

# TUNING IN ON WILDLIFE

Canadian provinces are known for running highly effective wildlife conservation programs. However, this involves increasingly sophisticated equipment and advanced strategies to out-manoeuvre the ever-more wily poachers and vandals who illegally hunt wildlife for gain or sport. So, when Dave Harvey, Director of the Enforcement and Compliance Branch of Environment Saskatchewan, considered the question of how to put some soon-to-be-retired field communications equipment to good use, he was determined to send it to where it was needed most.

The idea sparked a mission to transfer radios used for surveillance and patrolling in Saskatchewan to far-away Africa. Illegal wildlife trade worldwide is a \$6 billion-a-year industry, according to the non-profit group WildAid, and a large part of this activity is based in Africa, where

elephants and rhinoceros in particular are hunted for their tusks, horns, meat and hides. African conservation authorities have little equipment in some African countries, Harvey says, "Sometimes nothing more than a .303 rifle and a pair of shoes." The 228 surplus Motorola PT 300 radios will have a significant impact on patrolling and surveillance practices and strategies and will improve operations to circle in and apprehend poachers.

Transferring the radios to wildlife-threatened areas of Africa was a collaborative effort by an extensive network of partners in Canada and abroad. First, the radios were made available for donation by the Saskatchewan Association of Conservation Officers, which purchased them from the province for a nominal fee. The Government of Saskatchewan ensured that the radios were technically ready and then sent them to Environment Canada, where the Canadian Wildlife Service (cws) set up the necessary African connections for the transfer. Soon the cws had also enlisted the help of the International Fund for Animal Welfare, a wildlife protection group, which donated 110 antennas and 7,524 batteries so that the radios

would be available to African wildlife authorities in complete, ready-to-use packages. The cws then joined with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade to deliver the goods to their final destinations through the Department's diplomatic mail system.

The radios are now in use by conservation authorities in 11 African countries, including Chad, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Tanzania, and there are plans to create permanent channels for the transfer of surplus field equipment from Canada to wildlife protection agencies all over the world to fight illegal hunters. "These guys are very, very organized," says Yvan Lafleur, the cws Director for wildlife enforcement. "We can only combat this kind of crime by working together." ❁

**For more details about the radios for wildlife program, tune in to Environment Canada's Planet Update at [www.ec.gc.ca/pu-ec/0310\\_e.htm](http://www.ec.gc.ca/pu-ec/0310_e.htm).**



photo: courtesy of Environment Canada

| Motorola PT 300

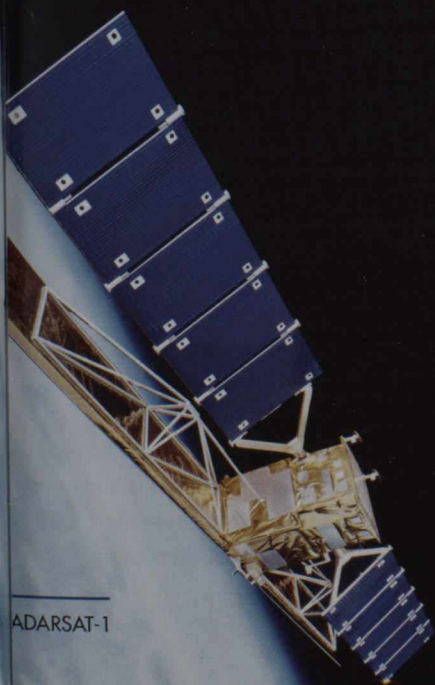


photo: courtesy of the Canadian Space Agency

RADARSAT-1



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