

Newfoundland and Labrador's Boreal Forest

SAM is a network of municipalities in Newfoundland and Labrador that are committed the practice of wildlife habitat conservation & environmental stewardship. Find more wildlife and habitat resources at samnl.org.

What is the Boreal Forest?

- Most of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) is part of the North American Boreal Forest, which spans across the upper middle portion of Canada around the 50th parallel.
- It is dominated by coniferous trees, such as balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*), white and black spruce (*Picea* spp.), and the deciduous tree Eastern larch (*Larix laricina*).
- Coniferous trees are well adapted to the boreal climate. Their conical shape reduces snow buildup in the winter and their waxy needles protect trees from drying winds.
- Fire is an important part of the boreal forest and large scale fires occur every 20 - 500 years. Some species have adapted their lifecycle to this occurrence.
- A few broad-leaved species also grow in the boreal forest in NL including 7 birch species, 2 maple species, aspen, and balsam poplar.
- More than two-thirds of Canada's boreal forest is covered by water and 85% of Canada's wetlands are in the boreal forest.



Identification tip:
Tree needles are a type of modified leaf. Easily tell them apart by rolling in between your fingers, fir needles are flat, spruce needles are round and larch are soft



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Boreal Owl,
Aegolius funereus

What to look out for in the Boreal Forest of Newfoundland and Labrador

Bird Species

There are 204 native bird species in NL's boreal forest, including the Rusty Blackbird, a species at risk.



Rusty Blackbird
Euphagus carolinus

3 billion landbirds, waterbirds, & shorebirds breed in, and another 3 million migrate through Canada's boreal forest.

Some species live year-round and have adapted to the climate. The Black-capped chickadee's black feathers absorb heat & provide insulation.

Lichen, Moss, & Fungi

Under the coniferous trees, moss, lichen & fungi thrive in the understory. Moss creates a cool, moist carpet, and lichen grown in open areas on the forest floor and on wood.

Lichens are a combination of fungi and algae that benefit each other. They are also an important winter food source for species such as Caribou.



Smooth Lungwort,
Lobaria quercizans

Invertebrate Species

There are many invertebrate species in the boreal forest. They work as pollinators and are a food source for birds & mammals.

Some butterfly species, such as the Mourning Cloak, overwinter in dead trees, known as snags or in wood piles.

Snags, provide important habitat for birds, small mammals, & invertebrates.



Mourning Cloak
Nymphalis antiopa

Native Mammals

Newfoundland is home to 13 native mammal species, Labrador has 39.

Beavers alter the forest by felling trees to create dams and lodges. These block watercourses and can create wetlands



American Beaver
Castor canadensis

Mammals Native to the Island of Newfoundland

- Caribou
- Black Bear
- Lynx
- American Beaver
- Red/Cross/Silver Fox
- Ermine
- Newfoundland Marten
- Wolf (Extinct)
- Little Brown Bat
- Eastern Long-eared Bat
- Hoary Bat
- Otter
- Muskrat
- Meadow Vole
- Arctic Hare



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