



Emily the Puffling's Amazing Adventure

Newfoundland
Labrador

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Emily the Puffling's Amazing Adventure

Written by Shannon Fisher and Nicole Hynes



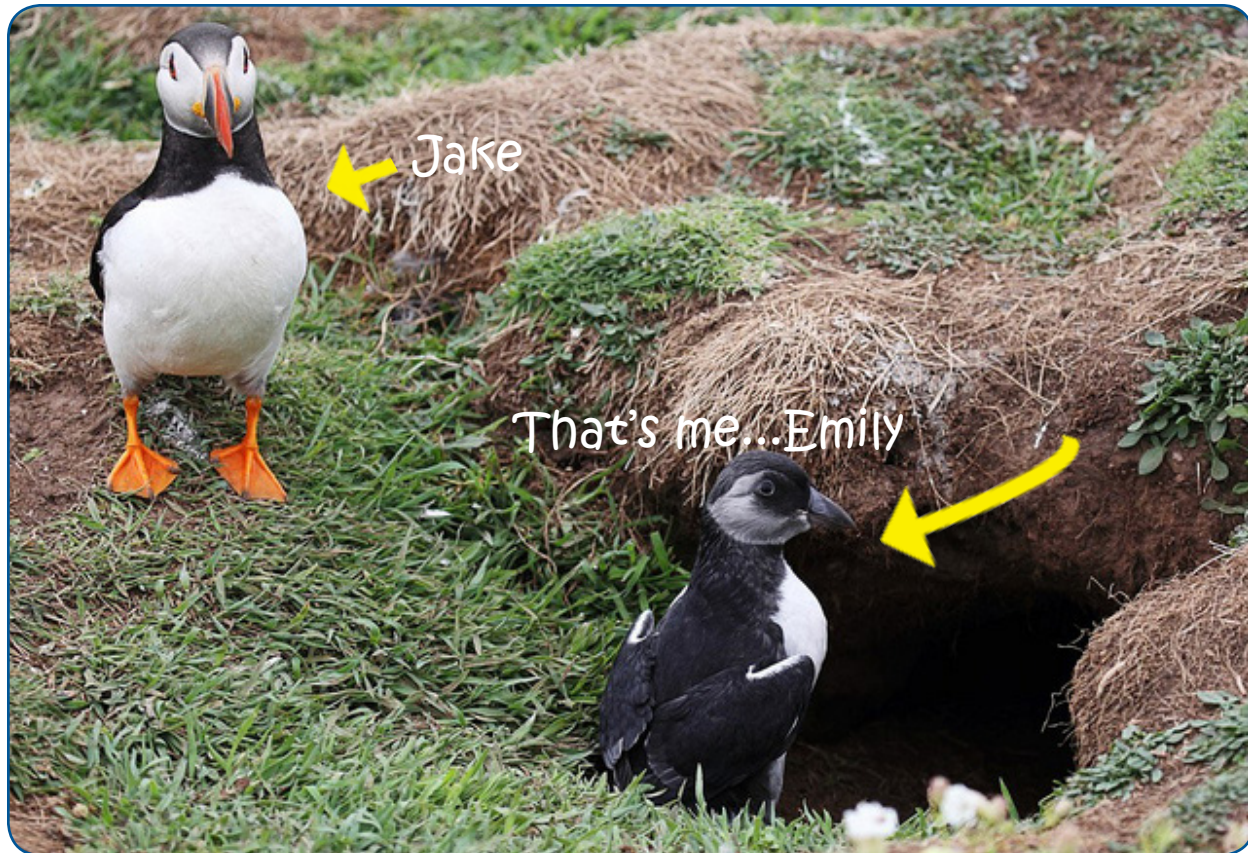
Emily the Puffling's Amazing Adventure is a made-up story about the real life Puffin Patrol. The Puffin Patrol was started by Elsie and Juergen Schau with the help of young volunteers in Witless Bay to save puffin chicks (pufflings). Since then, hundreds of pufflings have been rescued and released into the ocean to later return as adult puffins to the Ecological Reserve in Witless Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador.



Suzanne Dooley is the Co-Executive Director of Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society Newfoundland and Labrador (CPAWS-NL). Suzanne participates in the Witless Bay Puffin Patrol, recruiting volunteers and helping educate the public on the effects of artificial light on seabirds. She has helped many stranded pufflings just like Emily.







This is me with my brother Jake. He likes to tease me.

Chapter 1

Do you know what a baby puffin is called?

A baby puffin is called a puffling or chick. This story is about a puffling called Emily. Emily lives with her family and friends in a beautiful bird sanctuary in Witless Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Her older brother's name is Jake, and although he loves Emily he likes to tease her and say things like:

“Emily, you are just a puffling. You are too little for adventures.”



Mum cleaning my feathers





This is me as a little baby puffling. I am much, much bigger now.



This is me in a huff.

This drove Emily crazy because Jake had been on a big adventure and she wanted to go on one too.

“I am not too little. I am a big puffling. In fact, I am almost a grown puffin, and I will go on an adventure. It will be the BIGGEST and BEST adventure ever!”

Emily thumped off to find her best friend Leo the leatherback sea turtle.



Gull Island has lots of birds on it. It is a bird sanctuary.

Chapter 2

Emily's family lives on Gull Island and her best friend Leo lives in the surrounding water. Leo is a leatherback sea turtle. Every summer Leo and his family swim from their nesting beach in Trinidad to Newfoundland. Leo says his family likes to eat the jellyfish that live in the water around the island. Emily is always happy to see him when he comes home.



Leo the leatherback sea turtle and my new friend Mallory the beluga whale.



My friend Leo!

Emily swam out to the rock ledge where Leo's family liked to stay. Leo saw Emily and swam up to see her. Leo wasn't alone. Emily couldn't believe it. Beside Leo was a beautiful beluga whale. Emily hadn't seen a beluga in Witless Bay before. Belugas are not usually seen around the south coast of Newfoundland.



A close-up of Mallory the beluga whale and Leo the leatherback sea turtle.

“Leo, who is your friend?” asked Emily.

“Emily, this is Mallory. She is visiting from up north,” said Leo.

“Hi Emily,” said an excited Mallory. “I was following a tour boat full of people. They were playing music and I love music, and then all of a sudden I was here in Witless Bay. It’s so pretty that I decided to stay for a while.”

“So you like to go on adventures?” asked Emily.

“Oh yes, belugas are very curious. My whole family loves to see new things. Usually, we travel together, but not this time. I am all by



Mallory

Mallory followed a tour boat because they played music she liked.



Me swimming!

myself. Belugas hardly ever come to Witless Bay but I did. I am a fearless adventurer!”

“My dumb brother just said that I was too little to go on an adventure,” huffed Emily.

“That’s silly, you are practically a full grown puffin,” said Mallory. “As soon as your beak turns orange you will be making a nest of your own.”

“Exactly what I thought... Hey Leo, when does your family swim to Trinidad?” asked Emily. “Maybe I can come with you.” Leo thought about it for a minute and said, “Why don’t we practice going on shorter adventures before you



Trinidad to Witless Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador.

come with us? Trinidad is a very, very long way.”

That sounded like a good idea. Emily’s mother, who is a very wise bird, always said that if you practice something you will get better and better.

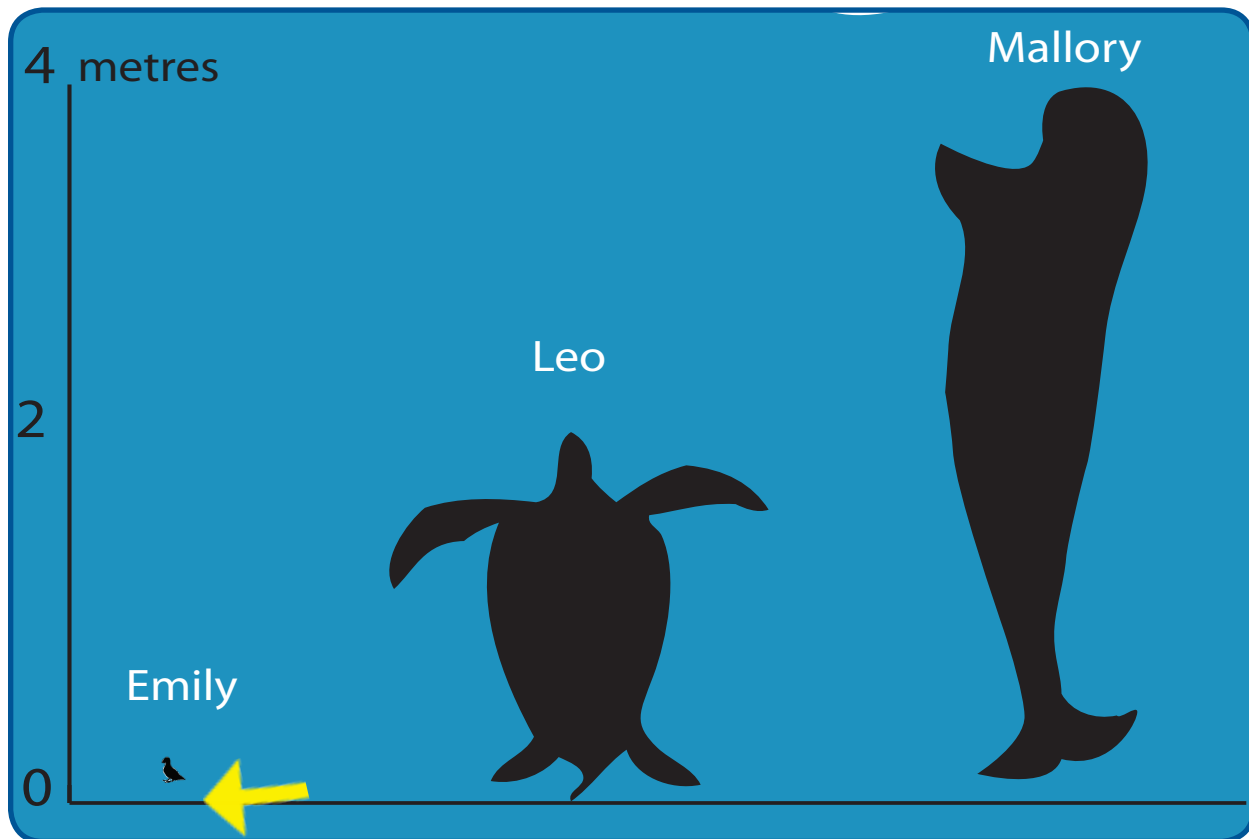
“Okay, where will we go?” asked Emily.

“Well, let’s practice swimming from Gull Island to the Witless Bay beach,” said Leo.

“Let’s do this!” said Mallory, and off they went.



Witless Bay from Gull Island doesn’t look that far.



My friends are much bigger than me.

Chapter 3



Me on Leo's back.

Emily is an Atlantic Puffin and even though she is almost a full grown puffin, she isn't even 10 centimetres long. Leo is almost full grown at 2 metres long, which is much bigger than Emily. Mallory is a full 4 metres long and much, much, much bigger than Emily.

Emily started swimming as fast as she could. Mallory and Leo swam as slowly as they could.



Leo thought this was a jellyfish!!!

After 10 minutes, Emily was very tired and they hadn't gone very far. Leo said, "Why don't you get on my back and I will carry you for a while? When you have rested for a bit you can try to fly. How does that sound?" So the three friends continued to swim and Emily enjoyed the view from Leo's back.

Because Leo is so big he gets hungry a lot. His favourite food is jellyfish. Jellyfish float like blobs of...well...jelly in the water. Emily prefers little silver fish called capelin but not Leo. Leo LOVES jellyfish. Jellyfish can sting but they don't sting Leo. As they were getting closer to the shore, Leo spotted a jellyfish and away he went.



Leo choking on a plastic bag.

All of a sudden Mallory yelled, “No Leo, don’t eat that!” but Leo didn’t hear her.



A plastic bag and a jellyfish look the same to a turtle.

What Leo saw wasn’t a jellyfish at all. It was a plastic bag floating in the water. Leo took a big gulp and tried to swallow but started to choke.

Emily and Mallory looked on helplessly. Emily saw a large rock near the shore. “Leo, go to that rock,” she pointed. Leo was finding it harder and harder to breath.

A piece of the plastic bag was hanging out of his mouth. Emily tried to pull at it with her beak but it didn’t budge. Poor Leo! The friends were starting to get scared and it was getting dark.



Mallory protecting Leo while he rests on a rock.

Chapter 4

As the sun started to set, Leo couldn't move without choking. Leo needed help and they needed a plan. Emily knew it was up to her.

"Mallory, you stay here and protect Leo. I will go find help."

Emily started to fly, flapping her little wings as fast as she could. It was hard to see in the dark but she could see lights in the distance. With all her might, Emily flapped her wings but it was so dark and the lights were so far away.



I had to get to the Witless Bay beach.



These lights were moving and I was getting confused.



I am flying by the light of the moon.

Emily finally landed on the beach. She made it. Now time to find help. She saw some lights that were moving. Maybe they could help Leo. She started to fly towards them but they were so bright. Emily was getting confused.

Woosh! All of a sudden Emily was in a net. She was scared but then a voice said, “Don’t be scared little one. That car almost hit you but I saved you. We will keep you safe until morning.”

Emily looked up and saw a kind smiling face looking down at her. It was Suzanne from the Puffin Patrol.





Here I am in a cardboard box.

Every summer, people from the Witless Bay Puffin Patrol help rescue lost and stranded puffins. Sometimes puffins are attracted to lights from communities along the coast and they get lost. Sometimes the lights they fly towards are headlights from cars. It can be very dangerous.

Emily was trying very hard to tell Suzanne about her friend Leo the leatherback sea turtle but she was so tired. Gently, she was put in a container in a warm garage. Her little eyes closed and she fell asleep.



Crates to keep us safe and warm.



Me waiting in my carrier for Suzanne and Dena to release me. I have to find Leo and Mallory.



A close-up of me in my carrier.

Very early the next morning, all the rescued puffins were taken to the beach and released back into the ocean. In the daylight, Emily could see her friends. Leo looked very tired and Mallory was frantically swimming around the rock he was lying on.

Suzanne gently threw Emily in the air. Emily had to get her attention. She landed with a





Me about to be released.

plop in the water and paddled back to Suzanne. Suzanne walked into the water and picked her up and threw her in the air again. Emily plopped into the water and swam right back to Suzanne. Just as Suzanne was about to throw Emily up into the air for the third time, she saw Mallory jumping out of the water, whistling, chirping, and squealing. Suzanne had never seen a beluga whale and she hopped in her kayak to get a better look.





Suzanne paddling out to save Leo.



Leo taking a gulp of air!

Everyone on the beach was really excited to see Mallory and then they saw Leo lying on the rock.

“There is a leatherback sea turtle on that rock and he isn’t moving,” said Suzanne. She paddled out to Leo. Leo was having trouble breathing and was too tired to move. Seeing the plastic bag hanging from Leo’s mouth, Suzanne firmly grasped the bag and pulled it out. Leo took a big mouthful of air and was finally able to breathe normally.



Me, Leo, and Mallory on our way home to Gull Island.

Suzanne smiled and paddled away. Humans can be very helpful, thought Emily. The three happy friends started to swim back home to Gull Island. Emily was especially happy because now she could tell her brother all about her adventure. Emily might still be a puffling but she was not too little for an adventure.



Me telling Jake about MY amazing adventure!

-The End-

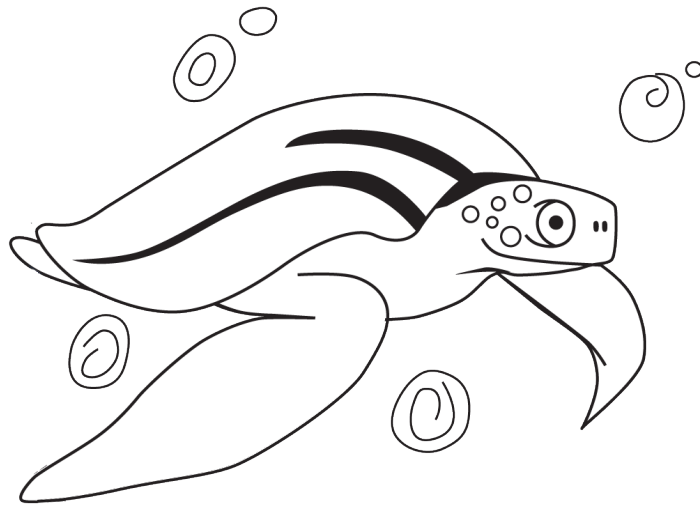
Have You Seen a Whale or Turtle? Tell Jack!

What, When & Where
telljack@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Tweet Jack @DFO_NL
#whale or #leatherback



Dr. Jack Lawson is a research scientist with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, working on marine mammals and leatherback sea turtles in Newfoundland and Labrador. For more information, contact: Jack.Lawson@dfo-mpo.gc.ca.



LEATHERBACK SEA TURTLES

Did you know?

The leatherback sea turtle is one of the world's largest reptiles, reaching 2 metres in length and weighing up to 950 kilograms. They are named for their unique shell that looks “leathery” and is made up of a layer of thin, tough, rubbery skin, strengthened by thousands of tiny bone plates. They are powerful and efficient swimmers that can cover enormous distances.

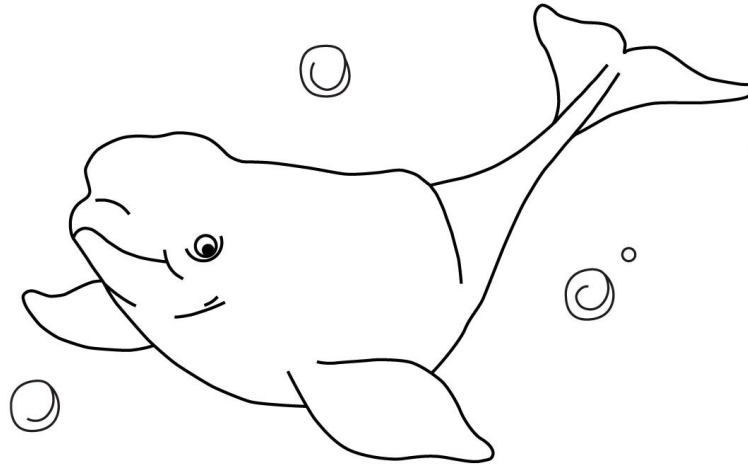
In Newfoundland and Labrador's coastal waters, leatherback sea turtles can be seen during the summer and early fall as they swim close to the surface to feed on jellyfish.

Since 2003, leatherback sea turtles in Canada have been designated as endangered under the national *Species at Risk Act*, making it illegal to kill, harass, capture, or harm them in any way. The total number of nesting females is thought to be less than 35,000 worldwide.

Why are they endangered?

The greatest threat to leatherback sea turtles is becoming entangled in fishing gear, ropes, or other floating debris. This causes them to have trouble swimming or feeding, or they become unable to swim to the surface to breathe and they drown. They also mistake plastic floating in the water for food, which can block their stomach as they are unable to digest it, causing them to starve.

Turtles also nest on tropical beaches to lay their eggs. Many of these beaches are being disturbed by human activities like tourism. Because they move slowly on land, turtles are unable to defend themselves from humans or other animals.



BELUGA WHALES

Did you know?

There are seven distinct populations of beluga whales in Canada, any of which may visit Newfoundland and Labrador. The St. Lawrence River beluga whale population has been listed as threatened under the *Species at Risk Act* and the other populations are under consideration. The world population is estimated at over 150,000.

Beluga whales usually live together in small groups known as pods. They are social animals and are very vocal. They use a diversified language of clicks, whistles, and clangs, giving them the nickname “canary of the sea.” Beluga whales can also mimic a variety of other sounds.

Most Canadian beluga whales live in cold Arctic waters, moving from place to place seeking ice-free water and food. Beluga whales average 3 to 5 metres in length and weigh up to 1,500 kilograms. Unlike other whales, belugas have no dorsal fin, which enables them to move more easily under ice.

With their white skin and bulging ‘forehead,’ adult belugas are easy to recognize. The word ‘beluga’ means the ‘white one’ in Russian. Only adult beluga whales are white. Calves are born brown or dark grey and gradually change to become totally white between six and eight years of age.

Why are they threatened?

Beluga whales are vulnerable to hunting and disturbance. Threats include noise and disturbance from increased boat traffic and competition with commercial fisheries. Hunting has been the main cause of the decline in beluga populations, although commercial hunting ended by the 1950s. Altering of their habitat, such as damming of rivers and noise pollution caused by ships and boats, are also factors. In addition, dredging, shipping, industrial activity, and environmental pollution have degraded the quality of the water in which the beluga whales live. This could also lead to a decline in their food supply.

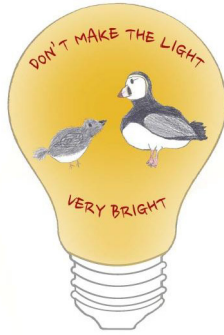
WHAT CAN WE DO FOR LEATHERBACKS AND BELUGAS?

If you see a leatherback sea turtle or beluga whale, make note of the date, time, and location, and take photographs or video. Contact Research Scientist Dr. Jack Lawson (email: telljack@dfo-mpo.gc.ca). Keeping track of their numbers and movements can help determine important information about their populations, movements, and behaviours. This can be used when developing actions to help protect them.

If you encounter an entangled leatherback sea turtle or beluga whale and are unable to clear the ropes or other materials from the animal, call the local Fisheries and Oceans Canada office, or contact the Whale Release and Strandings Group (tel: 1-888-895-3003) to help.

Keep marine debris, such as plastic bags, out of our waterways. Take reusable bags when shopping, don't litter, and pick up any garbage you see along the beach. Organize a beach clean-up in your community. Contact MI Ocean Net's Friends of the Beaches Network to learn how (email: mioceannet@mi.mun.ca).

Spread the word and let others know about these amazing sea creatures and what we can do to help protect them.



WITLESS BAY PUFFIN PATROL

Have you seen a puffin in trouble and want to help?

Become a volunteer patroller

Email: nlmarine@cpaws.org

Tel: 709-726-5800

www.cpawsnl.org

Did you know?

Witless Bay Ecological Reserve contains North America's largest colony of Atlantic Puffins, with over 260,000 mating pairs. Atlantic Puffins eat small fish and can dive up to 70 metres under water to catch them. Puffins dig burrows for nests and lay one egg in May or June which is incubated by both parents. Chicks hatch in July and begin leaving their nests in late summer and early fall to make their way out to sea where they spend the winter. Unlike colourful adult puffins, the beak and feet of the chick are grey/black.

Why do puffins fly inland?

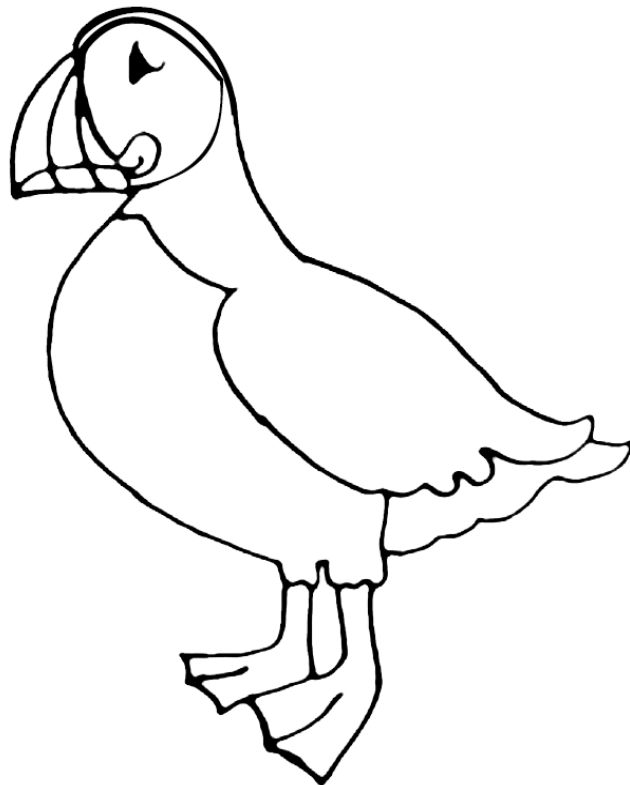
Because they are nocturnal, puffins fly at night, using the moon to navigate. If it is a foggy or windy night, the chicks sometimes become confused and fly inland, thinking the street lights are the moon. Sometimes this leads them into town and into the path of oncoming cars.

What does the Puffin Patrol do?

Each night, volunteers from local communities as well as those who have travelled far and wide just to participate in the Puffin Patrol search for juvenile puffins along the roads. Once they are caught, they are housed overnight in crates until they can be released into the ocean the next morning. The patrol operates from August to October.

What else can be done to help?

Homeowners and businesses in coastal communities around Witless Bay are encouraged to dim unnecessary lighting during fledging periods. In addition, they can angle and reposition lights down to the ground and install motion sensor switch lights which come on only when triggered, thereby reducing the potential for seabird light attraction. Changing the colour of the light (to amber, blue, or green) can also cause a 50-90 percent reduction of impact, as fewer birds display circling behaviour with coloured lights.





Emily the Puffling's Amazing Adventure is the story about a little puffling and her friends, a leatherback sea turtle named Leo and a beluga whale named Mallory.

Check out our website to find out more about the ocean and how we are working to protect it.

www.gov.nl.ca/flr