

## The Land Mammals of Insular Newfoundland

By Tom H. Northcott. Illustrations by Winston Howell. 1974. Wildlife Division. Department of Tourism, St. John's, Newfoundland. 90 pp.

Recently Canadian mammals have received much attention and with our many islands, the interesting aspects of insular faunas perhaps deserve special study. Not since 1913, to this reviewer's knowledge, has there been a separate work on mammals of Canada's easternmost island. In that year, Outram Bangs, a noted taxonomist, published in the Bulletin of the Museum of Comparative Zoology of Harvard University, an eight-page article, *The land mammals of Newfoundland*. Now we have this inexpensive booklet under the auspices of the Newfoundland government.

Twenty-four species (14, or about 1/10 of Canadian terrestrial species, being native and the rest introductions) are included. This is a distressingly high percentage of "exotics" even with some being "accidental importations." Two species, the polar bear and the arctic fox, are omitted as "infrequent" visitors. Since ranges of the 24 are also mapped for Labrador, might not its additional 21 species of land mammals also have been described?

Economic justifications abound for the importations although a warning does preface Northcott's text: "The fact that Newfoundland does not have as many land mammals as the nearby mainland does not mean that in all instances there is an unoccupied habitat that might just as well be filled." But why (we are not told) were bison brought to the island?

Introductions should be indicated on the checklist (p. 4). And it would be most helpful if

sources were stated in the fact-filled text. Few significant references are cited in the ample space at the end of most accounts. Some facts seem doubtful: for example, surely northern *Myotis* bats do not hibernate in buildings (p. 9). Subspecies on the island are noted, but no discussion of insular subspeciation is provided. Habitat is briefly but adequately given; remarks on habits and reproduction are quite interesting and more expansive. Also Northcott is up to date on recent introductions like eastern chipmunk, which is not mentioned by Peterson (1966) or Banfield (1974). Maps do not always agree exactly with those by these two authors (e.g., for *Myotis keenii*, p. 14). Distribution dots might have been better. Keys are satisfactory. Illustrations may be the weakest aspect; tracks and skulls are omitted and except for the cover and a few of the other drawings, they seem poor and lacking in originality. Compare them with those in Peterson's *Mammals of Eastern Canada*.

The writing is marred by some spelling and/or typographical errors (e.g., "forward"), especially regarding use of the apostrophe. Stylistic flaws are more serious—lack of agreement, run-on sentences. Although at times verging on the abrupt or repetitious (p. 83), the prose is otherwise readable.

All in all, Northcott and Newfoundland's Wildlife Division have produced a useful booklet that fills a need.

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## Oil Pollution of Birds: An Abstracted Bibliography

By R. Vermeer and K. Vermeer. 1974. Pesticide Section, Canadian Wildlife Service, Manuscript Report 29. 68 pp. Copies available from Dr. K. Vermeer, Room 1110, 10025 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta. Free.

The Canadian Wildlife Service is to be commended for sponsoring this useful bibliography by Rebecca and Kees Vermeer. It mainly comprises brief abstracts of 207 papers, arranged in chronological order from 1922 to 1973, dealing with the problem of oil pollution of birds. Most of these consider birds adversely affected by oil spills in Europe or in North America. The num-

ber of papers published per year and their degree of sophistication increase as they become more up to date. Those printed in foreign languages are well summarized in English. A list of 232 additional unabridged entries is appended to the end of the report.

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