



Eastern Newfoundland Atlantic Region

Represented by: Terra Nova National Park

35



Razor Bills

BOREAL BY THE SEA

...the country in all directions ... appeared to be covered with one dense unbroken pine forest, with here and there a bold granitic pap projecting above the dark-green surface Wind-fallen trees, underwood, and brooks lay in our way, which, together with the suffocating heat in the woods, and mosquitoes, hindered us from advancing more than five miles on this day....

*William Cormack, 1822
The only known European to walk
across Newfoundland.*



Terra Nova National Park

THE LAND:

The eroded remains of the ancient Appalachian Mountains give this region a rugged, hilly countenance. Along the coast in many places, sea cliffs rise precipitously 200-300 metres. Inland are innumerable lakes and rocky, fast-flowing rivers. The wounds left

by the passing of the glaciers have not healed over much of the region. Large areas of exposed bedrock where the soil has been scraped away remain. Other areas are covered by glacial till. Lichen-encrusted erratic boulders perch on barren hilltops.

VEGETATION:

Parks Canada (1997) National Park System Plan



At Cape St. Mary's, seabirds nest on every available ledge. Both Common and Thick-billed Murres, as well as various gulls, use the steeper sites, while the larger Gannets claim space on the more level summits.



Natural Region 35

About one-half of the region is covered by a boreal forest of black spruce and balsam fir. Near the coast, an understory of feather-moss thrives in the moist sea air. Inland, nearly pure stands of balsam fir occur on well-drained sites. In the hilly country and along protected valleys the forest is very productive and supports a thriving pulp-and-paper industry. Much of the original forest has been altered by human-caused fires. Bogs cover much of the region.

WILDLIFE:

“One of the most striking features of the interior is the innumerable deer-paths on the savannas. They ... take directions as various as the winds, giving the whole country a chequered appearance. Of the millions of acres here, there is no one spot exceeding a few superficial yards that is not bounded on all sides by deer-paths....”

William Cormack, 1822



Northwest River, Terra Nova National Park

Although the Strait of Belle Isle separating Newfoundland from the mainland is only 18 kilometres across, it has proven to be an effective barrier to many species of wildlife. Only 14 species of mammals are native to Newfoundland, compared to 42 species on the adjacent mainland. Many species, such as the moose, snowshoe hare and red squirrel have been introduced and are now thriving. Some native species have only recently made the crossing. Lynx,

for example, were not mentioned until the turn of the century. Other native species include the black bear, red fox, beaver, mink and caribou. The wolf was once found here, but has been extirpated from the area. The caribou of Newfoundland are a unique sub-species and are the largest in North America.

Along the coastal cliffs and islands of this region are some of the largest seabird rookeries in North America. Cape St. Mary's and the Witless Bay Islands are two of the most accessible and spectacular seabird rookeries in the world. Hundreds of thousands of kittiwakes, puffins, gulls, common murres, razor-billed auks, gannets and millions of Leach's storm petrels breed at these sites. Important seabird colonies are protected as Migratory Bird Sanctuaries or Ecological Reserves. On visiting Funk Island in 1534, explorer Jacques Cartier extolled the abundance and fatness of the birds there. The flightless birds that Cartier was describing were great auks. They were hunted to extinction by 1844.



Terra Nova National Park

STATUS OF NATIONAL PARKS:

Terra Nova National Park (400 km²) was established pursuant to a federal-provincial agreement in 1957. With its jagged rocky shorelines backed by dense boreal forest, the park protects an outstanding example of this natural region. The fiords or "sounds" that indent the coast are the park's most distinctive feature. Icebergs and whales can often be seen from the headlands framing the fiords. The teeming waters of Bonavista Bay and Newman Sound have attracted fishermen for hundreds of years, and some of Newfoundland's oldest settlements were located in the park.

Inland are numberless bogs and lakes filling depressions gouged out by the passing of

glaciers during the Ice Age. Raised bogs, gentle domes rising about 1.5 metres above the surrounding terrain, are common. Sprouting from the sphagnum mosses and lichens are pitcher plants, their curious deep crimson flowers conspicuous among the mainly pastel colours of the vegetation. Other plants that thrive in the acidic conditions found in bogs include Labrador tea, leatherleaf, bog laurel and sundews. The forest is dominated by black spruce and balsam fir. Much of the forest was logged before the park was established.

The wildlife found in the park is typical of this region. Caribou, once common in this part of Newfoundland, are still occasionally spotted. Moose, introduced to Newfoundland in 1878 and 1904, thrive and are often seen grazing in the park along the Trans-Canada highway. The Newfoundland pine marten has recently been reintroduced in Terra Nova National Park. The Terra Nova River provides fine fishing for Atlantic salmon and speckled trout.

Major Land Uses

Fishing
Tourism
Pulp & paper

Main Communities

St. John's
Grand Falls-Windsor
Gander

Aboriginal Peoples

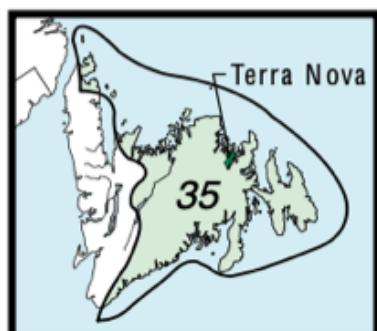
Beothuk people have all died.

Parks and Natural Areas

Terra Nova National Park
Cape St. Mary's

Further Information

Newfoundland & Labrador Tourism





Newfoundland is a coastal region, with nearly everyone living within a few kilometres of tide water. Whether from the small outports, or the bustling city of St. John's, local people take pride in their maritime heritage.





Aaaaw! Aren't they cute! Yes, puffins must be one of the cutest birds around. With their oversize beak and bold eyes, they are charmers. Close up, their fishy breath gives a different impression. Here is one of their skills: a puffin can perch on a ledge with two capelin in its mouth, then dive into the water and come up with three. Catching a slippery fish with your mouth already full is a good trick!





Although most of eastern Newfoundland is covered with coniferous forest, some large barrens have no trees at all.



The rivers run fast and free, unencumbered by hydro dams.



Lobster-lovers will be pleased to know that these tasty shellfish are held in large tanks, extending the short season that they are available.





Whale watching is always impressive. Guided boat tours get you to the best viewing locations, and the guides can explain so much background. Our guide felt that making a noise brought them closer to see what the fuss was about. I certainly seemed to work!

