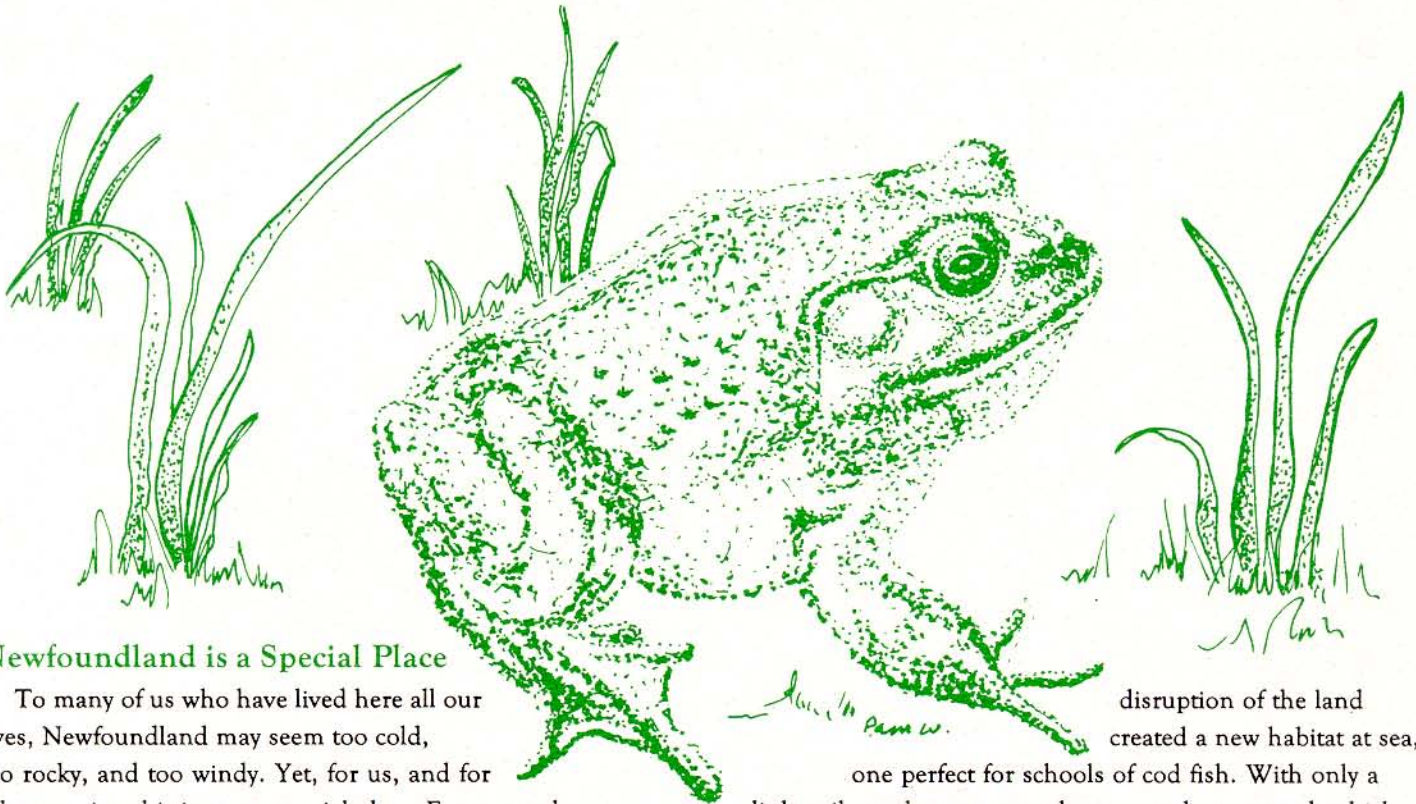


Special Spaces; Special Species



Newfoundland is a Special Place

To many of us who have lived here all our lives, Newfoundland may seem too cold, too rocky, and too windy. Yet, for us, and for other species, this is a very special place. Every year the Labrador current brings fresh, nutrient rich water from the north to replenish the salt waters of the south. As the current hits the pointed tip of the island of Newfoundland, it splits and travels along our coastline. The nutrients flowing with the water attract large numbers of fish, seabirds and whales to our coasts.

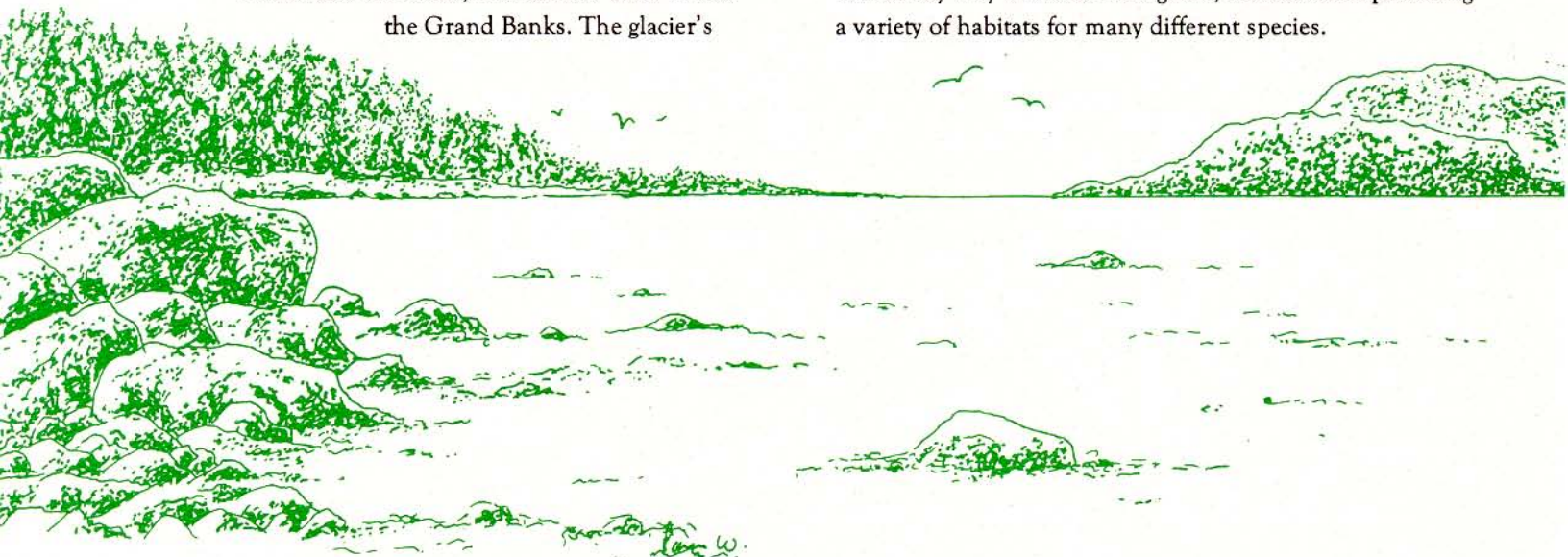
There are parts of Newfoundland and Labrador that look like they have been scraped bare. They have. Thousands of years ago, glaciers, huge, slowly moving rivers of ice, pushed much of the topsoil off the land and into the ocean. The soil landed out at sea, and formed what we call the Grand Banks. The glacier's

disruption of the land created a new habitat at sea, one perfect for schools of cod fish. With only a little soil, our barren grounds support dense growth which provides habitat for Caribou, Willow Ptarmigan and many other animals and birds.

While the top soil was all but gone from many areas of the land, bogs and ponds formed in others. These wet, inland areas provide yet another type of habitat.

The parts of Newfoundland that are now covered in forest, provide food and shelter for many types of birds, animals, insects, and plants.

Millions of years of moving land masses, changing climates, and glaciation left Newfoundland and Labrador with many very different ecoregions, each of them providing a variety of habitats for many different species.



Did You Know?

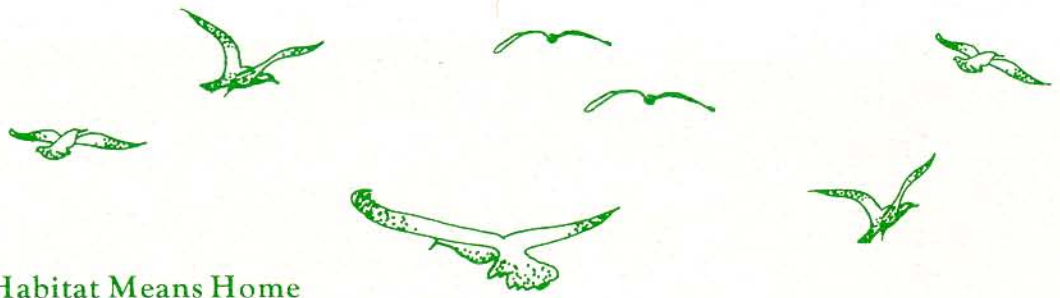
Bald eagles use a nest over and over, making it bigger each year. One famous nest was 36 years old and weighed about 1800 kilograms! That is about the weight of a station wagon!

Puffins lay only one egg per year. They must be extremely careful to prevent theft of that egg, or chick, by predators. That's why puffins make their nests in holes or burrows on grassy slopes.

During the winter, the heat from beavers' bodies warms their houses. The mud in the cracks freezes hard, keeping heat in and predators out. Sometimes, beavers make so much heat that the snow on top of their lodges melts!

Atlantic Salmon gain a lot of weight at sea. When there is plenty of food, some salmon gain nearly a kilogram a month before embarking on their journey up many of our Province's rivers and streams to spawn.

Blue Flag Iris



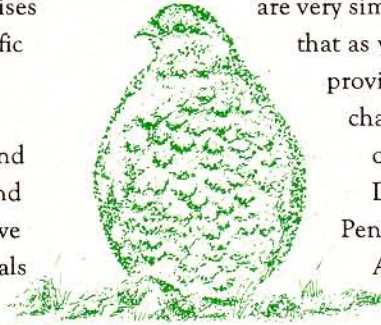
Habitat Means Home

Animals and plants, like people, need safe homes where their needs are met in relative comfort. We call our habitats communities, towns, villages and cities. Like us, animals choose spaces where they can find food and shelter. Even plants "choose" spaces where there is just the right amount of light, water and nutrients.

For the moose, the forest is home, for the pitcher plant, home means the bog. People can live nearly anywhere, because we have learned to provide for our needs in new ways. Some plants and animals, like Dandelions and Seagulls, can adapt to many different habitats. Others, like Blue Flag Irises and Atlantic Salmon, need specific types of habitat to survive.

In Newfoundland, there are many different types of habitat and each is home to specific plants and animals. By protecting habitats, we help protect the plants and animals that live there. Every species that shares this province with us is special; their homes are special too.

Willow Ptarmigan



Ecosystem

An ecosystem is a combination of plants, animals, land and climate. All living things are part of an ecosystem. Within any ecosystem, each and every partner is essential to the balance of the whole system. You are part of an ecosystem which includes air, light, water, plants and other animals! There may be many ecosystems within an ecoregion.

Ecoregion

An ecoregion is an area defined by plants, animals, and geology. A forest is an ecoregion. A barren is an ecoregion. Areas that have similar combinations of plants, animals and

land may be part of the same ecoregion, even though they are not next to each other. In Labrador there are ten different ecoregions, including tundra, barrens and forests, which provide habitats for hundreds of different species. The Southern most tips of the Avalon, and Burin Peninsulas are far away from each other, but they are part of the same ecoregion. That is because the plants, and animals and landscape of the three areas are very much the same. Newfoundland and Labrador has 19 defined ecoregions.

If you have travelled in Newfoundland and Labrador a lot, you will have noticed areas that are very similar. You may also have noticed that as you go from one part of the province to another, the landscape changes dramatically, as do the types of animals and plants you see. Driving across the Avalon Peninsula you will pass through the Avalon Forest Ecoregion, and into the Maritime Barrens, as you approach St. John's.

Most people notice the flat landscape of the barrens, often compared to a moonscape. In Southern Labrador, the landscape changes as you pass through the Forteau Barrens around Blanc Sablon, into the Mid Boreal Forest around Paradise River. The changing landscape, is an indication of a new ecoregion.

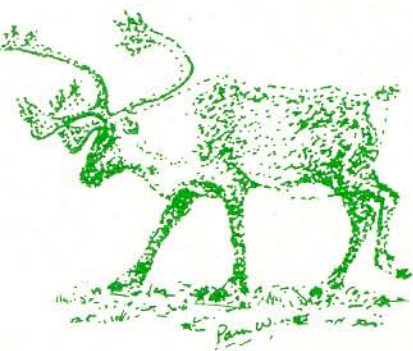
Biodiversity

Biodiversity means having a lot of different plants and animals. It is hard for us to see sometimes, but we are part of an ecosystem just like the plants and animals around us. The more plants and animals we have in our system, the healthier our system is. All over the world, people have made a commitment to protecting biodiversity in their own countries and all over the planet.

Did You Know?

Caribou can usually be found feeding on lichens, green plants, twigs of birch and willow and fruit. However, when they drop their antlers they often eat them too. Antlers provide a great quantity of calcium to their diet!

Caribou



Water striders, or "doctors", are very good at staying afloat. They have water repellent bodies and feet, and trap tiny air bubbles which keep them on the surface of the water.

Atop each blueberry is the shape of a star, representing the base of the flower. Aboriginal peoples told the legend that during a time of starvation, the great spirit sent these "star berries" down at night from heaven to relieve the hunger of the children.

Blueberries



Upsetting the Balance

Ecosystems are carefully structured; it does not take much to disrupt the balance. Not all places seem nice to us; as humans we are not well adapted to being comfortable everywhere. Yet, hundreds of plants and animals rely on our barren grounds, wet lands, mountains, coastlines, bogs and forests to survive. When we destroy, rearrange, or pollute these habitats, we are trespassing on the homes of hundreds of living things.

We all know that we must be careful not to kill too many animals. What most people may not know, is that many species in the world are endangered because their homes are being destroyed, not because they are being hunted. To keep the balance, we must respect every aspect of our natural environment. It may not be our habitat, but it is home to many other organisms.

Maintaining the Balance

Provincial Parks, Wilderness and Ecological Reserves

In Newfoundland and Labrador our ecoregions provide homes for hundreds of species of animals and plants. It has taken millions of years to create what we now call Newfoundland and Labrador, and our complex web of ecosystems, some of which are unique to the province. As long as our ecosystems remain in their natural condition, they will continue to provide habitats for our wildlife and plants.

In order to help protect the province's unique and representative ecosystems, nearly 2% of the province's area has been set aside in Provincial Parks, Ecological and Wilderness Reserves, National Parks and other protected sites. While 2% is a tiny portion, and nearly all of our protected spaces are on the island portion of the province, we have made a good start. Canada's Green Plan calls for the preservation and protection of 12% of the country's land mass. Our target in Newfoundland and Labrador, is to ensure that each of our ecoregions has adequate representation within a protected areas network. As part of the national and international movement towards environmentally responsible action, our system

of protected areas helps us understand and appreciate the value of our wild spaces and the habitats which they provide.

At our Provincial Parks, Wilderness and Ecological Reserves, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, as well as visitors from across the country and around the world, have an opportunity to see many of our province's species, at home in their natural habitats. We are truly fortunate that we can do this. Like welcome house guests, visitors to our Provincial Parks may share in the lives of our wild species, without disrupting or intruding too far.

When you visit a provincial park, you can get to know some of our wild species. You can sit in their "living rooms", and maybe see the world through their eyes for a minute. You are a welcome guest; perhaps when you leave, you will feel a little closer to these special species,

and understand why we must all do our part to protect their homes.

Red Fox



Our Provincial Parks provide us with a window into the homes, and lives of some of our most intriguing wild species. The following parks and reserves have interpretive staff throughout the summer months. Through guided walks, campfire nights, and regular outdoor activities, our staff will be happy to introduce you to your hosts.

Park/Reserve

Cape St. Mary's

Beothuck

Barachois

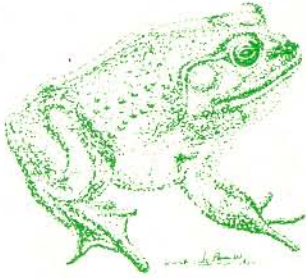
Notre Dame

Butterpot

Species

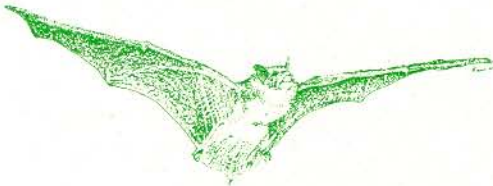
10 different species of seabirds; noted for Gannets and whales
Little Brown Bats
Pine Marten
Beavers, Boreal Forest orchids, butterflies and over 200 species of breeding birds

Green Frog



Do you remember when you were a child, collecting frogs' eggs and watching and waiting as they hatched into tadpoles and then into frogs? It's a summer activity that is becoming increasingly hard for our children to experience. All around the world frogs and toads are disappearing at an alarming rate. By protecting their habitats, we protect species such as the green frog along with mammals and birds.

FUTURE FOCUS The Little Brown Bat



These acrobatic, gentle, night fliers are truly a special species in Newfoundland. The little brown bat is one of nearly one thousand species of bats found world wide, the only mammals on earth that fly. Our little brown bat can catch up to 600 mosquitoes an hour, along with beetles and moths. A special species at home in our Provincial Parks.

What Does It Mean To You

- Ask a park interpreter to explain which ecoregion the park you are visiting is part of.
- Ask a park interpreter to describe an ecosystem in the area.
- Name a plant or animal which has a specific habitat.
- Describe your habitat...imagine life without a key feature (the roof of your house).
- Imagine life without a component of your ecosystem....grass, trees, water, birds.

What You Can Do

- Visit a Provincial Park or Reserve and explore!
- Be eager to learn! Ask questions! Find out about the area you live in and why it is special!
- Voice your concerns...become involved.
- Reduce, reuse, recycle.

Pitcher Plant



Department of Tourism and Culture, Parks Division
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1993



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