

Newfoundland Wilderness

WINTER 2016



Photo by Jeannine Winkel

President's Report



It seems like a lot of emphasis was placed on our wild spaces in 2015, and our organization has had a busy year navigating through it all and working towards positive outcomes.

Just weeks after writing the 2014 year-end report, three species of bats were listed as endangered under the *Species at Risk Act*, and before long came good news of new parks and protected areas developing on land, fresh water and ocean here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I'll come back to this shortly.

The year also saw back-to-back elections -- one federal, one provincial -- both resulting in a flipping of the magnetic poles of establishment. With new governments come new changes, mandates, commitments and personnel.

Provincially, we've already heard some notes of commitment in finalizing and releasing the long-awaited Natural Areas Systems Plan and working towards other conservation goals, such as the Eagle River Provincial Waterway Park and the South Coast Fjords.

There is also interest from the new provincial government in pursuing a proper buffer zone around Gros Morne National Park. CPAWS has been working diligently on a national campaign called *Save Gros Morne* that calls on the government to create this buffer. In the spring, CPAWS-NL and our national counterparts helped facilitate meetings and workshops with various government agencies to get the ball rolling. We also organized several memorable nights of music and food that saw supporters pack pubs to celebrate this unique and cherished gem.

And if that wasn't enough, the past governments did something right this year too by announcing that the Mealy Mountains / Akamiupishkua National Park and the Laurentian Channel Marine Protected Area are about to be officially formed, creating some of the most vast areas of protected undeveloped space and habitat on both land and water in the country.

We also can't forget the newest provincial addition: the Lawn Bay Ecological Reserve. It's fair to say 2015 definitely marked a distinct positive change in attitude towards the creation of new parks in our province and we think 2016 is going to be an exciting year on that front as well as these new areas begin their legacies of conservation.

In keeping with a positive tone, I would like to once again congratulate the staff and volunteers of CPAWS-NL for making so many great things happen this year. These dedicated people successfully held a

vibrant parks and protected areas forum at the Fluvarium in St. John's, saved another 250 stranded puffins (making the total to over 1500 birds banded and released since 2011), continued to work towards sustainable forest management, and have begun a new and engaging community initiative aimed at marine waste management.

As we reflect on the past year, I wish you all a peaceful future in enjoying and appreciating our newest and oldest protected spaces.

Stay tuned for more good things to come in 2016. We have a lot to look forward to.

Dan Ficken
President, CPAWS-NL



Baleen makes a big splash



If you're a whale and looking to make an entrance, World Oceans Day is the day to dive in. Baleen made a huge splash at celebrations in St. Johns in June. More than 2000 participants stopped by the Marine Institute to take in the exhibits, so Baleen was greeted by an endless stream of young and old visitors eager to learn more about our oceans.



She was super happy to be involved in our celebrations and we were happy to have her join us and our partners for the 5th anniversary of this fun-filled event! Although the event grows every year in fun, size and enthusiasm, Baleen offered up an extra "hump" of entertainment. She even got well-acquainted with the WWF's Panda. The start of a beautiful relationship, perhaps?



Making sure all waste goes from *Ship to Shore*



Photo by Holly Lake

If you take it out on a boat, bring it back to shore.

That's the thinking behind the Ship to Shore project, a pilot being run out of Petty Harbour to reduce the amount of waste finding its way into our oceans.

With the help of our partner, The Clean Foundation of Nova Scotia, we plan to work with local fishers, marine vessel operators and

harbour management to encourage them to bring all their waste back to shore and dispose of it appropriately.

This program tackles concerns about improper disposal of marine waste at sea and on land, and strives to improve waste infrastructure needs at commercial fishing harbours to reduce the amount of

accumulating waste. As part of our efforts, we're going to identify any barriers ocean users may face when it comes to proper disposal.

We want to encourage participants to keep trash where it belongs -- out of our oceans.

Paws off the park!

The campaign to build a buffer around Gros Morne continues

When you've got a jewel in your backyard, you treat it like a treasure. That's how we feel about Gros Morne National Park.

Last spring, we teamed up with CPAWS' national office, as well as some key volunteers, and conducted a series of meetings with various party members to talk about fracking and the need for a buffer zone around the park.

We followed up on those meetings with an evening at Erin's Pub in St. John's to celebrate the park and its beauty, and to raise awareness about the need for a buffer zone. A similar function was held in Corner Brook in the summer.

We'll be holding more stakeholder meetings and workshops in the coming year.

SAVE GROS MORNE NATIONAL PARK

Gros Morne is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Let's keep it that way!
In response to concerns about proposed oil drilling and fracking metres from Gros Morne National Park, UNESCO recommended that a protective buffer zone be created around the Park.

Join the thousands of Canadians who support the buffer zone.
Take action at: www.savegrosorne.ca

CPAWS
CANADIAN PARKS AND WILDERNESS SOCIETY
and concerned local citizens

In the meantime, you can show your support for Gros Morne by adding your name to our online petition.

Working for more protected areas

First forum in a decade to identify provincial needs



Photo by David Rendell

For the first time in a decade, a forum on protected areas was held in our province to identify the needs of and threats facing our land and water.

Organized by our chapter and Nature Newfoundland and Labrador, the May 13 event in St. John's was well-attended by nearly 50 people. A collection of panel discussions and speakers presented their experiences and views in regards to protected areas on land and in the marine environment.

A list of proceedings were developed and can be found here on [our website](#).

We have another forum coming up at the end of January, with a focus on marine protected areas. Stay tuned!



Dan Ficken addresses the forum



CPAWS' Suzanne Dooley and her son Colton release puffins in Witless Bay

Photo by Sébastien Deprés

Another year filled with flocks of volunteer patrollers

Things got flapping on our puffin patrols in mid-August and kept us busy until the middle of November.

With the help of our wonderful volunteers, including many new patrollers from all over the world, we were able to rescue more than 250

puffins and had sightings and reports of petrels all across the Avalon Peninsula. Our morning releases also attracted 150 visitors.

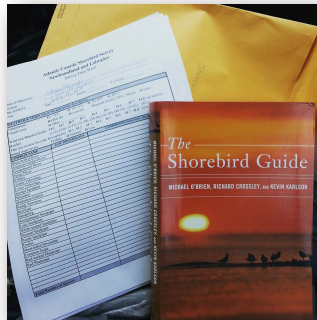
In November, the wonderful work done by so many for our puffins was profiled on *The Nature of Things*, which you can watch [here](#).

As always, we continue to work closely with residents who live near the Witless Bay Ecological Reserve and with local councils to reduce the problems artificial lighting causes for our feathered friends through education and new lighting.



Puffin Patrol volunteers. Photo by Suzanne Dooley

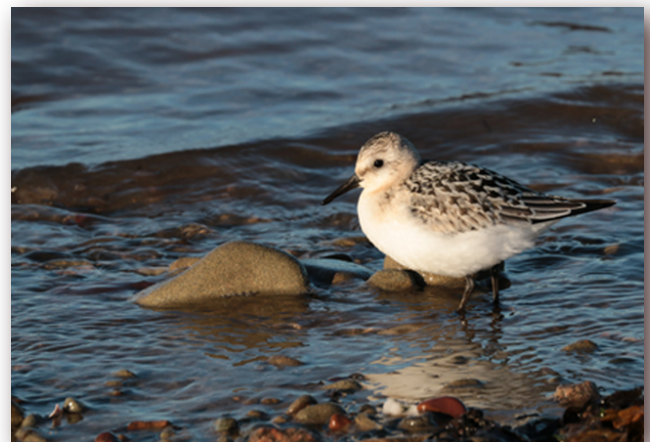
This was also a great year for our shorebird surveys, with new volunteers taking on new beaches across the province.



We've now expanded to more than 30 beaches, including Random Island, Stephenville Crossing, Swift Current, Forteau, Eddies Cove East and Garnish, as well as several new sites along the Labrador coast.

We're looking forward to once again keeping a collective eye on the province's many seabirds this coming season.

Care to join us?
Get in touch!



Photos by Jeannine Winkel



Doing right by feathered and finned friends

By Jeannine Winkel

The first thing I have to say is that I love, love, love my job.

The Witless Bay Ecological Reserve is such an amazing place, I feel like I fall more in love with it every day I'm lucky enough to be out there. With over 600,000 Atlantic puffins, a several million strong medley of seabirds, feeding humpback whales, frolicking dolphins and the beautifully rugged Newfoundland coastline, who wouldn't fall in love?

For the past six summers, I've worked as an interpreter for Molly Bawn Whale and Puffin Tours within the reserve and still can't get enough. I'd hazard to guess that most of our passengers feel the same.

We are a smaller tour boat operation, taking only groups of up to 12 at a time out of Mobile. This allows me to give guests a more intimate tour and tell them not only about the most obvious and most popular animals, like humpback whales and puffins, but to also focus on the other



Jeannine is a naturalist and Witless Bay Ecological Reserve steward
Photo by Scott Campbell

amazing aquatic life forms in our waters, like tiny, glowing comb jellies. From the smallest marine critters to the largest, everything is connected. They're all beautiful in their own way and have a purpose in this network. I want people to see how wonderful and valuable they are, and how our marine life is also in need of protection.

After our tour, many guests seem to see the sea a little differently. Unfortunately, not everything out there is great.

In recent years, I've seen an increase in human behaviours that disturb seabirds and mammals in the reserve, mostly by privately-operated pleasure crafts. This increase started to be most obvious right after the former reserve manager's (Holly Hogan) position was cut. It makes me sad to see that, because the summer months are so critical for whales and seabirds to find enough food for themselves and their babies.



Photos by Jeannine Winkel

Life in the North Atlantic is hard enough on them without extra human disturbance, and now no one with the authority seems to put any effort into intervening.

As a steward for the reserve, I write weekly reports about how the animals are doing and how many disturbances I've observed.



But I'd like to do more because I believe that many private boaters would act differently if someone took the time to explain to them why certain behaviours are harmful.

In cooperation with CPAWS, I've been working on creating signs with simple, graphic messages to post at the most frequented launching sites around the Witless Bay Reserve.

My hope is that this will make some difference for the animals.



Puffins and whales bring so many visitors to our province, we owe them better protection to make their stays here as safe and comfortable as we can.

They're certainly not a never-ending resource that will be here forever to entertain our visitors if we don't do right by them.

Progress in Boreal Forest Conservation

By Dr. John Jacobs

We've made good progress over the last year through our involvement with the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement and the auditing process of Forest Stewardship Council international certification for the Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Limited.

Dr. Ian Goudie and myself continued to represent CPAWS on the Newfoundland working group of the forest agreement, with Dr. Chris Miller, CPAWS' national conservation biologist, providing critical guidance.

Meetings were held every few months with the folks in Corner Brook and representatives from the Forest Products Association of Canada. After two years of considerable scientific analyses, the working group has produced a benchmark report for protected areas for the island portion of the province.

It identifies a range of areas of interest that are ranked based on the size and extent of intact landscape, as well as the catchments they contain.

It's been well-received in academic circles and by the scientific review committee of the forest agreement.

The working group is now looking at the agreement with a finer filter to identify spaces within the defined forest area that could be optimal sites for ecological conservation.

Late last year, the group also started working on a woodland caribou strategy.

Expect more news to come from our forests.

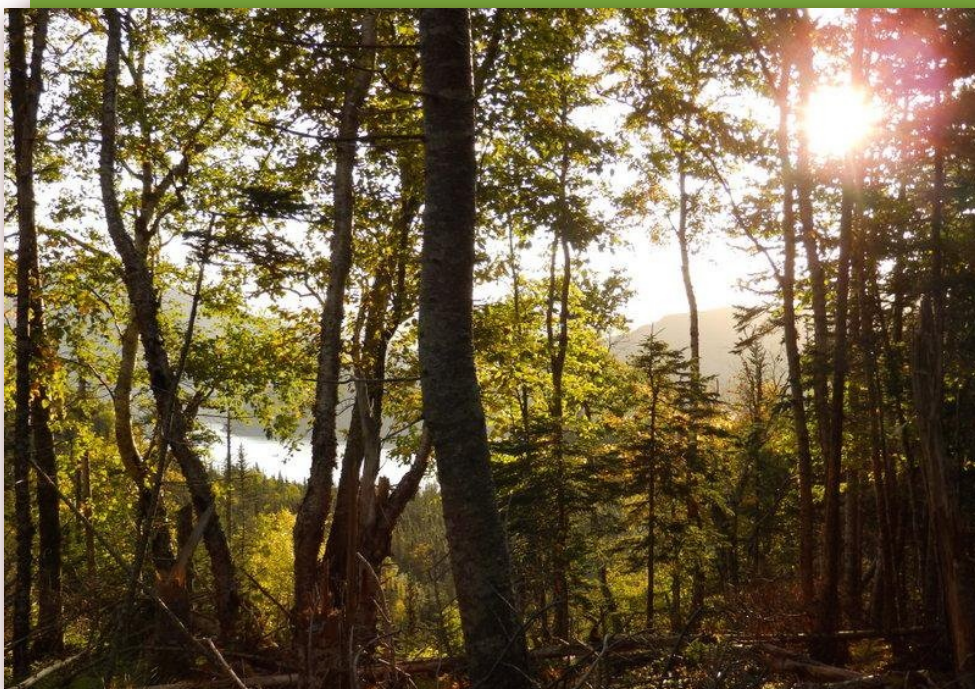


Photo by Jeannine Winkel



Don't be a stranger!

Photo by Jeannine Winkel

... Stay in touch and up to date!

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