

# Habitat Conservation Plan for the Town of Lewisporte



Male Yellow Warbler (*Setophaga petechia*) in Lewisporte. Staff photo

**February 2019**



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## **Municipal Stewardship Agreement for the Town of Lewisporte**

**THIS AGREEMENT** made at Lewisporte, in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada, this 27 day of September, 2017

**BETWEEN:**                    **HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN IN RIGHT OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR**, as represented by the Honourable the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources (herein called "the Minister")

- of the one part -

**AND:**                         **THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF LEWISPORTE**, a municipal corporation pursuant to Section 15 of the *Municipalities Act, 1999* (herein called the "The Town")

-of the other part-

**WHEREAS** the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has entered into an Agreement with others for the implementation of the of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan through the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture;

**AND WHEREAS** the parties hereto recognize that the proper protection and management of coastal, wetland and upland habitats are fundamental tools in maintaining and enhancing the wildlife populations, particularly birds, in the province;

**AND WHEREAS** the Minister proposed that certain important wetlands and associated wildlife habitats within the Town be protected and enhanced through and with the cooperation of the Town in accordance with this Agreement and a Habitat Conservation Plan developed hereafter;

**AND WHEREAS** the Town has agreed to enter into this Agreement for the purpose of protecting and enhancing those areas of important habitat within its jurisdiction.

### **NOW THEREFORE IT IS AGREED BY THE PARTIES AS FOLLOWS:**

1. The lands herein delineated and designated as a Management Unit (being the lands outlined on a certain Schedule A annexed hereto) shall be managed in accordance with the terms and conditions of this Agreement including any Habitat Conservation Plan developed hereunder for better protection of the wetlands for waterfowl and other wildlife.

We agree to work towards implementing this *Habitat Conservation Plan* in the Town of Lewisporte:

**SIGNED, SEALED, AND DELIVERED** by the Honourable the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources in the presence of:



Witness

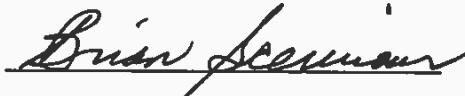


**THE HONOURABLE THE MINISTER OF  
FISHERIES AND LAND RESOURCES**

**THE SEAL OF** the Town Council of the Town of Lewisporte hereunto affixed in the presence of:



Witness



**THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF  
LEWISPORTE**

## Schedule A: Bottom Brook Management Unit

Municipal Habitat Stewardship Agreement

Town of Lewisporte, Newfoundland & Labrador, Canada



**Legend**

-  Management Unit
-  Existing Trail
-  Proposed parking area



Projection: WGS 84 EPSG: 3857  
Sept. 25th 2017

## **Preface**

In the province of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) some of the wildlife and wildlife habitats that are in greatest danger of being negatively impacted are those found within municipalities. In this province, the primary focus of the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture (EHJV) is to conserve valuable wildlife habitat through Stewardship Agreements. The Town of Lewisporte was identified as having ecologically valuable and unique habitat located within its Municipal Planning Area and signed a Stewardship Agreement with the Government of NL on September 27th 2017. The parties committed to conserve and protect the Bottom Brook Estuary. In accordance with the agreement, the Town of Lewisporte manages the designated area with technical advice provided by the provincial Wildlife Division, in part via this Habitat Conservation Plan. With the signing of this plan, both parties accept this Habitat Conservation Plan and will use it to minimize negative impacts within the estuary.

## **Plan Objectives**

- (1) To present an assessment of the habitats and wildlife species designated for conservation.
- (2) To recommend protection, conservation, and enhancement strategies.
- (3) To describe potential initiatives to build support from residents of the Town of Lewisporte.

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## Section 1: Habitat Conservation in Newfoundland and Labrador

Human development has resulted in the destruction or alteration of many types of habitat all over the world. The number and diversity of North America's wildlife species has been declining over the latter half of the twentieth century. Natural habitats are regularly lost to urban, industrial, and agricultural expansion.

Recognizing that habitat conservation could help increase waterfowl populations, in 1986 Canada and the United States (later followed by Mexico) signed the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP, [nawmp.wetlandnetwork.ca](http://nawmp.wetlandnetwork.ca)). This committed us to a long-term partnership to protect wetland habitats. 'Joint ventures' were established across North America to achieve the objectives of NAWMP. The province of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) committed to its participation in the **Eastern Habitat Joint Venture** (EHJV) in 1989.

Today, **EHJV** ([ehjv.ca](http://ehjv.ca)) partners continue to conserve, enhance, and restore wildlife habitat for all birds found across the six eastern Canadian provinces of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, PEI, and NL. Each province implements the partnership slightly differently, with each provincial program coordinated by a separate program manager and involving the cooperation of international partners, including government agencies and non-governmental conservation groups. In NL, the program is administered by the provincial Department of Fisheries and Land Resources (Wildlife Division). Other NL partners include SAM (Stewardship Association of Municipalities), Ducks Unlimited Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service (a branch of Environment and Climate Change Canada), and Nature Conservancy of Canada.

As its primary contribution to the EHJV in NL, the provincial Department of Fisheries and Land Resources created a habitat stewardship program to help municipalities conserve important wildlife habitat found within their planning boundaries. Stewardship Agreements are signed with municipalities so that when land use decisions are made, wildlife habitat will not be forgotten. This Habitat Stewardship Agreement is a public commitment by a municipality and the province to:

- a) Maintain and/or increase wildlife use in important conservation areas (known under the agreement as "Management Units").
- b) Increase Council and public awareness of the importance of 'their' habitat for conserving wildlife.
- c) Empower Council and municipal residents to conserve these habitats through informed development decision-making.



Since 1993, over forty municipalities have signed Habitat Stewardship Agreements in NL. Having now signed its own Stewardship Agreement, the Town of Lewisporte protects an important link in a network of conservation areas in NL and indeed, across North America.



Map of Habitat Stewardship Agreements signed in NL

## Roles of Stewardship Agreement Signatories

**The Province:** The NL Department of Fisheries and Land Resources, through its Wildlife Division, are expected to:

- Write a Habitat Conservation Plan in consultation with the Town (this plan)  
Work with the town to review any developments which are proposed within Bottom Brook Estuary Management Unit (Conservation Area).
- 
- Support Council and local groups in implementing the Stewardship Agreement and Habitat Conservation Plan (often with the partners of the NL Eastern Habitat Joint Venture). This includes assisting with wildlife and habitat conservation education, restoration, or enhancement projects such as those discussed in Section 4.

**The Town:** The Town of Lewisporte and its Mayor and Council are expected to:

- Incorporate the Stewardship Agreement and Habitat Conservation Plan into the Town's next Municipal Plan (**see Section 2a**)
- Protect the Bottom Brook Estuary Management Unit (Conservation Area) from destruction or degradation. The town must contact the EHJV Program Manager at the Wildlife Division (contact info on Page 2) in a timely manner to allow a 30 day written review of proposed development activities (**see Section 2b, c**)
- Implement, over time, the Habitat Conservation Plan in the community with the assistance of the NL EHJV partners (**see Section 2 b, c, d, e, and Section 4**)
- Educate residents, staff and development planners about the agreement, the Habitat Conservation Plan and their respective responsibilities in relation to it (**Section 2 b, c, d, e and Section 4**)
- Participate in SAM (Stewardship Association of Municipalities - **see Section 2f**)

## Section 2: Policies for Habitat Conservation

### a. Incorporate your Stewardship Agreement into your Municipal Plan

During the preparation of any draft Municipal Plan, or during the process of a future Municipal Plan Review or development regulations, the Town Council will incorporate the Stewardship Agreement into any resulting Municipal Plan or related Master Plan. The Management Unit (Conservation Area) **shall be zoned Open Space Conservation, Environmental Conservation, Open Space Recreation**, or some similar consistent zoning designation within any future municipal planning documents as governed by the Urban and Rural Planning Act (2000).

### b. Refer all possible developments to the Wildlife Division

In approving permits, regulations, developments or by-laws which could affect Bottom Brook Estuary, **Council will first consult with the EHJV program manager (709 637 2013)** at the Wildlife Division, Department of Fisheries and Land Resources. Activities will be permitted if they do not result in the loss of wildlife populations or wildlife habitat. Conservation will be at the forefront of management decisions.

### c. Keep riparian buffer areas intact

Riparian buffers are strips of untouched land surrounding wetlands, lakes, rivers, ponds, and streams. They are composed of trees, shrubs, grasses, cattails, and sedges and provide for a high level of wildlife use, as corridors for travel, for protection from predators, and against inclement weather. Healthy riparian areas filter and reduce surface water runoff from upland areas by trapping sediment and filtering out excess nutrients, pesticides and bacteria. Vegetation in riparian areas affects how readily water enters soil and has a positive effect on replenishing of local groundwater. They also serve to anchor soil with roots, helping to build stream banks and prevent erosion and help control flood levels.

Fish habitat quality is strongly influenced by the amount of riparian edge left along shorelines. Treed buffers provide shade and help keep water temperatures down, impact water quality, and provide spawning and rearing areas for fish and nesting areas for waterfowl. They provide food for wildlife when leaves, insects, and larvae drop into the water body off surrounding trees and shrubs.

Restoration projects can rebuild damaged riparian areas; Section 4 contains contact information for professionals with experience in environmental restoration and the SAM guide to plants for restoration projects is at **[samnl.org/restore-habitat](http://samnl.org/restore-habitat)**



The province, via the provincial Lands Act – Section 7(1), requires a crown land reserve (sometimes called an easement or buffer) of 15 metres along all water bodies greater than 1 metre in width and the maintenance of permanent riparian areas next to all watercourses. The town should build awareness of and adherence to this crown land reserve designation by all residents and businesses. This means that lawns should not extend right down to the water, parking lots should not extend right up to the water, etc. The natural vegetation must be left in place. The 15 metre is the minimum protection around all waterbodies and marsh areas and is critical within the Management Unit (Conservation Area).



**Healthy riparian buffers surrounding an urban stream in the autumn.** Staff photo.

#### **d. Form a committee**

We recommend that the Town of Lewisporte establish a committee of council that can help you carry out some of the initiatives described in this plan. This could be called a Wildlife Committee, *Environment and Trails Committee*, *Advisory Committee on the Environment*, or *Habitat Committee* but you are free to choose the name that suits your town and residents best. Usually these committees are chaired by a member of council with volunteers from the local community making up the remainder of its membership.

In our experience a dedicated committee can raise the profile of the habitat conserved by your agreement and increase public support. Many of these types of groups have found benefits in reserving spots in the group for a younger person, a high school student, or both.

These committees can organize events, apply for grants, conduct cleanups and other projects, host hikes and walks, and many other activities including those described in Section 4.

### **e. Understand Fish and Wildlife Enforcement**

The designation of an area under your Stewardship Agreement does not affect hunting, trapping, or fishing rights. Where hunting, trapping, and/or fishing are safe and legal in a certain area, they will remain that way after designation. However, many municipalities are (rightly) concerned about hunting and fishing activities that fall outside what is safe or legal no matter where they take place.

Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Officers can enforce regulations and can be contacted 24/7 at 1 877 820 0999. They can deal with a wide variety of other wildlife-related enforcement issues and are a good contact for poaching issues, hunting in inappropriate areas, and illegal hunting. Your closest office in Gander (50 McCurdy Drive) can be contacted at 709 256 1293.

For enforcement officers to fully understand the problem and to be able to pursue a case, it is helpful to provide a complete picture of the problem, with specific details. Without these details, it can be difficult for enforcement officers to properly follow up. **Appendix 1** provides a form for reporting possible wildlife enforcement issues. It can be used by Council or by residents, provided in printed copies to residents at meetings and events, or kept at the Town Hall for easy access. Developed with provincial wildlife enforcement officers, this form may help your Council or your residents to record information about possible problems with wildlife or habitat.

Enforcing regulations such as these can be complicated, especially where federal/provincial jurisdiction overlaps, and different species are covered by different laws. Partnering with provincial enforcement officers to ensure accuracy, SAM has produced a guide about conservation enforcement issues at [samnl.org/enforcement](http://samnl.org/enforcement).



**24 / 7 report line:  
1.877.820.0999**



## f. Participate in SAM

Since the Town of Lewisporte has signed a Habitat Stewardship Agreement with the province, it is a member of SAM (Stewardship Association of Municipalities, [samnl.org](http://samnl.org)). SAM is an incorporated, non-profit organization whose member municipalities together conserve, enhance, and restore important wildlife habitat. SAM represents its members on issues related to wildlife conservation. SAM maintains a public page about your agreement at [samnl.org/lewisporte](http://samnl.org/lewisporte) featuring maps, photos, facts, and information on local attractions. Please link to this page from your town's website; this will help increase residents' knowledge and understanding of the agreement and program.

SAM meets each spring (May or June) and fall (September or October) with host municipalities rotating among members and regions. Identify a representative of your town (mayor, councillor, staff, or involved resident) to attend at least one of these meetings per year. This will connect Lewisporte to like-minded municipalities and link you to resources and training. You may also be interested in co-hosting a SAM meeting in the Town of Lewisporte in the future; many municipalities enjoy this for the exposure it provides for their wildlife habitat and associated projects.



Field trip at a recent SAM meeting in Grand Falls-Windsor. Staff photo



### Section 3: Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat in Lewisporte



Map of Lewisporte's Municipal Planning Area (purple line) showing the location of Bottom Brook Estuary at the southern end of Lewisporte Harbour.

Lewisporte is a municipality of 3409 people, located in Burnt Bay in Notre Dame Bay on the northern shore of Central Newfoundland. The Notre Dame Bay area has a long history of use by a variety of Indigenous groups due to its seals, fish, and sea birds, demonstrating that this area was rich in wildlife. The area was then settled by Europeans in the late 1800's, who were attracted to the area because of the large amount of birch, spruce, and pine trees. The town was renamed Lewisporte after Lewis Miller, a Scottish entrepreneur who used Lewisporte's harbour to ship lumber from mills at Glenwood and Millertown.

Beginning in 2010, staff visited Lewisporte to conduct field work and deliver presentations to Council. During these field surveys, several important wildlife habitat areas were identified in the municipal planning area of the Town of Lewisporte. The signed agreement designated one of those areas, the Bottom Brook Estuary, which encompasses 58 hectares (143 acres).

The estuary is bounded on the south and east by Highway 340 (Road to the Isles) and on the eastern edge by the business on the eastern side of Main Street. The area extends to the north, into the Lewisporte Harbour (Burnt Bay), to include the island. A small area on the southern edge has been purposely excluded for the visitor parking lot, which is in development.



**American Black Duck** (*Anas rubripes*), one of the most common bird species in the Bottom Brook Estuary. Staff photo.



The Bottom Brook Estuary is home to large numbers of waterfowl (such as American Black Ducks, Green-winged Teal, mergansers) as well as a variety of shorebirds (such as Black-bellied Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Semipalmated Plover, Short-billed Dowitcher, Red Knot) and many species of passerine birds (waxwings, warblers, Tree Swallow, sparrows, and more). The continuously updating list (57 different species of birds at the time of writing) seen in your Conservation Area is at [ebird.org/hotspot/L3793608](http://ebird.org/hotspot/L3793608). Section 4 shows you how to add to this list.

## Existing land uses & potential impacts

### Private land (Issued Crown Land)

There are several known overlapping parcels of issued Crown land surrounding Bottom Brook estuary although most fall into the Crown Lands 15m setback from the waters edge. The larger parcel of land on the small peninsula jutting out into the estuary was originally a grant to William Woolfreys (Document number 10009157) but was deemed to not interfere with the ability of the Town to conserve this land. The Town committed to ensuring that these overlapping lands could be appropriately zoned for conservation.



Parcels of Issued Crown Land (Issued Titles) shown in transparent purple

## **Domestic Wood Cutting**

Lewisporte falls into Forestry Management District 8, Zone 3. Domestic cutting area CC08510 runs along the western side road west of the Bottom Brook estuary but there is no overlap, so there should not be any cutting here. There is no overlap with any commercial cutting; the nearest block (CC08020) is well to the east.

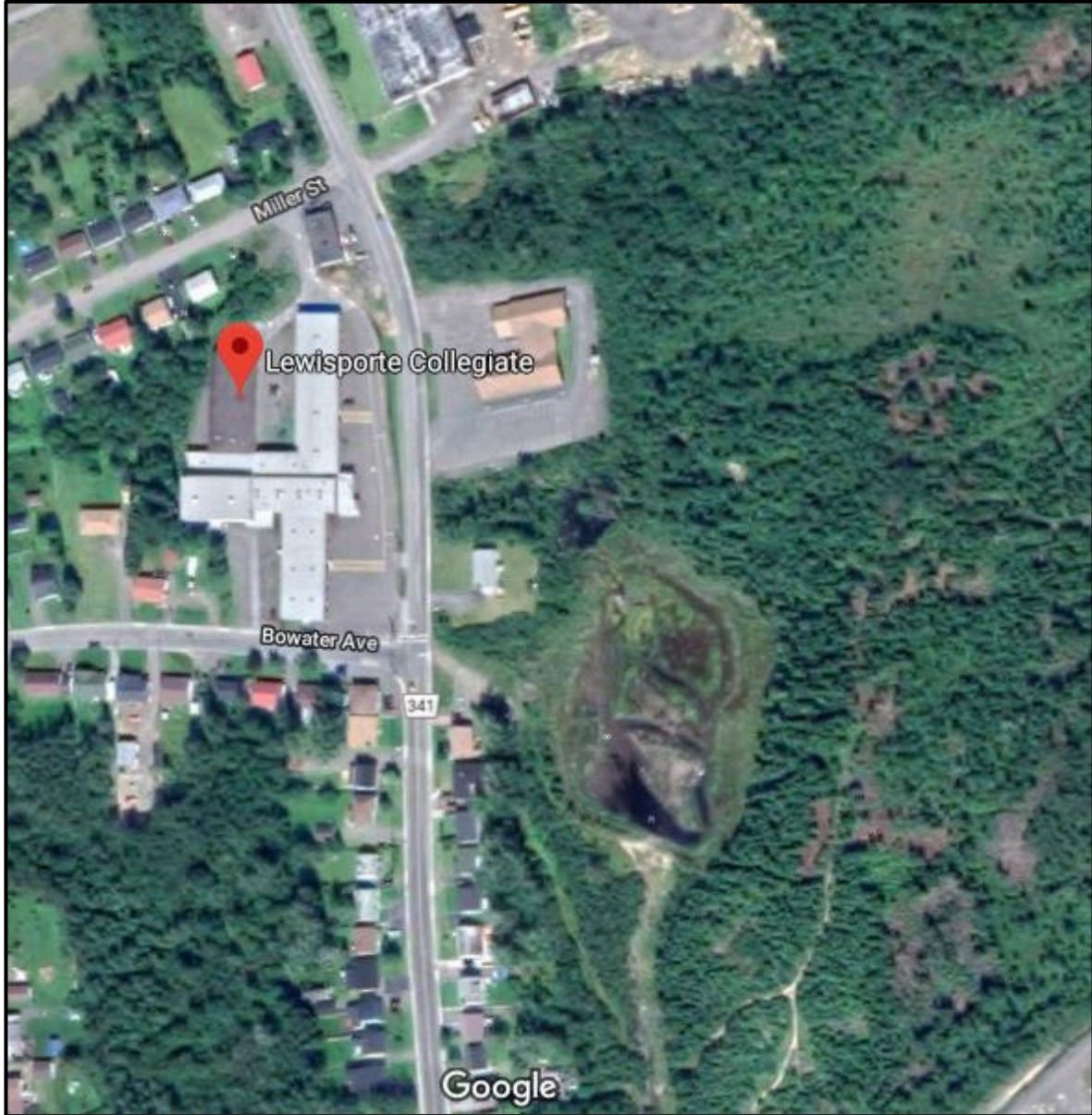
## **Fishing**

Since waterfowl are easily disturbed during the nesting and brood rearing period (May to mid-June), both resident and visiting anglers can help conservation by avoiding them. During the nesting period adult waterfowl will often abandon their nest if disturbed, and broods are very susceptible to predation when left unattended. Avoid nesting sites when working or playing around water.

## **Restoration Projects**

Two possible restoration projects have been identified in Lewisporte. One is to allow a low level of water into “the dam”, a site where a previously occurring wetland has been drained. It was drained to help prevent flooding in basements in the area, but perhaps maintaining some water in this area might allow for waterfowl use while still helping to prevent flooding. Ducks Unlimited Canada is speaking with their technical experts to understand if this would be feasible as the Town of Lewisporte owns a water control structure there.

The second possible project would be to create a wetland in the centre of Lewisporte; this was suggested for an area near the end of Council Road (north of the intersection with Spruce Avenue), as there is already a depression in the landscape there which might facilitate wetland construction.



**The potential restoration site “the dam”** (across the road from Bowater Avenue, east of the intersection with Highway 341/Premier Drive).



## Section 4: Habitat Conservation and Education Strategies

This section presents ideas for community education, engagement, and habitat enhancement that could be implemented over time in the community. Community engagement and partnerships are the true strengths of any stewardship agreement.

One benefit that people receive from stewardship is the opportunity to increase their knowledge of nature. These projects are great for local groups, allowing hands-on involvement in conservation efforts. Communities across the province who have signed stewardship agreements have had great success becoming involved in exactly these types of projects and will also be resources for you to connect with, especially at SAM meetings. The ideas below, and many others, can be found at [samnl.org/resources](http://samnl.org/resources).

### Explore grants and funding

Many of these activities and programs are free or can be funded through small community grants and via partnerships. SAM provides a regularly updated listing of many relevant grants at [samnl.org/funding](http://samnl.org/funding).

Large grant applications may take several months to prepare if committees are involved. Allow enough time to apply for these grants and to obtain the letters of support that local partners such as SAM or the Department of Fisheries and Land Resources may provide; keep an eye on deadlines as they approach.

### Hire a Green Team

Conservation Corps Newfoundland and Labrador ([ccnl.ca](http://ccnl.ca)) can help you hire summer Green Teams and interns, some of which can be funded by corporations at no cost to your organization. Students or recent graduates can work with municipalities on environmental projects. Municipalities with Stewardship Agreements, including Lewisporte, have often received Green Teams. Examples of potential projects could include nest boxes, bird monitoring, trail maintenance, community outreach, wildlife surveys, and developing field guides. Green Team members and interns could help train local high school students in monitoring and could develop educational material designed to raise awareness for conservation and stewardship initiatives. Sharing a CCNL Green Team with neighbouring towns might be explored, especially if other towns are beginning environmental projects as well.



## Find and place geocaches

Geocaches (small containers found via GPS; **geocaching.com** and various mobile apps such as **c:geo**) can be added alongside trails as well to provide a fun and inexpensive activity for walkers, hikers, and groups. It is a great idea to place geocaches near or at where you want people to go – to help them discover a new trail, a beautiful lookout, or an interpretive spot, for example.

Many geocaches already exist in the Town of Lewisporte. SAM and the EHJV partnership (username EHJV\_Stewardship) currently maintain 32 geocaches in SAM municipalities across the province. After creating a geocaching account (or logging in first), the full list can be found at **geocaching.com/seek/nearest.aspx?u=EHJV\_Stewardship**. A geocache has already been given to the Town of Lewisporte and is on the birdwatching blind, but will be moved by SAM staff so it can be activated and listed online soon.



A nanocache style geocache before installation (with house key for scale). Staff photo

## Construct trails & put up interpretive signs

Many SAM municipalities have found that trails increase recreation and health for residents and improve tourism possibilities. When constructed carefully, trails can increase stewardship by allowing people to discover new areas. They can help residents and visitors connect to nature, especially where interpretive signage is used to help point out interesting landscape and wildlife. Ducks Unlimited Canada, an EHJV partner, can in some cases partner on trail projects if time and funding allows (as they have for Bottom Brook Estuary).

Recreational and tourism opportunities can help raise awareness and educate visitors and residents about waterfowl and the importance of wetlands. Hiking, walking, birdwatching, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and geocaching are popular activities in many Conservation Areas across the province. Other activities such as photography and paddling (canoeing and kayaking) could be further encouraged as low-impact, healthy recreation opportunities for both residents and visitors.

In developing recreational and tourism opportunities, wildlife must be carefully considered during the planning process. Otherwise, human activities can negatively impact the resource that provides the attraction.

As part of the Stewardship Agreement, the Town of Lewisporte has been provided with a large highway road sign plus a smaller interpretive sign. Additional interpretive signage could possibly be funded through grants to the Town of Lewisporte; for example, the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation often funds trail and park projects (see funding opportunities link above for other possibilities)



**Lewisporte's Habitat Stewardship Road sign.** Staff photo

## Watch wildlife

Local groups and interested volunteers can watch and monitor birds, plants, and wildlife in all areas of the Town but, particularly, in Bottom Brook Estuary. This can provide information on changes in populations and can indicate problems or progress. By involving residents, they become more aware of these special places.

**iNaturalist** and **Seek** are free smartphone apps for those interested in learning to identify plants, butterflies and other insects, other invertebrates, birds, fungi, and mammals. They can be used to build plant and wildlife lists for any area, as a learning tool, for school students, family nature walks, and just for fun.

**iNaturalist** is great for adults as each nature observations turns into a real scientific data point. It also has a neat feature where other experts will identify your sightings for you - after taking a photo, it will often be identified within a few hours by another experienced user on the app. Turn your location services on so that your sighting can be found on the map and so others can help with your identifications. **Seek** is best for kids as it never saves location data and provides fun badges.



**ebird.org** is another free website and app to record bird sightings. It is already very popular across NL with more than 10 000 bird lists submitted each year.

Explore all the birds seen in Newfoundland and Labrador (click map to zoom to your area) at [ebird.org/ebird/canada/subnational1/CA-NL?yr=all](https://ebird.org/ebird/canada/subnational1/CA-NL?yr=all)

Start contributing to eBird at [secure.birds.cornell.edu/casso/account/create](https://secure.birds.cornell.edu/casso/account/create)

When watching wildlife, be mindful of tides and wetland (damp, soft, slippery) habitat, making safety your priority. Aim to cause as little stress and disturbance as possible to wildlife.

## **Create artificial habitat**

### **Build nesting boxes for cavity nesting waterfowl**

Cavity nesters such as the Common Goldeneye (also known as pie duck or whistler, *Bucephala clangula*) use abandoned woodpecker holes or natural tree cavities caused by disease, fire or lightning. In the absence of these natural cavities, they will also use constructed nest boxes; Lewisporte and the surrounding area are already home to many of these boxes. Boxes need to be placed correctly; [samnl.org/enhancehabitats](https://samnl.org/enhancehabitats) will help you get started.



## Build roosting and nesting structures for bats and birds

A variety of roosting and nest structures can be built, installed, monitored, and maintained for other bird species such as Tree Swallows, Northern Flickers, Great Horned Owls, Northern Saw-Whet Owls, and bats. Providing nesting boxes for Tree Swallows may increase their population in the area, which can help with natural insect pest control. Providing structures for predatory birds may also help reduce populations of undesirable birds (e.g. American Crow, European Starling) and rodents while increasing biodiversity. Installing nest boxes and roosting structures is exciting, but takes time, commitment and maintenance; see [samnl.org/backyard-habitats](http://samnl.org/backyard-habitats) for details.



Bat Box with dimensions. Staff photo.



## Construct islands

Many wildlife species, such as terns and waterfowl, nest and loaf on islands due to a reduced risk of predation from land-based predators, so constructing islands can help increase their populations. These structures can be constructed simply from wooden cribs (Tamarack / Larch would be an appropriate choice for building material), measuring approximately 4 m<sup>2</sup> that have been filled with rock and soil.

The islands must be positioned so that they are higher than the highest water mark. Hardy shrubs (e.g. alder, willow) must be planted on the islands to provide cover and to prevent occupancy from gulls. Take care to prevent the use of toxic construction materials (e.g. treated wood, contaminated soils) and disturbance to plant and animal communities. [samnl.org/enhancehabitats](http://samnl.org/enhancehabitats) has various free plans for islands and artificial nesting sites.

## Help Lewisporte residents enjoy nature

It's not just kids that enjoy the outdoors – adults and seniors benefit from spending time in nature as well. Birdwatching workshops have been successful in SAM communities (such as Spaniard's Bay), and snowshoe hikes in the winter or hikes in the summer are often enjoyed by adults as well.

Themes such as winter tracking or edible plant hikes can increase interest. Hikes can be inexpensive ways for adults in Lewisporte to discover the natural areas of the town, socialize, and learn something new. CCNL Green Teams are required to give interpretive presentations as a part of their work programs; SAM's **Guide to delivering interpretive hikes** and field guides at [samnl.org/outdoor-learning](http://samnl.org/outdoor-learning) could help CCNL Green Teams or summer staff lead hikes for residents and/or visitors. These could be used to create a small brochure and 'bird checklist' or wildlife list of the area, or as the basis for field guides which could be developed by a Green Team, high school, or a relevant committee.



Interpretive “Winter wetland walk” at Gambo Bog. Staff photo

## Explore outdoor education programs

Public education can help foster a greater sense of habitat stewardship among town residents. Lewisporte's Winter Carnival (mid February) and the Mussel Bed Soiree (early-mid August) are great opportunities to add in some nature games and activities. Residents will already be attending the festivals, so turnout is likely to be higher. Especially as the Mussel Bed Soiree activities will be changing somewhat this year, why not consider adding more outdoor family activities? They are affordable, interesting, and appropriate for all ages. SAM staff can help - either by attending, training some of your residents, or by providing resources that you can use.

There are excellent wetland education programs that can be adapted for activities in Lewisporte. Programs span every season and age group including *Wetlands in Winter* (Tantramar Wetlands Centre, [weted.com](http://weted.com)), *Marsh Bingo* and *Creatures of the Night* (Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre, [oakhammockmarsh.ca](http://oakhammockmarsh.ca)), *Junior Naturalists* (Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre, [wyemarsh.com](http://wyemarsh.com)), and *Wetland Field Trips* (Ducks Unlimited Canada, [ducks.ca](http://ducks.ca)). Canadian Wildlife Federation's *Project Wild* can foster environmental ethics in youth and adults alike. Many evening programs also exist that would be great for guide and scout groups.

## Nature and Art

Some stewardship municipalities such as Grand Falls-Windsor and Whitbourne use natural locations to bring together nature and art. Local art classes and drama groups can use an outdoor theatre for educational exercises. This could involve field trips whereby students could interpret natural beauty through various mediums (chalk, paint, etc.) or a day of sketching to the sound of nature or music. Companies like [crayola.com](http://crayola.com) offer resource grants to educators.

Similarly, drama classes could develop a play or series of dramatic readings based on nature. Several amphitheatres in Eastern Canada use the open-air concept to show nature-related programs outdoors in the evenings. Content can be tailored to various ages and could include nature-related craft projects as a follow up. Good starting points for nature projects for children include [hookedonnature.org](http://hookedonnature.org), [planetpals.com](http://planetpals.com), and [hctfededucation.ca/resource-room](http://hctfededucation.ca/resource-room)

## Backyard Habitat for Canada's Wildlife

This initiative from the Canadian Wildlife Federation ([cwf-fcf.org](http://cwf-fcf.org)) is administered by the Wildlife Division's Salmonier Nature Park (709 229 7888). The program offers inexpensive suggestions on how to make life better for wildlife and often includes a bird nesting box workshop as well.

## Host or attend hunter workshops

Municipalities can partner with their local rod and gun club, the Department of Fisheries and Land Resources (Wildlife Division) and other partners to participate in hosting a *Youth Hunter Skills Workshop*. These events require volunteer commitment, organization, and expertise. However, they can be very rewarding for participants and foster a sense of stewardship. Similarly, the *Becoming an Outdoorswoman* program can help introduce women from Lewisporte to sustainable, legal, hunting and fishing and is offered each spring and fall through the Wildlife Division in different locations across NL; contact [salmoniernaturepark@gov.nl.ca](mailto:salmoniernaturepark@gov.nl.ca) or **709 229 7888**.

## Discover Ducks Unlimited Canada's Youth Programs

Educating youth about wetlands and waterfowl is part of Ducks Unlimited Canada's mission. There are many resources which link to school curricula at [ducks.ca/resources/educators](http://ducks.ca/resources/educators). The Wetland Heroes program has useful action guides which help young people improve and protect wetlands. You can register at [ducks.ca/initiatives/wetland-heroes](http://ducks.ca/initiatives/wetland-heroes) and describe your conservation work. Wetland Heroes receive a certificate and a token of appreciation. With permission, Wetland Heroes may be featured in DUC media, and some receive \$500 Awards of Merit. Contact **709 237 DUCK** or [du\\_newfoundland@ducks.ca](mailto:du_newfoundland@ducks.ca) for more information.

## Restore Habitat

In some wetland areas, habitat has been degraded or lost and could benefit from plantings. Some aquatic plant species improve water condition by absorbing excessive amounts of nitrogen, phosphorous, and carbon – substances associated with the occurrence of algal blooms. Many beneficial plant species have limited distributions on the Island of Newfoundland, and should not be introduced into the environment without considering potential consequences, including the possibility of invasive plants out-competing native plant species. SAM's guide to native plants for restoration projects is available at [samnl.org/restore-habitat](http://samnl.org/restore-habitat). For example, eelgrass (*Zostera marina*) is an aquatic grass important for waterfowl and many aquatic species such as juvenile salmon and trout. It is possible to encourage the growth of eelgrass beds through an inexpensive project of habitat management and shoot transplantation from a nearby donor site. Some species of willow (*Salix* sp.) and alder (e.g. Green Alder, *Alnus viridis crispa*) are native to the island of Newfoundland and are renowned for their hardiness, ability to withstand tidal inundation, and extensive networks of roots.

The natural balance of an ecosystem can be changed when new species are introduced. Competition naturally exists between organisms within an ecosystem but the introduction of introduced, non-native, and possibly invasive species can allow for one species to outcompete most native species and have negative effects on wildlife. Some retailers have expertise in selecting and planting native plants or experience with restoration. Timothy Murray at Murray's Garden Centre Portugal Cove can be contacted at [timothymurray@murraysgardens.com](mailto:timothymurray@murraysgardens.com) or 709 895 2800 for potential projects. Nuthatch Nursery in Lethbridge NL (709 467 1309) also specializes in native plants. SAM member municipality the Town of Bonavista also recently completed a wetland restoration project at O'Dea's Pond; lessons learned are often shared with SAM members in newsletters and at meetings so that other municipalities and groups may be able to take on similar projects in the future. If there are habitat restoration projects your municipality would like to take on, or you know of areas that need restoration, contact us at [samconservation@gmail.com](mailto:samconservation@gmail.com). We may be able to help secure funding and support your project.



**Lefthand photo:** Construction in progress to dig out a former wetland and recreate islands; **righthand photo:** At the conclusion of the project - one of the completed islands showing new growth. Staff photos

## Conclusion

We hope these ideas have you thinking about ways you could become involved in protecting and enhancing wildlife habitat in your area. Keep an eye on [samnl.org](http://samnl.org), our newsletter, and our social media, where additional resources are added regularly – and we hope to see you at the SAM conferences each year. Remember, community involvement is the true strength of a Stewardship Agreement!

# Appendix 1: Conservation enforcement form

## Complaint / information related to conservation, hunting, or wildlife enforcement issues

You can also report any issues online 24/7 by calling 1.877.820.0999 or at stoppoaching.ca  
 You can stay anonymous, whether it's by phone, online, or on this form

Please fill in as much of the following information as you can. Even partial info can be helpful

<b>Date</b> When did it happen? Or is it an ongoing issue?	
<b>Time</b> Is there a specific time of day when it happens?	
<b>Suspects</b> Do you have an idea of who it might be?	
<b>Location</b> Where is it happening? Being as specific as possible will help	
<b>Vehicles</b> Description of vehicles (ATVs, cars, trucks, boats, etc.) being used and/or licence plates	

Please fill in any other details

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**Do you wish to remain anonymous (Circle one)**

**Yes      No**

If you choose to provide your name or number, you may be contacted for follow up. If you provide this info it will be kept confidential by enforcement, or you may remain completely anonymous by leaving both these spaces blank. Thank you – you're playing an important role in protecting your natural resources.

**Name**  
**(optional)**

**Phone**  
**(optional)**