

FEBRUARY 2020 | YOUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT, DAN FICKEN

Hello CPAWS supporters and nature enthusiasts! While we are well into 2020, the last month of record breaking snowfall in Eastern Newfoundland almost made time stop for some of us. I hope that many of you have made the best of a snowy situation and have taken advantage of the great natural outdoor conditions for skiing, snowshoeing, bird watching in the forest, or even just getting some fresh winter air and taking the time to observe nature in your backyard (in between never-ending shovelling!). While the new year and decade has started with a winter storm filled bang for some of us, I would like to take a moment to look back on the year past of our accomplishments and activities in 2019.

I would first like to extend congratulations on the designation of the Laurentian Channel Marine Protected Area (MPA), Canada's largest fully protected MPA to date. The MPA designation by the Federal Government also represents a whopping 9 years of dedication by CPAWS as chapter staff have spent countless working hours in consultation with the stakeholders and decision makers with the goal of setting a very high science-driven standard of protection for this ecologically rich and diverse marine region. In addition to the standard setting designation of the Laurentian Channel, CPAWS-NL is also pleased to announce that Canada has now met the international challenge and has also set a high bar of minimum standards for all future MPA designations. This means newly created MPA's will not allow dumping, oil and gas, bottom trawling, or mining, a huge step forward for our oceans! We are also on track as a nation in achieving the goal of 10% marine protection by 2020, which means more to come by the end of this year. However, I must mention that according to the 2019 CPAWS Oceans Report (Dare To Be Deep) species survival in our oceans continue to decline, the right

CPAWS-NL WELCOME'S CATHERINE AS NEW MARINE ASSISTANT



This January, CPAWS-NL welcomed Catherine Ducey as our new Marine Assistant! Catherine is in the final stages of completing a Master of Marine Studies in Marine Spatial Planning and Management at the Marine Institute. Catherine is very interested in the conservation and sustainability of our oceans. CPAWS-NL are happy to have Catherine join our team. Catherine can be reached at nlmarine@cpaws.org

whale being a particularly significant species of dire concern in our waters among others, and CPAWS is recommending that we reach a minimum of 30% ocean protection by 2030 in order to ensure the survival of our troubled marine species. This is the decade to get to triple!

Switching gears, I would like to give special mention to the volunteer and staff efforts of CPAWS-NL's Puffin and Petrel Patrol. In 2019, in partnership with CWS we rescued and banded over 320 pufflings in the Witless Bay region. Building on this we expanded our program to communities in the Conception Bay areas to help with Leach's Storm Petrels and educated community members and school children on the relationship between seabirds and artificial lighting.

Other activities I would like to mention include the creation of Top 10 Priority Coastal Areas which have high priority of higher protection. Also, the continuation of harbour designations with the Ship to Shore program (which vastly reduces marine pollution through the environmental education and cooperation of ocean users to commit to taking important steps in proper waste disposal), and continued work in consultation with the provincial government and related stakeholders in protection of critical terrestrial areas and the creation of new protected areas, which includes continued support for release of the long-awaited but still unreleased Natural Areas Systems Plan (NASP), one of the key pillars of CPAWS-NL's mandate. According to the 2019 CPAWS Parks Report (Canada's Nature Emergency), Canada and the world is in the midst of a nature emergency on par with our planets climate emergency. Recognition of this by all key decision makers and the willingness to work together to find a solution will be of utmost importance this coming decade.

In closing, I would like to say I think we can do this. I think we can achieve these goals and more. The dedicated staff of CPAWS-NL and of all the chapters across the country are doing amazing professional work in collaborating with governments and land and ocean users alike, and I can foresee their hard work will guide us all towards true conservation standards for the province, and country, over the next decade. And to all of you reading, I want to thank you for all the things you do, big and small, that contribute to the well-being of the environment and that promote conservation. Here's to a new year and decade looking ahead!

Dan Ficken President - CPAWS-NL



Photo Credit: Suzanne Dooley



Photo Credit: Ocean Quest



Pictured: Dan Ficken
President- CPAWS-NL

LEACH'S STORM-PETRELS: HOW WE DID?

This past fall, CPAWS-NL staff were very busy raising awareness about Leach's Storm-Petrel strandings in the Conception Bay Area.

We worked closely with communities that had prominent strandings in years past, as well as with local industry and businesses to prepare them for the 2019 fledging season. Through our visits, we educated workers, community members and children at local schools on what to do if they find a Leach's Storm-Petrel and on the things that they can do at their workplaces and homes to help.



Photo Credit: Ingrid Pollet

We had a great response to our awareness campaign . After receiving over 100 reports of stranded petrels this fall, with the help of community members and industry we rescued and released over 400 Leach's Storm-Petrels. Thank you to all of our supporters and community partners who helped make this fall fledging season a huge success.

TOP 10 SPECIAL MARINE AREAS: GROS MORNE NATIONAL PARK

Gros Morne National Park is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, located on Newfoundland's west coast. It is characterized by strikingly beautiful coastal plains, fjords and coastal cliffs.

Its marine environment is also considered important by biologists for its variety of marine habitats and as this location has the highest biodiversity in Newfoundland. Although Gros Morne is a World Heritage Site, it lacks marine protection below the high water mark.



Photo Credit: Good Free Photos

Despite high biodiversity in the area, over-fishing has caused population depletion and large expansions of residential and tourism-related industrial development is occurring on portions of the shoreline that are not included in Gros Morne National Park.

WHITE ATLANTIC PUFFINS?

A STORY FROM JEANNINE WINKEL

In 2013 CPAWS-NL's Jeannine Winkel, caught her first glimpse of a white puffin on the Witless Bay Ecological Reserve. Upon further research she discovered that white puffins are very rare, but can be found throughout the breeding range. As a summer boat tour interpreter and an offshore seabird observer for Canadian Wildlife Services (CWS), Winkel has been keeping an eye out for these interesting birds ever since.

In 2016 she spotted a white puffin again. "Not only did I spot a white puffin, I was able to show it to all of our passengers before it disappeared, I also snapped a few photos," she told of the encounter. Because they would now spend part of the cruise scanning puffins on the water in search of the single white one, the crew named the bird Waldo. "We can tell that this bird appears to be younger than 5 years, as it does not have many grooves in the orange part of the bill." More detailed photos however are necessary to learn more about Waldo and to determine what type of mutation may have caused the white colour.

To the best of our knowledge, Waldo is the only white puffin that has been photographed in Newfoundland so far. One interesting behavior that was noted in the white puffin is that it always seems to be the last puffin taking off.

"Melanin, which is responsible for dark feathers, does not only provide color, but also makes them more resistant to wear and tear", according to Winkel. Perhaps this makes Waldo's feathers weaker than those of a regular puffin and makes flight harder. Waldo also always seems to sit on the outskirts of the group, this may be due to Waldo's strange appearance in the eyes of other puffins. Although somewhat of an outcast, Winkel hopes that Waldo will find a loving mate once mature enough to start a family- and maybe Waldo will even pass on these traits to some pufflings. Waldo has not been spotted since 2016, but the crew did spot a puffin with a white back in 2017 and again in 2018. During summer 2019, they spotted another partially white puffin throughout the season. Like Waldo, both of these birds also were loyal to their resting locations near Great Island.

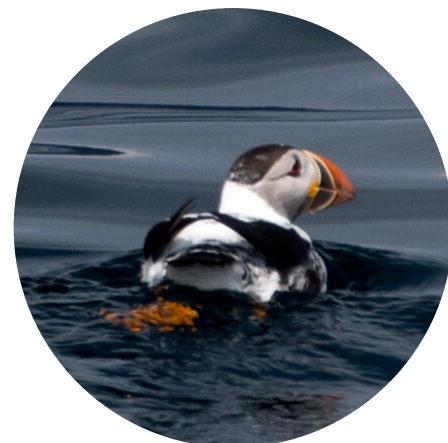


Photo Credit: Jeannine Winkel and Ryan Murphy



DO YOU HAVE SUGGESTIONS, COMMENTS OR CONTRIBUTIONS?

We are always looking for inspiring stories, photos and ideas to help us engage Canadians in nature conservation. Do you have any great stories about your experiences in nature? Pitch your ideas and content to us at nlcoordinator@cpaws.org!



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