

Conservation Canada

Autumn 1977



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"In a world of constant change, Parks Canada exists to preserve the natural heritage of this country, to help Canadians everywhere to enjoy the vast beauty of our land and the great achievements of its founders."



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Northern Affairs

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Cover: Diver examines the wheel of the
sunken vessel Mavoureen.

Centre spread: Sunrise at Cap des Rosiers,
Forillon National Park. (Photo: Maxime
St. Amour)

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**A Summer Morning's Dream
In the Land of the Chasse-galerie**

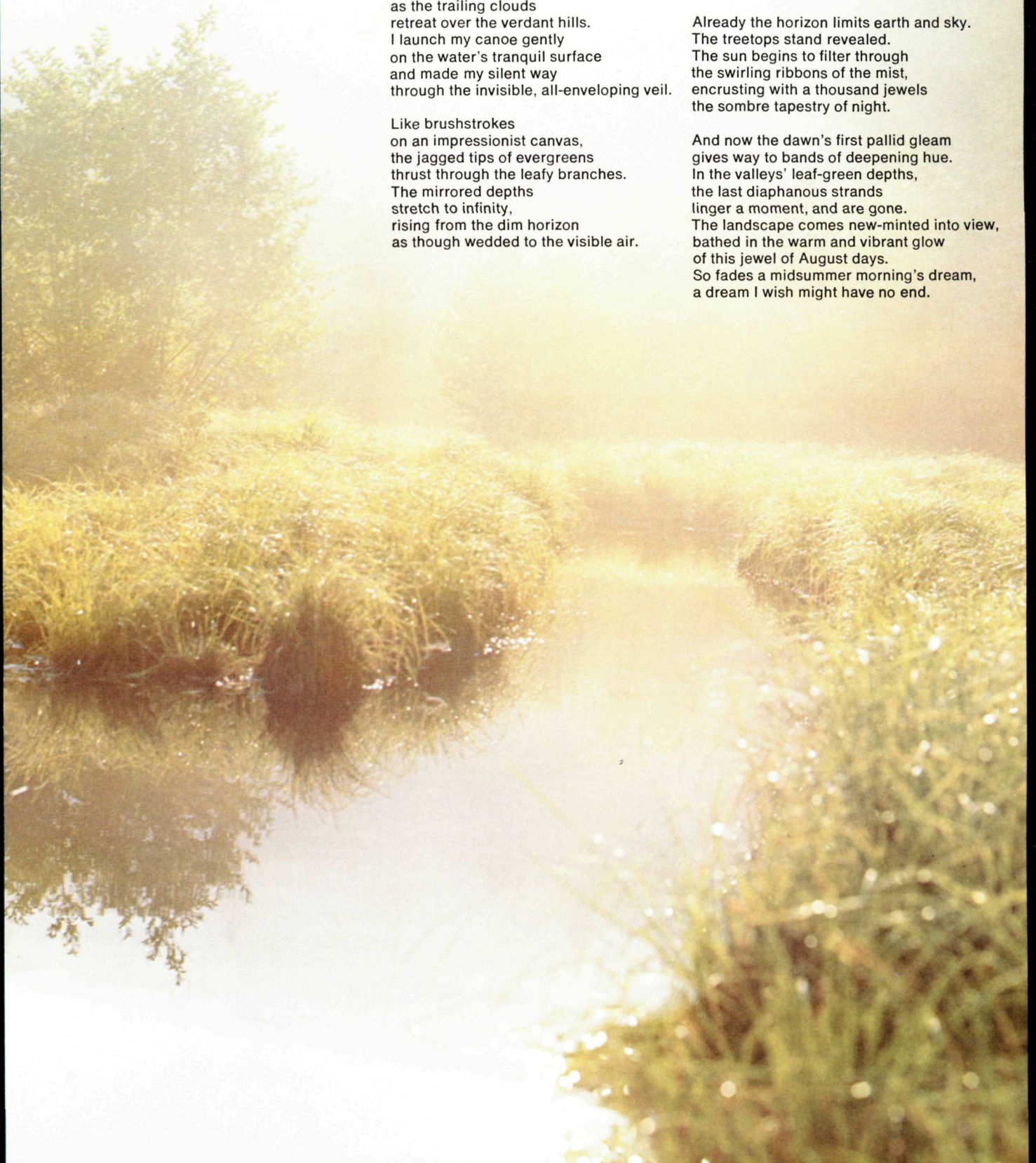
An August morning,
clothed in the moist folds
of a heavy-hanging mist.
Outside my tent
the vapour-laden air
casts over me its comforting warmth.
The early dawn holds promise
of an ever-changing perspective
as the trailing clouds
retreat over the verdant hills.
I launch my canoe gently
on the water's tranquil surface
and made my silent way
through the invisible, all-enveloping veil.

Like brushstrokes
on an impressionist canvas,
the jagged tips of evergreens
thrust through the leafy branches.
The mirrored depths
stretch to infinity,
rising from the dim horizon
as though wedded to the visible air.

A luminous ray
steals shyly through.
The curtain is about to rise;
the shadowed forms
take on a sharper line.
Colours cast off
their milky tint.
From my soundless paddle
the ripples dance away,
and images of the landscape
break and follow in their train.

Already the horizon limits earth and sky.
The treetops stand revealed.
The sun begins to filter through
the swirling ribbons of the mist,
encrusting with a thousand jewels
the sombre tapestry of night.

And now the dawn's first pallid gleam
gives way to bands of deepening hue.
In the valleys' leaf-green depths,
the last diaphanous strands
linger a moment, and are gone.
The landscape comes new-minted into view,
bathed in the warm and vibrant glow
of this jewel of August days.
So fades a midsummer morning's dream,
a dream I wish might have no end.





In the Land of the Chasse-galerie

La chasse-galerie, it's flying still. An old French legend tells of a "Monsieur Galerie" who went hunting during the hour of high mass. As punishment he was condemned to go hunting through the skies each midnight until the end of time. His endless journey became known as the "chasse-galerie".

In Canada, the legend was applied to *coureurs de bois* whose canoes had been trapped upriver by early winter ice. Unable to reach their loved ones by river, they made a pact with the devil to sail through the air in a phantom canoe, at the stroke of midnight when the moon was full.

In the last century, lumberjacks in isolated forest camps made their way back to their sweethearts along the same nocturnal route, taking special care not to pass too close to mountain peaks or church steeples that might damage their slender canoes.

In the 20th century, skyscrapers, television antennae and airport control towers have added new perils to the pilots of these fragile craft; but on they sail – when conditions are right, an air service rivalling the flying carpets of Araby.

The legend of the *chasse-galerie* is little known in scientific circles. Which may explain the confusing reports of mysterious flying objects, often described as saucer-shaped. Have you ever noticed how much a birch-bark canoe resembles a saucer when seen in profile?

A detailed description of the phenomenon, with proper footnotes, was first prepared by Honoré Beaugrand in 1900. His book, *La chasse-galerie: Légendes canadiennes* was reissued in 1970 by Fides of Montreal. The author of the following article, Yves Tessier vows he saw signs of the phantom canoes in La Mauricie National Park.

La Mauricie National Park, located about 24 km north of Shawinigan, Quebec, presents an interesting transition between two important Canadian geographical regions, the St. Lawrence Lowlands and the Canadian Shield.

In this part of the country, the highest marine terraces left by the Champlain Sea give way to rocky formations from the Precambrian era. Millions of years separate these great geological works, the fashioning of which was interrupted by repeated glaciations.

Similarly, some deciduous species of the Lowlands forest reach the northern limit of their range in this area, and the

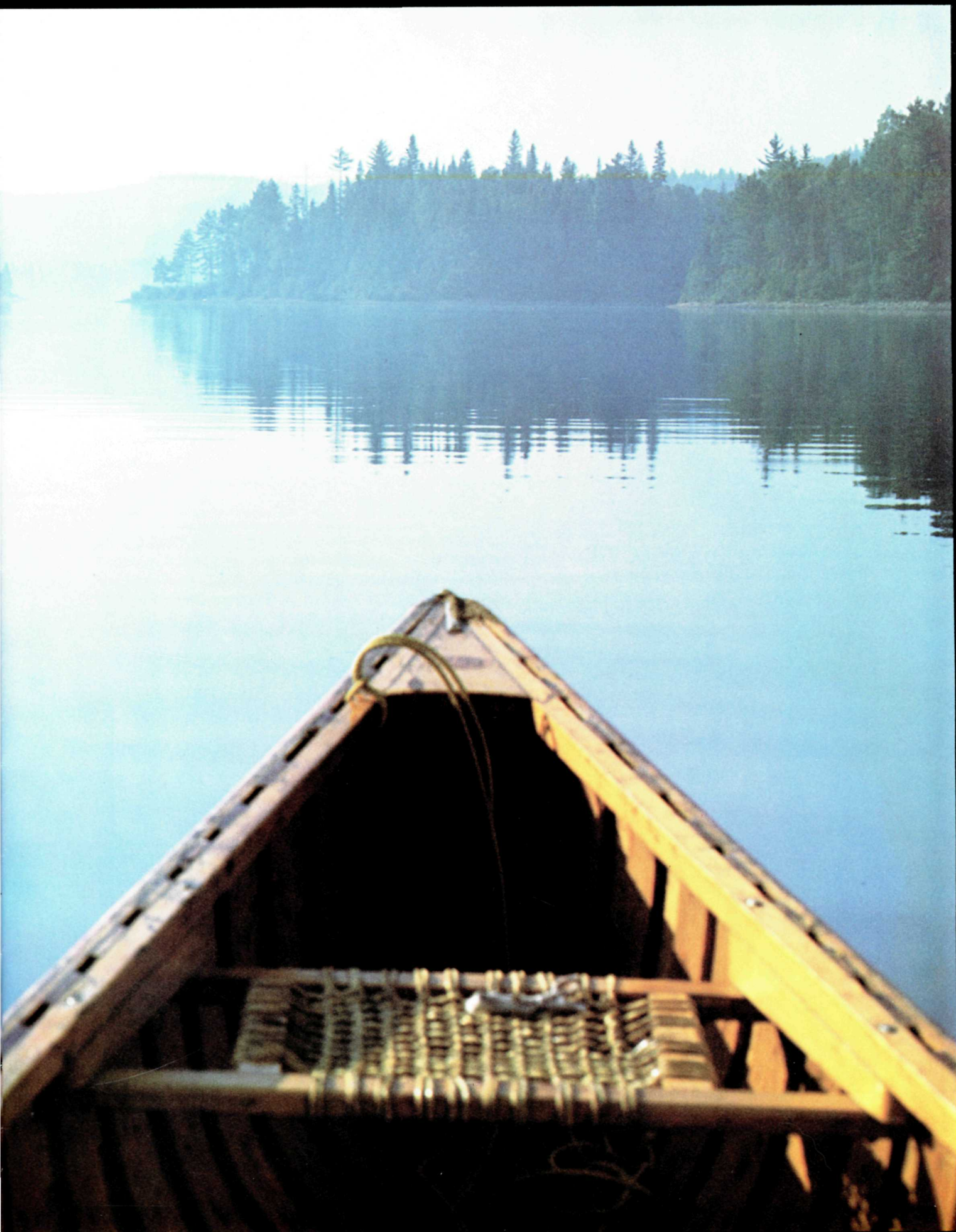
boreal forest with its stands of conifers gradually takes over on the rising slopes of the Laurentian Plateau.

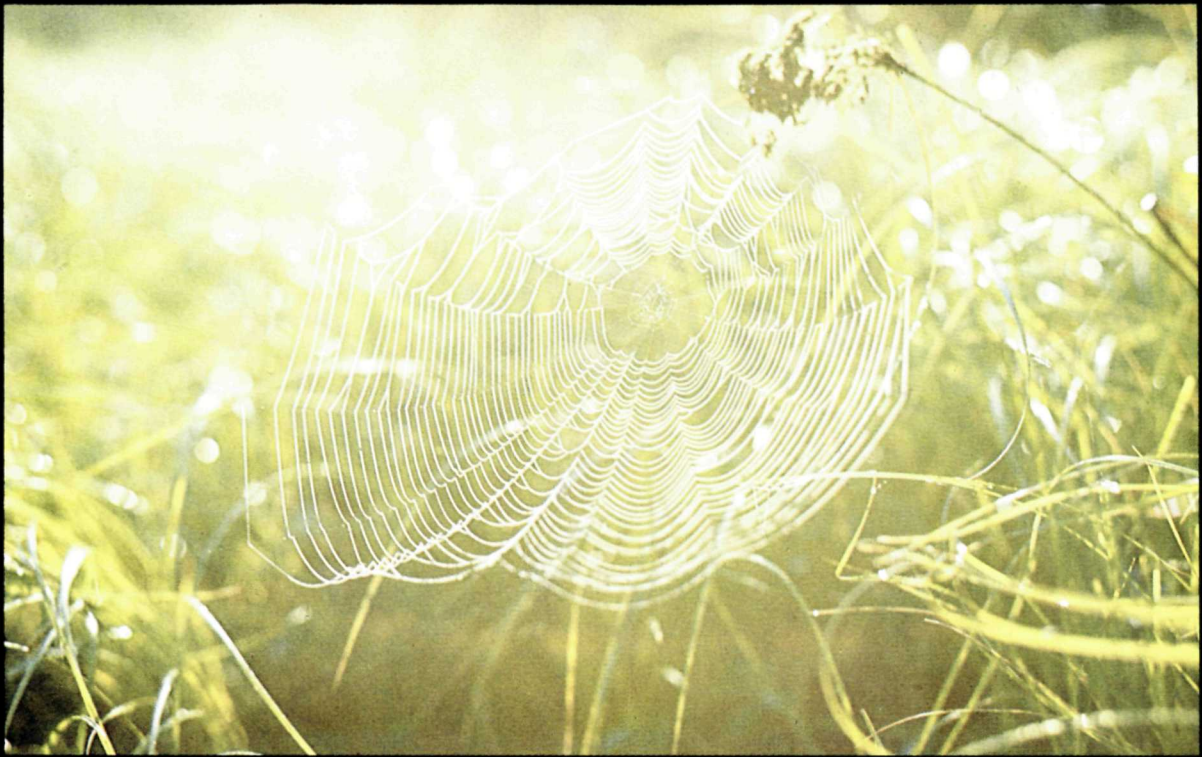
The land here shows obvious signs of glacial action, including rounded hills, gently sloping valleys, long, narrow lakes with moraine deposits along their shores, and drift boulders, as unexpected as they are imposing.

The various reworkings of the land have resulted in the creation of various habitats – crystal-clear lakes, swampy bogs and bare escarpments – suitable for many different types of plant and animal life.

It is in this typical ecological region of eastern Canada that the 544 km² of territory making up La Mauricie National Park, which has the St. Maurice River as part of its eastern boundary, is located.

Over the years this river has served





as a route between the backcountry of the Upper St. Maurice Valley and the St. Lawrence River. The Indians in their birchbark canoes came down from the north by way of the St. Maurice on hunting and trading trips. As early as 1651 Father Jacques Buteux gave a detailed description of the country of the Attikamégue Indians.

The canoe was long the characteristic mode of transportation in the St. Maurice Valley. It was used by the natives, the explorers, the *coureurs de bois* and the missionaries to travel the many waterways of the region, which often were shallow. Thus it is not surprising that an international canoe race came to be held on the St. Maurice River. This an-

nual event, which was first run in 1934, is held in early September on a 201.25 km route between La Tuque and Trois-Rivières. The race is divided into three stages, with stops in Saint-Roch-de-Mékinac and Shawinigan.

Canoeists from the St. Maurice Valley and the United States compete fiercely for top honours in this race, known for





the swift rapids and demanding portages on the route.

This is competitive canoeing, but there are also many opportunities for pleasure canoeing in La Mauricie National Park. The calm waters of Wapizagonke Lake, almost everywhere bordered by sandy beaches, are dotted with tiny fir-covered islands.

Faster water is found in the Mattawin River, access to which requires difficult portages. Simple campsites have been set up along the route; however, in order to maintain the original character of the land, only the most basic of facilities have been provided.

... On a warm summer night on the shore of Caribou lake, at the end of a day

of canoeing and exhausting portages, I saw the spirits gliding past in their canoe in the sky. So the legend of the *chasse-galerie* really was true . . .

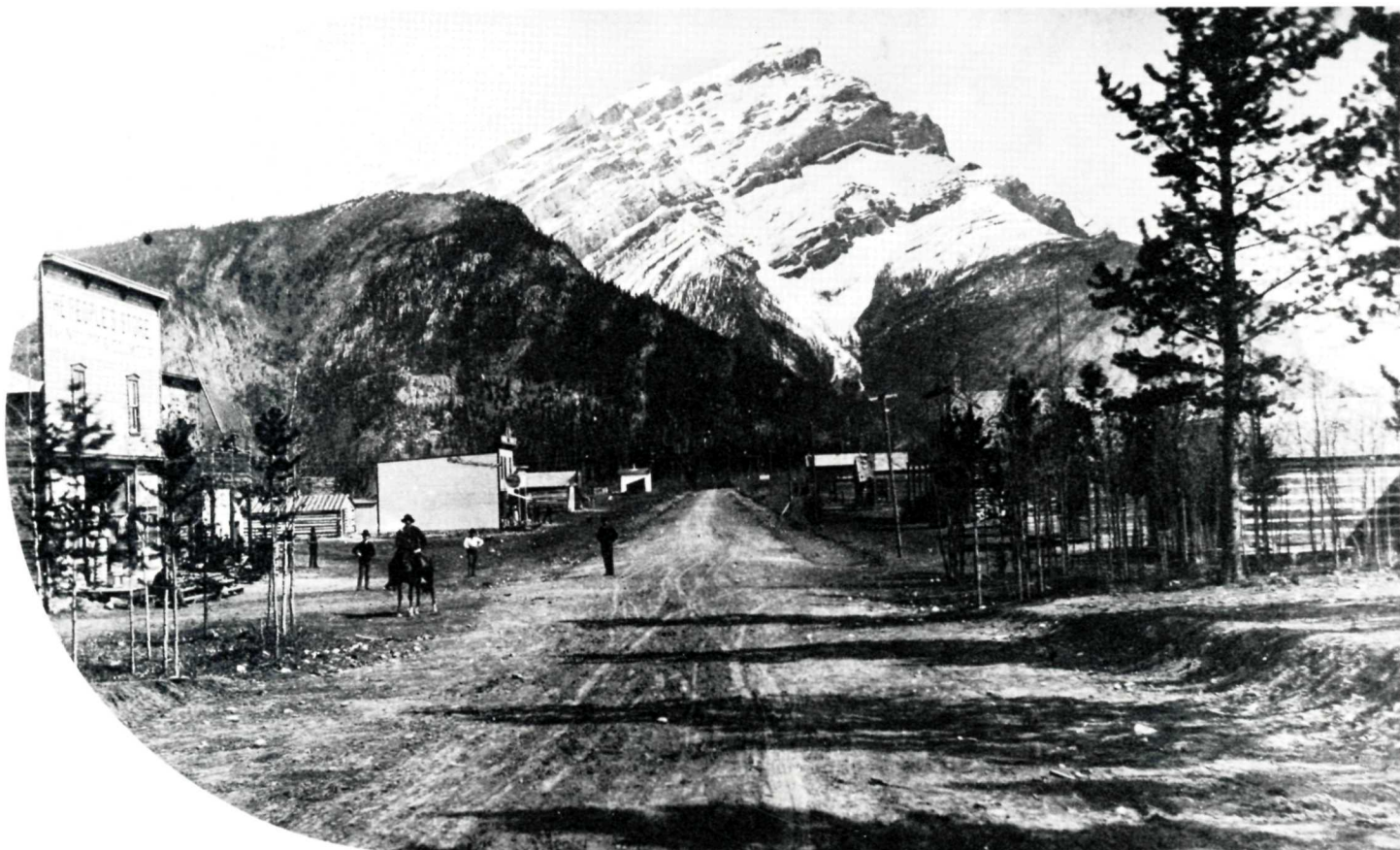
Originally written in French by Yves Tessier, Head of the Map Library, University of Laval, Quebec City. Yves, who has been a photographer for 20 years took these pictures in La Mauricie National Park.



Birthplace of the National Parks

by W. Fergus Lothian

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Canada's first national park, Banff in Alberta, celebrates its 90th birthday in 1977. Undimmed by time, Banff is the shining jewel in a nationwide system of parks and historic sites that extends into every province and both territories.

From L'Anse-aux-Meadows, in Newfoundland, where Vikings settled 500 years before Cartier, to Mount Logan, Canada's tallest peak, in arctic Yukon, Parks Canada administers 28 national parks, 53 historic parks and sites and seven heritage canals. Last year an estimated 21 million visitors shared the heritage beauty of Parks Canada. More than two million of those visitors passed through Banff.

The founding of Canada's first National Park and the events leading up to it are described by Parks Canada historian Fergus Lothian.

The construction of the first transcontinental railway had brought hundreds of adventurous and ambitious young men across the western plains to the Rocky Mountains. Here among the towering peaks, some of them discovered mineral hot springs flowing from the mountain-side.

On a cool November day in 1883, Frank McCabe, a section foreman, and William McCardell discovered what are now known as the Cave and Basin Hot Springs. The two men had come up the newly-laid line by hand car from Padmore, and crossed the Bow River on a rough raft to examine the foot of Terrace (now Sulphur) Mountain.

They literally stumbled on the basin pool, fed by a hot spring, and the cave spring, entry to which was gained by a hole in the roof of the cavern.

Knowledge of the hot springs rapidly spread among railway construction workers. Strangely, McCabe and McCardell expended little effort in protecting their interest or in attempting development until others working in the vicinity erected shacks and made use

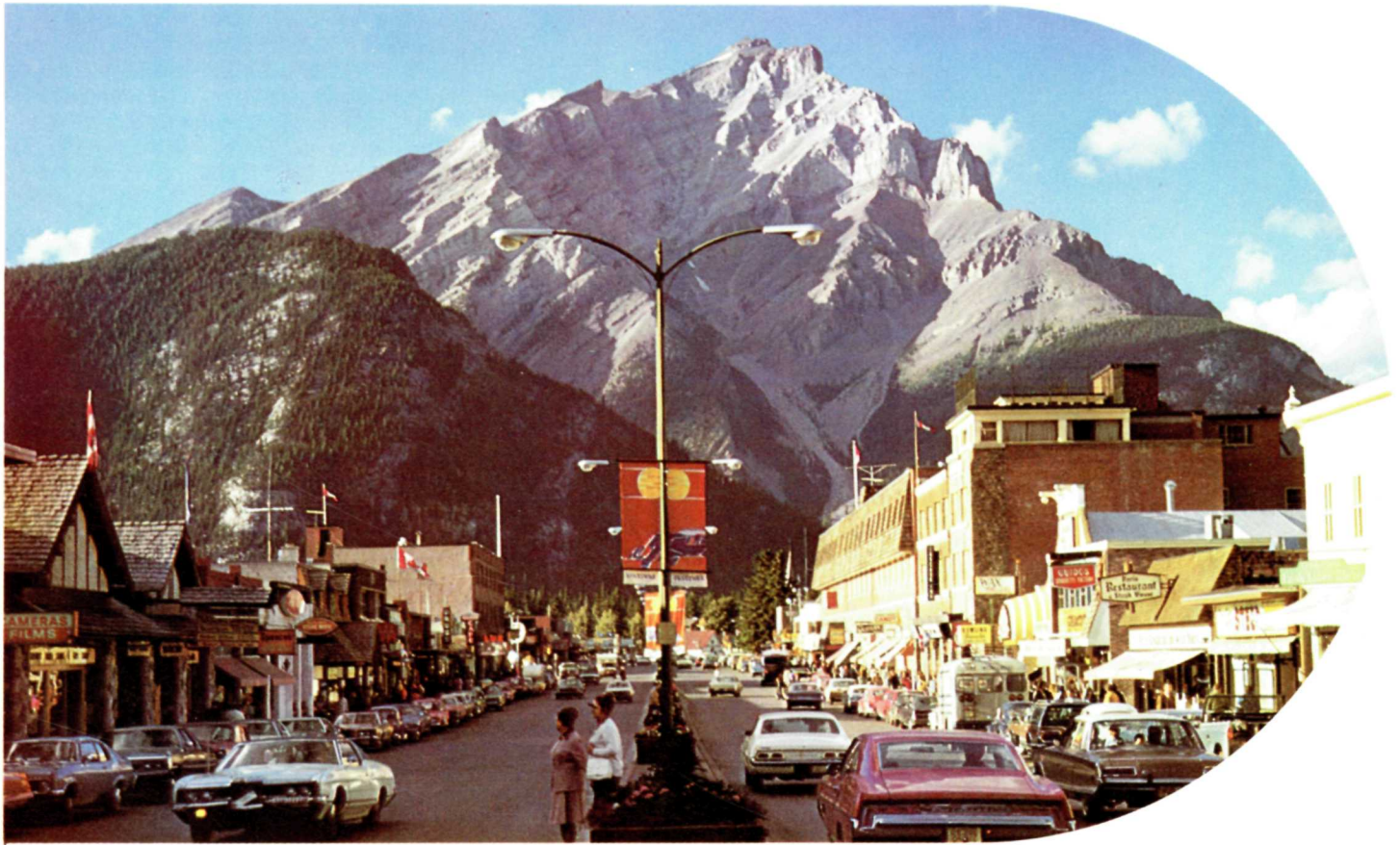
of the hot waters at both the lower and upper springs.

Members of Parliament who had visited Banff during the summer of 1885 strongly recommended reservation of the springs for the purpose of a public park.

Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald, on October 16, 1885, sent a note to Deputy Minister A. M. Burgess expressing the hope that "great care had been taken to reserve all the land in or near Hot Springs at Banff".

On October 23, 1885, Thomas White, Minister of the Interior, advised his Deputy Minister by letter from Calgary as follows: "My dear Burgess: I have just returned from a visit to the Hot Springs at Banff and have made up my mind that it is important to reserve by Order-In-Council, the sections on which the springs are and those about them. I send you a memorandum which Mr. Pearce has prepared for me, and I wish you would prepare a recommendation to

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Council reserving these sections. It is important this should be done at once. What we may do with them afterwards can be considered when I get back".

Hot Springs Reservation

On November 28, 1885, Order-in-Council 2197 received approval. An area of a little more than 26 km² on the northern slopes of Sulphur Mountain was set aside for future park use.

With the hot springs now set aside as a national possession, the government was faced with the problem of their disposition and future use. Even in their natural but crude form, the springs had attracted wide attention and were visited by numerous invalids seeking relief from various ailments in the hot waters. The only accommodation at the springs had been shacks erected by enterprising squatters.

Access to the Cave

During the winter of 1886–87 improved access to the Cave Spring, one of the principal visitor attractions, was accomplished by blasting a tunnel through the rock along the route of a natural passage through which the water drained. On completion, visitors could enter the cave at ground level instead of climbing down a rough ladder through the opening at the top of the cavern.

A bill to establish Banff National Park was introduced in the House of Commons on April 22, 1887. The Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, accompanied by Lady Macdonald, had journeyed to the Pacific coast on the railway in July, 1886, and had ridden through parts of the mountains on the pilot or cow-catcher of the locomotive.

The Prime Minister contributed to the debate by extolling the beauties of the region. "I do not suppose in any portion of the world there can be found a spot taken all together, which combines so many attractions and which

promises in as great a degree not only large pecuniary advantage to the Dominion, but much prestige to the whole country by attracting the population, not only of this continent, but of Europe to this place. There is beautiful scenery, there are the curative properties of the water, there is a genial climate, there is prairie sport and there is mountain sport; and I have no doubt that it will become a great watering-place."

The little opposition that was voiced concerned the expenditure of funds without Parliament's approval. Macdonald wanted swift action and he got it.



National Park Established

The bill was read for the third time on May 6, and the Act, since known as the Rocky Mountains Park Act, received Royal Assent on June 23, 1887.

The future concept of the park, its scope and purposes were set out in the dedication clause of the new Act, "The

said tract of land is hereby reserved and set apart as a public park and pleasure ground for the benefit, advantage and enjoyment of the people of Canada, subject to the provisions of this Act and of the regulations hereinafter mentioned, and shall be known as the Rocky Mountains Park of Canada."

In 1887, the Canadian Pacific Railway began construction of the first of several

buildings to be known as the Banff Springs Hotel. The site, admirably located on a bench above the junction of the Bow and Spray Rivers, was selected personally by W. C. Van Horne, the Vice-President of the Company. The handsome five-storey building provided the finest accommodation in the Park. Adjoining the hotel was a bath-house containing two plunge baths and ten tubs, all supplied with water from the Upper Hot Springs.

The Lake Louise Reservation

Although the alpine splendour of Lake Louise, situated about 35 km northwest of Banff, had been known since its discovery in 1882 by Tom Wilson, it was not until 1892 that it was reserved, within a surrounding area of 132.6 km² as a forest park.

The majestic snow-capped peaks surrounding the lake-some of them forming the continental divide-provided an irresistible challenge to mountain climbers. The Railway Company encouraged alpine activity by importing Swiss guides, building a special lodge for their accommodation at Lake Louise, and placing their services, for a fee, at the disposal of visitors. In 1902 the area surrounding Lake Louise was incorporated in Rocky Mountains Park, when the boundaries were extended westerly to the continental divide.

There are now 28 National Parks in Canada, from Newfoundland to Vancouver Island, and into the Arctic; but Banff National Park continues to draw more visitors than any other. As Macdonald foresaw, the visitors come not only from this continent. In 1976, an estimated 20 000 Banff visitors came from Japan. Ninety years after it was first established, Banff's magnetic beauty still justifies the praise of Sir Donald Smith, the man who drove the last spike in the first transcontinental railway.

Speaking in support of the National Park, Smith told the House of Commons in 1887, "Anyone who has gone to Banff, . . . who has looked on the reaches of the Bow River, and, on turning beheld the mountains towering heavenward, and not felt himself elevated and proud that all this is a part of the Dominion, cannot be a Canadian."

Marine parks: A world of submerged beauty

by Claude Mondor

Thalassa

*From times before time, until time's end,
Ceaselessly breathing to a timeless tune,
Learned minds cannot begin to
comprehend,
Leviathan's untimely ruin,
And Mankind cannot begin to mend,
The Tragedy of the final harpoon*

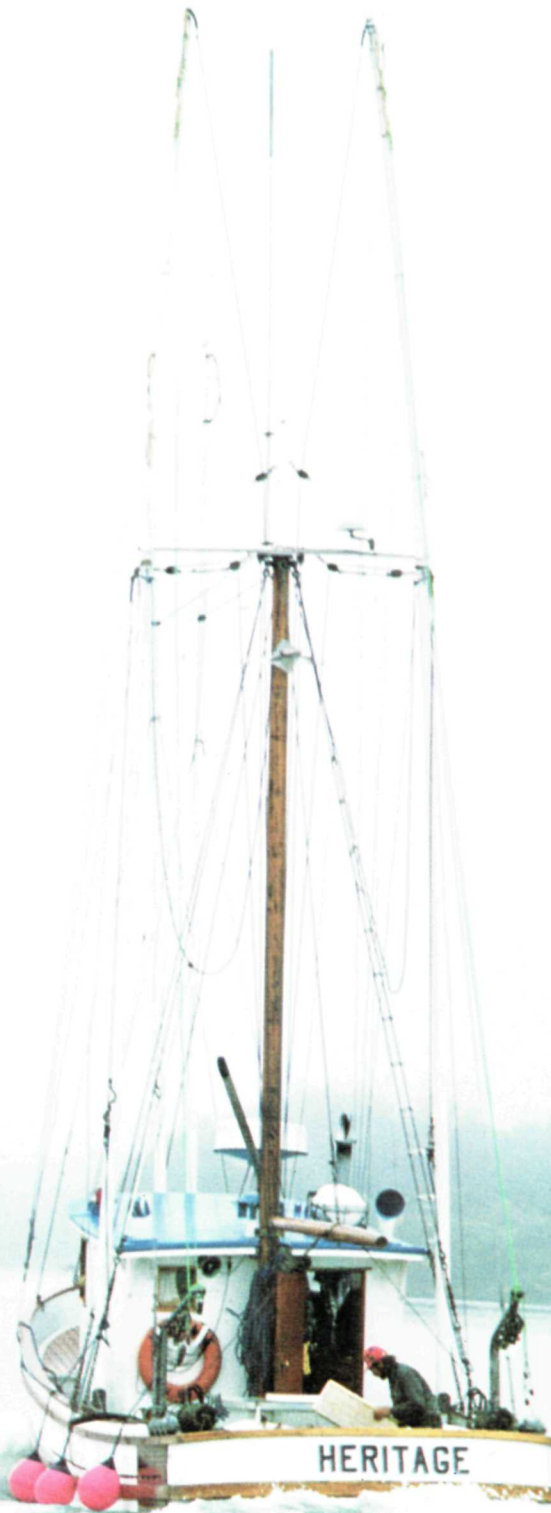
. . . Too late comes far too soon.

Max Finkelstein

Canada has approximately 241 000 km of coastline fronting on three oceans – the Arctic, the Atlantic and the Pacific – giving it one of the longest and most diversified coastlines on Earth. What might be termed our submerged lands, the continental shelf comprises an area equal to over 40 per cent of our land area, equal in fact to that of both the Territories combined or to the total area of Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Canada's past and future are inextricably interwoven with the seas. Since the earliest times, Canadians have clustered where the land and sea interface, in order to harvest the living and non-living resources of the oceans.

The sea has been a highway for explorers, merchants and immigrants, an area of importance to sovereignty and defence, an inspiration to poets and artists, a playground, an element both loved and feared. It has been an environment that has influenced the general development of the Atlantic fishing communities, the Inuit and the Northwest Coast Indians.



- 1 Fishing boat at Ucluelet, near Pacific Rim National Park
- 2 Goose-necked barnacles, Pacific Rim National Park
- 3 Seal lions, Pacific Rim National Park
- 4 Hermit crab, Fundy National Park
- 5 Anemones, coral and sea urchin, Pacific Rim National Park

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Unfortunately, like other maritime nations, Canadians have traditionally viewed the sea as a bottomless garbage can and as a limitless pot of gold. The total impact of our activities on the surrounding seas is impressive and frightening. The most obvious results of these activities being the declining productivity of our fisheries, and pollution from oil, pesticides and waste disposal. This pollution has in turn caused the closure of shellfish beds in many parts of the



- 6 Herring gull, Prince Edward Island National Park
- 7 Herring gulls and black-backed gulls, Prince Edward Island National Park
- 8 A denizen of the deep, Pacific Rim National Park

Maritimes and the West Coast as a source of human food. Perhaps the most tragic example of human interference is the virtual eradication of the immense colonies of seabirds in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, exploited for eggs, meat, oil, feathers, fish bait, fertilizer and sport. For such species as the flightless Great Auk on Funk Island, Newfoundland, the signing of the Migratory Bird Treaty of 1916 came too late.

The extermination of the southernmost colonies of Atlantic walrus from the Magdalen Islands and Sable Island, is also deplorable, as is the reduction of whale – and other marine mammal – populations to dangerously low numbers.

Unlike other countries, most of Canada's oceans are still in a relatively natural condition. Consequently, we are able to set aside and preserve some of these unmodified marine environments for the enjoyment of present and future generations before they are polluted or pre-empted for other activities.

To a great extent in the past, conservation in Canada has stopped at the edge of the sea. Although Canada's first National Park was established at Banff in 1885, it was more than 50 years later before the first coastal national park was established in 1937, along the ocean beaches of Prince Edward Island. And, it was only in 1970 that an area of sea was included within the jurisdiction of the National Parks Act by the incorporation of the adjacent marine environment at Forillon on the Gaspé Peninsula of Quebec and Pacific Rim on Vancouver Island in British Columbia.

The idea of preserving areas of great beauty in the sea has been slow to develop in Canada, perhaps because here it is only in the last decade that man has entered the sea with facemask, fins, and self-contained underwater breathing apparatus. It is also only in recent years that the public has become really aware of the natural beauty, importance, diversity and fragility of our oceans. Yet much of Canada's rich ocean heritage is largely unknown. The Pacific Coast with its nutrient-rich waters, its relatively uniform seasonal range of temperature and freedom from winter icing, has probably the richest echinoderm fauna in the world, including

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the largest species of starfish, the sunstar. The largest species of octopus also inhabits this area.

Canada is one of the few nations in the world which have resident populations of whales such as the bowhead and beluga entirely within their national boundaries. In addition part, or all of two populations of great whales – the blue and the fin whale – summer in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Other features of Canada's seas not found in tropical oceans include icebergs and kelp forests, individual fronds of which can extend 30 m or more and grow 60 cm a day.

Few Canadians are aware that Bonaventure Island, Funk Island, Witless Bay Island and Prince Leopold Island provide refuge for the largest remaining seabird colonies in the world.

So far Canada does not have a marine national park, that is, a marine area pro-

tected by the provisions and regulations of the National Parks Act. Fortunately encouraging progress has been made in marine conservation within the last decade.

Each of the existing coastal national parks – Kouchibouguac, Pacific Rim and Forillon, incorporates a marine component, a small portion of the adjacent sea, within its boundary.

Among the other coastal national parks, Terra Nova, Auyuittuq and Gros Morne include only the intertidal marine communities, for their boundaries terminate at the ordinary low water mark. The boundaries of Prince Edward Island and Fundy National Parks end at the ordinary high water mark.

Early efforts to overcome this obvious deficiency focused on dividing Canada's ocean environments into marine regions, each incorporating relatively similar oceanographic and biological characteristics. Nine of these marine regions have already been tentatively identified.

Each marine region will be studied to identify significant seascapes or areas worthy of protection. To qualify, a region must satisfy at least one of the following criteria: be an outstanding representation of an Atlantic, Arctic or Pacific ecosystem; be a critical habitat of marine mammals or seabirds; have underwater seascapes of outstanding beauty and inspirational value; or have marine environments which permit marine-oriented activities such as SCUBA diving and the observation of marine mammals and seabirds.

This identification and inventory process has been completed for two marine regions – the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Vancouver Island Inland Sea. Similar studies have begun for the Labrador Sea and the Atlantic southwest coastal regions. Work on the remaining regions will be started later this year.

One of the sites identified in the inven-

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tory phase is currently under study with the province concerned for possible establishment as Canada's first marine national park. The realization of this object would be a formidable Canadian contribution to the recently announced global marine conservation program, "The Seas Must Live". This program is co-sponsored by the World Wildlife Fund, and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

Work has also begun on a marine resources policy statement to provide guidance on the management of marine resources in those national parks under the jurisdiction of Parks Canada, and for those that may be incorporated in the future.

Public awareness of the potential riches beneath the seas and the threat to the survival of the world's oceans may soon lead to the establishment of Canada's first marine national park, a positive step towards preserving a world of submerged beauty and vitality.

... Too late comes far too soon!

Claude Mondor is a parks systems planner for Parks Canada.

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Overleaf: Sunrise at Cap des Rosiers, Forillon National Park, Quebec. (Photo: Maxime St. Amour)



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