
Report 2005-2007

Newfoundland and Labrador Murre Conservation Fund

Prepared by the Newfoundland and Labrador Legacy Nature Trust
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Establishment of the Newfoundland and Labrador Murre Conservation Fund

The Newfoundland and Labrador Murre Conservation Fund (“the Fund”) was created in 2005 by the Newfoundland and Labrador Legacy Nature Trust (LNT), Wildlife Habitat Canada (WHC), the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and Environment Canada’s Canadian Wildlife Service to support the conservation of murre.

Hunters have long supported conservation initiatives across Canada by purchasing the Canadian Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp. In 2001, purchase of the Habitat Conservation Stamp became a requirement for licenses issued in Newfoundland and Labrador for hunting murre (also called turrs), and revenues for the Murre Conservation Fund come from the purchase of these conservation stamps by turr hunters. It’s a direct way for hunters to help conserve populations of these birds that are so important to them.

The Murre Conservation Fund encourages the conservation of murre as functioning components of ecosystems, and as a contribution toward the biological diversity of native species and habitats in Newfoundland and Labrador. The priorities of the Murre Conservation Fund are to provide funding for projects that introduce people of Newfoundland and Labrador to the conservation, management and traditional uses of turrs, and to fund projects that support conservation and management of turr populations and their habitat. This may include assessments of murre breeding populations, productivity, survival, harvests and other mortality factors, as well as projects that focus on long term conservation of high quality habitat, particularly that which is vulnerable.

This is a special report on the two foundational years of the Fund, covering the period from early 2005 to March 31, 2007. Subsequent reports will cover an annual period from April 1 to March 31 of the preceding fiscal year.

Meetings

On February 15, 2005, the then named Murre Conservation Working Group held a conference call to discuss the details of an agreement concerning the administration and disbursement of revenues derived from the sale of Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamps to murre hunters in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Working Group evolved into the Newfoundland and Labrador Murre Conservation Fund Committee (“the Committee”) comprising representatives of:

- Environment Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service
- Wildlife Habitat Canada
- Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Department of Environment and Conservation, Wildlife Division
- Murre Advisory Group
- Academic Community.

Members of the Committee became signatories of the agreement, with the LNT having observer status on the Committee.

The official announcement of the Murre Fund took place on June 21, 2005, at an event in St. Andrews in Newfoundland’s and Labrador’s Codroy Valley. Peter Gray-Donald and Jean Cinq-Mars, respectively Chairman of the Board and President of Wildlife Habitat Canada, presented a cheque amount of \$86,600 to Toby Rowe, Executive Director of the LNT. This amount included funds derived from the sale of Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamps to murre hunters in the province since 2001.

Six meetings of the Committee subsequently took place at the LNT office in St. John’s, Newfoundland and Labrador, with some members joining the meetings by teleconference. These initial meetings focused mainly on the development of appendices to the Fund Agreement, and other documents as listed below:

- Appendix I: Priority Program Areas
- Appendix II: Proposal Submission Guidelines and Application
- Appendix III: Conditions for Awarding Funds
- Terms of Reference of the Newfoundland and Labrador Murre Conservation Fund Committee
- Funding Agreement between the Fund and grant recipients.

Projects Approved for 2007-2008

Applications for the 2007-2008 project-year were accepted at the LNT office between September 1 and November 30, 2006. Five applications in total were received, all of which were appropriate for consideration by the Committee.

2007-2008 applications were reviewed at a Committee meeting on February 7, 2007. For each project application, individual Committee members completed a standardized evaluation

sheet prior to the meeting. Committee members agreed that the evaluation sheet was a useful tool in reviewing the applications against the priorities of the Fund.

Four of the five applications were approved for funding in 2007-2008. A total amount of \$62,704 was approved to be disbursed as grants to the following projects in 2007-2008:

Project #1 - \$12,000

Project Title: "Reproductive and Parental Behaviour of Common Murres"
Recipient: Dr. Anne E. Storey and Dr. Carolyn J. Walsh,
Dept of Psychology, Memorial University

Project #3 - \$25,000

Project Title: "Stewardship and Responsible Hunting of Turrs"
Recipient: Dr. Kathleen Blanchard,
Intervale and Associates Inc.

Project #4 - \$6,000

Project Title: "An investigation into population status, reproductive success and phenology of Common and Thick-billed Murre colonies on the Gannet Islands"
Recipient: Dr. Tony Diamond,
University of New Brunswick

Project #5 - \$19,704

Project Title: "Year-round Tracking of Murres in Newfoundland and Labrador"
Applicant: Dr. William Montevecchi,
Memorial University

Further details on the objectives, activities and results of the above projects will be included in the 2007-2008 Annual Report of the Newfoundland and Labrador Murre Conservation Fund.

Media and Communications

A media release was issued on June 22, 2005, following the announcement of the Fund's establishment at an event in St. Andrew's in the Codroy Valley, Newfoundland and Labrador. The release detailed the objectives of the Fund and other background information, highlighting the contribution that Murre hunters are making to Murre conservation efforts.

On August 17, 2006, a media release announced the Fund's upcoming application period of September 1 to November 30. This media release was aimed to promote awareness of the

Fund to groups, individuals and communities that may be interested in submitting an application.

Following the media release of August 17, 2006, the Fund participated in two radio interviews, with CBC radio Corner Brook on August 31 and with CBC radio Gander on September 1. Tammy Baldwin of the LNT participated in the interviews and provided information related to the Fund. Greg Robertson of the Canadian Wildlife Service also participated, answering questions related to the Murre hunt and the status of Murre populations in the province.

Financial Summary

Upon the signing of the Fund Agreement in June 2005, WHC transferred to the LNT the accrued revenues from wildlife habitat conservation stamp sales to Murre hunters in the province in the 2001-02, 2002-03, and 2003-04 hunting seasons (\$86,600). In October 2006, WHC transferred \$39,366.45, which included an additional \$4,765.50 as an adjustment to payments in previous years, plus 30% of the proceeds from conservation stamp sales in 2005-06 (\$34,600.95). In February 2007, WHC transferred an advance of \$20,000 from stamp sales in 2006-07.

Revenues received by the LNT are used to establish and administer the Fund and to provide grants to projects with conservation activities that enhance Murre management in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Fund is administered by the LNT who receives direction from the Newfoundland and Labrador Murre Conservation Fund Committee.

Financial Summary	
June 1, 2005 – March 31, 2007	
Receipts	
2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04, 2004-05	91,365
2005-06	34,601
2006-07 (advance)	20,000
	\$ 145,966
Expenses	
Human Resources	7,900
Office	1,085
Meetings	29
Travel	740
Legal services	407
	\$ 10,161
