed the vanity and greed of unscrupulous collectors."

Proposed penalties in the re-written Act, which has not been changed substantially since it was passed in 1930, include a maximum fine of \$150,000 and/or imprisonment of up to six months for poaching specific trophy and endangered species - the stiffest fines anywhere in the world. The new sanctions will be supported by a strategy of vigorous enforcement.