

## **Ian McTaggart Cowan - Pioneer Award**

Ian McTaggart Cowan was born in Edinburg, Scotland in 1910 and came to Vancouver, B.C. with his parents when he was 3. An avid naturalist since boyhood, he received his degree from the University of British Columbia (UBC) and went on to the University of California to receive a PhD in Zoology. Returning to British Columbia in 1935, he found employment at the Provincial Museum in Victoria and greatly expanded and improved the vertebrate collection over the next five years. In 1940 he became an Assistant Professor in the Department of Zoology at UBC. He spent the rest of his career there and became the foremost authority on wildlife in western Canada. In 1943, the Canadian government hired Dr. Cowan to undertake the first extensive field studies of the fauna of the Rocky Mountain Parks of Canada. He soon became Full Professor and over time developed the first program in Canada to focus on the biological basis of wildlife conservation. He also convinced the Canadian government to hire professional wildlife biologists. Dr. Cowan has an extensive publication list of 179 papers and several books to his credit. He was very vocal about the need to control negative impacts of humans on world ecosystems. He was among the first to use television to bring his concerns to the attention of the public. Dr. Cowan has received many awards for his efforts, including the Aldo Leopold Medal in 1970. Ian passed away on April 18, 2010, only two months shy of his 100th birthday.