

as federal hunting regulations, and in doing so, work closely with provincial and federal officials engaged in the enforcement of such regulations.

Members stationed at Carmanville Detachment, on the province's northeast coast, are no exception, and it was that close working relationship with our local district wildlife officer that got us involved in one of the most incredible abuses of our valued natural resources as we are ever likely to see.

Carmanville, you may recall, was the home of Aunt Martha's Sheep, that woolly creature celebrated in song, which was, according to legend, delightfully devoured by an unsuspecting member, who was duped into thinking that he was eating that other great Newfoundland delight, moose.

Since that time, we haven't laid claim to a whole lot, but all that changed on the morning of February 5, 1987, when District Wildlife Officer Harold Abbott, who works out of Musgrave Harbour, and Cst. Dexter Gillard, made arrangements to check a group of hunters on Peckford's Island and White Island, part of the Wadham Islands group located just east of the larger Fogo Island.

The Wadham chain offers to a variety of salt water ducks not only shelter from the biting Atlantic winds but vital feeding grounds along the shallow banks. Strong and durable, these ducks, which are protected under the federal Migratory Birds Convention Act, are hunted all along the northeast coast. The most common species, the Common Eider, was formerly a common breeding species, which is now mainly confined to the Wadhams. The second most common species, the Oldsquaw, or, in Newfoundlandia, the Hound Duck, feeds along the coast from early November to late May, after which it migrates to Labrador and as far away as Greenland.

Because their winter habitat is so accessible, they are a favorite game bird of hunters who often set up camps on

the islands and proceed to slaughter them in large numbers. Prepared and eaten in a variety of tasty dishes, they can fetch a price of up to \$30 a pair. Sale of them is, of course, illegal.

Cst. Gillard and W/O Abbott, along with another Wildlife Officer, Ralph Burt, of Gander, travelled to the island in a helicopter, chartered by the provincial Department of Wildlife. What looked like a routine wildlife patrol turned into the discovery of an ecological nightmare as they uncovered caches of a variety of ducks, in various stages of processing. Some were partially cleaned, while others were packed and frozen in plastic bags, apparently ready for sale.



Wildlife Officer Ralph Burt, with seized birds in the foreground.

On Peckford's Island, they seized 404 ducks, five shotguns, and 10 boxes of shells from three persons. The 10 boxes of shells certainly suggested that the party wasn't about to end just yet. On White's Island, they encountered five more individuals in possession of 265 ducks and five shotguns. Since the maximum number of birds which one person may possess at any time is 24, these eight individuals had a total of 477 birds over their allowable bag limit.