

Another season of sailing below the falls



A Maid of the Mist tourist boat is lowered into the Niagara River in preparation for carrying passengers below Niagara Falls. At the height of the summer season, four Maid of the Mist vessels transport visitors under the famous cataracts.

Birds in flight featured on stamps



Four large, colourful and well-known birds — the Great Blue Heron, the Snow Goose, the Spruce Grouse and the Great Horned Owl — have been portrayed in flight, as if startled by the intrusion of an observer, on four domestic-rate stamps issued by Canada Post Corporation on May 22.

Selected from among the more than 500 species found in Canada, the birds were painted for the stamps by one of Canada's best known naturalist painters, Jean-Luc Grondin, as though they "just started into

flight so that their extremely colourful plumage could be displayed at their greatest advantage", said Canada Post Chairman René J. Marin.

The Great Blue Heron, a tall and stately wader, is the largest of Canada's heron species. It hunts in shallow waters, either fresh or salt, and nests in deciduous and mixed woodlands. The Snow Goose is a large, snow-white migrant that breeds in the high Arctic and lives in colonies in Northeastern Manitoba, Northern Ontario, James Bay and Southern Baffin Island. A common migrant in parts of Western Canada, it also stops regularly at Cap Tourmente, about 50 kilometres east of Quebec City.

The Spruce Grouse nests in depressions on the ground, sparsely lined with grass and leaves, often under small isolated conifer saplings on dry ground near a wet bog. It is almost exclusively Canadian in range and so tame it is known as the "fool hen".

The Great Horned Owl is found throughout most wooded parts of Canada north to the tree line. Savage and powerful, it preys on a wide variety of birds and small mammals which it hunts mostly at night and at dusk.



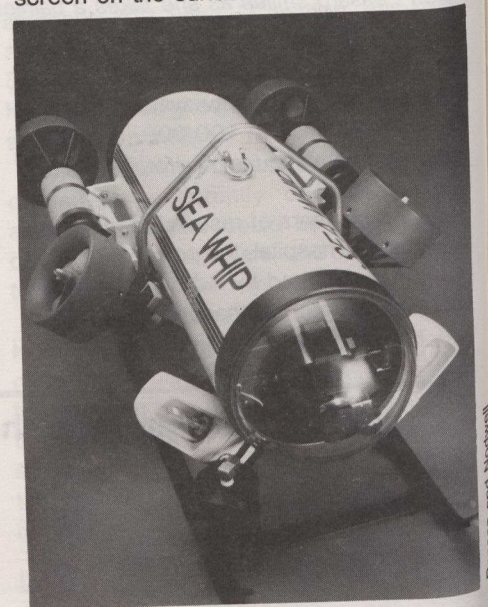
Deep-diving mini robot

An underwater robot that is described as "the smallest and least expensive remotely-controlled underwater vehicle in the world" has been developed by Sea Scan Technology Inc. of Calgary, Alberta. The Sea Whip, which will fit into a suitcase, weighs about 32 kilograms and costs \$37 000.

Sea Scan president, Peter Jess said that, until three years ago, it would have been impossible to "miniaturize" to this degree so inexpensively. "The technology is really new," he added.

Onboard microprocessor

The Sea Whip is a compact, pressure-resistant metal cylinder with windows, mounted on runners, and connected to the surface by cable. The cylinder houses a high resolution video camera, a compass and pressure sensors, and a microprocessor that transmits signals up the cable to a video screen on the surface.



Sea Whip is a 32-kilogram deep-diving cylinder that fits in a suitcase.

Only 800 watts of electricity flow down the cord to power the device's four propellers and electronic messages that control the camera and the vehicle's horizontal and vertical movements.

Miniature underwater robots provide a relatively inexpensive means of inspecting submerged structures, including canal walls, ship hulls and offshore oil rigs. Sea Whip has been used to inspect a hydroelectricity plant, a dam and outfall pipes from a power generating station. It might also be used to investigate toxic waste leaks in lakes and rivers.

Sea Scan has sold five of the robots, and has received firm orders for 15 more.