

the world-famous Banff-Jasper Highway and the Cabot Trail, sections of the Trans-Canada Highway where this route traverses the National Parks and secondary roads. There are 710 miles of secondary or fire roads; 2,404 miles of riding and hiking trails; 1,344 miles of telephone lines. To patrol the larger parks, wardens must move with the seasons as well as the times, using trucks, tracked vehicles, canoes, launches, horseback, skis, snowshoes, sno-cats and bombardiers.

By the terms of the National Parks Act the Parks are "dedicated to the people of Canada for their benefit, education, and enjoyment". It is the responsibility of the National Parks Branch of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources to plan their use and development so as to leave them unimpaired for future generations. To shape their future wisely and with imagination calls for some far-reaching decisions. It is recognized, for example, that by the year 1975 the population of Canada may have grown to - or beyond - 25 million people and that possibly 9 million visitors may be using the National Parks. This estimate is based on something more solid than surmise. Between 1951 and 1957 the population of Canada rose 41 per cent. In the same period visits to parks rose 84 per cent. This trend is causing the National Parks Service to place a new and high priority on long-range planning.

Two years ago the National Parks Service set up a planning Section to study the Parks singly, and as a whole, and to recommend to the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources plans for long-range development. The planning Section is a permanent research group that works with data collected from every field of Parks management.

Description

From east to west the National Parks extend from Newfoundland on the Atlantic coast to the mountain parks of Alberta and British Columbia - Banff, Jasper, Waterton Lakes, Yoho, Glacier Kootenay and Mount Revelstoke. From north to south they illustrate by dramatic contrast how totally dissimilar two areas can be in size and character and still have in common the qualities to fulfil the requirements for a National Park.

Wood Buffalo National Park, lying half within northern Alberta, half in the Northwest Territories, comprises 17,300 square miles of still largely undeveloped wildlife habitat. Wood Buffalo - home of the largest herd of bison on the North American continent and nesting ground of the whooping crane - is easily the biggest of the Parks. Here, in the protection of the wilderness, the young crane, rusty brown and all but invisible in the cover of underbrush, learns to become airborne for the long north-south migration that begins in Northern Canada and ends in Texas. Few bird journeys receive such publicity as the yearly flight of the surviving handful of whooping cranes.

In contrast to wide-ranging Wood Buffalo is Point Pelee National Park on Lake Erie, one of the smallest (6.04 square miles) and the most southerly in the system. Yet tiny Point Pelee can also claim its share of distinguished bird life for it lies on the Mississippi flyway and is a favourite resting place for millions of migratory birds. Point Pelee, like every National Park, is a natural museum for the study of animal and birdlife, tree species and regional flora.