Discovering Our Planet Together



# Puffins, Whales & Wildlife of Newfoundland & Labrador

*Explore Marine Wilderness & Maritime Heritage in Far-East Canada*

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**Trip Details:**

**Days**
12 Days / Jun–Aug

**Price**
From $14695 (+Air)

# Puffins, Whales & Wildlife of Newfoundland & Labrador

*Explore Marine Wilderness & Maritime Heritage in Far-East Canada*

Canada's most easterly province of Newfoundland and Labrador is indeed a realm of new-found discovery for nature travelers. Its rugged northern landscapes, seasonal wildlife and rich cultural heritage combine to create a wealth of surprises for adventurers seeking a nature encounter beyond more well-trodden destinations. In June and July, the world's largest population of humpback whales plies the waters off the Avalon Peninsula. In high summer, 35 million seabirds, including huge colonies of Atlantic puffins, nest on the cliffs of myriad islands. Traditional fishing villages dot the coastline, with hardy residents who pursue the catches that drew the first European settlers here centuries ago. The wild backdrop is a glacier-scoured landscape showcasing rocks from the earth's mantle and oceanic crust. From the 400-year-old capital of St. John's, steeped in maritime heritage, to far-flung bays filled with marine life, Newfoundland and Labrador offers new realms for exploration.

## Trip Highlights

### Look for Whales, Puffins & Other Wildlife in Season

View a diversity of whale species through July, see breeding colonies of Atlantic puffins and other prolific seabirds, and look for caribou and Arctic fox.

### Walk on Earth's Mantle in Gros Morne National Park

Explore the planet's geological evolution atop its exposed mantle in this UNESCO World Heritage Site where the theory of plate tectonics was confirmed

### Explore Natural & Cultural History in Labrador

Visit the historic fishing village of Battle Harbour, once a vibrant economic and cultural hub, now transformed into a living museum on remote Battle Island



# Puffins, Whales & Wildlife of Newfoundland & Labrador Itinerary

*Explore Marine Wilderness & Maritime Heritage in Far-East Canada*

### Itinerary at a Glance

| | |
|---|---|
| **Day 1** | St. John's / Cape Spear Lighthouse |
| **Day 2** | St. John's / Trinity |
| **Day 3** | Bonavista Peninsula / UNESCO Global Geopark / Cape Bonavista Lighthouse |
| **Day 4** | Trinity / Skerwink Trail |
| **Day 5** | Blanc-Sablon / Battle Harbour National Historic Site |
| **Days 6–7** | Battle Harbour |
| **Day 8** | Mary's Harbour / Red Bay / Point Amour |
| **Day 9** | Port au Choix / Gros Morne National Park |
| **Days 10–11** | Gros Morne National Park |
| **Day 12** | Deer Lake |



Day 1

**St. John's / Cape Spear Lighthouse**

## Panoramic views from Canada's easternmost point

- Arrive in St. John's, North America's easternmost city
- Join your Expedition Leader and fellow travelers for a welcome dinner
- Enjoy dramatic views of the Atlantic coastline from Cape Spear Lighthouse, where a beacon has stood since 1836

Arrive at St. John's International Airport where you're met and transferred to our downtown hotel. Situated on the eastern tip of the Avalon Peninsula on the island of Newfoundland in Atlantic Canada, St. John's is North America's easternmost city and one of the continent's oldest municipalities. Its rich cultural heritage blends Indigenous, English and Irish influences, some of which are on view on the downtown Quidi Vidi Trail, a series of interpretive panels and artwork. If time permits, explore on your own before gathering this evening for a welcome dinner and orientation with our Expedition Leader. Afterward, take in panoramic views from historic Cape Spear Lighthouse on Canada's most easterly point of land, where a lighthouse has operated here continuously since 1836.

Day 2

**St. John's / Trinity**

## Search for whales along the Newfoundland coast

- Travel to Trinity, a coastal village and your base for exploring the Bonavista Peninsula
- Head to sea on a private safari aboard an agile rigid-hull inflatable boat
- Look for humpback, fin, sperm and minke whales in the nutrient-rich waters of Trinity Bay

A scenic three-hour drive takes us from St. John's to Trinity, the coastal village where *The Shipping News* was filmed, and our destination for the next three nights. After lunch, head to sea in search of Newfoundland's abundant whales on a two-hour private marine safari aboard an RHIB—a Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat, offering agility that bigger vessels lack. The largest annual whale migration in the northern hemisphere begins off the Newfoundland coast in early June, with various species attracted to the nutrient-rich waters present until September or later. With our boat's low profile, we hope to get close enough to observe whales as they breach, feed and play. Following the coastline of Trinity Bay, passing scattered islands and remote seaside communities, scout for humpback, fin, sperm and minke whales, orcas, dolphins and porpoises, seals, basking sharks, eagles, and seabirds, including puffins, gannets and more. Return to Trinity to enjoy some free time this afternoon before dinner in town.

Day 3

**Bonavista Peninsula / UNESCO Global Geopark / Cape Bonavista Lighthouse**

## See Atlantic puffins at close range along the Bonavista coast

- Walk to a nesting colony for some of North America's closest land-based puffin viewing
- See The Dungeon, a sinkhole formed when two sea caves collapsed
- Watch Rising Tide Theater bring Newfoundland's history and contemporary stories to the stage

Today's focus is the dramatic coast of the Bonavista Peninsula, home to hundreds of nesting pairs of Atlantic puffins. From Elliston, take a short walk to a colony that roosts on a rocky outcrop, offering a close vantage for the best land-based puffin viewing in North America. Exploring the geology and natural history of the area, we witness the power of the ocean to relentlessly erode and reshape the soft sedimentary rock shoreline. This phenomenon is vividly demonstrated by a dramatic feature at Discovery UNESCO Global Geopark called The Dungeon. A large sinkhole formed by the collapse of two adjacent sea caves, The Dungeon will one day erode to become a single pillar known as a sea stack. We also visit Cape Bonavista Lighthouse, one of the most photographed in Newfoundland. Built in 1843 and painted in the classic red-and-white style of the region, the lighthouse contains a rare 19th-century catoptric lamp system that once burned seal oil.

Return to Trinity for a fun evening at Rising Tide Dinner Theater, a renowned drama company in operation since 1978. Producing plays that celebrate the province's storied past and contemporary voices, the company's performances are equally entertaining and educational. When weather permits, many performances take place outdoors.



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Day 4

Trinity / Skerwink Trail

## Return to sea for whales along Trinity's coast

- Head out on a private half-day whale-watching cruise
- Walk through 500 years of Trinity history with a local guide
- Or join a hike past sea stacks and rock arches before a seafood boil at Fort Point

Return to the sea this morning on a private half-day whale-watching cruise. After lunch, choose between a guided walking tour of historic Trinity and a hike on the Skerwink Trail. Trinity's rich heritage dates back more than 500 years, and we learn about the history of its many inhabitants over the centuries, including the Beothuk Indigenous people, and French, Irish and English settlers. Experience Trinity's magnificent cultural heritage through stories, photos, burial records, shipwrecks and disasters as we time-travel through Newfoundland with our acclaimed local guide, a Trinity native whose ancestors arrived in the "New Founde Land" from Dorset, England in the early 1800s. The Skerwink Trail route offers striking views of the rugged coastline, sea stacks, rock arches and beaches. Scan the deep blue ocean for humpback and minke whales, and watch seals bask on the rocks at the base of cliffs. Seabirds abound, and we frequently see bald eagles soaring overhead. This evening, depart for Fort Point where we gather for a classic Newfoundland summer dinner: a seafood boil by the ocean.

Day 5

Blanc-Sablon / Battle Harbour National Historic Site

## Reach car-free Battle Harbour on the Labrador coast

- Fly by private charter to Blanc-Sablon on the Gulf of St. Lawrence
- Ferry through narrow channels to Battle Island, watching for seals and whales
- Settle into remote, car-free Battle Harbour, a restored cod-fishing outpost

From Gander—a small town that gained international recognition after the 9/11 attacks when it welcomed stranded passengers whose planes were diverted due to the closure of American air space—we board a private flight to Blanc-Sablon, Quebec on the north coast of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Here, we transfer to a small bus and cross the nearby border into Labrador. While Labrador comprises one province with its neighbor Newfoundland, it is distinctly different in geography and culture. On the Canadian mainland, Labrador is twice the size of the island of Newfoundland and significantly larger than Great Britain, though home to just 27,000 residents—a mere 5% of the provincial population. While Newfoundlanders are largely descendants of English, Irish, and Scottish settlers, much of Labrador's population is Indigenous, mostly Inuit and Metis.

We follow the coast to Mary's Harbour where we board a ferry for Battle Island, weaving among narrow channels and islands while watching for seals, whales and other marine life. As we approach Battle Island, brightly painted cottages come into view, scattered along the hill overlooking the historic settlement. Ashore, step back in time as we explore this restored former fishing outpost. For centuries, it served as an economic and cultural stronghold for Labrador's sparsely populated southeast coast, sustaining a thriving fishing community until the 1990s when the cod fishery crashed and the permanent settlement was abandoned. Restored by the Battle Harbour Historical Trust, today it is a car-free island without cell service or reliable Wi-Fi, offering overnight visitors a sanctuary from modern distractions. From the shoreline, scan the horizon for whales or look for Arctic fox as you traverse the small island on one of the many hiking trails that wend among Arctic vegetation and quirky rock formations.



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Days 6–7

Battle Harbour

## Explore Labrador's restored salt-fishing outpost

- Learn how Battle Harbour grew from an 18th-century fishery into a thriving coastal community
- Walk to Cape St. Charles for views across Labrador's eastern coast
- Enjoy a private boat tour, with the chance to see icebergs early in the season

Over two days, delve into Battle Harbour's origins as a fishery in the early 1770s, where fishermen would salt and preserve their catches. Witness its evolution into a thriving 19th-century fishing community and its modern incarnation as a living museum. Through interactive experiences and guided tours, gain insight into the resilience and determination that allowed this isolated community to thrive in the face of harsh conditions as it relied on the bounty of the sea. Battle Harbour's well-preserved buildings, including its red-and-white striped lighthouse, salt fish and merchant's premises, offer a tangible link to the island's heritage.

On a popular short hike, wander through once-thriving communities, now abandoned, which offer a glimpse into the past. Stroll to Cape St. Charles, the easternmost point in North America, for views that have remained virtually unchanged for centuries. Discover Battle Harbour's maritime heritage on a private boat tour along the island's shoreline, with the chance to see icebergs early in the season.

Day 8

Mary's Harbour / Red Bay / Point Amour

## Trace 9,000 years of history along the Labrador coast

- See the remains of a 16th-century Basque whaling operation at Red Bay
- Visit L'Anse Amour, the site of North America's oldest known burial mound
- Cross the Strait of Belle Isle by ferry, watching for whales and other marine life

An early morning ferry ride returns us to Mary's Harbour, as we scout for whales along the way. Ashore, we follow the Labrador coastline southward, passing Red Bay National Historic Site. With UNESCO World Heritage status, Red Bay encompasses the remains of a major 16th-century Basque whaling operation, attracting nearly 2,000 Basque whalers from Spain and France. They hunted bowhead and right whales, both currently endangered species, for their oil, used primarily as fuel for lighting in Europe at the time. Today, the archaeological remains include shipwrecks, rendering ovens, cooperages, and a cemetery containing the remains of 140 whalers.

L'Anse Amour, our next stop, is the oldest known burial mound in North America. Located in one of the largest and longest-used Aboriginal habitation sites in Labrador, occupied by the Maritime Archaic people between 9,000 and 2,000 years ago, the low circular mound of large stones measures about 25 feet in diameter. We also see Atlantic Canada's tallest lighthouse at Point Amour, rising 109 feet above the Strait of Belle Isle. Then it's time to return to Newfoundland as we board another ferry this evening, watching for more marine life as we cross the strait.



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Day 9

Port au Choix / Gros Morne National Park

## Enter Gros Morne's glacier-carved landscape

- Search for caribou around the fishing village of Port au Choix
- Hike to views over Western Brook Pond and its 2,000-foot cliffs
- Settle into Gros Morne Inn, your base near Bonne Bay

The fishing village of Port au Choix is home to a small resident caribou herd accustomed to human presence, which we go in search of this morning. While sightings are never guaranteed, we often have a chance for close observation and photo opportunities.

Continue to Gros Morne National Park, acclaimed for its dramatic geology that provides a rare visible illustration of plate tectonics and the process of continental drift. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the park contains exposed rocks from the earth's mantle and oceanic crust, which were thrust to the surface of the earth through a process called subduction around 500 million years ago. The geology also showcases events that occurred around 1.2 billion years ago when the ancient continental margin of North America collided with another continent and formed a vast mountain range. Explore this fascinating phenomenon this afternoon on a guided hike overlooking Western Brook Pond. Steep rock walls rising 2,000 feet high surround this spectacular fjord created by receding glaciers. Fed by Stag Brook and refreshed with numerous waterfalls, the pond formed when land rebounded following the melting of the glacier, creating a natural dam. Continuing to Bonne Bay, we transfer to Gros Morne Inn for three nights. The remainder of the afternoon is free to enjoy the cedar sauna or hot tubs, or relax on the patio by the fire pit before dinner.

Days 10–11

Gros Morne National Park

## See Earth's mantle exposed at the Tablelands

- Explore the barren Tablelands, where carnivorous plants grow among exposed mantle rock
- See nearly 500 million years of geological history in the layered cliffs at Green Point
- Follow coastal trails to Lobster Cove Head Lighthouse above the Gulf of St. Lawrence

Gros Morne is a living laboratory for the study of geology, and we visit several intriguing sites over the next two days. Tablelands is an otherworldly expanse of exposed mantle rock, scoured by glaciers, typically found deep within Earth's interior. Orange-brown in color, the rock, called peridotite, creates a barren landscape in stark contrast to the surrounding verdant hills. It is devoid of vegetation due to a heavy concentration of metals that are toxic to most, but not all, plants. We'll view several carnivorous plants thrive in this otherworldly setting, surviving mainly on insects. Green Point Geological Site is one of the world's most important geological landmarks and the international reference point marking the boundary between the Cambrian and Ordovician periods. Along the shoreline, discover layered rock formations that reveal nearly 500 million years of Earth's history, providing remarkable evidence of ancient oceans and continental drift.

We also explore some of the park's dramatic coastal landscapes. Trails hugging the rugged shoreline offer sweeping views of Bonne Bay, stark cliffs and the Long Range Mountains. A highlight is Lobster Cove Head Lighthouse, a historic beacon overlooking the Gulf of St. Lawrence from a high, rocky promontory.

Day 12

Deer Lake

## Depart from Deer Lake after exploring Newfoundland and Labrador

- Transfer to Deer Lake for homeward flights

Our adventure on Canada's northeast coast comes to a close today. Transfer to Deer Lake Regional Airport, an important transportation hub in western Newfoundland, to meet departing flights.

*Our goal is to provide you with an exceptional, life-enhancing adventure. In order to achieve that goal, our Expedition Leaders are empowered to make reasonable changes to itineraries while a trip is underway. These decisions might be made to more closely follow the movements of wildlife, to accommodate extreme weather, to take advantage of unexpected opportunities, or generally to improve overall guest experience. For this reason, the above itinerary should be considered a general outline of your trip, but it is subject to change. After all, the very definition of adventure is "an exciting or remarkable undertaking involving the unknown."*



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# Puffins, Whales & Wildlife of Newfoundland & Labrador Accommodations

*Explore Marine Wilderness & Maritime Heritage in Far-East Canada*



## Rosewood Suites at Trinity

In a restored heritage building in the heart of downtown Trinity, this boutique hotel embodies early 20th-century charm with traditional furnishings, polished hardwood and a welcoming front porch.



## Battle Harbour Merchant Building

This restored 200-year-old building overlooking the water, now an inn replete with historic decor, once served as the hub of mercantile operations for Battle Island's commercial fishing operation.



## Torrent River Inn

A recently renovated riverside lodge located near some of northern Newfoundland's most famous wild destinations, the inn offers immediate access to the Torrent River and surrounding nature.



## Gros Morne Inn

This sustainability-focused boutique ecolodge, new in 2022, showcases views of ocean and mountain through large picture windows, while a cedar sauna and hot tubs offers relaxation after adventuring.




## Alt Hotel St. John's

This bright and modern hotel located on St. John's Harbor is a short drive to the airport, with trendy design features and rooms with floor-to-ceiling windows, down duvets and Egyptian cotton linens.

For detailed descriptions, visit nathab.com/canada-northern-nature-travel/explore-newfoundland-labrador/accommodations.

# A More Intimate Encounter with Newfoundland & Labrador

***Puffins, Whales & Wildlife of Newfoundland & Labrador***

Complementing Newfoundland and Labrador's pristine nature is a rich tapestry of history and culture. Nat Hab gets you closest, in greater depth, to the province's wild, lesser-known natural features while also introducing you to its intriguing human heritage and hardy, hospitable people. Here are the features that make our trip so distinctive:

1. **No One Shows You More of Newfoundland & Labrador**
   Look closely at other itineraries: We doubt anyone else gives you a more comprehensive, unhurried encounter with this little-visited province. You'll explore coastline and interior alike, with three days in Labrador alone—a rare inclusion on most other trips.

2. **Save Time with Our Private Chartered Flight Between Newfoundland & Labrador**
   Our private flight between Gander, Newfoundland, and Blanc Sablon, Quebec, en route to Battle Harbour, Labrador, saves hours of driving, setting you up to explore much more of the region.

3. **Skip the Crowds on a Private Boat Tour of Western Brook Pond**
   Most visitors experience this stunning freshwater fjord aboard a packed 75-passenger boat. We charter that same boat exclusively for our small group of 14 guests—you'll have a peaceful experience, and everyone gets a superlative view at the rail.

4. **Spend Three Nights on a Remote Labrador Island**
   Once the commercial fishing capital of the region, historic Battle Harbour today is a restored community on Battle Island, nine miles off the coast of Labrador. From this secluded base, look for icebergs, whales, and Arctic fox as we learn about the rewards and challenges facing Labrador's hardy mariners. No other trip we know of offers this in-depth immersion in this special place.

5. **A Small Group Ensures Intimate Nature Encounters**
   Unlike typical tours, our adventure is limited to just 14 guests. Our small group size allows exclusive access to secluded hikes and walks, privately chartered small boats, watching wildlife without disturbing it, and true serenity in nature. With our high guide-to-guest ratio—you'll travel with an Expedition Leader and a local guide—we can tailor daily activities to travelers' personal interests and physical ability levels, impossible to do in a larger group.

6. **Intimate, Distinctive Accommodations Reflect Local Character**
   Our small group size allows us to choose authentic inns noted for their history and atmosphere, and boutique ecolodges close to nature—a real contrast to larger, impersonal chain hotels.



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**7** **The World's Finest Naturalist Guides**

Natural Habitat Adventures has a well-deserved global reputation for employing the highest-quality guides in the industry. Our Expedition Leaders have years of experience and training, including resources from WWF's top scientists. You won't find more knowledgeable—or more personable—guides than those who work with us. Our philosophy is simple: a nature adventure is only as good as the guide who leads it, so we provide the very best! See Expedition Leader bios with traveler comments regarding the quality of our leaders.

**8** **Our Quality-Value Guarantee Ensures Your Outstanding Experience**

With Natural Habitat Adventures, you receive our exclusive guarantee that clearly states that we will meet the high expectations we set forth in our promotional materials. To our knowledge, this is the most ambitious guarantee made by any adventure travel company. Read our important promise.

**9** **Feel Good About Your Carbon-Neutral Journey**

We care deeply about our planet, as we know you do. When you travel with us, the carbon emissions from your trip are 100% offset—including your round-trip flights from home. Natural Habitat Adventures has been the world's first carbon-neutral travel company since 2007.

**10** **Natural Habitat Adventures is WWF's Travel Partner**

Because of our commitment to environmentally friendly travel, as well as the exceptional quality of our small-group nature adventures, World Wildlife Fund, the world's leading environmental conservation organization, has named Natural Habitat Adventures its worldwide travel partner—a designation that makes us exceedingly proud!



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**Dates & Pricing Summary:**

**Price**
From $14695 (+Air)

**Group Size**
Limited to 14 Travelers

# Puffins, Whales & Wildlife of Newfoundland & Labrador Dates, Pricing & Info

*Explore Marine Wilderness & Maritime Heritage in Far-East Canada*

## 2027 Departures

| Departure – Return | Pricing | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| **Jun 21 - Jul 2, 2027** | **$14995** +internal air | |
| **Jun 28 - Jul 9, 2027** | **$14995** +internal air | |
| **Jul 12 - Jul 23, 2027** | **$14995** +internal air | |
| **Jul 26 - Aug 6, 2027** | **$14995** +internal air | |
| **Aug 2 - Aug 13, 2027** | **$14995** +internal air | |
| **Aug 16 - Aug 27, 2027** | **$14695** +internal air | Natural Habitat Explorers Pricing Available |



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## 2028 Departures

| Departure – Return | Pricing | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| Prices and dates not confirmed for 2028 | | |
| **Jun 20 - Jul 1, 2028** | **From $14695** +internal air | |
| **Jun 27 - Jul 8, 2028** | **From $14695** +internal air | |
| **Jul 11 - Jul 22, 2028** | **From $14695** +internal air | |
| **Jul 18 - Jul 29, 2028** | **From $14695** +internal air | |
| **Jul 25 - Aug 5, 2028** | **From $14695** +internal air | |
| **Aug 8 - Aug 19, 2028** | **From $14695** +internal air | |
| **Aug 15 - Aug 26, 2028** | **From $14695** +internal air | |
| **Aug 22 - Sep 2, 2028** | **From $14695** +internal air | |

See https://www.nathab.com/canada-northern-nature-travel/explore-newfoundland-labrador/dates-fees for the latest pricing details.

## Included

**Trip price includes:** Accommodations, services of Nat Hab's professional Expedition Leader, local guides, whale watching and puffin viewing excursions, private boat tour of Western Brook Pond, evening wildlife and cultural presentations, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on final day, some gratuities, all ferry transfers, airport transfers on Day 1 and final day, all activities and entrance fees, all taxes, permits and service fees.

## Not Included

Travel to and from the start and end point of your trip, most alcoholic beverages, gratuities for your Expedition Leader, passport and visa fees (if any), optional activities, items of a personal nature (phone calls, laundry, etc.), international airline baggage fees, airport and departure taxes (if any), required medical evacuation insurance, optional travel protection insurance.

**Internal air:** Private charter flight from Gander to Blanc Sablon (this will be listed separately on our invoicing).

## Important Information About This Trip

Our journey to Newfoundland and Labrador offers an exclusive opportunity to encounter eastern Canada's rugged landscapes as few travelers do. We immerse ourselves in this landscape and explore more of it than any competitor. As we delve into the remote lands and coastlines, guests must be prepared for adventure, solitude and culinary elements.

***Meals***

Newfoundland and Labrador are renowned for abundant and high-quality seafood sourced from the cold, pristine North Atlantic. Guests with allergies or strong aversion to seafood must be aware that many of the meals on this trip showcase local seafood. Dietary requirements due to serious medical conditions or strict personal restrictions can be met, with ample notice.

***Transportation***

Where possible, we have scheduled flights between destinations to minimize long drives. However, some of our remote stops are accessible only by roads, and travelers should be prepared for several long drives over the course of the trip.

## Mandatory Insurance

Since the areas we travel to are remote and wild (that's why we go there!), we require that all guests have, at minimum, medical evacuation insurance for this program. This is for the safety of all guests. We require that your chosen independent insurance plan includes at least $250,000 in medical evacuation coverage.

To protect your investment and to provide peace of mind while you travel, we also strongly recommend purchasing comprehensive travel insurance. Plans may cover everything from medical treatment to trip cancellations and delays and lost luggage. Please contact our office if you would like more information about the medical evacuation and comprehensive travel insurance policies we offer by calling 800-543-8917.

## Getting There & Getting Home

This trip begins in St. John's, Newfoundland and ends in Deer Lake, Newfoundland. **You must arrive in St. John's by 4 pm on Day 1** in order to join your group orientation at 6 pm. For guests who come in early, recommended hotels will be included in your pre-departure materials.

**You may depart Deer Lake at any time on the final day.** Please note that the transfer from the group hotel in Gros Morne to Deer Lake Regional Airport takes about one hour, so early-morning departing flights will require a very early wake-up.

**Natural Habitat & WWF: Discovering Our Planet Together**

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