

Wildlife habitats receive protection

Environment Minister Charles Caccia recently announced the creation of Wildlife Habitat Canada, a new foundation to reverse the losses of essential wildlife habitat across Canada.

"Habitat destruction is the single most important factor affecting many of our Canadian wildlife population," said Mr. Caccia. "The loss of habitat, particularly wetlands, has reached serious proportions throughout the developed areas of Canada.

There is now an urgent need for a concerted effort by both the public and private sectors to conserve land as wildlife habitat. Wetlands are not the wastelands that so many people think they are."



Charles Caccia

Within the past three decades, the destruction of wildlife habitats, particularly wetlands, in southern Canada has accelerated. Wetlands, such as marshes, swamps and bogs are among the most important habitats for a wide variety of migratory birds and other wildlife. Until recently, wetlands have generally been considered wastelands until they have been filled, drained, dyked, or dredged for the purposes of urban, agricultural, industrial, or recreational development.

The losses have been massive. Only 276 000 hectares (12 per cent) of the original 2.3 million hectares of wetlands in southern Ontario exist today. Elsewhere, 60 per cent of the marshes of the St. Lawrence River estuary, 70 per cent of the Fraser River marshes, and 65 per cent of the tidal marshes in the maritime provinces have been lost through development.

Wildlife Habitat Canada has been approved by the federal Cabinet. Its ongoing programs will be funded in part through revenues from the annual sales of migratory game bird hunting permits which will increase from the present \$3.50 to \$7.50 in 1985.

"An initial one million dollar contribution by the federal government will allow a rapid start-up of the foundation," said Mr. Caccia. "We are convinced that the future depends on innovative and co-operative programs with interested organizations including those in the private sector."

Atom research boosted

Canadian physicists are receiving \$14 million to join an international brigade of scientists trying to detect and understand the tiniest bits of the atom, writes Christina Spencer in *The Citizen*.

In a move designed to boost the country's role in the emerging field of high-energy physics, federal funding agencies will sponsor Canada's participation in two major international ventures to produce and study the basic constituents of matter. It is the first time such a large amount of money has been committed to basic research in the area.

One group at Ottawa's Carleton University and the National Research Council will receive \$8 million over five years for research at CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research near Geneva. A second group — researchers from several Canadian universities, the National Research Council (NRC) and Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. — is to spend \$6 million over the next six years for work with DESY laboratories near Hamburg, West Germany.

Scientists from Western nations will look for fundamental particles of matter that may help explain how all of nature is bound together.

Four main interactions

Physicists believe there are four main interactions — or "forces" — at work in all things. While it is difficult to explain them in everyday terms, scientists say all actions — from kicking the cat to driving a car — depend on them.

The forces range from familiar gravity to the electromagnetic force, to the "strong" force that keeps the nucleus of atoms together. One called the "weak" force is thought to be embodied in elusive particles called "W" and "Z" particles. These two products of subatomic collisions were detected for the first time only last year. In some way, scientists think, all the forces are connected. The question is how.

Physicists observe the forces through huge, high energy particle accelerators in which pieces of the atom collide with each other or with a fixed target to produce energy and other subatomic particles. The scientists in Geneva are building a colossal particle accelerator called LEP. The LEP storage ring will bash together electrons and positrons to produce the "W" and "Z" particles at a rate of one a second.

Government aids teletext system

The federal government is pouring \$6 million into development over the next three years of CBC's Project Iris, a teletext system providing information that can be read on specially equipped television with the push of a button.

Project Iris allows users access to about 250 electronic "pages" of up-to-date information, including news, weather, sports, household hints and culture on a teletext "magazine" through television sets equipped with special decoders.

The project was launched in experimental form in about 500 homes last April. The additional grant will allow it to continue and be enhanced.

The Communications Department said one such enhancement may be creation of a national billboard, a form of teletext soapbox in which certain "linguistic, social or cultural groups...create and transmit pages of information about issues of concern to them".

Teletext services are already established in Britain, France, West Germany, the Netherlands, Austria and Switzerland, where they are grabbing an ever-increasing share of the consumer and business market eager for quick access to information. There are six million teletext users in Britain alone.

Capital dollars — new souvenir coins



New souvenir coins called "Capital Dollars" were announced in Ottawa recently by the Capital Visitors and Convention Bureau. The coins will actually be legal tender in Ottawa-Carleton and Hull from May 1 to October 11, 1984 with a face value of \$1. About the size of a silver dollar, they feature the Parliament Buildings on a maple leaf background on the front, with a soldier of the Governor General's Foot Guard regiment, complete with busby, on the reverse. They went on sale in March in individual pouches and will be put into general circulation on May 1.