

First Newfoundland Mushroom Foray

Gros Morne National Park,
October 2003

In 2003, the Humber Natural History Society took the bull by the horns, or more to the point, the basidium by the sterigmata, and hosted the first official Newfoundland Mushroom Foray. The foray took place from Oct 3rd – 5th at Killdevil Lodge in Gros Morne National Park. Declared a UNESCO Heritage Site in 1987, Gros Morne's spectacular fiords, outstanding hiking trails, and forested coastal regions served as the backdrop to collecting. The inspiration of the indomitable mycophile, **Andrus Voitk**, President of the Humber Natural History Society, the foray produced a species list of 183 fungi identified by experts from Estonia, the USA and Ontario, supported by local mycologists and 30 to 40 enthusiastic amateurs.

The foray opened with a reception and two evening presentations by local mycologists, **Gary Warren** and **Faye Murrin**, who spoke on Wood Decay Fungi and Mushrooms of Terra Nova National Park Newfoundland, respectively. **Rod Tulloss** of New Jersey generously shared his expertise on the genus *Amanita* and his excitement at finding new taxa in the park. **Vello Soots**, President of the Mycological Society of Toronto, and **Pat Burchell**, that Society's Treasurer, brought their many years of foray experience to the event. Adding a truly international flavor, four mycologists from the Estonian Agricultural University traveled from Europe to join us: **Kuulo Kalamees**, **Anu Kollom**, **Bellis Kullman** and **Vello Liiv**. Among their many contributions to the foray was a presentation on Estonian mushrooms, illustrated by Vello Liiv's incomparable photographs. Delivered in the Estonian language, with translation by Andrus, this was a rare treat.

The island of Newfoundland along



Visiting and local mycological enthusiasts at the Killdevil Lodge in Gros Morne National Park, Newfoundland: (front) Pat Burchell, Bellis Kullman, Gary Warren; (back) Rod Tulloss, Anu Kollom, Vello Soots, Faye Murrin, Andrus Voitk, Vello Liiv, and Kuulo Kalamees. (Photo by Michael Burzynski)

with its more northern, mainland partner, Labrador, constitutes Canada's youngest and easternmost province. With an area of 108 860 km², the island spans 5.5 degrees of latitude, with the southern part of the island at the 47th parallel (shared with Seattle & Paris). Newfoundland is covered largely by lakes, ponds, and boreal forest, with fir and spruce predominating. The island has a cool spring and summer, and yearly precipitation exceeds 1000 mm everywhere across the island. The provincial capital is the foggiest, snowiest and wettest Canadian city, and while it has a particularly cool spring and summer, next to Victoria and Vancouver it has the mildest winter. Thus, for mushroom lovers there is a short season, but a productive one.

Reports of early studies of basidiomycetes in Newfoundland &

Labrador are patchy. Lucien M. Turner, a member of the US Army Signal Corps, collected during his stay in Labrador and a 1884 collection of his, identified as *Lycoperdon lambindonii* by **Vincent Demoulin** in 1977, can be found among JB Ellis herbaria specimens deposited at the New York Botanical Garden. Along with it are several collections of other gasteromycetes collected in 1895 and 1896 by the Newfoundland botanist, Rev. AC Wagborne, and the 1884 "probable isotype" of *Omphalia semi-vestipes* Peck by an unknown collector. More recently, occasional visits by mycologists to the island, including **Scott Redhead** and **Jim Ginns**, have added to our mycological knowledge of the region. Today, continuing efforts by long-time local enthusiast

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Gros Morne National Park. Site of the first Newfoundland Mushroom foray, October 2003. (Photo by Andrus Voitk)

John Bridson have resulted in a gallery of photos available on the internet and **Faye Murrin** is in the fourth year of a study of ectomycorrhizal mushrooms of Terra Nova National Park, located in eastern Newfoundland.

The list of 183 species produced from the first Newfoundland Foray adds immensely to the knowledge of the mushrooms of Newfoundland and starts us on a promising road. The intention of the organizers is to make this

an annual event, with the next foray, a NAMA sponsored event, already set for Sept 17 of 2004, again at Killdevil Lodge. I, for one, have marked my calendar and it would be great to see you there.

A huge thanks to foray organizer Andrus Voitk and also to members of the HNHS including Judy May, Stan Piedad, and Maria Voitk; mushroom chef, Randy Tsang; check list developers Pat Burchell, Claudia Hanel, and Nathalie Djan-Ch kar, and Michael Burzynski of Gros Morne National Park. The foray was sponsored jointly by the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, The City of Corner Brook, Gros Morne National Park and the Western Newfoundland Model Forest.

For links to the foray report, species list and other sites mentioned here please visit www.swgc.mun.ca/hnhs/

—**Faye Murrin**
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Mycophagist visiting the Killdevil Lodge site during the Newfoundland Foray. Biologist Henry Mann said, "I got (this picture of) the moose, but unfortunately did not get a good picture of him kneeling and actually gobbling the mushrooms, i.e. too stunned (at the sight) at the time! However you can see a little clump that used to be a cluster of mushrooms."



This collection of *Cortinarius* sp. from the first Newfoundland Mushroom Foray exhibited an *unbelievably* boggy (?), permeating odor (sometimes subtle, sometimes overpowering) which plagued Faye Murrin's eight-hour drive home, filled the lab and adjacent corridors, and attached itself to pieces of paper and articles of clothing that retain the odor to this day. (Photo by F. Murrin; tentatively identified as *Cortinarius callisteus*)