

A natural resource

The economic value of Canada's wildlife resources in relation to recreation like photography, nature study and casual sightseeing is difficult to estimate, but it probably exceeds that of fishing and hunting. For thousands of people it is a rare privilege to observe a wild animal or bird in its natural surroundings and preserve the experience on film.

While recreation appears to be the major use for wildlife, many Canadians still rely directly on game for their livelihood, and even for their existence. Fur-trapping is still an important occupation. In 1977-78, Canadian wild-fur sales totaled more than \$47.6 million. Many Eskimos and Indians earn their livelihood from fur-trapping, and need wildlife for food and clothing. Much of the economic and social difficulty that has been experienced by some groups of Eskimos stems directly from a decline in the number of caribou, which formerly provided meat for food, hides for warm clothing and bone for implements.

Wildlife also controls insects and small mammals that damage crops. The coyote preys on the field-mouse, and the extent of its control is only being properly appreciated now that it has been killed off in many western agricultural areas. Birds feed on a great many insects that harm agricultural

production and damage and kill commercial timber stands and shade-trees.

The main object of Canadians concerned with the future of wildlife is that it should be managed properly as a renewable natural resource of great value. It should not be regarded as a competitor of other resources for attention but as an integral part of the whole complex of natural resources that are of value and benefit to man. The relation between resources is a difficult subject to understand and man's attempts to put comparative artificial valuations on resources have complicated the subject further.

Wildlife management in Canada must place stress on the preservation of natural habitat as much as it stresses the preservation of the mammals and fish that live there. A wild animal and its surroundings cannot be separated; one cannot be preserved without preserving the other.

Management must also solve the problems arising, ironically, from under-use of wildlife. The scientific training and practical experience of the wildlife biologist may enable him to effect increases in wildlife population, but as yet he has only a very limited knowledge of rational and acceptable methods of influencing men to harvest a surplus wildlife crop. The modern wildlife scientist is as often concerned