

Newfoundland & Labrador Cruise: Species List July 15 – 25, 2017 | Assembled by Peg Abbott



With Simon Boyes (guide of One Ocean Expeditions), host Peg Abbott and 11 participants: Shyamala, David, Cindy, Ty, Julie, Susan, Susan, Jenny, Phillip, Bud and Gingy.

Our Canadian Newfoundland and Labrador Cruise, from Nova Scotia to Baffin Island, provided us with a remarkable landscape to experience, going from Boreal Forest habitat to a land above the trees. This chance to experience such changes in latitude on one trip is a rare one! From the harbor at Sydney, Nova Scotia, we had trees with us through our third day at L'Anse Aux Meadows, then we transitioned to lush shrubby tundra, and to tiny ground-hugging plant tundra and finally to pack ice.

We saw 12 species of mammals and 78 species of birds, though birds were not in great number, we found a good cross-section of what is possible this far north. The ocean was surprisingly quiet, despite following the Labrador current up the Outer Coast of Newfoundland and Labrador, but with diligent searching for those with interest (and always in competition with the scenery!) we pulled together a good list of the iconic northern species.

Highlights included Northern Gannet, Iceland and Glaucous Gulls, Common and Red-throated Loons, Red Phalarope, Dovekie, King Eider, Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, Bearded and Harp Seals, Moose, Caribou, Polar Bear and more.



BIRD AND MAMMAL SPECIES LIST CANADA NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR CRUISE – JULY 2017

Checklist order follows family order of eBird as of July 2017

(#) = NUMBER OF DAYS SEEN OUT OF 11 Days total

HO = HEARD ONLY

- July 15 – Sydney Harbor and the Fortress of Louisbourg
- July 16 – Gros Morne National Park
- July 17 – L'Anse Aux Meadows Historic Site / Newfoundland Coast
- July 18 – Battle Harbor / Labrador Coast
- July 19 – Hopedale / Labrador Coast
- July 20 and 21 – Torngat National Park, Saglek and Nachlek Fjords
- July 22 – Button Islands, tip of Labrador
- July 23 – Pack Ice Crossing the Straits to Baffin Island
- July 24 – Frobisher Bay
- July 25 – Iqaluit / Departures

Anatidae: Ducks, Geese and Swans (7)

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American Black Duck *Anas rubripes* (3) – Seen at several locations, first encountered in large numbers (more than one group of 30+) in the city park in Sydney, then again in the quieter waters of the Torngat Fjords. On a misty Zodiac cruise there we encountered rafts of 15 or more, flightless in eclipse plumage post breeding.

Green-winged Teal *Anas crecca* (2) – Seen at the Fortress of Louisbourg in a small pond, and then found again at an estuary leading into a fjord of Torngat National Park on the first Zodiac ridge there in Saglek Fjord.

Common Eider *Somateria mollissima* (10) – First seen in the harbor at Sydney, then seen on all but one day in small numbers as we explored up the Labrador Coast. In a back bay of the larger Frobisher Bay we encountered about 200 in a quiet cove, likely gathering there for molting, but still able to fly. Long lines of drake eider against ancient red rock with icebergs and blue sky was most memorable!

King Eider *Somateria spectabilis* (1) – We had three eiders fly by close to the ship out at sea between the two fjords we explored at Torngat National Park, both Peg and Rod got photos, and the pattern of white was not right for Common, with review we had seen three Kings on the wing, nice!

Harlequin Duck *Histrionicus histrionicus* (3) – We first found four birds flew out of an estuary in Saglek Fjords of the Torngat area, where our kayaks were stopped as we passed by on Zodiacs, all in female plumage. Hearty souls on the second afternoons very cold cruise, that went off to explore the Caribou Bay cove, found a nice male that was most cooperative posing on a rock. We had them again on the day of ice near the end of the cruise.

White-winged Scoter *Melanitta fusca* (2) – Seen early on in the journey, at sea, going into Battle Harbor and then Hopedale. Both sightings were rapid flight views.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator* (3) – Seen in the L'Anse Aux Meadows area, and then on both days in the fjords of Torngat National Park.

Phasianidae: Partridges, Pheasants and Allies (2)

Ruffed Grouse *Bonasa umbellus* (1) – One individual crossed the road in a wooded area going into the Fortress at Louisbourg, only those on the left hand side of the bus got to see it as Peg called it out, a quick but good view.

Rock Ptarmigan *Lagopus muta* (1) – One individual seen close to the shore on a rock outcrop by one group during our first Zodiac cruise at Torngat National Park, a female, so we recorded this as Ptarmigan, sp. but it is almost certainly this species by habitat and location.

Gaviidae: Loons (2)

Red-throated Loon *Gavia stellate* (4) – A beautiful species seen on multiple days, best views in the Torngat Fjords, but also present on the windswept Button Island days and on our day in the pack ice.

Common Loon *Gavia immer* (5) – First seen in the Sydney Harbor by our hotel, we heard them on our first morning walk. We heard them again in the Torngat Fjords, a wild song to match the scenery. Great close views from the Zodiacs there. Fairly common.

Procellariidae: Shearwaters and Petrels (2)

Northern Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis* (6) – On the first part of the journey, we'd pick up one or two seen at sea, but in the far north, Button Islands onward, we had them in big number, 100 or more a day, swirling around the ship

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and in small groups out at sea. We had more individuals of white phase than blue, perhaps at best a 10% ration of the darker gray-blue form of this bird.

Sooty Shearwater *Ardenna grisea* (1) – One individual seen at the same time we found the first Thick-billed Murre, in a little pocket of upwelling and seabird activity.

Hydrobatidae: Storm-Petrels (1)

Wilson's Storm-Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus* (1) – Vicki, our New Zealand friend, had a couple of these at dawn one morning from the ship, on the day we went into Battle Harbor.

Sulidae: Boobies and Gannets (1)

Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus* (5) – Seen daily on our first five days, often close to the ship, elegant in flight, 2-6 at a time, but regular.

Phalacrocoracidae: Cormorants (2)

Double-crested Cormorant *Phalacrocorax auritus* (4) – Seen in the Sydney harbor right away, and then in the first four harbors.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* (2) – Brian Ratcliffe of Quest saw one in the Sydney harbor, and two were perched on a rocky outcrop on our second day, intermixed with the more common Double-crested but obvious by size at pretty close range.

Ardeidae: Herons and Egrets (1)

Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias* (1) – One individual, seen in the Sydney harbor, in the evening as we set sail.

Accipitridae: Hawks, Kites and Eagles (3)

Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* (1) – One elegant individual perched on a rocky outcrop as we drove into the Fortress of Louisbourg, seen coming and going from this scenic site.

Northern Harrier *Circus cyaneus* (1) – A pair was spotted at L'Anse Aux Meadows, from the boardwalk trail we walked that eventually looped back to the Visitor Center. We saw a prey exchange, and the male made several passes carrying prey to a nest we could not see.

Cooper's Hawk *Accipiter cooperi* (1) – Rod picked one up at the Fortress of Louisbourg as he birded throughout the visit while the rest of us veered off to experience some history. The only accipiter of the trip.

Charadriidae: Plovers and Lapwings (1)

Semipalmated Plover *Calidris pusilla* (3) – Rod, an avid birder on our ship, saw one at the Fortress of Louisbourg. We all then had a good look at a pair on a sand bar while on our first Zodiac Cruise at Saglek Fjord of Torngat National Park. This pair had chicks and we did not linger long. Peg spied a second bird on the rocks our next day also on a Zodiac cruise in Nachlek Fjord.

Scolopacidae: Sandpipers and Allies (4)

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Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* (1) – One individual seen in the small coves near town at Battle Harbor.

Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca* (1) – Spotted by Rod at the Fortress of Louisbourg our first day outing.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* (1) – Seen at sea on the day we visited Battle Harbor.

Red Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius* (3) – Encountered on two days at sea, often where we had a burst of activity of multiple species. Peg saw a small group on our final cruise through Frobisher Bay.

Stercorariidae: Skuas and Jaegers (2)

Pomarine Jaeger *Stercorarius pomarinus* (3) – This robust jaeger was seen in flight, going to harass gulls, seen typically as a small group. Two came past the bow at very close range to Peg one early morning, enough to see they were immatures but adult size and capable predators.

Parasitic Jaeger *Stercorarius parasiticus* (2) – Seen with a burst of seabird activity in the seas off the Labrador Coast near Hopedale, and then again as we cruised in the pack ice.

Alcidae: Auks, Murres and Puffins (6)

Common Murre *Uria aalge* (4) – At first the most common alcid of our trip, with numerous individuals seen on the first four days of our trip.

Thick-billed Murre *Uria lomvia* (6) – This species overlapped with Common Murre only on the seas north of Battle Harbor, picked up where we also had a little flurry of other species including the Red-necked Phalaropes. They then replaced Commons as a fairly common sighting, on the water and in small groups in flight. Once in the pack ice we had the fun of seeing them perched upright like little penguins.

Razorbill *Alca torda* (3) – We had this handsome species on two days along the Labrador Coast between Battle Harbor and Hopedale, and then found them again in the pack ice region, including two very close to the ship swimming.

Black Guillemot *Cephus grille* (11) – Our most regular alcid, an everyday bird sighting, often low over the water and moving quickly. Seen at the open sea and in quiet bays and fjords.

Atlantic Puffin *Fratercula arctica* (4) – We kept seeing one or two puffins at a time, often at a distance, but in time those up on the bridge or bow got a pretty good look. This species was regular, but not as common as the murres or guillemots. We did not pass a breeding island for this species, more commonly found around Nova Scotia, so we may add one for the following year as an cruise pre-trip extension.

Dovekie *Alle alle* (1) – Luck in timing and perseverance on the bridge, a half dozen of the group got to see this northern species (very common here in winter, but breeding farther north than our route) – just one individual spotted by Simon as it crossed the bow, it landed on the water and Peg even caught a few pix, wow!

Laridae: Gulls and Terns (7)

Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla* (10) – Once at sea, we had them every day and typically in good number. They loved to sit on the icebergs and we'd often put them up off the water. They were present, tens and twenties at a time, below the latitude of Hopedale. Once in the far north they were very regularly sighted though in small

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numbers, including on the pack ice. Some flew very close to the ship, though they did not follow the ship like fulmars.

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis* (4) – Common in the Sydney Harbor, in the harbor at the Fortress of Louisbourg, and present through the first four days of our journey, through Battle Harbor. Those in the bay of L'Anse Aux Meadows posed for lovely photos.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus* (11) – Common daily, often 50 or more a day. They seemed particularly common in the first half of the voyage, but were present in small numbers throughout.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus* (6) – Seen as we headed north, from Hopedale onward we spied them among the other gulls in small number. At Charles Francis Hall Bay they dive-bombed our Zodiacs, not used to humans and boats, they were defending nests we could not see. Lovely to see their pearly luster on the wing.

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoides* (4) – At least two individuals seen at first, as we took a Zodiac ride through the Button Islands, one perched on a rock for us for a very good, close-up view. We saw others at sea, sporting to sort them by size and flight pattern from the larger Glaucous-winged which were the more common of the two. When seen, we had 2-4 per day, whereas Glaucous could number 50 or more towards the end of the journey.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus* (9) – Seen almost daily until we reached the far north, common and impressive.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* (3) – First seen in the Sydney harbor, and going into Gros Morne, then again around some icebergs ahead of going into the Hopedale harbor.

Columbidae: Pigeons and Doves (2)

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia* (2) – Regular in Sydney, and seen in the two small towns on either side of Gros Morne National Park.

Mourning Dove *Zenaidura macroura* (1) – A very northern individual, perhaps a northern record, called out by Brian and seen by seven of us atop the bridge, it swooped past the ship at very close range, about 15 KM north of Hopedale, at sea. Brian thinks this may be quite a good northern record for the region and will submit it to eBird, as we will later do for all the findings of our journey.

Strigidae: Owls (1)

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* (1) – We were lucky to have one individual in sight as we walked back to the ship from the L'Anse Aux Meadows Visitor Center. It seemed very much at home in the town, flying over open fields between houses. Great views!

Tyrannidae: Tyrant Flycatchers (1)

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher *Empidonax flaviventris* (1) – Two individuals seen on the trail from Gros Morne down to the village where our boat was waiting, good views, pushed up by Peg.

Vireonidae: Vireos (1)

Red-eyed Vireo *Vireo olivaceus* (1) – Seen only in Sydney as Peg, Shymala, and Susan walked our first morning before boarding the Vavilov.

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Corvidae: Jays and Crows (2)

American Crow *Corvus brachyrhynchos* (2) – Seen on the first two days, common in Sydney and around the Fortress, at Gros Morne.

Common Raven *Corvus corax* (4) – Seen in and around villages and park buildings our first three days, and then five vocal ones greeted us at the landing at Iqaluit.

Alaudidae: Larks (1)

Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris* (1) – Several individuals seen on our walk around Battle Harbor and its island pathways through ancient geology.

Hirundinidae: Swallows and Martins (3)

Tree Swallow *Tachycineta bicolor* (2) – First seen by a few on the walk at Gros Morne, Simon found one nesting on one of the houses at Battle Harbor for all to get scope views.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* (1) – Numerous individuals were flying about the fields surrounding the Fortress of Louisbourg, there were so many we had to estimate, a one to two ratio of Barn to Cliff Swallows.

Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota* (2) – Very numerous and nesting on buildings at Fortress Louisbourg, several hundred like a low count, we also had them near the Gros Morne Visitor Centre and on the Tablelands trail.

Paridae: Tits and Chickadees (2)

Black-capped Chickadee *Poecile atricapillus* (2) – Common in Sydney, we watched one brood with small chicks and another feeding young in a nest cavity. Also seen at the park at Gros Morne.

Boreal Chickadee *Poecile hudsonicus* (HO – 1) – This shy species was calling as we descended the trail from the Visitor Centre to town at Gros Morne, they were intrigued by our calling, but did not come up for a view. We were limited on time and had to leave them, darn! Perfect habitat and vocal, we had to be content with heard only.

Regulidae: Kinglets (1)

Ruby-crowned Kinglet *Regulus calendula* (1) – Seen at Gros Morne National Park on the hiking trail by the Visitor Center, just one individual.

Turdidae: Thrushes (1)

American Robin *Turdus migratorius* (5) – This flexible bird showed it can be at home in the Arctic, showing up even in the almost treeless lands at Hopedale, quite far north. Ahead of that we had them at each location, particularly around the villages, where they loved to be on the lawns. The most remote sighting was at the end of Saglek Fjord.

Sturnidae: Starlings and Mynas (1)

European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* (2) – Seen only on the first two days of our journey, once away from settlements and into the northern tier they were not present.

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Motacillidae: Pipits and Wagtails (1)

American Pipit *Anthus rubescens* (3) – Several individuals were seen as we walked around the island where Battle Harbor was, some perched and singing on the old communication towers. Also seen in a small cove at Hopedale where the birders got to view rocks and birds on a misty day ahead of the village visit. Then again at Charles Francis Hall Harbor of Frobisher Bay with a high count for the trip of 6 on that day.

Passeridae: Old World Sparrows (1)

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* (3) – Seen in Sydney, the Fortress of Louisbourg, and in the small towns near Gros Morne and L'Anse Aux Meadows.

Fringillidae: Finches (4)

Purple Finch *Haemorhous purpureus* (1) – Small group of six spotted in the fields by the harbor at Woody Point as we finished walking the trail from the Visitor Center.

Common Redpoll *Acanthis flammea* (1) – There were several flocks about on the day we went to L'Anse Aux Meadows. Some posed long enough for photos in the short spruce trees of the area.

Pine Siskin *Spinus pinus* (1) – Two individuals seen on the trail down from Gros Morne Visitor Center to town.

American Goldfinch *Spinus tristis* (2) – Seen in Sydney, the Fortress at Louisbourg, and Gros Morne National Park. Often seen in flight, calling.

Calcariidae: Longspurs and Buntings (1)

Lapland Longspur *Calcarius lapponicus* (1) – Seen at Charles Francis Hall Bay on the walk into the tundra, fleeting glimpses of a female that was calling, those in the Zodiac had two fly by calling as well. Eva had two protecting a nest area as the staff was scouting the site to know we were clear from Polar Bears.

Parulidae: New World Warblers (4)

Mourning Warbler *Geothlypis philadelphia* (1) – Good looks at a female while at Gros Morne National Park.

Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas* (2) – First seen at the Fortress of Louisbourg, then a pair seen very well on the walk down from the Gros Morne Visitor Center. Jenny got a good photo of one that was used in the final tour slideshow.

Yellow Warbler *Setophaga petechia* (4) – Seen in the small pockets of woods around our hotel in Sydney, at Fortress Louisbourg, Gros Morne near the small town, L'Anse Aux Meadows in a shrubby area walking back to town.

Blackpoll Warbler *Setophaga striata* (2) – Two individuals seen walking down the hill from the Gros Moine Visitor Center, and then at least six during our time at L'Anse Aux Meadows the following day. Males still singing and easy to find.

Emberizidae: New World Sparrows (10)

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American Tree Sparrow *Spizelloides arborea* (1) – Several individuals were spied singing and visible on perches as we walked up to the L'Anse Aux Meadows, and then to the bridge below the parking lot there where we found a good pocket of sizable trees.

Fox Sparrow *Passerella iliaca* (1) – One individual came up to Peg's pishing while we were watching a Moose below the back parking area of the L'Anse Aux Meadows Visitor Center.

Dark-eyed Junco *Junco hyemalis* (2) – Seen on the trail we walked at Gros Morne National Park, both at Tablelands and by the Visitor Centre, and then noted as heard only on the boardwalk trail, singing, at L'Anse Aux Meadows.

White-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia leucophrys* (3) – Seen on three days, in the small villages we visited on the Labrador Coast and at L'Anse Aux Meadows.

White-throated Sparrow *Zonotrichia albicollis* (2) – Seen in Sydney, the Fortress at Louisbourg and Gros Morne.

Savannah Sparrow *Passerculus sandwichensis* (5) – Widespread and common, easy to find with almost constant singing, our best views were at the Fortress of Louisbourg, but they were present the first five days of the journey at each location, often singing.

Song Sparrow *Melospiza melodia* (2) – Sydney, the Fortress of Louisbourg and Gros Morne in the open fields with shrubs down by the harbor.

Lincoln's Sparrow *Melospiza lincolni* (1) – Bud got a great photo of this species that Peg pished up as we walked the trail down from the Visitor Centre to town, admiring the splendid views.

Swamp Sparrow *Melospiza georgiana* (1) – Seen in Sydney close to our hotel along the waterfront.

Nelson's (Sharp-tailed) Sparrow *Ammodramus nelsoni* (1) – Peg and Phil saw this species, first heard and with patience we found two individuals, on a trail at Fortress Louisbourg that passed through some low, wet areas with shrubs. It posed and sang repeatedly, nice!

78 species

MAMMALS

American Mink *Neovison vison* (1) – Two youngsters popped up on the rock wall jetty as Peg, Shymala and Susan took a walk the first morning from our hotel in Sydney. We got photos and enjoyed their antics.

Moose *Alces alces* (1) – One individual seen by Jenny, Rod and Peg who were birding by the river behind the parking lot of the L'Anse Aux Meadows historical site. Great views of it feeding – first spotted as it raised its head to Peg's bird pishing.

Caribou *Rangifer tarandus* (1) – One individual seen through spotting scopes, feeding along the beach aptly named Caribou Bay in Saglek Fjord, Torngat National Park. We were told this animal would have been the woodland subspecies still at this far latitude.

American Black Bear *Ursus americanus* (1) – Cruising along the incredibly scenic Saglek Fjord we spied a mother with two cubs WAY up on the slope. Then on a Zodiac cruise we found two others – one parked in a patch of flowers, just feeding and digging away – fun!

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Polar Bear *Ursus maritimus* (2) – Such a thrill to see this species in its realm! Our first were spied on the Button Islands, where one Zodiac has very close views as a mother and cubs got out of the water to climb a ridge, with luck the rest of us caught up at least for good views. We had two others on the islands, an amazing view of a big male swimming quite a ways out from the island at sea, and then the following day on pack ice, another big male, and a mother with two very playful cubs. These were at a far reach for photos but great views in the scope and binoculars, unaffected by our presence, we could just watch them work the pressure ridges and ponds of the ice.

White-beaked Dolphin *Lagenorhynchus albirostris* (1) – Seen at sea the day we also visited L'Anse Aux Meadows, photos helped us to make the id.

Humpback Whale *Megaptera novaeangliae* (3) – The best views were of an individual breaching just off the ship on the day we visited L'Anse Aux Meadows, then we had two other more distant sightings.

Minke Whale *Balaenoptera acutorstrata* (4) – Seen at sea, and then one in the harbor at Hopedale.

Beluga Whale *Delphinapterus leucas* (1) – Recorded only as a close-range spout from two of the Zodiacs, on the really cold drizzly day we visited Nachlek Fjord. Last year there were a good number of whales in the fjords, but we were not so lucky this season.

Harp Seal *Pagophilus groenlandicus* (7) – Quite common along our route, seen daily in the north, with large numbers in cavorting groups entertaining us in the Button Islands.

Bearded Seal *Erignathus barbatus* (4) – We saw several in the water identified by their huge bulbous heads, the first in the Torngat fjords. Later, in the pack ice, we noted a few hauled up and visible in the scopes.

Ringed Seal *Pusa hispida* (1) – Just one identified as certain, seen as we left the ship to explore the Button Islands.

12 species