



# CPAWS

CANADIAN PARKS AND WILDERNESS SOCIETY  
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR CHAPTER

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## September 2022 Newsletter





## CANADIAN PARKS AND WILDERNESS SOCIETY NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR CHAPTER

Dear Supporter,

September has flown by and fall is in full swing! Despite this past month looking a bit different for us with the Avian Flu, we still have had quite the busy month, you can read about it more below.

In observance of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, which is today, September 30th, we would like to invite you to join our staff in taking time to learn about the traditional stewards of the land, freshwater, and ocean in Canada, and reflect on our responsibility to continue learning about the history and current experiences of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. This newsletter features a piece written by Stanley Oliver, on reconciliation and conservation that we hope you find as impactful as we have.

### **Reconciliation and Conservation**

*Written by Stanley Oliver*

Reconciliation has become a topic of interest at many tables, including Protection and Conservation. It is a very powerful word and can arouse a lot of sentiment and sometimes even debate. But what does it really mean in terms of Conservation? Well-reconciliation can mean different things to different people (scientist and Indigenous). As such each group/assembly (associations with First Nations, Inuit and Metis established bodies) may wish to define what reconciliation-conservation-protection means from their perspective.

One of the saddest things and worst impact of Colonialism was the removal of Indigenous people from their-our land and waters-the very places where we continue to find our strength, identity and our inherent right and place in this world. Accordingly, true reconciliation requires a sincere discussion about conservation which includes the past and present. But reconciliation talks must also be rooted in the land and waters. It calls for a respectful relationship, that is also ingrained in the central connection to the land and waters that continues to provide healing to Indigenous people and communities.

Indigenous and local communities are inclined to thrive in terms of conservation for several reasons. Indigenous people and communities have long standing histories with their lands and waters, which have provided Indigenous families nourishment and sustenance in a very direct and intimate way since time immemorial. Indigenous people (especially our elders) have a unique relationship and understand the many uses and the values of hundreds of natural species (trees, fish, birds, insects' rocks etc.). Some say they see the forest differently than others. This feeling/observation must be recognized, respected, and included in any government led process. There is an Inuit word "Silas" that refers to everything, the sky, the waters, and the land. Everything affects each other, everything is connected a truly holistic approach.

Indigenous leaders are now vociferously encouraging government and policy writers to not only focus on a single management topic but rather look at the function of landscapes-waters and what is important to keep in terms of whole ecosystem connectivity, how different habitats-species may be managed to complement each other?

One-way Indigenous people suggest to government, interest groups and agencies (such as the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency) is the fundamental inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge in balance with Western Science. Indigenous and local knowledge holders continue to be a significant part of protecting the planet's biodiversity and the overall health of all our ecosystems. I would suggest and insist that governments and scientists need to be allies with Indigenous people and communities by developing/strengthening Indigenous voices-governing bodies, including scientific assessments, recognizing territorial rights and creating collaborations between researchers and indigenous and local communities. One of the most important aspects is that governments really must respect Indigenous knowledge and values.

Officially, Webster's Dictionary defines the term reconciliation as simply the act of the unification of parties at variance (difference), renewal of friendship after disagreement or animosity. Further to this, Webster explains that reconciliation is "the state of things that are seemingly opposite, different, and inconsistent.

Shortly after being elected as the leader of the Liberal party and defeating Stephen Harper, Prime Minister (PM) Justin Trudeau proclaimed a National Day of Reconciliation. He also pushed his Indigenous rights recognition framework and stirred debate on ending or "decolonizing" the 1876 Indian Act, which gave Ottawa control over most aspects of Indigenous life, from health and education to land development.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (T&RC) final report (released in 2015) of Canada chaired by Murray Sinclair describes the term reconciliation as "an ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships. It adds that "a critical part of this prescribed process involves mending and repairing damaged trust by making well deserved apologies, providing specific ways to include Indigenous people in official processes and following through with tangible actions that demonstrate real inclusion and change.

The T&RC report further goes on to make clear that creating respectful relationships also requires the revitalization of important related Indigenous law and legal traditions/customs. It is crucially vital that all Canadians better understand how traditional Indigenous Knowledge and philosophies helps in resolving possible conflict, repairing harm, and ultimately restoring those broken relationships that can benefit and contribute to economic and environmental stability of possible natural resources development.

Indigenous people of Canada deserve better, "it can no longer be about us, without us" approach (not my quote). Hence, if we as a Canadian society want to really move forward in terms of reconciliation and conservation and it is important enough for all of us, an absolute necessity remains to have those respectful inclusion discussions and work towards and amicable reciprocal relationship.



## LIGHT ATTRACTION RESEARCH UPDATE FROM THIS SUMMER!

 @TBrown\_birds

### Light Attraction Research Update!

Hi again everyone! This past August, you may have seen my bright experiment light shining out over the water at Witless Bay's Lower Pond beach and Ragged Beach some evenings. My experiment ran for 11 nights total, and was a great success! Without getting too deep into the details, it did appear that my bright light attracted pufflings. We made sure to count all the pufflings we saw, as well as document their behaviour in detail, and we made every effort to capture puffins that might have been brought into town by our lights. Hopefully, once I can delve into the data a bit more, I can release more information about our results. But for now, I would like to thank CPAWS, the Canadian Wildlife Service, and the Town of Witless Bay for all of their essential support of this project. I look forward to coming back next year and working with these wonderful organizations again to figure out how we can prevent pufflings from getting stranded in town!

- Taylor

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Although this season looked very different than past years, we were still able to help stranded pufflings! We thank you once again for your understanding and help reporting any sightings.

This year 91 pufflings were measured and released this fledging season! While this number may seem lower than other years, it is consistent with what we would expect based on moon phase and mean body mass. Also, despite lower search effort, the majority of stranded pufflings were found alive and successfully released!

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Photo Credit: Morgan E. Gilmour



Photo Credit: Schlave, C



### Nature Feature: Leach's Storm-Petrel

Leach's Storm-Petrels leave their burrows from September to mid-November. When juvenile Leach's Storm Petrels fledge their burrows to make their way out to sea.

Fledging occurs during the night to avoid predators, using the moon and stars as their navigation system, leading them to the ocean.

Unfortunately, just like juvenile puffins, on overcast or foggy nights, many chicks become disoriented and are attracted to artificial lights along the coast. Street lights, vehicle headlights, and home lights can all throw these little birds off course—leading them to navigate toward land instead of out to the open ocean, often leaving them stranded!

Stranded petrels are great at hiding! They take shelter to hide away from predators like cats, foxes, and other birds. Keep an eye out for them, as they can be hard to spot.

**You can report any sightings of stranded petrels to CPAWS-NL at 709-327-5365 by call or text!**

## Share your thoughts!

Do you have any great stories about experiences in nature, environmental events or other topics that you would like to see published on our blog or newsletter? Have any thoughts or ideas about the new newsletter format? Pitch your ideas to us at [csimmons@cpaws.org](mailto:csimmons@cpaws.org)!

As always, feel free to reach out with any questions or issues that you many have. Send us an [email](#), give us a call at 709-726-5800, or [visit our website](#) to find out how to [volunteer](#) or make a [donation](#). Also, if you're interested in keeping up to date on what's new and exciting at CPAWS-NL follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) or [Twitter](#) for regular updates.

All the best,

CPAWS Newfoundland and Labrador Team

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