

Hunters are the mainstay of provincial wildlife management programs
by
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A recently completed study of Canadian hunting licence fees compiled by Gary Mauser, Vice President of the BC Wildlife Federation, shows that hunters in Canada pay to the government, on average, almost \$70 million per year in hunting licences and fees. This equates to what the provinces spend to manage their wildlife populations.

This is the first time a study has collected hunting licence revenue information from all provinces and territories in Canada. "Over the past year, I have contacted all provinces and territories and researched how much they had collected in hunting licences and fees for fiscal years 1996/97 and 1997/98. Most provinces and territories were very helpful, although a few were slow to respond," stated Mauser.

Table 1 compares the Canadian provinces and territories annual revenue from hunting licences and fees. Because annual variations are so large, this sum has been averaged for 1996/97 and 1997/98.

For most of this century, hunters in Canada have funded provincial wildlife management programs. The proportion of the provincial budget covered by hunting licences varies, of course, from province to province, and from year to year. In 1989/90, hunting licence fees constituted about 90% of the cost of the provincial wildlife management programs in BC. In 98/99, due to years of government cutbacks, revenue from hunting licence fees was more than 110% of BC's wildlife management programs. In contrast, in Manitoba, hunting licence revenue made up approximately 80% of the provincial budget for wildlife management in 98/99.

The contribution of Canadian hunters to wildlife does not end with the fees they pay for their hunting licences. Expenditures on hunting trips injects badly needed cash into the Canadian economy and particularly into the economy of small rural communities. The Canadian Wildlife Service reports that Canadian resident hunters spend approximately one billion dollars annually on hunting trips.¹ This contribution is more than half of the total amount that Canadians spend each year on wildlife.

In addition, and possibly most importantly, Canadian hunters and anglers volunteer their time and donate their own money to conserve vital wildlife habitat, to raise and release salmon and other fish species into our rivers and to conduct vital wildlife research. Resident hunters spend another 1 billion

on trips to view wildlife outside of hunting season and contributions to habitat restoration.²

While government has continually cut back on programs and services, hunters and anglers continue to pick up the slack.

The BC Wildlife Federation is the largest and longest standing province wide voluntary conservation organization in British Columbia and is the voice of over 500,000 hunters and fishermen in the province.

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¹ The importance of wildlife to Canadians: The economic significance of wildlife related recreational activities in 1991, Canadian Wildlife Service, 1994, pp 8,9.

² Special analysis made on request by the Canadian Wildlife Service, 1999.