

A Tribute to Ian McTaggart-Cowan, 1910-2010, O.C., O.B.C., PhD, LL.D, F.R.S.C.

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When Andy Stewart, a wildlife biologist with the BC Conservation Data Centre, went looking for historical information to include in the final volume of *The Birds of British Columbia*, he found, published in Mackie (1985:114), a letter written by Dr. Rudolph M. Anderson of the Canadian National Museum to naturalist Hamilton Mack Laing. The date was December 26, 1929. In part, it read:

“There is another factor that enters into the plans. You are now about the only freelance collector in the West who is competent to do museum collecting, and is familiar with the technique, and, as an old apostle, we want you to help pass on some of the tradition to a disciple. We have a young man in view that has been recommended to me from several different sources. His name is Ian McTaggart-Cowan of North Vancouver, now a third year student at the University of BC. I met him at Winson’s place in Huntingdon last fall, and Kenneth Racey and Allan Brooks spoke highly of him, also Professors Spencer and MacLean Fraser of the department of zoology at the University.

...They say his forebears were naturalists, and he has camped and hunted all his life. Spencer says he... is a go-getter in the field. I had only a short conversation with him last fall and was much taken by him.... I think that Cowan is the real thing....”

Ian McTaggart-Cowan was born in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1910 and immigrated to Canada at age three. The eldest of four, he developed an early interest in natural history, which was encouraged by his mother. That interest grew as he did. At age 12, he completed a one-year diary of all the birds he had seen around his North Vancouver home as a requirement for a proficiency badge in the Boy Scouts. Ian would later recall, “James A. Munro unknowingly gave me

useful advice at a very early stage in my adventures with birds. In 1923, National Parks of Canada offered a book prize to any boy scout in Canada who achieved his Naturalist badge and submitted a bird diary covering a year of observation. I met the requirements, sent in my diary, and in time received a copy of Gordon Hewitt’s book, *The Conservation of Wildlife in Canada*. This was my first introduction to wildlife conservation. I still have the volume, with its congratulation signed by J. B. Harkin, Director of the National Parks of Canada. I was impressed! Some days later a letter came from J. A. Munro, Federal Migratory Bird Officer. He had read my diary and, in a nice way, pointed out some mistaken identifications and fine points not covered in my library of one book (Chester A. Reed’s *Bird Guide*). I wrote in reply asking more questions and received helpful answers. Of such small kindnesses new directions are born. Twenty-four years later Munro and I co-authored a book on the avifauna of British Columbia!” (Cowan 1998). Ian’s bird diary was the beginning of a life-long obsession with observing, recording and writing about the wonders of the world around him.

While a first-year student at the University of British Columbia, he attended a lecture by Vancouver Natural History Society life member Kenneth Racey, hosted by the Burrard Field Naturalists. The topic was small mammals of the Lower Mainland. Ian was fascinated by Racey’s knowledge of wildlife, his understanding of the rapidly changing natural world and his expertise in the use of techniques to study small mammals. Racey invited him to his house to see his collection and, recognizing Ian’s enthusiasm, thereafter included him in many of the Racey family field trips, including outings to their summer home at Alta Lake. Racey and Cowan would publish *The Mammals of the Alta Lake Region of Southwestern BC* in 1936.

Ian's first major publication, however, came in 1930 with *The Mammals of Point Grey*, a modest beginning to his over 550 works in print, on radio and on television that followed in the subsequent 80 years.

For Ian, 1930 also saw the beginning of total immersion in the adventures of becoming a vertebrate zoologist. He was appointed as field assistant to Hamilton Mack Laing, a naturalist, outdoor writer and photographer who collected wildlife specimens from Western Canada for the National Museum of Canada. Ian first worked for a month on the little known Tobacco Plains near Elko, British Columbia, then for three months in the Rocky Mountain National Parks of Jasper and Banff. It is here that Ian's initial biological studies of the fauna of the parks began.

The following year, Laing's expedition was cancelled as the depths of the Great Depression took hold and research monies vanished. Kenneth Racey was seriously ill in the winter of 1930–31, and in the spring, decided to take a few months away from his business to recuperate. He asked Ian to accompany him on an extended field trip. They spent May 1931 studying the birds and mammals in the Tofino area of Vancouver Island including the fascinating near-shore fauna, and the alpine assembly of creatures at the head of the Nanaimo River. The most important contribution of the Nanaimo River work was the rediscovery of the Vancouver Island Marmot, an animal not seen since 1911, when the type series was collected on the mountains above Port Alberni by an expedition from the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley. June was spent with the entire Racey family on Anarchist Mountain and in other locations in the southern Okanagan where a new mammal for British Columbia was discovered: the Pacific Pallid Bat. The expedition continued in July and August in the western Chilcotin and included a side trip by Racey into the unique "northern" habitats of the Itcha Mountains to see caribou. Ian acknowledged the extraordinary contribution that Racey made to his growth and understanding of wild landscapes and their vertebrates. Though a generation apart, Kenneth Racey became a life-long friend and in 1936, Ian's father-in-law.

In 1932, after graduating from the University of British Columbia with an undergraduate degree, Ian took a teaching fellowship at the University of California at Berkeley to begin his doctorate. There he had the opportunity to work under the guidance of noted ecologist Joseph Grinnell. While at home in British Columbia during the summer of 1933, a broken leg almost ended his doctoral studies because he was unable to report for duties as a teaching assistant. He found himself without an income to pay for fees and books for the autumn term. His year was saved by the generosity of Grinnell who accompanied his gift to Ian with some scholarly advice: "Now, no more foolishness about dropping out of your program because of a small shortfall. I don't want the money back—give

it to some worthy student somewhere down your path. There will be many of them." Ian fondly remembers Grinnell for his kindness, and for providing a first glimpse of the dedication that good thesis advisors require in order to ensure the success of their graduate students.

Ian completed his doctorate at Berkeley in 1935. His doctoral thesis was on geographic variation and taxonomy of the mule and white-tailed deer genus, *Odocoileus*, of western North America. It was probably the first published document to include statistical treatment of big mammals, written at a time when the Canadian government still believed that game was unlimited and all predators should be shot. Ian returned to British Columbia to work as the first university-trained biologist at the Provincial Museum in Victoria, then directed by Francis Kermode. As Corley-Smith (1989) noted, "Cowan had taken his training in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at Berkeley, at the time 'one of the great institutions of the world in terms of systematic collections. Even though the collections had been neglected, there was good basis for a fresh start' and Ian went about the task of reversing the years of neglect."

Cowan would recall, "my analysis of the situation was that, apart from cataloguing and curating the collections, the Museum's most important opportunity was in getting out into the province and studying the great diversity of living animals and plants to be found there."

Ian seized on that opportunity and initiated a series of systematic surveys of the vertebrates in different regions of the province through his own fieldwork and a network of naturalists and museum collectors. Possibly the most ambitious was a 3-year survey of the vertebrates on the remote coastal islands of the central-northern coast with Thomas McCabe, mostly sampled by fish boat. This tradition of biodiversity surveys by the Museum would carry on for many decades.

During his five years at the Museum, Cowan published more than 20 scientific papers, some through the Museum, and others in various scientific journals. In 1939, he initiated the Provincial Museum's Occasional Papers series with his monograph "The Vertebrate Fauna of the Peace River District of British Columbia". The series ran for 50 years with 26 Occasional Papers produced that covered various aspects of the province's natural history.

In 1940, he left the Museum for an appointment as Assistant Professor in the Department of Zoology, University of British Columbia, in Vancouver, but continued to work closely with Museum staff to collect, classify and describe the province's diverse fauna. Among the most successful collaborative projects was the publication of *The Mammals of British Columbia* in 1956 with close friend, former graduate student, and colleague Charlie Guiguet. In the following 22 years, this important reference book had seven printings and two



FIGURE 1. Ian McTaggart Cowan, October 2004 as Director Emeritus of the Nature Trust of British Columbia (Andrew Klaver, Nature Trust of British Columbia).

minor revisions and was one of the most widely used and widely distributed handbooks the museum had ever published.

Ian appeared on the university scene at a most fortuitous time. The great graduate schools in the United States had discovered “ecology”, and the graduates, of whom Ian was one, were making waves. The “field” sciences were in ferment.

In 1943, Ian was contracted by Parks Canada to undertake the first extensive field studies of the fauna of the Rocky Mountain Parks of Canada. He was a natural choice for the work because, through his three-month stint in the parks with Mack Laing 13 years earlier, he was immediately at home in the landscape. His first guide was the legendary mountain man, James “Jimmy” Simpson, who provided safe passage to the most remote areas of the Rockies. “Jimmy taught me everything I couldn’t get from books,” said Ian in a 2005 interview with Briony Penn. “We climbed as high up every mountain as we could get, then would stop and use our field glasses to count, age and sex the animals as best we could. You never disturbed those animals, because if you did they’d get all mixed up, and forget it — your study is over.”

Promoted to Professor of Zoology at UBC in 1945, he served as head of the department from 1953 to 1964. During this time he continued to develop and teach courses in vertebrate zoology. It was the first academic program in Canada to emphasize the biological basis of wildlife conservation. As well, Cowan was largely responsible for convincing Canadian governments to recruit trained wildlife biologists to staff their wildlife management agencies. He himself served as a scientific advisor to the BC Game Commission.

Ian was a prolific researcher and writer, achieving an impressive number of published scientific works. The scope of his efforts is unprecedented with work on both invertebrates and vertebrates. His papers on mammals ranged from shrews to whales, a scope unimaginable in today’s world of specialization. However, his scientific papers made important contributions in other areas as well, such as the now neglected field of vertebrate taxonomy. His taxonomic revisions of the mule and white-tailed deer (1936), mountain sheep (1940), pikas (1954), and coastal populations of the deer mouse (1945) are important works still cited today and used as models for testing with the latest modern genetic methods.

The vertebrate zoology program at UBC was established around the personal specimen collections belonging to Ian and friend Kenneth Racey. Those collections are part of the over 40 000 specimens known as the Cowan Vertebrate Museum, now part of the Beaty Biodiversity Museum at the University of British Columbia.

The 60s and early 70s were exciting times for students in the field sciences at UBC. In addition to Cowan and Mary Taylor in the zoology department, Ian’s



FIGURE 2. Ian with Black-tailed Deer, Constitution Hill, Vancouver Island, 1939 (Image B-01601 Courtesy of the Royal British Columbia Museum Archives).

students often drew on the vast knowledge and guidance of top notch leaders in related disciplines such as Bert Brink in plant science, A. J. Wood in animal science, D. J. Laird in soil science, Vladimir Krajina and Kay Beamish in botany, Bill Matthews in geology, a young Fred Bunnell in forestry/wildlife and Peter Larkin and Bill Hoar in fisheries. McTaggart-Cowan’s extensive bibliography clearly demonstrates his collaborative approach to exploring the many fascinating aspects of science.

Ian became Dean of Graduate Studies at UBC in 1964. Even with expanded responsibilities, he continued to teach a course in wildlife biology, supervise directed studies and guide the research of zoology doctoral candidates. “You would be surprised how much work you can get done in the quiet of 2 hours before the world wakes up,” he told Rod Silver, explaining his habit of rising early to keep up with his interests.

Education was at the heart of McTaggart-Cowan’s long career and he was phenomenally successful in influencing people, from politicians to children. He was an engaging and much sought after speaker. The key to teaching, he said, was to “identify the point where the audience will join you and engage themselves, even if they think you are wrong. Dogmatism turns people

off. I tried to paint a picture of what a fascinating and dramatic world we live in. I like to explain to people the beautiful, fascinating things that I see. All my life I have tried to explain to colleagues, family, students, anyone who will listen to me, what a beautiful place I am looking at! It is not all sweetness and light, but this world is absolutely fascinating" (Penn 2005).

In all, Ian worked with over 100 graduate students and directly supervised a wide variety of research by some 23 PhD and 20 Masters students. Perhaps Carl Linnaeus, the father of taxonomy said it best: "a professor can never better distinguish himself in his work than by encouraging a clever pupil, for the true discoverers are among them, as comets amongst the stars."

Some of his graduate students were indeed the new "comets" in the wildlife field. Names like Maurice Hornocker (mountain lions), Valerius Geist (mountain sheep), Charles Jonkel (bears), Fred Zwickel (Blue Grouse), and C.S. "Buzz" Holling (predation) quickly became associated with excellence in wildlife science in academic circles.

Geist recalls, "I knew Dr. Cowan as an intellect who quickly grasped unusual, new, complex concepts and appreciated such even if they ran afoul of conventional social norms. Homosexuality in mountain sheep was one such example. Realization that growth, development and bioenergetics were vital aspects in understanding mammals was another."

Other students such as Ian Stirling, Daryll Hebert, Dave Hatler, Steve Johnson, Charles Guiguet, Yorke Edwards, James Hatter, J. Bristol Foster and many others enjoyed equally successful careers in government and consulting.

Former student Dave Hatler no doubt spoke for students and colleagues alike in the dedication of his latest book:

"To Ian McTaggart-Cowan, an extraordinary naturalist, remarkable biologist and as good a mentor as anyone could hope for" (Hatler et al. 2008).

It is difficult to imagine any areas of terrestrial vertebrate zoology and wildlife conservation that have not been influenced by Ian's work. Long-time UBC contemporary and colleague, the late Bert Brink, agreed: "More than any others, Ian and his students have fostered knowledge of the fauna of the land and sea. I would stand by this choice (from the multitude of his accomplishments) as the most far reaching and significant: his field work was outstanding and global."

Indeed, Ian identified 15 new subspecies of vertebrates, and while in Australia he rediscovered the Mountain Pygmy-Possum that was previously known only from fossils (Campbell et al., in preparation).

It is little wonder then that Ian was often referred to as the "Dean of Vertebrate Zoologists" in Canada.

Few know of the pivotal role that Ian played in the elimination of the bounty system in Canada. Beginning



FIGURE 3. Ian with vertebrate skull collection at University of British Columbia, 1951 (University of British Columbia Archives).

in the 1920s, the provinces had systems to reward those who would rid the land of "undesirable" animals or so-called vermin. Some rewards involved cash, some involved gun cartridges. The systems were costly, inefficient and open to widespread abuse. Wolves, cougars, coyotes, Bald Eagles, Golden Eagles, crows, jays and magpies were among the wildlife on the bounty lists. Together with J.R. Dymond, a top Canadian fisheries biologist at the University of Toronto, and armed with good data from both Canada and the United States, they lectured on the folly of the bounty system to hundreds of audiences over nearly 10 years. In the end they prevailed, obtaining strong support from the hunting community. Ian would later recall this victory as "an important step in trying to put scientific management of wildlife into play." By 1973, all Canadian jurisdictions but the Northwest Territories had eliminated the bounty system on wildlife. [Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia have recently implemented limited bounty programs].

Cowan's interests in large mammals and ecology led him to extensive field studies in the Canadian Arctic, the Rocky Mountain National Parks, western Mexico, Scotland, Finland, Africa, Australia, several Pacific Islands and throughout British Columbia. Long before there were computers with electronic search engines, he was highly sought after as an expert advisor on a variety of nature and other issues. In all, his 36 years of formal conservation studies took him to six continents and resulted in over 275 technical and popular publications, being co-author of six teaching films on mammalian behaviour, 110 educational television programs, some 200 radio programs and countless public lectures.

Ian is recognized as a pioneer in the use of television as a medium to provide information to educate the public about conservation and the wonders of the

natural world. The *Fur and Feathers* series and *The Living Sea* series, both produced by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), went to air live. Only *The Web of Life* series, also a CBC production, was taped.

In the popular *Fur and Feathers* series of 52 episodes in 1955–56, the approach was to confront a youngster with a natural history object that had never been seen before, and provide facts by responding to the child's questions.

The *Web of Life* was aired during 1960–63 and used footage from British Columbia, Uganda, southern United States, the Arctic, the Caribbean, and the Gulf of Mexico. In 1963, one of the shows in that series won an award for educational television films at an international television festival.

Although Ian formally “retired” from the University of British Columbia in 1975, his varied interests kept him active on many fronts. One special scientific project involved the consolidation of information on the distribution, abundance and other aspects of the ecology of the bird fauna of British Columbia. It was a sequel to his work with James A. Munro some 40 years earlier. This time though, Ian and the other authors wrote species accounts based on a database of nearly 2 million records contributed by over 11 000 volunteers and a bibliography of almost 4700 articles.

Ian made an exceptional contribution to that long-term project, *The Birds of British Columbia*. His efforts to help initiate the BC Nest Record Scheme that provided vital historical data for the work and his role as one of the authors are well chronicled in the four-volume set. Throughout the more than 20-year term of the project, Ian took on the usual tasks of analyzing data, writing species accounts, and proofing the galleys.

The summarization of the data for Volumes I and II was formidable, each author dealing with the information on thousands of cards that were tabulated manually. The accounts were written in long hand and then turned over to staff at the Canadian Wildlife Service and their word-processing skills.

By the time the authors began Volume III, the personal computer had appeared and they chose to make use of this new technology to help prepare the last two volumes. This meant Ian had to learn the basics of operating a computer along with the database and word-processing programs they used to summarize the data and write the species accounts, all of which he did proficiently. He was 82 years of age.

In addition to his author's duties, at the request of the federal and provincial governments, Ian also served for 10 years as the volunteer Chair and project manager for the production of Volumes III and IV.

Managing the activities of the six other authors plus reporting to the federal and provincial Wildlife Directors was a complex and sometimes thankless task. But his leadership paid handsome dividends. Not only were Volumes III and IV of the *Birds of British Columbia* produced in a timely fashion, they provided the same

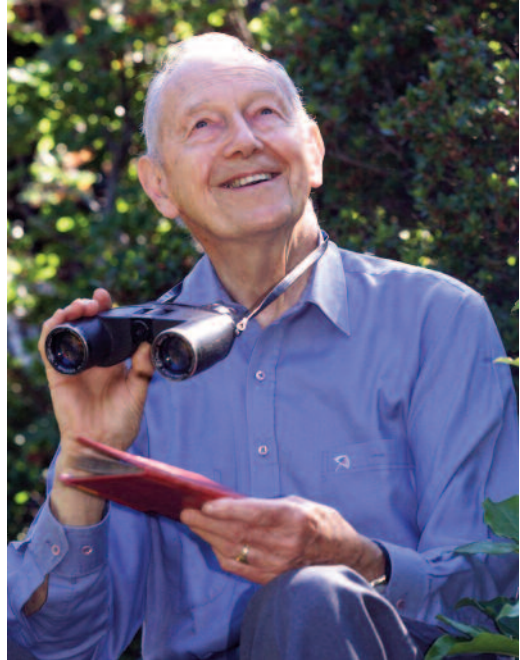


FIGURE 4. Ian birding in his yard and celebrating the release of the 4th and final volume of the *Birds of British Columbia*, 2001 (Debra Brash/Victoria Times Colonist).

type of comprehensive data that made the first two volumes so valuable and popular. For Volume IV, Ian also wrote more species accounts than any other author as well as being the lead author of the 46-page synopsis, the latter in his 90th year. Volume IV was short-listed for the 2002 Roderick Haig-Brown Regional British Columbia Book Prize.

As Neil Dawe, a co-author of *The Birds of British Columbia* noted “I had the good fortune to work with Ian on the project and saw the breadth of his knowledge, far beyond the biological realm, and his significant administrative abilities firsthand. What stuck with me the most, however, was his youthful approach to life and his respectfulness of others no matter their status in life. Ian was always open to new experiences, such as learning to operate a computer in his early 80s. And new ideas, however unorthodox, were always welcome, indeed encouraged. While he did not necessarily agree with the new concepts, he weighed them carefully, and respectfully challenged them when necessary. His challenges always made one think more carefully and ultimately an improved approach to the issue at hand was the result.”

Author/naturalist Bruce Whittington asked Ian in 2001 about his last recorded bird observation. “This morning – a juvenile Cooper's hawk appeared again in the garden. It's banded”, Ian said “but I haven't got the number. Not yet, but I will!” At 92, the habits of a scientist were still very much a part of his every day life.



FIGURE 5. The annual *Birds of British Columbia* “Authors get-together” at the home of Dr. Ian McTaggart-Cowan (seated), 12 April 2010. Standing, from left, Gary W. Kaiser, Neil K. Dawe, Andrew C. Stewart, Michael C.E. McNall, and John M. Cooper (missing: R. W. Campbell). Photo by Brenda Beckstrom.

In the words of long-time friend and colleague, Tom Beck, “even in his 90s, Ian never lost his school-boy enthusiasm for nature”.

Ian admitted to being a dedicated collector and museums in several parts of the world now house his collected treasures. His early collections included mammal, bird and plant specimens and the literature of wildlife in the northwest. Later, he focused on kodachrome transparencies, alpine plants, rhododendrons, special ground orchids and award-winning revenue stamps and their legal documents. Always the collections were in search of more information on a topic of interest. The search continued until his death. His learning never stopped.

Ian and his wife Joyce were devoted companions for over 70 years until her passing in 2002. They raised two children, Garry and Ann. Garry (PhD, UBC 1969), a talented fisheries biologist in his own right, was a respected researcher/lecturer at Memorial University, Newfoundland, and coauthored several papers with his father, including the naming of a new species of chiton in 1977. Garry died in 1997. Ann holds a BSc. from UBC (Microbiology/Biology, 1961) and a Masters degree in Canadian Studies (Carleton University, 1964). She is an accomplished pianist and composer. She fondly remembers Ian as a generous and caring husband and father with an enduring sense of humour, extraordinary zeal for exploring the world and a habit, in his latter years, of relaxing with his Hohner Echo harmonica. She also remembers him as a bit of an

adventurer who annually navigated his open 6-metre runabout the 30 or so kilometres across the Strait of Georgia from Vancouver to the family’s summer stomping grounds on Saturna Island. Three grandchildren and five great grandchildren have benefited from his wisdom and guidance.

Together, Ian and Joyce savoured many of the treasured wild spots of six continents including some 30 trips as invited naturalist hosts, educating guests on Sven Lindblad’s ecotourism cruises for Special Expeditions. On early field trips, Joyce paid special attention to data on the occurrence of vegetation, later becoming an expert gardener. A keen and knowledgeable bird observer for all of her life, she kept daily diaries of the visitors to her feeders at their Victoria home. She was, after all, Kenneth Racey’s daughter, and natural history was a big part of daily life. Back in the early 1930s, apparently there was more than a small mammal collection that caught Ian’s eye in the Racey household.

When Ian was 95, writer Briony Penn asked him about his recipe for living to a good old age:

“Choose your parents very carefully,” he said; “find yourself an excellent partner — you can’t do it all on your own; eat lots of venison, which you have to get yourself, so you have to climb mountains so you get lots of exercise. And last, but not least, maintain enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is a self-feedback system.”

Ian passed away peacefully on 18 April 2010 surrounded by his family in his Saanich home. He was 2 months shy of his 100th birthday.

Looking back, it was naturalists like Racey and Laing who fed and encouraged Ian's seemingly insatiable initial curiosity of the outdoors. And mentors and contemporaries such as Grinnell, A. Starker Leopold, Dymond, Guiguet and the many other colleagues and students who worked with Ian helped fuel his enthusiasm for exploring the science of that world.

When asked what it is that connected him so passionately to the natural world he said:

"I find it emotionally very satisfying. I think if you spend part of your life alone out in the wild, you are changed. You have a chance to really experience the extraordinary wealth of the creatures around you, and get a heightened sense of imagination and sensitivity to a living community. It doesn't mean that you can't cut a tree or eat a venison steak, it is just understanding the role of each of our lives and how we all fit in" (Penn 2005).

That sensitivity to a living community led to an exceptional career in conservation biology and his passion for sharing information led to equally important contributions to education. His lengthy listing of works, awards, distinctions and public service reflects a broad spectrum of interests, and is a testament to his unsurpassed contributions to Canada.

Ian spent his entire life as a learner and educator, the true mark of a Renaissance Man. In his own words, "Evolution is never finished and this applies equally to ideas and to organisms." He never ceased to evolve—as a naturalist, scientist, writer, collector and human being.

Yes, Cowan was indeed, "the real thing."

Awards and Distinctions

Ian received more awards and distinctions than virtually any other Canadian scientist. These include the Canadian Centennial Medal (1964); the Leopold Medal of the Wildlife Society (1970); Einarsen Award in Conservation by the Northwest Section of the Wildlife Society (1970); Officer of the Order of Canada (1972); Fry Medal of the Canadian Society of Zoologists (1975); Queen Elizabeth Silver Jubilee Medal (1977); the J. Dewey Soper Award (1982, Alberta Society of Professional Biologists); International Conservationist of the Year (1985, American Wildlife Society); Outstanding Achievement Award (1990, Foundation for North American Wild Sheep); Officer of the Order of British Columbia (1991); Doris Huestus Spiers award for Lifetime Achievement (1998, Canadian Society of Ornithologists); and the Ted Barsby Award for Conservationist of the Year (2000, BC Wildlife Federation).

He was an Honorary Life Member and one-time President of the Wildlife Society (1955), Honorary

Life Member and Part President of the Pacific Science Association (1964), Honorary Life Member of the Alberta Society of Professional Biologists (1982) and Association of Professional Biologists of British Columbia (1984), and invited Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada (1946), Fellow of the Arctic Institute of North America (1955), Fellow of the American Association of Advancement of Science (1955), Fellow of the California Academy of Sciences (1955) and an Erskine Fellow (1969, University of Canterbury).

Ian was also, for many years, Honorary President of BC Nature (Federation of British Columbia Naturalists) and Honorary Curator and Research Associate of the Royal BC Museum.

In recognition of his outstanding achievements, he was awarded a Doctor of Environmental Studies by the University of Waterloo (1976), honorary D.Sc. degrees by the University of British Columbia (1977), the University of Victoria (1985) and the University of Northern British Columbia (1997) and LL.D degrees by the University of Alberta (1971) and Simon Fraser University (1981).

In 1988, the Association of Professional Biologists of British Columbia established the Ian McTaggart-Cowan Award of Excellence in Biology to recognize members who have made outstanding contributions to biology. Former student Daryll Hebert and Birds of BC co-authors Wayne Campbell and Neil Dawe are among the nine recipients to date.

Ian's name is associated with three permanent post-secondary scholarships to assist students in his discipline: The Ian and Joyce McTaggart-Cowan Scholarship at the University of Victoria for outstanding students proceeding to year 3 or 4 of an Honours program in Biology, the Dr. Ian McTaggart-Cowan Scholarship in Environmental Studies for University of Victoria graduate students in the School of Environmental Studies who are focusing on Endangered Species Recovery and/or Ecological Restoration, and the Ian McTaggart-Cowan Scholarship in Wildlife Management at the University of Northern British Columbia.

In addition, the University of Northern British Columbia created the Ian McTaggart-Cowan Muskwa-Kechika Research Chair (2000) and the University of Victoria established the Ian McTaggart-Cowan Professor of Biodiversity Conservation and Ecological Restoration in its School of Environmental Studies (2005).

The University of Victoria has also named a student residence at its Commonwealth Village in his honour. And in 1992, Ian donated to the University of Northern BC, over 2000 titles from his personal natural history library.

Fittingly, Ian also had an invertebrate species and vertebrate subspecies named in his honour: *Cuspidaria cowani*, a septibranch bivalve and *Microtus townsendii cowani*, the Triangle Island subspecies of Townsend's Vole.

Public Service

Ian had an outstanding record of public service. As a founding member, he served for seven years (1955–1962) on the National Research Council of Canada where he was the first Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Wildlife Research. He also served on the Fisheries Research Board of Canada (1954–1965). He was a member and one time Chair of the BC Resources Council (1949–1960), President of the Biological Council of Canada (1966–1968), Chair of the Canadian Environmental Advisory Council (1975–1979), member of the Environmental Protection Board, member of the Arctic Gas Pipeline Board (1973–1976), member of the Arctic Environmental Council (1974–1976), Chair of the Canadian Committee on Whales and Whaling (1978), and inaugural Chair of the Public Advisory Board of the BC Habitat Conservation Trust Fund (1981). Ian was also active with the City of Vancouver Museum Board (1959–1962), Friends of the Royal BC Museum (1991), a founding director (1971–2002) and Director Emeritus (2002–2010) of The Nature Trust of British Columbia. Ian served as a member of the University of British Columbia Senate for 21 years, Chancellor of the University of Victoria from 1979 to 1984 and was the first Chair of the Academic Council of BC for six years (1976–1982).

Internationally, he was Chair of the Board of Governors of the Arctic Institute of North America (1955); President of the Wildlife Society (1955); Vice President of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature; a member of the Select Committee on National Parks for the United States Secretary of the Interior (1966–1968); Visiting Scientist, CSIRO, Wildlife Division, Canberra Australia (1969–1970); and Chair, National Research Council of the United States

Special Committee on Grizzly Bear Conservation in Yellowstone National Park (1973–1974).

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