



# Newfoundland and Labrador Wetlands and Coastal Habitat Conservation and Stewardship

Stewardship Association of Municipalities Inc.  
**\$45,000 Grant**



CREDITS: Stewardship Association of Municipalities Inc.



This project engaged a number of municipal councils in the signing of new or expanded municipal stewardship agreements, implemented a variety of education and outreach activities and events and achieved significant progress in completing a digitally mapped inventory, assessment and prioritization of significant estuaries and beaches found along the province’s coastline.

**Project Achievements:**

- 7 municipal councils were engaged in habitat conservation via formal stewardship agreements, securing 388 acres of habitat.
- 12 municipalities (441 individuals) were engaged in education and habitat enhancement activities.
- 157 important coastal estuaries, beach and dune sites were mapped and documented for future conservation efforts.



*A Stewardship Agreement represents a formal public commitment by a community, individual, the Stewardship Association of Municipalities Inc. and the province, to act together over the long-term to conserve habitat for wildlife.*

*Since 1993, thirty-nine municipalities in the province have become involved through the signing of Municipal Habitat Stewardship Agreements securing over 41,000 acres of wildlife habitat, primarily wetlands.*





Murre hunting is a traditional activity and a part of the cultural heritage of Newfoundland and Labrador. The regulations permit only hunters from Newfoundland and Labrador to harvest Murre in Canada and only within the provincial boundaries. Since 2001, Murre hunters have been required to purchase a Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permit, which includes the Canadian Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp. It was agreed that a associated portion of Stamp funds from Murre hunters be directed to support Murre conservation activities.

The priorities of the NL Murre Conservation Fund are to fund projects that support the conservation and management of Murre populations and their habitat, and to provide funding for projects that involve the people of Newfoundland and Labrador in the conservation, management, and the sustainable harvest of Murre.



## Top-down and Bottom-up Influences on Common Murres Breeding in Coastal Newfoundland: Productivity, Foraging Effort, and Impacts of Gull Predation on Breeding Common Murres

University of Manitoba  
**\$10,000 Grant**

This study examined parental foraging effort and productivity (i.e. breeding success) of Common Murres at two colonies on the northeast Newfoundland coast, along with Great Black-backed Gull predation rates of murre eggs and chicks in the context of varying prey (capelin) biomass.

### Project Achievements:

- Breeding common murres (COMU) on Funk Island (a large, offshore colony) foraged farther from the colony and over a larger area (i.e. higher foraging effort) than those on South Cabot Island (small, inshore colony).
- Great black-backed gulls (GBBG) showed high individual-level variation in use of the COMU colony as a foraging site.
- Gull diets primarily consisted of capelin, although some individuals appeared to specialize on COMU eggs.
- Murre egg/chick predation by gulls decreased during high capelin biomass relative to low biomass, while kleptoparasitic attacks revealed the opposite trend.



CREDIT: Julia Gulka





## Population Monitoring and Tracking Murres at the Gannet Islands, NL

Acadia University

**\$10,000 Grant**

Researchers travelled to the massive Gannet Islands auk colonies to assess population trends, marine habitat use, and breeding success of the 4 auks nesting there; however, predators (bears and foxes) arrived at the islands in 2018 and most birds abandoned nesting for the season.

### Project Achievements:

- Tracked 4 auk species to determine specific marine habitat use.
- Took blood samples from birds to compare mercury levels to these same species breeding elsewhere.
- Banded hundreds of birds, with population counts suggesting declines in some species, most notably: Common Murres.



*CREDIT: Acadia University*

## Identifying Critical Habitats for Murres throughout the Annual Cycle

McGill University

**\$10,000 Grant**

Tiny tracking devices were used to study the movement of Thick-billed murres year-round. Mapping was completed to illustrate the year-round hotspots for murres in the Arctic and Atlantic oceans.

### Project Achievements:

- Collected data on the year-round movements and behaviour of 31 Thick-billed murres from Coats Island, Nunavut.
- Mapped the distribution of Thick-billed murres throughout the year.
- Maps were provided to stakeholders for the planning of their Marine Protected Areas.



*CREDIT: McGill University*

