Canadian Wildlife Service Encyclopedia Article

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Contents

Canadian Wildlife Service Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Canadian Wildlife Service.....3

Canadian Wildlife Service

The Canadian **Wildlife** Service (CWS) was established in 1947. Until 1971 it was governed by the federal government's Parks Branch in the Department of Indian and Northern Development. Since 1971 it has been a branch of **Environment Canada**, most recently under the **Conservation** and Protection division. The Service is served by five regional offices across Canada and is headquartered in Hull, Quebec. There are four branches within the CWS: the Migratory Birds and Conservation Branch; the North American Waterfowl Management Plan Implementation Branch; the Wildlife Toxicology and Surveys Branch/National Wildlife Research Centre; and the Program Analysis and Co-ordination Branch.

Wildlife matters were delegated to the provinces by the Canadian constitution, and responsibility is generally in the hands of provincial administrations. Federal-provincial cooperation was facilitated through meetings of the Federal-Provincial Wildlife Ministers Conferences, ongoing since 1922 and an annual event since 1945. Through those ongoing discussions, federal wildlife policy has developed mainly around areas of transboundary issues and problems deemed in the national interest. Currently, the CWS's primary responsibility is to enforce the Migratory Birds Convention Act, the Canada Wildlife Act, the Convention on International Trade in **Endangered Species** of Fauna and Flora (CITES), and the Ramsar **Convention on Wetlands of International Importance**. Furthermore, it has increased responsibility on federal lands, north of 60°N latitude, although in recent years much responsibility has been delegated to the territorial wildlife services and local co-management agreements with aboriginal peoples.

Within those statutes and agreements CWS is responsible for policy and strategy development, enforcement, research, public relations, education and interpretation, **habitat** classification, and the management of about 98 sanctuaries and 49 wildlife areas. The combination of a national and international mandates and diverse landscapes of Canada make CWS the pivotal **wildlife management** institution in Canada. However, CWS's increasing reliance on cooperative measures with provincial governments and nongovernmental organizations, including **Ducks Unlimited** Canada and **World Wildlife Fund** Canada, has led the organization to less direct management and more coordination activities. Critics of Canada's wildlife management direction have suggested that the once world-renowned repository of research expertise in CWS has suffered in recent years.

Resources

Organizations

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