

# Outfitting Tourism: A Successful Tourism Niche in Newfoundland and Labrador

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Outfitting tourism is valuable to Newfoundland's economy. Although it accounts for a small percentage of Newfoundland's tourism sector it generates larger revenues than most other tourism activities within the province and stimulates the economy of the areas surrounding the outfitting camps. This research project takes a closer look at where the visitors come from and exactly how much revenue they bring to the province. Questionnaires were sent out to all outfitting companies with listed email addresses, as well as hotels and restaurants in rural areas within close proximity of an outfitting company. Online research and library research was also a major part of this paper.

## Introduction

Newfoundland and Labrador is comprised of over 7,000 tiny islands and accounts for 4.06% of Canada's land mass (Fig. 1). It is located on the Eastern side of Canada, in the North East corner of North America. Labrador is a land mass connected to the mainland with a collection of small islands close to its shores. Newfoundland is a larger island surrounded by a collection of smaller islands that sits just off the eastern coast of the mainland. Newfoundland and Labrador have a total land mass of 405,720 km<sup>2</sup> and although the province is only a small part of Canada as a whole it is still a significantly large area of land (Wiki, 2014).

*“Newfoundland and Labrador is more than three times the total area of the Maritime Provinces (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island) and would rank fourth in size behind Alaska, Texas, and California if it were one of the United States. It's almost one-and-three-quarter times the size of Great Britain” (NL, 2014).*

Figure 1: Map of Canada Highlighting Newfoundland and Labrador



Newfoundland may have an impressive land area, but the population is surprisingly low with approximately 514,536 inhabitants (Wiki, 2014) which is less than two people per square

kilometre. This means that a lot of Newfoundland is wilderness, and 95.6% (Wilderness, 2014) of the land is crown land, so the wilderness is easily accessible for residents and visitors. Outfitting tourism is a branch of wildlife tourism. It involves travel to a place for the purpose of hunting a particular type of animal or fishing for a particular type of fish. Newfoundland offers several types of outfitting packages which include licences for different animals but the most popular is moose. Moose were introduced to the island of Newfoundland in 1904 and have become quite heavily populated. The animal has “established itself so great that it now has the [densest] population in North America” (AdvertiseNorth, 2014).

Figure 2: North American Moose Subspecies Map

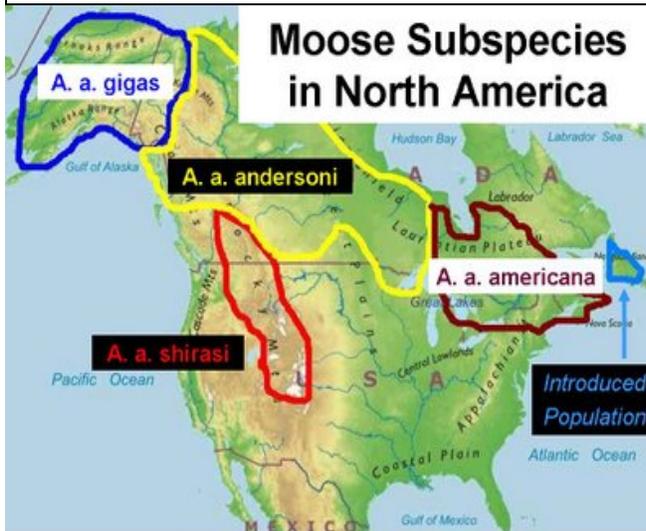
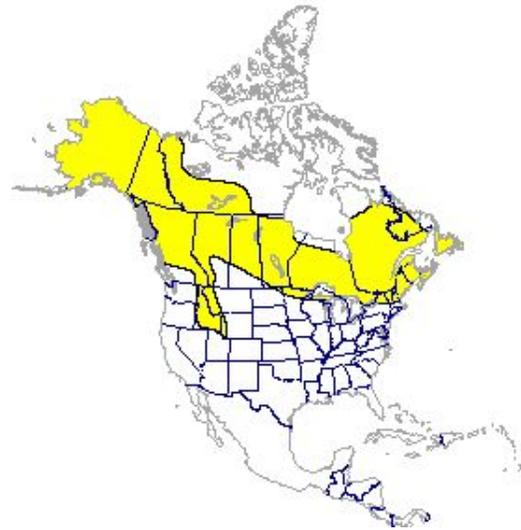


Figure 3: North American Moose Area Map



Licences are limited so as to prevent endangering the province’s moose population. Resident licences must be awarded through a draw from an eligible applicant pool whereas outfitting companies are awarded an average of 15 licences. Other popular tourist licences in Newfoundland are Bear, Caribou and Salmon. There are over 100 outfitting companies and lodges that offer hunting packages and fishing packages, as well as several fishing lodges that sell out of province licences and have a list of private guides available for hire.

### Research Objectives

The main objectives are to:

1. Establish a profile of visitors to Newfoundland tourism industry
2. Highlights the economic impact of outfitting tourism in the Province

### Significance of Study

Outfitting tourism is a “niche product [that] has received relatively little attention from researchers. This may be attributed to a number of reasons, including the relative lack of visibility of this sector not only in terms of its economic scale but also in terms of any large

physical infrastructural presence. It is also possible that tourism researchers have tended to treat hunting and fishing as non-touristic activities” (Lovelock, 2008). Hunting also involves use of guns and can be considered as low class and inappropriate tourist activities. Because of this lack of attention the economic impacts of outfitting tourism are generally underestimated due to a complete lack of knowledge. It is important for people studying the economic effects of tourism to understand the true impacts of this sector.

### **Methodology**

The literature for this project paper was collected between January and April of 2014. Questionnaires were sent out to all outfitting companies with listed email addresses, as well as hotels and restaurants in rural areas within close proximity of an outfitting company. Approximately 175 questionnaires were sent out with only 25 returned. This posed a significant challenge in obtaining usable information for results. Other research instruments used in this process included online and library research publications.

### **Literature Review Definition of Terms**

*Wildlife Tourism:* Tourism that is specific to some form of contact with wildlife species; this can be physical or visual contact. Includes but is not limited to wildlife viewing, wildlife interactions and hunting expeditions.

*Outfitting tourism:* Is a branch of wildlife tourism that deal specifically with hunting or fishing.

*Outfitter:* A company that provides hunting expeditions and excursions. Usually provides transportation and lodging as well as legal documentation and permissions for the hunt.

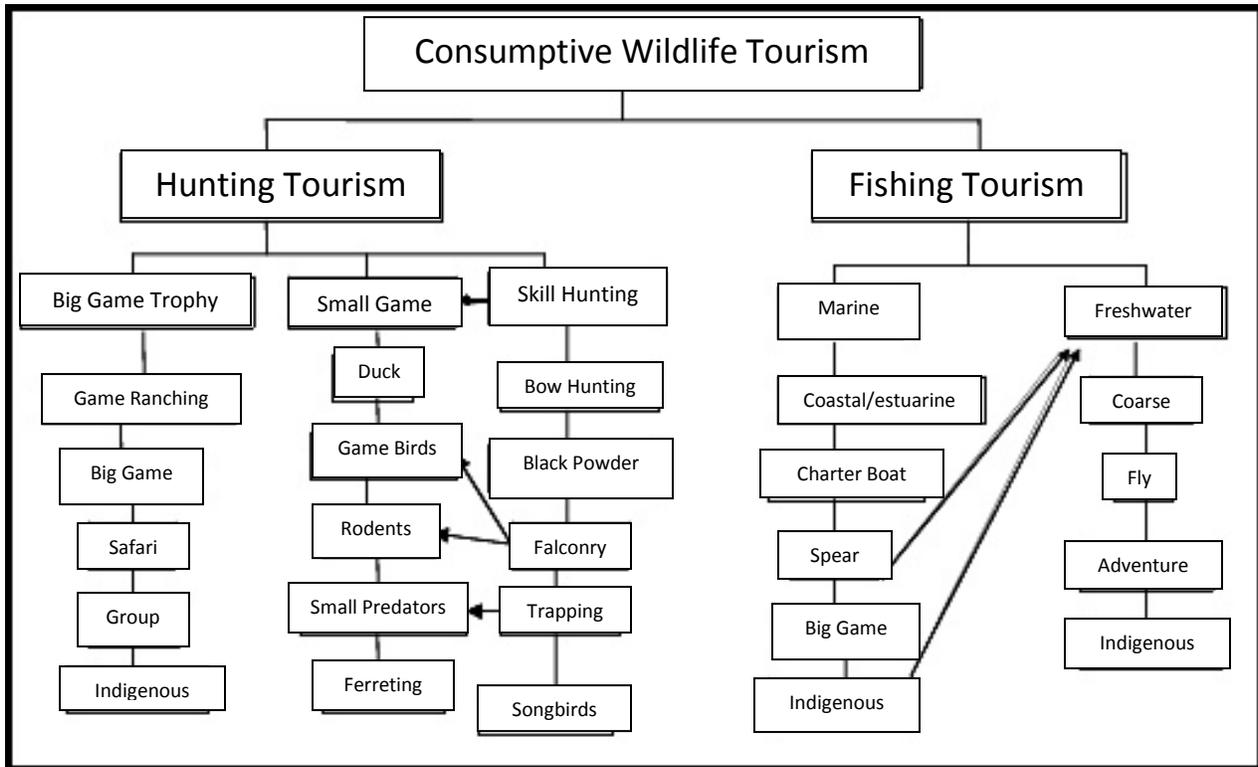
*Guide:* A licenced person that has experience and expertise in a particular hunting or fishing area that is designated to help tourists fill their tags and guide them through the areas during their visit. Non-residents are not permitted to hunt or fish without a guide.

*Tags:* These are the licensee identification pieces that have to be attached to each killed animal or caught fish.

### **Outfitting Tourism and Culture**

Outfitting tourism can be linked to culture. The methods people use to catch or to kill their prey usually comes from a cultural base. There may even be cultural rituals and activities that take place after the kill. In Newfoundland both hunting and fishing are a part of the culture and heritage. Newfoundlanders of yore grew up living off the lands. Hunting and fishing was part of everyday survival. These activities were fundamental and children grew up learning how to provide for themselves and their families.

Figure 4: Types of Outfitting Tourism



### Outfitting in Newfoundland

There are more than one hundred outfitting companies in Newfoundland. Licences available include Bears, Caribou, Moose and Salmon. The Moose population in Newfoundland is estimated to be around 150,000, while the Labrador population is much less impressive and is not documented as well as the islands. Every year approximately 3,925 (Gov, 2014) Moose licences are issued to outfitters for resale in Newfoundland. Labrador only has 205 licences for the entire land area. Moose is Newfoundland's major attraction for big game hunters. With an average tagging success rate of approximately 90%, Newfoundland offers big game hunters probably the highest success rates of all the world's big game hunts (AdvertiseNorth, 2014).

There are approximately 100,000 woodland caribou in Newfoundland and an astounding 750,000 barren ground caribou in Labrador. Newfoundland regulations permit only 266 caribou licences for non-residents. Labrador would presumably allow a lot more as they are part of the George River Caribou Herd, the largest herd in the world. The barren land of Labrador with its abundance of shrubs and lichens makes an incredible stopover for the migrating herds of Canada's north. With the change of seasons these caribou continuously roam north and south from breeding grounds to feeding grounds. Labrador is non-mistakably one of the best areas in the world to hunt barren ground caribou (AdvertiseNorth, 2014). Exact numbers of permitted licences are currently undergoing changes and have not yet been released for the upcoming hunting season. Black bear hunts in Newfoundland are not as successful as moose hunts. Trophy bears are hard to find but Newfoundland is home to some of the largest black bears in the world; weighing in at 840kg. Labrador has such a large wilderness and very low hunting pressure,

[therefor] black bear seem to be more plentiful [there] than on the island and hunters would likely have better luck filling a licence there.

There are very few outfitters that specialize in black bear hunting in Newfoundland or Labrador. Most Newfoundland outfitters offer it as an add-on to a moose or woodland caribou hunt. While in Labrador black bear hunting is in conjunction with barren ground caribou or sport fishing in season (AdvertiseNorth, 2014).

Aside from hunting, Newfoundland and Labrador is home to 60% of North America's Atlantic Salmon rivers and boasts some of the best Salmon fishing in the world. The Atlantic Salmon are quite plentiful in the rivers of both areas and the opportunity to fish those rivers is a dream for anglers worldwide. In both Newfoundland and Labrador you can find lodges scattered around these rivers in prime locations with the best fishing pools. Pools are deep regions in the rivers where the salmon stop to rest. They are usually located near the base of waterfalls or rough water zones. Non-residents must be accompanied by a guide or direct family member in Newfoundland and Southern Labrador. Northern Labrador requires that anglers use an outfitting company unless in certain rivers accompanied by direct relatives or in certain areas where they may fish unaccompanied.

Newfoundland and Labrador offer some unique trout fishing experiences. Brook Trout fishing is probably the fastest growing outdoor sport in Newfoundland and Labrador. It's not until recently that avid fishermen have realized the joy and excitement involved in brook trout fishing. Some of the best brook trout waters in the world are in sparsely populated regions of Newfoundland and Labrador (AdvertiseNorth, 2014). Lake Trout fishing is perhaps the most exciting opportunity for trout fishermen as they populate in shallow areas and fishermen can expect their catch to weigh up to 25lbs. The Lake Trout is generally a deep water fish so the concentrated numbers found in the shallow, fast moving waters of Newfoundland and Labrador lakes is quite a unique occurrence. Some avid fishermen and outfitters believe that Labrador has the best Lake Trout fishing in the world.

As an addition to other fishing packages and excursions, visitors can also have a try at Arctic Char fishing. As the name suggests, these fish like cold temperatures and are much more plentiful in Labrador. Northern Newfoundland does have some Arctic Char stocks that are more plentiful the further North you go, but Northern Labrador has the best Arctic Char fishing. Outfitters in Labrador are notorious for the large number of Arctic Char retrieved at their fishing lodges annually. Probably one of the best Arctic Char fishing areas on the globe is in Labrador, Canada. World record Arctic Char has been retrieved in these waters and some rivers are literally teeming with this interesting fish" (AdvertiseNorth, 2014).

### **Annual Tourist Statistics**

Outfitting lodges generally have an average of 48 tourists annually. This does not seem like a large number but there a large number of outfitting companies so the number of visitors for the entire province is over 5,500. This number is also limited specifically to outfitting companies and does not include the number of tourists staying at Salmon lodges or those staying at hotels and participating in trout fishing that is not part of a tour package. Approximately 85% of outfitting tourists in Newfoundland are American, 14% Canadian (non-Newfoundlanders) and less than 1% international.

### **Financial and Economic Impacts**

The fishing industry in Newfoundland generates 207.1 million dollars annually according to the Canadian Tourism Commission's research and evaluation of Sport Fishing and Game Hunting in Canada from 2012.

Fishing licences for non-residents range from \$8 per licence for trout fishing to \$53 for salmon licences. Fishing is very different from hunting when looking at economic impacts and tourism generation. There are a large number of avid anglers and fishermen that travel to Newfoundland and Labrador yearly to participate in fishing activities but there are also residents that travel within the province to participate as well. The licences for residents are much less but it is not the licence fees that generate the most money. Newfoundlanders and non-residents alike both pay to stay in popular fishing areas, whether it is in a camp ground or a lodge. Both residents and non-residents shop for fishing supplies and camping supplies in suitable stores within short distances from lodges and campgrounds.

Grocery stores and restaurants close to these places also see a flux of fishermen preparing for the camping and fishing season as well. For this particular style of fishing the main difference in non-residents and residents is the guide fees for salmon fishermen. Non-residents must be accompanied by a guide or direct family member, so most of them have to pay for guides. Guide fees are very dependent on the situation; such as which river the guiding is required for as there are some that are easier to fish than others, years of experience of the guide, years of experience for the tourist fishermen, number of people in the party, and whether or not boat service will be required. Guiding can be a pleasant and easy task for an experienced guide that has experienced fishermen, but it can also prove to be quite a difficult task if one or both of the parties is inexperienced. A guide will accompany the fishing party to the river and help them locate pools and positions in the water to fish. A good and experienced guide will also offer tips on exactly how to cast lines and which types of flies are best for luring salmon. Licences include 6 tags, 4 of which can be used in June or July and 2 of which can be used only in August, and no more than 2 tags in one day. A typical trip for a non-resident to a fishing lodge is about four or five days long. Angling requires a certain amount of skill and even with five days it is possible that fishermen may not fill all their tags.

A guide is required for each day that a non-resident intends to fish and fees are generally charged on a daily basis, averaging between \$150 and \$300 per day per fisherman. Tourists can fish in groups, known as parties in the guiding world, but most guides limit themselves to two or three people per party to ensure equal attention to each fisherman. Salmon packages are also available through some outfitting companies. These packages cost about \$3,000 and include a licence, guide, transportation, lodging and meals. Most of these packages are for fishing in Northern Labrador, where the regulations are slightly different than Southern Labrador and Newfoundland. Hunting excursions are high revenue earners for Newfoundland. Outfitters offer packages that include transportation, licences, food, lodging, and sometimes butchering services. Average prices for the packages are indicated in Table 1:

**Table 1: Hunting Packages**

No	Hunting Services	Cost
1.	Bear	\$ 5200
2.	Moose	5200
3.	Trophy Lodge	6200
4.	Double	10000
5.	Double Trophy Lodge	11000
6.	Caribou	8000
7.	Trophy Lodge	9000

There are 3,925 available moose licences for outfitters to use, which means that if every licence was purchased, the revenue could reach over twenty million dollars. With 266 Caribou licences available just on the island of Newfoundland, the economic impact is high as well. The potential revenue from this is tremendous and almost always underestimated. There is also a major economic stimulation in businesses surrounding hunting areas and lodges. Non-resident tourists purchase goods and services from related businesses such as hunting supply stores, butchers, and restaurants during their stay. Residents also travel within the province to hunt. Residents may apply for licences anywhere on the island, so there are always situations where hunters must travel outside of the residential area for hunting. In these cases they become domestic tourists and they stay at hotels in popular hunting areas and purchase goods and services in those areas as well. Hotels and restaurants receive thousands of dollars every year from Newfoundlanders traveling within the province to hunt.

### **Conclusion**

The potential revenue from hunting tourism is tremendous. It is a very small niche of the tourism sector that receives very little attention but offers one of the largest revenues. With proper research and attention this little niche could become an explosive market, because as awareness grows, demand grows. When demand grows for something that is very limited in supply the prices can surge even higher. With a little more attention this could be Newfoundland's greatest contributor to the GDP and livelihood of its residents.

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

- 1) Which does your company provide licensed excursions for (circle all that apply)? What is the cost of each licence?
  - a) Bear
  - b) Moose
  - c) Caribou
  - d) Salmon
  - e) Other?
  
- 2) Do you offer double licence packages? Y / N  
What are the costs?
  
- 3) How many clients do you serve yearly?
  
- 4) Approximately how many of your clients are:
  - a) From other parts of NL?
  - b) From Canada, not including NL?
  - c) From the USA?
  - d) International, not including USA or Canada?
  
- 5) Do you provide transportation to and from the airport? Y / N
- 6) Do you provide accommodations? Y / N
- 7) Do you provide meals? Y / N
- 8) Do you provide butchering butchery services? Y / N
- 9) Has your company noticeably stimulated the economy in your area (through your customers making purchases and spending money at other businesses while visiting with you)? Y / N

## References

Images used:

Image 1

<https://www.gstatic.com/images>

Image 2

<http://www.northamerica.com>

Image 3

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Image 4

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