

# NEWS AND NOTES (CON'T)

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DOG-GONE RACCOON DOGS GONE. The last raccoon dog in Canada has been killed and pelted, according to Environment Minister John Roberts, who recently released the final payment to Supi Farms of Onatrio for the destruction of its breeding stock. The final payment ends a story which began almost three years ago when 140 raccoon dogs were imported into Canada. Recognizing the threat to indigenous wildlife, the federal government commenced proceedings to eliminate this breeding stock and to toughen regulations controlling the importation of all exotic wildlife into Canada.

Unfortunately, in spite of the Canadian government's best efforts, Canada is still not without threat that raccoon dogs could reappear. At present there are at least two raccoon dog fur farms in the United States (Illinois and Wisconsin). Although the U.S. government has since moved to prevent any further importations, it has no plans to dispose of, or prevent the dispersal of breeding stocks already in the country.

Raccoon dogs are prolific breeders, and escapes from these existing stocks could easily result in the establishment in the wild of the species over wide areas, including Canada. Destructive effects on wildlife and agriculture would almost certainly follow.

BUDWORM SPRAY RESEARCH. For years studies have been carried out on the toxicity to birds of various chemicals used in spruce budworm spray programs. In this way certain chemicals have been identified as not producing acute toxic effects on birds when used at recommended dose rates, and have been considered 'safe'. Studies currently underway at the University of Maine are investigating the effects on insect-eating birds of the sudden very drastic reduction in their food supply which takes place when a forest is sprayed for budworm. Studies of this sort should help to reveal some of the more subtle side-effects spraying can have on an ecosystem. (reference: Oliveri, Stephen. 1981. Maine Birdlife 3(1).)

## FROM THE EDITOR

As the season of winter meetings draws to a close, it seems timely to reflect on our activities and accomplishments of the past year. Certainly it has been a most successful and busy time. The eight monthly meetings have presented an excellent array of interesting topics and speakers, each drawing a large and enthusiastic attendance. A Mushroom Club has sprung up and found a niche for itself under the umbrella of the Natural History Society. Members have been busy in many directions including Christmas Bird Counts (this year adding a third), the Provincial Science Fair, Environment Week, Nature Slide Contest, the Francis Bain Birdathon, etc., etc. Active liason continues with the Island Nature Trust and the Canadian Nature Federation; and planning is now underway to host a regional CNF meeting this fall. The Society has participated in Piping Plover management planning in P.E.I. National Park, sent a representative to ENGO meetings in Ottawa, actively worked for a Provincial Museum of Man and Nature, and conducted a PEI natural history specimens survey of museums across the continent. The spring field trip series is enjoying better than ever attendance.

All of which bespeaks a most healthy and hearty group, and congratulations are due to all of us for making it so. However most particular thanks are due to Geoff Hogan and his hardworking executive committee, who are responsible for organizing and carrying out such a high-quality and well-rounded program.

As we go our separate ways for the summer season, let us continue on our own even more exploration of the fascinating natural world around us. To each of you go my best wishes for a most happy and rewarding holiday time.