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**VOLUME 11, NO. 1**  
**WINTER 2001/02**

**Changes Made to  
The Wildlife Act**

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**New Perspectives  
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# NOVA OUTDOORS

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*Cover photo courtesy of Michael Murray, of Halifax.*

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# Nova Outdoors

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of Anglers and Hunters



Vol. 11, No. 1  
Winter, 2001/02  
**STATEMENT  
OF PURPOSE**

The Nova Scotia Federation of Anglers and Hunters is interested in all aspects of the out-of-doors and is dedicated to the fostering of sound management and wise use of the renewable resources of the Province. We want to ensure that their economic, recreational and aesthetic values may continue for the benefit of this and all future generations.

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## President's Message

### "New" Wildlife Habitat And Watercourse Protection Regulations

#### A Mixed Bag

I was a "Lands and Forests" biologist in 1989 when the government introduced new Forest/Wildlife Guidelines. At subsequent public information meetings they were advertised as an important first step - from an environmental perspective.

Issues of fish and wildlife habitat as well as river bank protection, have long been viewed as necessities by well-educated hunters, anglers, trappers, naturalists and other conservationists. But they also are sensitive subjects in a province where 70 percent of the forested land is privately owned, and a considerable portion of public (Crown) land is subject to forestry leasing agreements.

Why has it taken 12 years to come up with forestry regulations to protect fish and wildlife habitats? Blaming government is a pitfall. I'd rather draw your attention to the average Nova Scotian's low level of understanding and knowledge about the outdoors - the natural world around us. How can young Nova Scotians spend 12 years of their lives in a public school system where, unless the teachers take "extra" time, outdoor awareness is forgotten? Biology students I've taught at one university are hard pressed to differentiate balsam fir from spruce trees. They seem more familiar with the virtual reality of a computer. The latest generation of young adults spends little time in the woods. If they do, it's probably blasting through wetlands on an ATV.

School systems have taught the 2R's: Re-use and Recycle. There was supposed to be another R - Reduce. Instead, we are generating more packaging and more waste per person than ever before! Few public leaders are promoting the idea that one can live a good life And consume less.

Government, which sometimes controls our education system, is the slowest to change. Industries will shift more quickly; but only if they perceive a need, like market demand. Given the habitat damage that private landowners have inflicted upon their own properties in the last decade, woodlot owners in Nova

Scotia either (1) don't understand the environmental havoc they wreak with large scale clearcuts or (2) they do not care, or (3) they're greedy and shortsighted. There are notable and exceptional woodlot owners -but they are few and far between. There's an enormous amount of abuse in the back 40.

Regrettably, a similar statement can be said about farmers and farming.

To paraphrase Thomas Jefferson, "the best defence of democracy is a well-informed citizenry". Given reasonable amounts of information combined with options from which to choose, I think many folks are capable of stepping beyond greed or out of single-purpose mind-sets to make environmentally-wise decisions. As long as our education system is woefully negligent in this regard, the door stays wide open to land abusers who have only to contend with wimpy regulations. I have seen trout brooks so ruined by forest machinery that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Habitat officer could not find a fish, or prove in court that it had been fish habitat. Great way to beat the charge!

Most of the science proving the case for more careful forestry and farming has already been done. It is just being ignored by politicians, so industry and landowners can act accordingly. Hunting, trapping and fishing regulations exist to "protect" species. But as a woodlot owner or farmer you can utterly destroy the habitat that "protected" moose, beaver or trout depend upon for survival and get government grants and subsidies to pay for it! There are alternate ways to produce forest products, farm crops and a profit. The Nova Scotia government is not promoting these in any effective manner. We'd have more fish and wildlife if it did!

This "new" law is a twelve year old "first" step. Wildlife habitats and waterways need more steps, quickly. I fear that collective public ignorance will maintain the current government pace - which is slower than the lowest gear on my tractor. At the rate they are going, there soon won't be many fish or wildlife left to protect.

Best Wishes for the New Year! \*

*Bob Bancroft*

# Executive Director's Voice



A number of people who knew that I was in Ottawa recently to make a presentation to the Justice and Human Rights committee on the Animal Cruelty Act suggested that I share this presentation with our readers because of the importance it has for all animal users. Presentations to the committee were also made by the cattlemen's association, poultry producers, trappers association and medical research associations, just to name a few on Bill C-15 B. The committee also heard from a number of well known animal rights groups who supported the proposed new law. Please ensure that your MLA and your MP understand the mess this legislation will get us into. Share this article with them. I would also appreciate your comments. Thanks.

## House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights Presentation made by Mr. Tony Rodgers, Executive Director, Nova Scotia Federation of Anglers and Hunters, October 16, 2001

Mister Chairperson, members of the committee. On behalf of the 6,500 members of the Nova Scotia Federation of Anglers and Hunters, thank you for this opportunity to speak on the legislation before you, Bill C-15 B.

My Federation's membership is relieved and pleased that Minister McLellan, recognized the necessity to split the original bill. This change became a benefit to the wildlife conservation community. It allowed us some elbow room to argue against the wording in some parts of C-15 while supporting other sections.

By splitting the legislation it allows for a fair airing of our concerns without us

having to appear uncaring about the sexual exploitation of children or creating an offense of disarming a peace officer. No caring or feeling person in Canada can support brutality to animals. That is why law makers, at all levels of government, have taken progressive steps to protect them.

This recent attempt to improve animal cruelty law by making it stronger and increase penalties is a positive one.

However, what brings me here today and what will bring others from like minded organizations during the course of this committee's hearings, is the shallow interpretation by government of what is needed to improve the teeth in the law, increase the punishments for those who want to brutalize animals and yet at the same time protect people, who use animals respectfully and wisely from unjust prosecution because of this interpretation.

It's a tricky balancing act, but it is achievable. The end users of these wild and domestic animals must be allowed to influence this legislation and hope that our words are not forgotten after we leave this room.

Animals are important to the quality of all of our lives. They are sources of food, medicine, medical research, recreation and companionship. But the point of concern is, how will this act change the way we will be judged in using these animals in a humane way? That has us worried.

I am a hunter and an angler and I feel that I'm a typical representative of the hunting and angling population of Nova Scotia, which is in most ways not really different than the hunting and angling populations in any other region of Canada.

In this country, it is a well known fact that hunters pay for wildlife conservation. When you examine the spending on hunting related activities and hunting related equipment, you will soon see the positive impact hunter dollars have on the economy and on the wildlife they support. Provincial wildlife departments will attest, that their programs for animal habitat improvement will not survive without hunters. The same holds true for anglers and recreational fishing.

*Continued on next page*

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But lately federal government legislation has had a negative impact on the hunting community. It has been severe. Since the introduction of the ill-advised and wasteful Firearms legislation the loss to this country of hunter support for wildlife has been noticeable. This loss will be demonstrated more so over the long haul with the decline in the number of new hunters who support wildlife programs, and the loss of revenue for wildlife research and wildlife habitat improvements. These losses will be viewed someday as its own form of animal cruelty.

It is my view, and the view of the Nova Scotia Federation of Anglers and Hunters, that well written legislation is needed to punish those who intentionally abuse and neglect animals. Our group is supportive of the government in its desire to amend the original animal cruelty legislation to better protect animals, but we also believe that Bill C-15 B, as drafted, could still have serious and largely unintended consequences for hunting, trapping, angling and other legitimate uses of animals.

It is our contention that it will allow animal rights extremists to use the Criminal Code to further their aims against animal uses that are legitimately regulated through legislation such as the Nova Scotia Wildlife Act and other provincial acts, not only in Nova Scotia but in other provinces. I would caution anyone hearing support for the bill from animal rights organizations appearing as witnesses before this committee to take that support as a warning of things to come.

This new bill, even after changes made from the original Bill C-17, does not appear to provide any assurances and clear guidance to the public or the courts, that hunting, trapping and angling in accordance with applicable regulations would not be considered an offense under the criminal code.

A number of points in the proposed legislation have been identified by us and echoed by government officials in Nova Scotia. I will not pretend to be speaking on their behalf, but we do agree on these views;

1. Moving the animal cruelty provisions out of Part XI of the Criminal Code removes the protection that animal users had by virtue of Section 429(2) which permits acts done with legal justification or excuse or with colour of right. This is of particular concern for hunting and trapping in relation to Sections 182.2(1)(a) and (b).

2. The language in 182.2 (1) (b) "brutally and viciously" requires clarification or rewording. Some people would consider any killing of wild animals or fish by hunting, angling or trapping to be "brutal and vicious". Again the weapons, trapping systems and humane aspects are currently regulated by other legislation and programs for hunting and trapping.

3. By expanding the definition of animal to "any animal that has the capacity to feel pain", we put at risk activities such as the baiting of fishing hooks with a live worm or boiling lobsters. I doubt that this was the intention, but some people would no doubt take advantage of the opportunity to use the legislation to further their own beliefs.

For months the government has scrambled to assure hunters and anglers as well as farmers that Bill C-15 was not intended to target them and that they did not need to worry about being jailed for their standard practices. Still, the wording of the bill is so loose that criminal prosecution of members of virtually all animal-related professions is a very real possibility.

The traditional practices of hunting, angling and trapping do not fit into the category of mean-spirited or spiteful violence. There is a need for clear language to assure their protection.

Obviously there must be a compromise to ensure that these people who have intentionally and deliberately caused suffering to an animal be punished, but on the other hand not restrict hunters, anglers and trappers who could, in some instances, have their livelihoods and recreations inadvertently restricted by such regulations. Common sense must prevail.

This legislation smells of the same ink that penned the infamous Bill C-68, The Firearms and Other Weapons Act. That legislation was, supposedly, designed to make us safe and reduce crime and it may have the very opposite effect.

Instead of contemplating their actions fully from the start, the government chose to proceed with that sloppy piece of legislation. Time and money have been squandered as a result of the failure to consider the needs and wants of Canadians on the issue. Now we have another bill that purports to want to punish individuals who

commit crime, this time against animals, and it puts all legitimate animal user in a difficult position just like the Firearms Act did to legitimate target shooters and hunters. I'm going to use this as a segue into the firearms section of C-15 B. I will say just a few words on the changes proposed for the firearms act.

Those words are not nearly enough change. It is not significant enough of a change and it is not serious enough change. However, we view these proposed changes as an important good first step toward a full recovery within the Department of Justice.

Having the courage to recognize that they have a serious legislative problem was the first challenge. Finally admitting freely, that the Firearms Act needs changes, especially after all of the public exposure to its pitfalls, huge price tag, screw ups and its divisive nature is commendable.

We salute the Justice Minister on her brave attempt to make changes to the bill. But to do it right she should scrap the whole thing.

In the beginning days of C-68 the Justice Minister, Alan Rock, avoided public consultation. And as we know now, to the bill's peril. But he did have the foresight to install the "Minister Users Group", which you heard from earlier today. Now using the expertise of that group, who has made many insightful recommendations to the ministers in concert with the firearms community of Canada, including people sitting here today, rewrite the whole thing. Using a sharp pencil, a clean sheet of paper, ask the firearms community how to do it right this time. Do a proper consultation.

Even if you need to split this bill one more time, do it. Come back with Bill C-15 C. But let's take our time with it this go around. There was a desire to rush a law to protect children and peace officers and their is a longing to move forward and provide animals the necessary protection they need, and also protect animal users from shortcomings which have been identified but on the matter of Bill C-15 C, we should take our time and do it right. Thank you. \*

*Tony Rodgers*  
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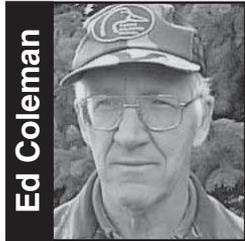
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# Pheasant Hunting — Only An Average Season

**B**efore seeing the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) estimate, I would have given anyone odds there was a province-wide drop in the pheasant harvest last season.

I based my assessment of last season on the pheasants bagged by our hunting group. Don't ask me why or how come,



Ed Coleman

but I've found that in most years our pheasant harvest generally follows the provincial trend - down if the provincial total is down, up if it's up and so

on. I keep detailed hunting notes, recording not only the birds bagged but also hours per day hunted, the distance walked, the number of roosters and hens flushed and (at times) the number of roosters fluffed, or missed if you prefer.

Except when comparing personal harvest with the provincial trend, these records aren't of much use to anyone. However, I can tell you right to the bird how many roosters we've bagged every season for at least the last three decades. And as I said, our success or lack of it usually reflects what's happening throughout the province.

Anyway, getting back to my statement on guessing that the provincial pheasant harvest would be down. This was confirmed by harvest numbers I obtained recently from the Department of Natural Resources; these numbers indicate a decrease in the estimated pheasant harvest of over 20 percent.

This is the second season in a row in which the harvest has dropped and it's a substantial decrease. In fact, according

to DNR estimates, last year's estimated harvest was the lowest since the 1995 season. Three years ago the estimated harvest was a whopping 13,033 roosters. In the following season, 1999, there was a slight drop, and then came last year's whopping decrease, an estimated harvest of only 9,178 roosters.

Looking at the harvest records, we see the not surprising fact that for the most part the harvest in the pheasant belt - the Annapolis Valley - has generally increased steadily since 1995. Keeping in mind that the pheasant season is a month shorter in the Valley than the rest of the province, you could say that this ongoing harvest gain is surprising.

Most of the Valley gains came in the heart of the pheasant belt, Kings County, the prime rooster region of the province. While Annapolis and Kings County have similar farmland habitat, the type of habitat that's pheasant friendly, Kings apparently produces more birds (and at the same time, attracts more hunters). Kings County's edge in pheasant production may have something to do with the Minas Basin moderating winter weather, but this is only a guess on my part.

Now that the pheasant history lesson is over, what's the outlook for this season in the Annapolis Valley?

In a nutshell, don't expect another 1998 season. And don't expect a season any better than last year. We've been combining a lot of good coverts in Kings County and pheasant numbers appear to be down. A few areas look good, but only a few.

Based on what we've been seeing in Kings County, and based on reports from farmers and other hunters, I'm predicting a so-so to average pheasant season. I'll really be surprised if this season's harvest exceeds last year, and if there are any gains they'll only be slight.

## Will the grouse come back?

It was a glorious season. There was an abundance of ruffed grouse in the uplands,

and even the poor coverts held birds. The weather co-operated with an early leaf-fall and hunters enjoyed one cloudless, cool day after the other.

This was the 1995 grouse season and hunting was great. Hunters in that autumn bagged a record number of grouse. The estimated harvest that season reached over 145,000 birds, exceeding the previous season's harvest of almost 127,000.



Male ring necked pheasant. Photo courtesy of Department of Natural Resources.

This wasn't the only time the ruffed grouse harvest exceeded 100,000 birds in a season. It happened several times through the 1970s, and at least once in the 1980s. Grouse hunters remember those times, especially the record seasons of 1994 and 1995, as the golden years; and if you listen closely when they talk about them you'll detect a hint of nostalgia since this was the last time that grouse hunting was good.

The fact is that grouse hunting has hit hard times. Since the great 1994 season and the record 1995 season the annual grouse harvest has gone down, down and down.

*Continued on page 9*

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# A Walk In The Woods

Creating outdoor classroom is invaluable for our future leaders

Recently I had the pleasure of being invited to participate in the official opening of the new playground and nature trail at Valley Elementary School, just outside Truro. What I saw and learned was truly impressive. In this day of decreasing resources for school facilities, a determined and hard working group of parents and volunteers



Don Cameron

took it upon themselves to create a state of the art playground, tennis and basketball courts, soccer field and recreational tour. All of this was created immediately adjacent to the school. After the influx of 30,000 dollars from J.D. Irving Ltd. for playground equipment, the project took off and never looked back. It is something to see and from which other groups with similar interests can learn.

An integral part of the project was the creation of a trail through the forested land located behind the playground. The planning group, along with the Principal Michael Price had the foresight to recognize the many potential benefits that the trail would provide to the students and the community at large. Besides the obvious recreational uses such as hiking, running, biking, and cross-country skiing, they knew that there was unlimited potential for providing educational opportunities for the kids. There's nothing like taking children to the forest in order to expose them to the beauty and intricacies of nature. While the kids searched intently for various woods items that I requested during the scavenger hunt, I was very impressed with their interest and questions. Everyone of those children, from ages 4 to 10, tried their best to find and identify all that they were asked to find.

In this day and age, we are concerned with teaching the next generation about how to protect and nurture our environment. For the most part, this teaching takes place in the controlled atmosphere of the indoor classroom. However, everyone would agree that a child who has witnessed nature in action is more likely to develop respect for it. That is why teachers have occasional field trips to natural areas, for example. Current funding cutbacks, however, are limiting school field trips. So what is the alternative?

Why not create a natural "outdoor classroom" right next to the school? That is what people in many parts of the industrialized world, (like the good people of Valley Elementary School) are doing just now. It is called "school grounds naturalization," and in England, France, Sweden, the United States, and parts of Canada, schools are using any forested area on or adjacent to the school grounds as well as breaking up asphalt and lawns to plant native trees, shrubs, and wildflowers, thereby attracting birds, insects and small mammals. Even children in inner cities are learning about soil ecosystems, life cycles and self-sufficiency as they plant vegetable and flower gardens and feed compost heaps. In the process, they are also learning research skills, cooperation, and subjects ranging from math and physics to language arts. In a time when cross-curricular, activity-based education is growing in popularity, the outdoor classroom is an invaluable resource.

A more natural school ground is also a more pleasant place to play and relax. In London, England, incidents of school ground fighting and vandalism have dropped dramatically at schools where children have helped make their surroundings more natural and less hostile. Having put their hearts, minds, and muscles into improving their environment, children tend to develop a greater sense of stewardship toward it.

In other words, "naturalizing" school grounds offers children many educational, physical and emotional benefits and can be a force for developing environmentally responsible future citizens.

## Tree Trivia:

Eastern white cedar is the tree we know as arborvitae, the Tree of Life, so named because it was said to cure the scurvy that afflicted some of the earliest European explorers in North America.

One such group was the crew of French explorer Jacques Cartier, ravaged by scurvy during the bitter winter of 1535. Cartier's journal reports that two Indian men showed the party how to prepare a hot drink from the leaves and bark of a tree they called annedda.

Only one or two of the ill men dared try the drink. But for them the cure was "a true and evident" miracle, wrote Cartier. "After having seen this, there was such a demand for this medicine that a tree, as large and as tall as I have ever seen, was used in less than eight days."

The following year Cartier took white cedar back to France. It was probably the first tree brought to Europe from the New World.

Was the tree that helped Cartier's crew, in fact, something other than white cedar? It may have been. Native sources suggest spruce and hemlock were more effective against the illness; both contain higher amounts of vitamin C. But, even without its medical cachet, eastern white cedar is a wonderful tree. \*

*Don Cameron is the Information Officer for the Nova Scotia Section of the Canadian Institute of Forestry.*

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**Pheasant Hunting..**  
Continued from page 7

In the season following the record '95 harvest, the estimated kill dropped to just over 88,000 birds; in the next two seasons, 1997 and 1998, the harvest fell even more, down to 51,745 and 55,519.

When the 1998 season wound up, hunters were hopeful that a low grouse population would rebound; but there was worse to come. The 1999 season was even more of a disaster; that year the Department of Natural Resources estimated the grouse harvest at a paltry - and unbelievable - 29,098 birds. Hunters were hopeful as last year's season opened, but once again grouse were scarce and the harvest extremely low, an estimated 29,722.

If you're a grouse enthusiast you have to be discouraged by the poor hunting in recent seasons. The last few years have been total disasters, an understatement if there ever was one. While there were a few areas around the province with reasonably good hunting, the overall grouse hunting picture has been bleak.

Like other game birds and animals, the grouse population runs in cycles. Wildlife biologists will tell you that over the decades there will be naturally occurring periods of highs and lows. Good seasons will be followed by poor seasons and so on.

What we must be seeing now is a long, drawn out low in the grouse population. Why the low seems to be persisting is anyone's guess. We might think that weather is a factor, but is it? With the exception of last winter, the weather in recent winters has been relatively mild and open.

This year we could see another poor grouse season. The few hunters I surveyed tell me hunting has been only fair to date. Everyone is waiting for leaf fall and colder weather when grouse come out to the edges; only then will we get a handle on the season.



*Ruffed grouse. Photo courtesy of Department of Natural Resources.*

In the meanwhile, if you are asking, "Will grouse rebound?" the answer is yes. We'll see good seasons again. When those mysterious factors that keep grouse numbers low change, hunting will again be like the golden years of the mid-90s. \*

*Ed Coleman is a well known outdoors writer who lives in Annapolis Valley, NS.*

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December 3, 2001

Hon. John F. Hamm  
Premier  
Province of Nova Scotia  
PO Box 726  
Halifax, NS  
B3J 2T3

Dear Dr. Hamm:

During the last provincial election your Progressive Conservative Party made, what we considered to be, three significant promises to the hunters, anglers and trappers of this province, and in this public letter I would like to thank you for fulfilling them.

Your first promise was to "join the efforts by other provinces" in legally challenging Ottawa's gun control legislation. The court decision did favor the Federal legislation, but your action established Nova Scotia as one of the eight regions in Canada that did not support the legislation.

The second promise was to "legislate the right to hunt and fish in Nova Scotia with a Heritage Hunting and Fishing Act." This was accomplished with Bill No. 89, "Wildlife Act (amended)". Some will argue that it should have been a stand alone piece of legislation but the change does establish our rights to these heritage activities.

Changing the "Forestry and Wildlife Guidelines" to regulations and then establish them as law is a very positive first step in protecting our forests. This third promise, was welcome news to many of us who have been asking for this for years. We needed something with teeth to protect our forest from negligence by those who operate without care in the woods. It was a long time in coming. Previous governments of all political stripes had the chance to move on this change, and we're glad you finally did. Now enforcement will be the key to success.

These are all fine transformations. Thank you again for keeping your promises. Now our hope is to work closer with your government to make more significant changes to continue to improve the state of our forest ecosystem for all creatures, and promote responsible recreational use within them.

Yours in Conservation,

Tony Rodgers  
Executive Director

Founded in 1930 - Formerly The Nova Scotia Wildlife Federation

# Every Year Statistics Canada Proves Gun Registration Doesn't Work

**"So why don't the Liberals finally heed the Statistics Canada numbers and put an end to this charade?"**

Every year, Statistics Canada publishes a report on homicides in Canada, and every year the statistics prove what the Liberals don't want to admit - gun registration doesn't work. "Why don't they put an end to this soon-to-be billion dollar charade perpetrated on the Canadian taxpayers?" asked Garry Breitkreuz, the Official Opposition's gun control critic. "Is the truth that hard to swallow, or is it that the Liberals just hate admitting they made such a huge mistake?" The Saskatchewan MP continued, "These Stats Can numbers were just as obvious in 1994 and 1995 as they are today, except the data now shows that the situation is getting worse. Instead of relying on independent statistics the Liberals decided to fabricate some of their own to fit their ill-conceived beliefs and to perpetrate this firearms fiasco."

Here are some of the more revealing facts from the Statistics Canada report, Homicide in Canada, 2000:

1. Of the 542 homicides in Canada

in 2000, stabbing, beating and strangulation accounted for 58 percent, and firearms for 34 percent (Page 7). Obviously, violent individuals are the problem and registering a persons' firearms doesn't prevent someone from killing another person.

2. Of the 183 firearms homicides in 2000, 58 percent were committed with handguns (The law has required all handguns to be registered since 1934), 8 percent were committed with firearms that are completely prohibited (sawed-off rifles or shotguns and fully automatic firearms), and 31 percent were committed with a rifle or shotgun (Page 8). Obviously, 67 years of registering handguns demonstrates that registration is a fatal flop as a way to prevent the criminal use of firearms. The statistical evidence also indicates that the total banning of guns doesn't work any better.

3. Despite 67 years of mandatory handgun registration, the use of handguns in firearms homicides has been steadily increasing since 1974, from 26.9 percent to 58.5 percent in 2000. Conversely, fire-

arms homicides with rifles and shotguns that weren't registered dropped steadily over the same 27-year period, from 63.6 percent to 30.6 percent (Table 6 - Page 9). Makes a sane person wonder why the Liberals employ 1,800 staff and have wasted more than \$680 million trying to register millions of rifles and shotguns, doesn't it?

4. Of 110 handgun homicides committed between 1997 and 2000, 69 percent of the handguns were not registered (Page 9) - This despite the fact that the law has required handguns to be registered since 1934. Does the failure of gun registration as an effective government policy get any more obvious than this? Read on.

5. In 2000, 67 percent of persons accused of homicide had a Canadian criminal record, and 69 percent of these had previously been convicted of violent crimes. At the same time, 52 percent of homicide victims also had a criminal record (Page 15). Obviously, the Liberals have hit the wrong target by requiring completely innocent farmers, hunters and recreational shooters to register their firearms. Obviously, criminals are the real targets - not duck hunters!

The government had a choice six years ago and it made the wrong one. On September 21, 1995, the Ontario Solicitor General, Bob Runciman, told the Senate Standing Committee, "In national terms, 85 million dollars would put another 1,000 customs agents on the border; 500 million dollars would put an extra 5,900 police officers on the street. The federal alternative is to use the money to register every shotgun and bolt-action .22 in Canada. No great brilliance is required to figure out which would have a greater impact on crime." Breitkreuz concluded, "The September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks have shown us all what a real security threat is. With few exceptions everyone in Canada now knows that the threat is not the three million "completely innocent" firearms owners." \*

## The Wise Cliff Claven

I have not seen anyone explain this as well as Cliff Clavin, from the TV show *Cheers*. Cliff Clavin was explaining the Buffalo Theory to his buddy Norm. Here's how it went:

"Well ya see, Norm, it's like this. A herd of buffalo can only move as fast as the slowest buffalo. And when the herd is hunted, it is the slowest and weakest

ones at the back that are killed first.

This natural selection is good for the herd as a whole, because the general speed and health of the whole group keeps improving by the regular killing of the weakest members.

"In much the same way, the human brain can only operate as fast as the slowest brain cells. Excessive intake of alcohol, as we know, kills brain cells. But naturally, it attacks the slowest and weakest brain cells first.

In this way, regular consumption of beer eliminates the weaker brain cells, making the brain a faster and more efficient machine. That's why you always feel smarter after a few beers."

Now you know. \*

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# Stay Sharp With Off Season Coyote Hunting

By Jim Power

The early morning air was cool and crisp, but only in the shade did small patches of snow hide from the warm spring sun. I adjusted the camo stocking on my Browning 12-gauge pump, slid on camo gloves, then adjusted the camo face mask. Sitting on a stump, I started blowing the rabbit distress call.



Coyote and sheep. Photo courtesy of Department of Natural Resources.

Thirty seconds after finishing the sequence, a big coyote appeared on the horizon, 250 yards away. He wasn't one of those little foxlike dogs from out west; he was a big, strapping Eastern coyote - coyotes from a stock who had bred with domestic dogs and wolves. I watched him hurriedly cross the ridgeline of the partially regenerated clearcut, then lope off on an angle to my right. Between us was a finger of low, thick pines that led right to me.

I put away the call and prepared myself. In short order, much quicker than anticipated, the coyote emerged from the pine run at roughly eight yards. At a mere 10 feet, he suddenly caught my scent and flipped backwards as if he had just stepped on a land mine. The bead was on him. I had hunted this coyote off and on all winter, tracking him in snow and seeing him twice already, both times just out of range. I even trailed him to a 6-point buck he and his cohorts had killed and cleaned in a deer yard. Only the hair on the deer's lower legs remained. They looked almost like brown wool stockings.

But now he was within spitting distance. Yet my finger never touched the trigger. I had promised myself that the first coyote I could take, I would let walk. The big boy sheepishly melted into his backtrail and was gone.

If he were a cat, he had eight lives left. That was my first year of coyote hunting. Since then, in pursuing the smart creature for keeps, I have come to greatly appreciate the animal and thoroughly enjoy the challenge of hunting them. In Nova Scotia we can hunt coyotes all year with a shotgun. By permit hunters are allowed to use rifles for several months beyond deer season.

Few species are as adaptable and successful as the woods dog. Francois Leydet, a coyote researcher, cited a study done in New Mexico. Between 1964-1975, he calculated that man killed 300,000 coyotes. Did that put them on the endangered species list? Hardly. The population in 1976 was higher than in any of the previous years. Leydet says that man kills about half a million coyotes each year, and yet their population is not adversely affected and they actually continue to expand their range. According to experts at the University of California at Davis: "If 75 percent of the coyotes were killed each year, the creature would still be around in 50 years."

What are the chances of killing 75 percent of them every year? Nil. A poet once wrote, "When the last human heart stops beating, the night will still be filled with the songs of the coyote." There is an old Indian saying that goes: "A feather fell from the sky. The eagle saw it, the bear smelled it, the deer heard it. The coyote did all three."

As an outdoorsman who spends between 600-1,000 hours per year in the woods, I personally see more black bears than coyotes in non-hunting situations. You often hear coyotes, particularly at

dusk, but they are past masters at staying just out of sight. Last season at my bear bait they teased me on numerous occasions, hanging back on the downwind side. I itched to unleash an arrow, but they could read my mind. And with a nose that compared to ours is like the Space Shuttle next to a paper airplane, it was no contest.

Yet a well-conceived bait site, a vigil over coyote kills, and calling can all produce. But they learn fast. The rabbit distress call, however, has led to the demise of countless coyotes. Electronic callers can afford you some of the most exciting hunting you'll ever encounter because they reach out long distances, are totally realistic and, like hand calls, turn you into the hunted. Very peculiar feeling.

There are numerous pluses to coyote hunting: liberal seasons, the first class challenge, lack of competition from other hunters who might be playing golf or visiting the beach while you have the woods to yourself, strong and vibrant populations. Any coyote is a feather in the cap of a hunter, even if taken incidentally when actually hunting something else. To harvest a coyote while specifically hunting coyotes is a true trophy. My brother took a nice coyote with his bow in 1999. In my opinion, to do that is much more difficult than taking a deer, and actually on par with a quality buck or good bear. They are that clever. But when you entice a coyote into range or see one slinking just behind cover, the rush of blood and beating of your heart makes it all worthwhile.

So extend your hunting season with coyote hunting. You won't regret it.

Get out and enjoy the Nova Outdoors. \*

*Jim Power of Truro, NS, is a well known outdoor writer*

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# How To Protect Your Cat And Wildlife

By Linda Winter, Director,  
Cats Indoors!  
American Bird Conservancy

I used to own an indoor/outdoor cat, (or perhaps I should say she owned me), so I know why cat owners let their beloved felines outdoors. But I also know what can happen to outdoor cats. They can get hit by a car; injured or killed by coyotes, dogs, other cats; contract deadly diseases such as rabies, feline leukemia, or feline immunodeficiency virus; suffer from harsh weather; get lost, stolen or poisoned; or become infected with parasites. Millions of free-roaming cats are euthanized each year because people don't bother to spay or neuter their pets and there are not enough homes for them.

I also know the impact that domestic cats can have on local wildlife populations, and my cat was no exception. She was an excellent hunter, and it made absolutely no difference if she just had a meal. Since becoming director of American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) Cats Indoors!, citizen education campaign almost six years ago, I also know that millions of pets, stray and feral cats are having significant impacts on wildlife already struggling to survive on shrinking habitat.

So, what's a cat owner who cares about cats and wildlife to do? I took the easy road, and adopted two cats already

raised as indoor pets. However, an outdoor cat can also become a content indoor pet with patience and time. Some people bring their cats indoors gradually for increasingly longer stays, and some people just bring them in and shut the door. Either way, it's important to provide lots of attention and stimulation while the cat is indoors. In northern climates, the easiest time of year to make this conversion is during the cold winter months when your cat is more likely to want to be inside.

Cats need human companionship to be happy, and when they spend all their time outdoors, they get very little attention. An outdoor cat may welcome the indoors if he or she gets more love, attention, and play. Provide your cat with cat condos which offer interesting places to lounge, play and scratch. You should also provide scratching posts, corrugated cardboard or sisal rope for your cat to scratch, and praise your cat for using them.

To encourage your ex-outdoor cat to exercise, offer interesting toys, especially those that are interactive. These usually consist of a long pole and attached line with fabric or feathers at the end. Some cats enjoy searching for toys. If your cat likes to explore the house looking for "prey," hide his toys in various places so he can find them throughout the day. Be sure that the toys are not so small that they can be swallowed or get stuck in your

cat's throat. Cats also enjoy ping pong balls, paper bags and cardboard boxes.

Does your indoor cat miss grazing in the grass? You can buy kits that include containers and seeds to grow, or plant pesticide-free alfalfa, grass, bird seed, or catnip in your own container. Your cat can graze safely and not destroy your house plants.

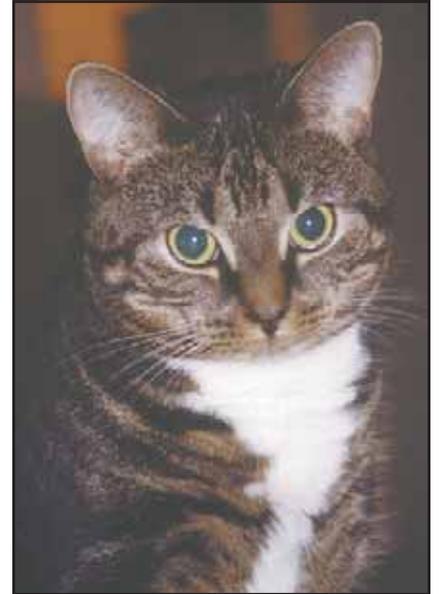


Photo courtesy of Maria Faulkner.

If your cat remains stubbornly committed to life outdoors, help her adjust by providing an outdoor covered enclosure or run that the cat can access through a window or pet door. This gives the cat some of the advantages of being outside while minimizing the dangers. You can make the outdoor enclosure interesting and appealing by adding objects for the cat to explore, such as tree limbs, multi-level cat condos, tires, toys hanging from branches, and boxes.

*Continued on next page*

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# Changes Made To The Wildlife Act

Changes to the Wildlife Act had recently been introduced in the Nova Scotia House of Assembly by Minister of Natural Resources, Ernest Fage. The amendments will help to strengthen the original legislation which was enacted in 1989 and was designed to regulate the importation, captivity and hunting of all forms of wildlife.

"The amendments being made to the Wildlife Act will contribute to the province's ability to provide for the conservation and sustainable use of wildlife",

said Minister Fage. "In particular these amendments will strengthen the legislative ability of the provincial government to deal with the issues surrounding the management of alien species."

The amendments will provide for a clearer definition of what constitutes wildlife in order to fulfil the obligations related to the conservation of native wildlife species, particularly from adverse ecological impacts of non native (alien) species.

Another change to the Act states that angling, hunting and trapping are

valued and safe parts of the heritage of the Province and that the continuing opportunity to participate in these activities will be maintained in accordance with the Act and the regulations.

"This amendment fulfills a commitment made by this government to enshrine heritage hunting and fishing in law," said Minister Fage. \*

*For more information, please contact Natural Resources at P.O. Box 698, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2T9.*

## How To Protect Your Cat...

*Continued from previous page*

### The following are several products that you can order:

1. Cat Enclosure Kit measures 6' X 6' X 6' and attaches to the outside wall of your house. Call toll-free: 1-888-554-7387, or write: C & D Pet Products, 405 East D St., Petaluma, CA 94952, or visit: <http://www.cd pets.com/enclosure.html>.

2. Kittywalk is a portable outdoor cat run which can be set up quickly, extends to 10 feet long, and works with pet doors. Additional units can be added. Call Midnight Pass Inc. at 781-834-0112 or visit <http://www.midnight-pass.com> 3. SafeCat Outdoor Enclosure is a detailed manual on how to build an enclosure. Visit <http://www.just4cats.com> or write to: Jim Montgomery, 2127 Old Bainbridge Rd., Tallahassee, FL 32303.

If you cannot or prefer not to offer your cat a run or enclosure, consider leash-training the cat so you can supervise her time outside. The leash attaches to a harness, and the cat can get used to the harness by wearing it for short periods of time inside the house. Your cat

may resist leash-training at first, but she will eventually accept it. Never leave your cat outside unsupervised while on a leash or lead.

Be sure to have your cats spayed or neutered before bringing them indoors for good. Even so, some cats may develop behavioral problems when they are no longer allowed outside. Most problems can be attributed to a change in routine or to lack of attention and stimulation inside. Review your steps and keep working with the cat. Be patient and continue to praise your cat when she plays with her toys, uses her scratching post, and does what she's supposed to do. If your cat becomes destructive or stops using the litter pan, consult a veterinarian or animal behaviorist to find ways to solve the problem.

If your cat howls to go outside, use a long-range water pistol or a shake can. These are very successful and harmless ways to curb a cat from wanting to go outside. \*

### Additional tips for a happy indoor cat:

- Trim your cat's claws every one to two weeks to keep him from damaging furniture, rugs, or drapes. Or glue on artificial nail caps called "Soft Paws" every six to eight weeks.
- Provide one litter pan per cat and keep the litter pan clean.
- Many cats enjoy the companionship of another cat or compatible dog. If your budget allows it, consider adopting another companion animal for yourself and for your cat.

*For more information on the Cats Indoors! campaign, visit: <http://www.abcbirds.org/cats/catsindoors.htm> or contact: American Bird Conservancy Cats Indoors! 1834 Jefferson Place, NW Washington, DC 20036 (p)(202)452-1535, ext. 201 (f)(202)452-1534 [lwinter@abcbirds.org](mailto:lwinter@abcbirds.org)*

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# Special Trout Management Areas In Nova Scotia

By John MacMillan, Inland Fisheries Division, Nova Scotia  
Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

## Introduction

Special Management Areas have been implemented on a few lakes and rivers across the province. The locations associated with the Special Management Areas have been recommended by angler organizations and approved through the Recreational Fishing



John MacMillan

Advisory Council process to increase angling opportunities. The following provides an overview of the different regulations implemented in

Nova Scotia, and the information that was used to develop regulations for specific regions, as well as the projects required to assess the impact of regulatory changes.

## Need for new regulations

The Inland Fisheries Division uses a number of methods to assess the status of the sportfish resource. One method was to assess catch information through a licence stub that was attached to every angling licence sold. Anglers were requested to fill out the catch information and submit the licence stub to our department. This information provided long-term trends in the catch of brook trout and other species and was used as an index of abundance at a provincial level. The licence stub data indicated that brook trout catch had declined by 40 percent from the early 1980s and established the need for provincial regulations in 1995, which included a reduced bag limit from 10 trout to 5 trout and a catch and release season during September. Since 1995, the catch of trout has remained relatively stable but has remained far below the catch in the early 1980s. Additional measures to increase

the catch of large trout involved changes to gear, bag limits, and length limits on less than one percent of mainland lakes, in a designated area in the Cape Breton Highlands, and on four rivers.

## Methods used to collect trout population information

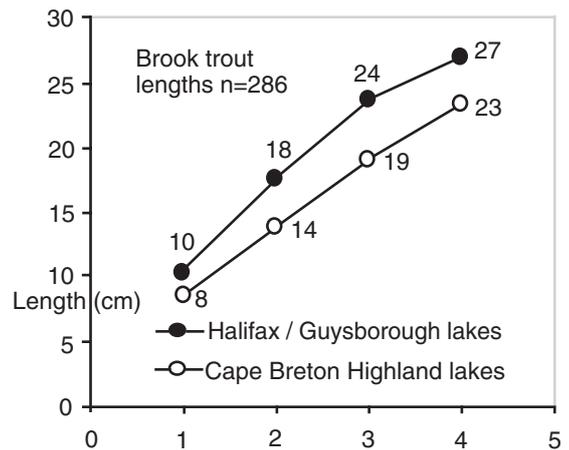
The Angler Diary Program has provided information on species caught, location of catch, and length of the catch. In many cases, the number of diary reports was not sufficient to assess the current status of a specific fish population; however, this information was useful to estimate catch information on a regional basis, such as from Recreational Fishing Areas and counties. A direct means of obtaining catch information was through the use of creel surveys, during which fishery officials and Department of Natural Resources conservation officers interviewed individual anglers that were in the process of angling. The catch was often measured and weighed, and scale samples were collected. Scales were later used to age the individual fish and determine growth rates. Lake surveys have also been used to assess the current status of the habitat in terms of suitability for trout and other fish.

## Information used to develop regulations

### *Mainland Lakes versus Cape Breton Highland Lakes*

From the angler diary program, we have learned that the average length of trout caught in Halifax County lakes was about 25 centimeters or 10 inches, and the average size of trout caught in the Cape Breton Highlands was about 20 centimeters or 8 inches. The results suggested that growth rates were high in mainland populations compared to Highland populations. Scale analysis confirmed expectations, whereby

individuals from average trout populations from Halifax and Guysborough counties reach about 24 centimeters after three years of growth. Highland trout populations grow to about 23 centimeters in length after four years of growth (see Figure). Weight at age data also demonstrated a marked difference between areas, with mainland trout approximately three times as heavy at age two years and more than twice as heavy at age three years compared to Highland trout. The results of the angler diary program also indicated that different population densities (levels of crowding) existed between the regions. Catch rates were one trout per hour in Halifax County and five trout per hour in the Highlands. Low density populations will tend to have faster growth, because there will be more food and space available to be used by individual fish.



Differences in habitat conditions between the areas were probably responsible for the differences in the population densities and growth rates. Mainland Nova Scotia has a greater number of fish species in lakes compared to Cape Breton, and as a result, direct predation from competitors can reduce the overall number of trout in

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a lake, thus thinning out the population. As well, mainland waters tend to be warmer and more acidic, both factors functioning to reduce the overall number of trout in a river/stream/lake habitat. Warmer conditions in the summer can reduce habitat available and the number of trout that can survive during critical periods. Warmer conditions may also translate into a longer annual growing season or the number of days in the Spring, Summer, and Fall when water temperatures are between 10°C to 18°C. The trout that survived the warm water-low flow summer conditions would be able to take advantage of the good growing conditions that exist in the Fall and following Spring. Differences in productivity (amount of food) could also result in differences in growing conditions.

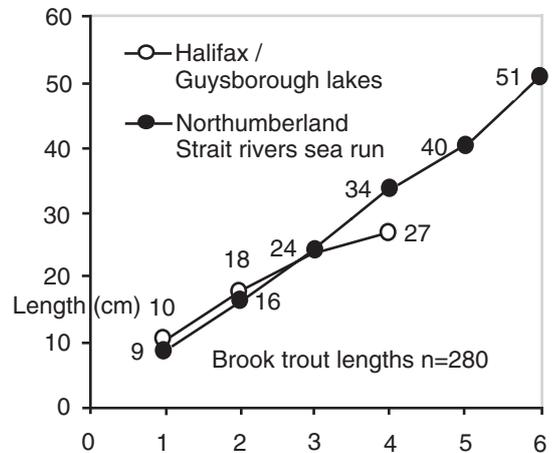
Environmental conditions and competition can play a big role in reducing trout populations, and are often the main reasons why some trout populations remain at very low levels of abundance. In mainland Nova Scotia good trout fisheries are probably present in those areas that have limited competition and above average water quality. Exploitation will probably have a much larger impact on trout populations that are considered by anglers to have average or above average fisheries, because those sites will tend to attract more fishing pressure and trout harvest. Sites under heavy angling pressure will tend to be the fisheries that benefit most from regulatory changes; however, they may also be the sites where the most resistance occurs from anglers who do not agree with the change or do not fully understand why change could improve their catch. The goal of a regulatory change should not be to reduce access to the resource, but to increase the opportunities available, often translating into an increase in the opportunity to catch and retain larger trout (trophy fishery).

Growth of trout in Halifax and Guysborough counties indicate that small trout have a greater potential to reach a larger size faster than in some other areas, if they are given the opportunity to grow. Minimum size limits or slot limits, combined with gear restrictions and reduced bag limits, are the most common methods used in other regions to increase the number of older, larger individuals in the

population, thus potentially establishing trophy fisheries. Length limits have been put in place to protect smaller trout and allow them to grow to a larger size before being susceptible to exploitation. Gear restrictions to lure or fly only (no bait) were used to increase the survival of released fish. New bag limits were introduced to reduce the number of trout harvested, and to allow for more trout to mature and reproduce. A recent study on lakes in Maine demonstrated that new regulations were very successful by increasing the number of large trout caught and reducing the time required to catch large fish (report is available from the Inland Fisheries Division upon request). Two lakes, East Taylor Bay and Harrison's Lake, have been selected as sites for special regulations, which include minimum size limits, reduced bag limits, and gear restrictions. Catch and release with angling gear regulations have been used in Kejimikujik National Park, and results of a recent survey indicated that the number of large brook trout caught have increased. Catch and release regulations for Wooden's River were put in place to improve sport fisheries, as well as to align the angling regulations with the Health Canada advisory issued regarding Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) contamination and fish consumption in that system. The Inland Fisheries Division and Trout Nova Scotia have been involved in a fish collection in Wooden's River to assess the current status of contamination by PCBs, as well as, to collect biological data on that trout population. Fishery closures or sanctuaries have also been used to protect trout in lakes of Kejimikujik National Park and in Trout Brook a tributary of Lake Ainslie, one of the largest lakes in Nova Scotia. Closures are put in place to allow fish populations to rebuild or to protect fish populations during times when they are susceptible to angling.

Under certain conditions, when spawning and rearing habitat was not in limited supply and competition from other species was at a low level, trout have the ability to overpopulate, and as a result growth rates may be slow. The data suggests that the Cape Breton Highlands may fall into this situation and require different regulatory measures compared to many mainland lakes. Creel surveys of highland populations provided a length frequency distribution from which a maximum length limit was established. Angler creel

surveys in the Cape Breton Highlands indicated that 80 percent of the catch was composed of trout with lengths smaller than 23 centimeters. In the Highland Special Management Area, the bag limit was increased to ten trout, with one trout longer than 23 centimeters or 9 inches, the maximum length limit. The increased bag limit combined with the maximum length limit was used to focus harvest on the smaller individuals of the population, reduce crowding, and allow for increased growth to occur while protecting some of the larger individuals of the population.



#### Sea run populations versus Lake populations

Sea run populations have been in a state of decline throughout the southern half of their North American distribution, which includes Nova Scotia. Popular sea run fisheries are located across the province, with the majority of the angling pressure occurring in estuaries and river mouths in the spring of the year. The number of trout in a population that migrate to the ocean can change from year to year, depending on juvenile recruitment and environmental conditions. Sea run brown trout and brook trout remain in fresh water for about three years before migration to salt water in the spring. The purpose of the migration is believed to satisfy a need for more food and space. Estuaries, the place where river water meets salt water, tend to be very productive and are nursery areas for smelt, flounder, gaspereau, shad, and many other species. As a result, food is plentiful and growth rates of sea trout reflect the abundance of food and good growing conditions present in estuaries. The size at age data collected from sea run populations from Northumberland Strait and Middle River Cape Breton demonstrated the large difference that exists between growth in fresh-water and saltwater (See Figure).

*Continued on next page*

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**Special Trout Management...**  
*Continued from previous page*

Creel survey results from Northumberland Strait indicate that mortality rates tend to be high. On average, 85 percent of first-time sea run brook trout die before they reach their fourth year, and five-year-old brook trout are rare. Brown trout live longer than brook trout and are believed to be more difficult to catch; however, mortality rates are still quite high, with an average of 86 percent of four year old sea run brown trout dying before they reach their fifth year, and 85 percent dying before they reach their sixth year. The high mortality rates are thought to be the result of angling and predation. Angler catch rates of sea runs tend to be low, with 0.1 brook trout and 0.2 brown trout caught per hour; however, angling pressure was high during the first month of the season. As a result, many fish are harvested, which may contribute significantly to the high mortality rates observed. High growth rates and high mortality rates suggest that potential exists for special regulations to greatly improve the number of large trout in the catch of some sea run populations. Regulations to improve some sea run fisheries in Nova Scotia include a minimum length limit of 35 centimeters to protect potential first and second time spawners; a delayed opening of angling season date to May, and a daily bag limit of one trout, to reduce harvest; and a gear restriction to fly and lure to increase survival rates of released fish. The Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Fisheries has initiated some or all of the above listed special regulations on the West River of Antigonish, Cornwallis River of Kings County, Middle River of Cape Breton, and Stewiacke River of Colchester County in order to protect anadromous brook trout and brown trout populations, and to ultimately enhance the sport fishery.

**Assessment of new regulation changes**

*Angler Diary Program*

The Angler Diary Program could be used to assess impacts of regulatory changes

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if angler participation in this program is high in the special management areas.

*Creel surveys*

Future angler creel surveys will be used to assess the impacts of regulation changes that may include a higher catch rate and an increase in the number of larger trout caught in sea run populations.

*Population Assessments*

Studies in other areas have demonstrated the benefit of special management regulations to the sport fishery. In Nova Scotia, lake surveys could provide insight as to the potential for a lake habitat to support more large brook trout. As a part of lake surveys, netting

and trapping studies could be used to assess changes in the size structure that were associated with a regulatory change. Additional lakes recommended for the special management area program should be considered for assessment to demonstrate to the angling community the effectiveness of new regulations. \*

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***The Regulations specify three techniques that must be followed on all lands, including private lands, to maintain habitat for wildlife and fish:***

***1. Buffer Strips (Greenbelts)*** of natural vegetation *must* be left along both sides of watercourses 50 centimetres (20 inches) or more in width. This includes lakes, marshes, ponds and salt water bodies.

***2. Clumps of Living Trees*** *must* be left standing on all harvest sites.

***3. Coarse Woody Debris*** and standing dead trees *must* be left on all harvest sites.

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[www.gov.ns.ca/natr/forestry/strategy](http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/forestry/strategy)



**TODAY'S RESOURCES, TOMORROW'S LEGACY**

# Wildlife Habitat And Watercourses Protection Regulations

By the Department Of Natural Resources

Natural Resources Minister Ernest Fage recently announced cabinet approval of new Wildlife Habitat and Watercourses Protection Regulations, which will come into effect Jan. 14, 2002.

"These regulations will help ensure the sustainability of woodland diversity, water quality and wildlife habitat on all lands in forest production," said Mr. Fage.

"Forest harvesting has a major impact on wildlife habitat and the quality of woodland watercourses. These regulations are intended to provide necessary protection when forests are harvested."

The new regulations will make guidelines for forestry operations mandatory on all lands. They provide for the protection of water quality, biodiversity and wildlife

habitat. For example, the new regulations will require that harvesters leave at least a 20-metre strip of natural vegetation along watercourses that are 50 centimetres or more wide. Some partial harvesting is allowed inside this special management zone under certain conditions.

To ensure additional habitat is maintained after the harvest, the regulations also require that a specified number of trees are left standing in cut areas larger than three hectares. These trees must be in groups that meet size and composition requirements. The clumps are important to wildlife for nesting, shelter, biodiversity preservation and in some cases, food.

Also, harvesters must leave dead trees standing and woody debris on the floor of the area to provide some habitat for wildlife and nutrients for the next forest.

"These regulations were derived from

the Forest/Wildlife Guidelines and Standards of 1989 and have now been established as law," said Mr. Fage. "The approval of these regulations fulfills one of our government's commitments and completes another element in the new forest strategy."

The Department of Natural Resources will work with industry and landowners to explain the new requirements in detail and to discuss other ways to maintain or enhance wildlife habitat on their woodlands. \*

*The Department's website, [www.gov.ns.ca/natr/forestry/strategy](http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/forestry/strategy), offers more information about the regulations. Details of upcoming workshops and field tours are being finalized. Staff at local Department of Natural Resources offices and the website will soon have more information on locations and times.*

## Book Report

By Tony Rodgers

The book "Deadly Frontiers" is a fascinating book about disaster and rescue on Canada's Atlantic coast, and the terrors and triumphs of real-life heroes.

When ships sink, planes crash and children wander into the forest, death is sometimes inescapable except for the skills and courage of the men and women who brave these dark frontiers as rescuers. Sometimes they fail, but often they pluck disaster's victims to safety. These are real-life adventures and author Dean Beeby has captured these moments.

Beeby shows us the reality of east coast search and rescue: poor emergency equipment managed by superior search and rescue personnel with all of their knowledge and training. It makes you wonder about what could be if both were equal to the task.

Disaster occurs frequently along Canada's eastern seaboard, where major air and sea routes intersect with turbulent, unpredictable weather, and deep woods surround villages, towns and cities. Canadian search and rescue technicians both volunteer and career, lead the world at what they do, and *Deadly Frontiers* tells about some of the terrible events that have provided their incentive to be better: a little boy lost in

the woods near Halifax, the sinking of the Ocean Ranger oil rig off Newfoundland, the breakup of the bulk carrier *Flare*, the crash of Swissair Flight 111 and the wreck of a Labrador helicopter in Gaspé, which killed six search and rescue technicians.

Liberal use of freedom of information laws enable Mr. Beeby to discover new information about several disasters, including the chaos that surrounded the Swissair crash and the fundamental rethinking of emergency response it provoked.

It is evident from his writing that by participating in several search-and-rescue missions he saw for himself that the heroism of our elite rescue groups stems partly from their ingenuity with geriatric aircraft, outdated communication systems and second-rate equipment.

While praising the search and rescue personnel, Beeby exposes their desperate need to cheat death without fearing betrayal by broken-down hardware.

This book is a must read for everyone who calls Eastern Canada home or served as a rescue technician. These stories will be familiar to many. And revisiting the events in the clear light of time, shows how the expertise of search and rescue increased

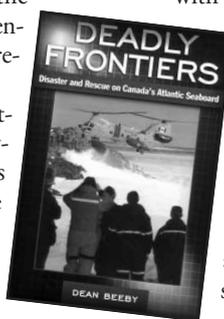
after everyone of these tragic events. Learning from ones mistakes is important to search-and-rescue technicians so that mistakes may not be repeated in the future.

As Beeby alludes in the book, its too bad that our political leaders don't follow the same example. They continue to procrastinate when it comes to providing their specialists with the best air platforms to deal with these desperate rescues.

Halifax journalist Dean Beeby has been Canadian Press Bureau Chief for the Atlantic region since 1990. In 1998, the bureau won a National Newspaper Award for its coverage of the Swissair Flight 111 disaster. Beeby is the author of "In a Crystal Land: Canadian Explorers in Antarctica and Cargo of Lies: The true story of a Nazi double agent in Canada.

For my money this book is just in time for Christmas. Any search and rescuer from the region who has moved away should be sent a copy of this book for their enjoyment and it should be made mandatory reading for all members of parliament who make decisions about people lives. The lives of those in danger and those who want to be rescued.

The book is published by Goose Lane Editions, Fredericton, NB, \$19.95. ISBN - 0-86492-311-2 \*



# New Perspectives On Gun Control

The gun control debate has been forced off center stage in the aftermath of the 2000 election and the 9/11 terrorist attacks. This is an excellent time to take a deep breath and see what can be learned from the experience of the last decade.

The public dispute over the role of guns in society reached a shrill peak during the decade from 1990 to 2000. Most arguments took the form of slurs and slogans hurled across the airwaves by loyal troops on both sides. But for those who prefer a more thoughtful analysis, this intense period of cultural warfare also produced an unprecedented flood of books on the subject.

At the ideological extremes are books that blatantly appeal to the emotions, like Josh Sugarmann's, "Every Handgun is Aimed at You" and books that falsify historical research like "Arming America - Origins of a National Gun Culture" by Michael Bellesiles.

More scholarly and ethical authors produced excellent works like "To Keep and Bear Arms", a look at the history behind the second amendment by historian Joyce Lee Malcom. Many readers also enjoyed "The Samurai, the Mountie, and the Cowboy" by David B. Kopel, which discussed the cultural differences that affect national views of gun ownership.

My favorite topic is the fascinating nature of the debate itself, and by coincidence a new book has just appeared that looks back at the many strange and interesting facets of the public gun control debate.

Criminology professor Gary Kleck and attorney Don B. Kates collaborated to produce "Armed - New Perspectives on Gun Control" from Prometheus Books. They are known for their criticism of extremist rhetoric on both sides of the issue, as well as their insistence on honesty and

respect for scientific principles in analyzing the role of guns in society. They both make a point of saying that some types of gun control may be appropriate.

The book contains chapters on all the important topics. Kates begins with an excellent review of the role played by doctors and medical publications. He demolishes the fake studies and exposes the hijacking of medical research to support a political agenda. Numerous quotes document the often ludicrous claims of anti-gun "researchers" and the blatant censorship of information by medical journals. His use of the term, "overt mendacity" is a polite way of saying that the anti-gun doctors simply lied.

Kleck writes the chapter on media bias, which offers a more complete analysis of this phenomenon than I have previously seen. He explores the various ways in which reporters develop their deliberate anti-gun bias and how unintentional bias creeps into the system.

One particularly chilling piece of evidence is a 1989 letter from the editorial offices of Time magazine to a reader who complained about their anti-gun bias. The letter claimed that "the time for opinions on the dangers of gun availability is long since gone." Apparently, all the editors at Time agreed that it was time to get rid of the guns, which relieved them of any responsibility to provide balanced coverage of the issue.

Kates explains how the anti-gun lobby "poisoned the well" by demonizing gun owners, apparently oblivious to the fact that they were insulting roughly half of the adult population. These foolish attacks on the character of gun owners were exploited by gun rights groups to create a powerful backlash against the anti-gun movement. Pro-gun organizations found this so helpful that they reportedly purchased the rights to reprint cartoons that were created

to denigrate gun owners.

Another major mistake of the gun control groups was their failure to coordinate public statements on their eventual goal. Kleck offers a long series of quotes from anti-gun leaders proclaiming their intent to completely ban handguns, and in some cases all guns. Even when those goals were later denied, the public was left with a perception of anti-gun organizations as extremists who could not be trusted. Although most Americans support some sort of "reasonable" gun control laws, very few agree with the radical aims of anti-gun organizations.

Professor Kleck is arguably the nation's foremost authority on the statistical analysis of defensive firearms use. His chapters on the frequency of defensive gun use and the effectiveness of guns for self protection nicely summarize the latest research.

"Armed - New Perspectives on Gun Control" would be excellent reading for politicians, journalists, teachers and anyone with an interest in this issue. I particularly value it for the numerous footnotes that provide documentation for future discussions and the wonderful collection of radical anti-gun quotes.

Anyone who is interested in the truth about gun control should buy a copy. When finished, they should send it to someone who needs to be educated. \*

*Submitted by Dr. Michael S. Brown  
rkba2001@home.com  
Doctors for Sensible Gun Laws  
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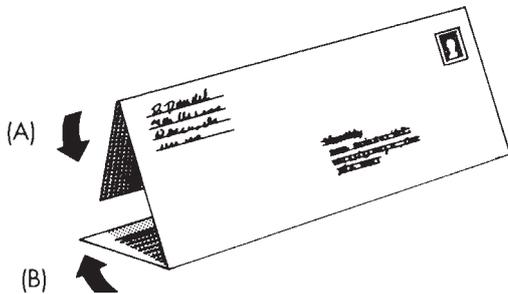
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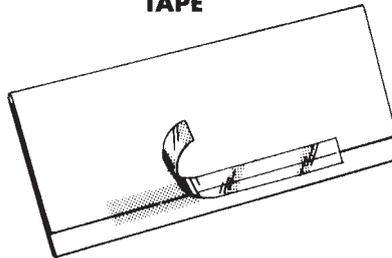
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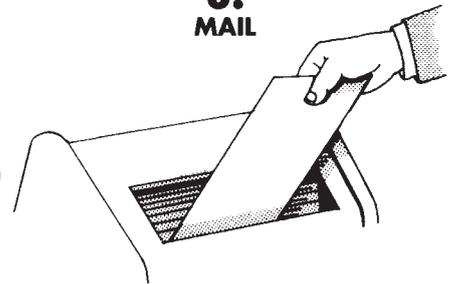
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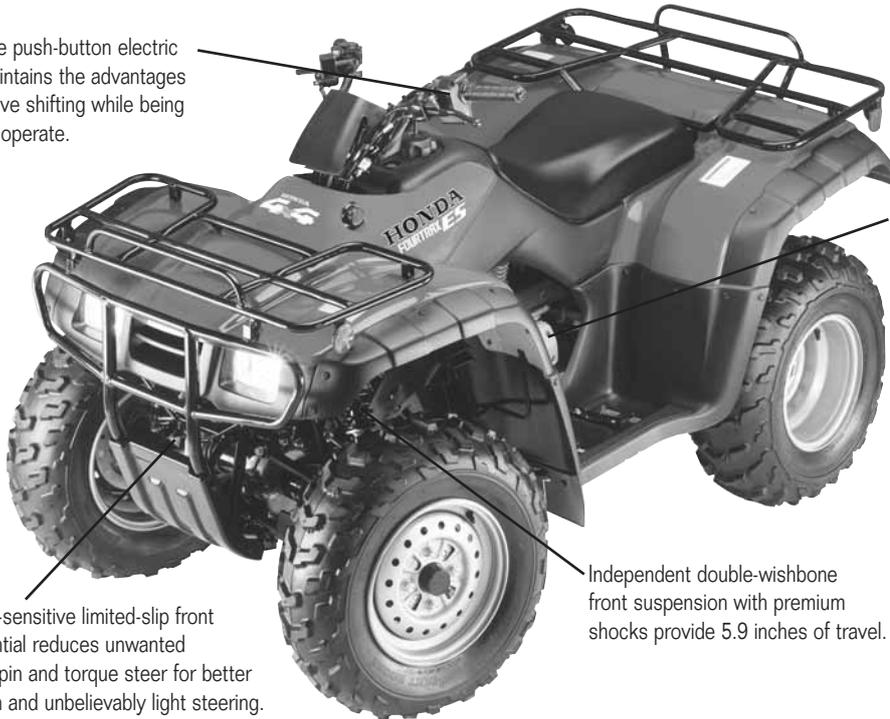


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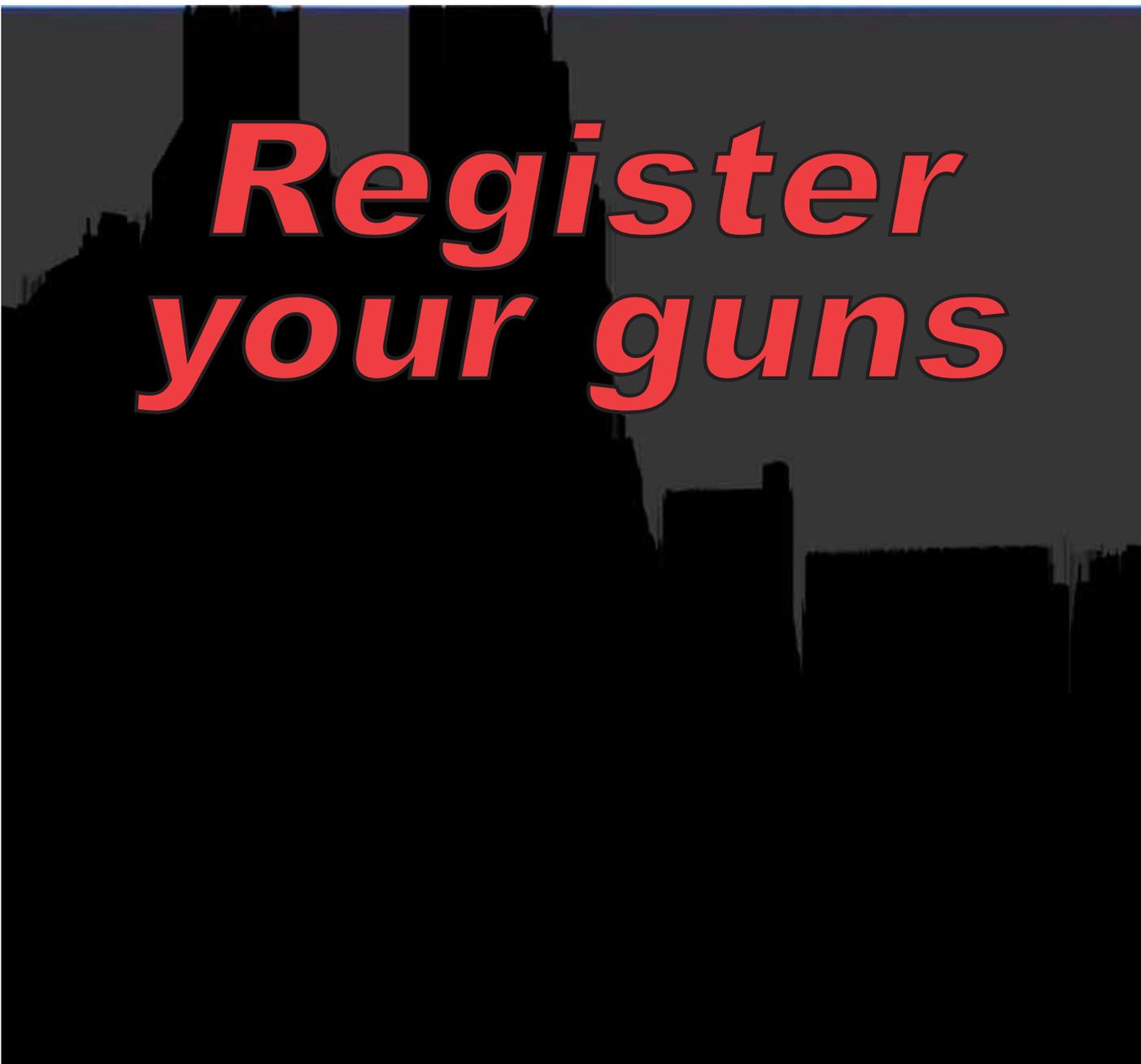
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