

Fifth in a six-part series  
looking back at 80 years of  
*Canadian Geographic*

DECADES OF DISCOVERY

# 1980s

## GLOBAL WARNING

At the core of this magazine's raison d'être has always been the notion of making Canada better known to Canadians. In the 1980s, *Canadian Geographic* urged readers to stand up and take notice of the environmental degradation that was threatening the country.

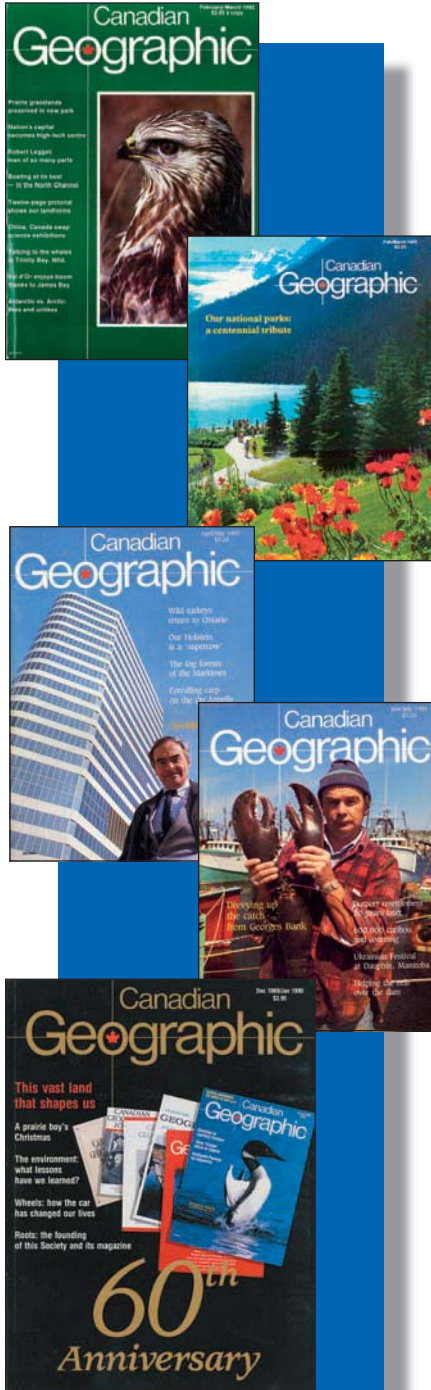
The magazine increased its coverage of environmental issues, from acid rain and air pollution to clear-cut logging and vanishing wetlands. (A 1981 feature delved into the complexities of and growing debate over global climate change.)

But the magazine did more than just open Canadians' eyes to the consequences of our actions; it also asked what we should do about it. As editor Ian Darragh wrote in 1989: "It is time for magazines to go beyond cataloguing environmental disasters and hand-wringing to report on the search for solutions." There were features on non-polluting fuels, the greening of industrial wastelands and the reintroduction of endangered wildlife species.

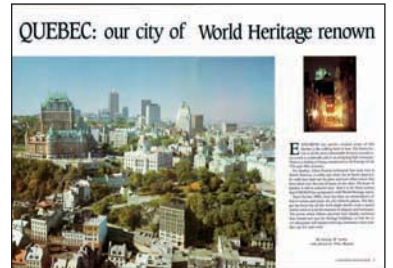
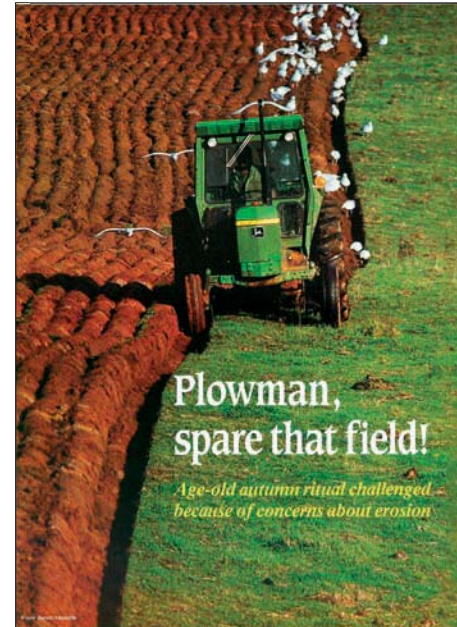
The decade also saw a growing number of articles about the places where the majority of Canadians now live — our cities. Many stories dealt with urban revitalization.

At the height of yuppie culture, the pages of *Canadian Geographic* served as an eco wake-up call. As renowned Canadian naturalist John Livingston noted in a 1989 essay, "Since [nature] predates the presence of people in this land, it must have some right of priority in human conscience."

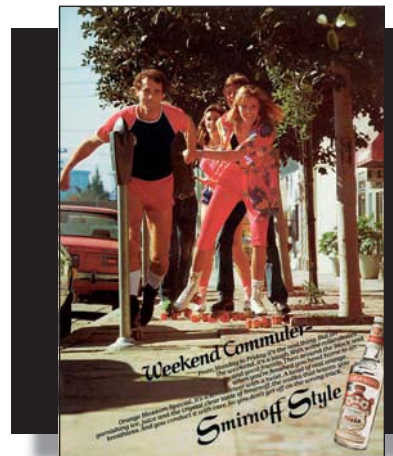
Mary Vincent



**PRETTY IN PRINT** The cover design evolved throughout the 1980s, culminating in a splashy anniversary issue.



**WHAT'S OLD IS NOUVEAU** Expanded coverage of urban issues included this profile of restoration efforts in Québec.

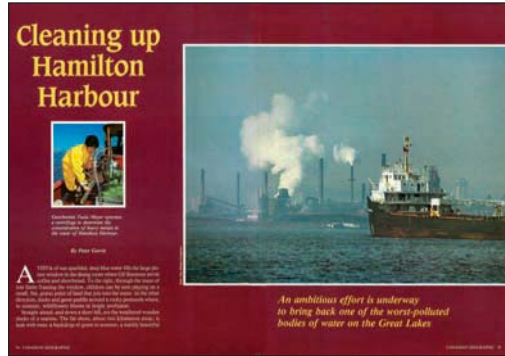


**GREENER PASTURES** Farmers were encouraged to change their plowing practices to prevent soil erosion.



By Jim High  
**N**ATURE HAS always been the sign of good planets. As long as they are not too hot or too cold, and the atmosphere is not too thick or too thin, life can flourish. But the model of agriculture was an inverted field of stacked soil, covered with the straight furrows. But the model is changing.

**CLEANING UP OUR ACT** Once one of the world's worst-polluted bodies of water, Hamilton Harbour was slowly recovering. "There is no dearth of interest in the defence of nature today," noted John Livingston in 1989.



**TRUE COST OF OIL** 27 years before the BP disaster, the magazine pondered what a spill on our Atlantic coast would mean.

**BACK FROM THE BRINK** "Every day, scientists estimate, the world loses another three species of wildlife," stated this 1987 piece. But success stories such as the recovery of the swift fox offered readers hope that this tide would turn.

**Introducing Kodacolor VR-1000.**  
 The color film that almost sees in the dark.

Now you can take pictures in the light of a candle. Kodacolor VR-1000 is the most sensitive color film ever made. It's the only color film that can capture the subtlest of colors in the dark. It's the only color film that can capture the subtlest of colors in the dark. It's the only color film that can capture the subtlest of colors in the dark.

Universide 85

**1988 Ford Aerostar, in class by itself.**

Quality is built in.

**We're spending 500 million dollars on something we'd all like to see.**

**Clean air.**

**YUPIEDOM** Ads in the fun-loving, pre-digital '80s were mostly about good times and trendy affluence — with the occasional pause for corporate responsibility.