

Why were they introduced?

Food Source

Moose, snowshoe hare, brown trout and other species have been introduced to Newfoundland and Labrador to diversify food resources. The hunting and fishing of these species has become an integral part of our culture and heritage.

Fur Farming

Mink were introduced to the island for fur farming. While some mink are escapees from farms, others were intentionally introduced by government in 1948.

Experimental/ Biological Control

An amphibian enthusiast introduced four species to the west coast of Newfoundland between 1960 and 1967. The purpose of the introduction was to increase species diversity in the local area and to control insect and invertebrate populations, namely slugs and sow bugs.

Species and groups of species including, the masked shrew, lady bugs, bees, wasps, beetles and flies were introduced by government managers, industry and backyard gardeners to help control insect pests and pollinate plants.

Aesthetics

We regularly introduce exotic ornamental plants into our backyard and public gardens. If conditions are favourable, these species may spread beyond their garden homes, dispersing seed and other propagules into natural areas. For example, purple loosestrife at one time appeared to be a harmless easily grown garden plant. Now it is extremely invasive throughout most of its range.

Accidental

It is suspected that several species have been accidentally introduced to Newfoundland or Labrador through the movement of hay, vegetables, horticultural materials and products, packaging materials, timber and pulpwood. Species may unintentionally be brought into the province on heavy equipment, industrial machinery, vehicles, campers, trailers, and even the soles of shoes.



What effects have they had?

Competition

Invasive alien species often compete with native species for both food and habitat. Red squirrels forage heavily on the seeds of cone bearing trees, the preferred food source of many native bird species, including the endangered red crossbill.

Exclusion

Invasive alien species compete with native species for habitat, resulting in native species having to settle for less suitable habitats. For example, brown trout populations out compete native trout and salmon populations for habitat.

Alteration

Some introduced species, such as the moose have impacted forest regeneration, therefore altering the landscapes and affecting habitat availability for native populations. Invasive plants have been found to restrict waterways and eliminate habitats of existing species.

Nuisance

The introduction of exotic species does not always have immediate negative impacts on native species and natural ecosystems. Some species, such as the European earwig and house mouse, are considered nuisance species to humans, but have no impacts on natural ecosystems.

Benefits

Hunting and fishing for non-native species, such as moose, snowshoe hare, grouse and rainbow trout, has provided residents of the province with millions of pounds of chemical free organic protein.

Species such as moose catch the eye of residents and tourists alike, who spend hours watching, photographing and video taping this exotic.

These species often contribute to local economies through spin-offs from resident and non-resident hunting, fishing, outfitting, and tourism.



Background images provided by: C. Hanel & S. Moores. Species Photos: E. Schuttler (American mink), J. Brazil (June beetle, American toad, red squirrel, snowshoe hare, moose, coltsfoot), S. Moores (purple loosestrife), D. Cappaert (European earwig), M. Rodrigues-Wright (European starling).