

The Northern Fulmar, *Fulmarus glacialis*, breeding in Newfoundland¹

David N. Nettleship² and R. D. Montgomerie³

The Northern Fulmar, *Fulmarus glacialis*, is a bird of the open ocean, known to breed in North America only in Alaska, the Canadian Arctic, and Greenland. Godfrey (1966) notes that it nests in large colonies in the Canadian arctic islands and is "found in summer in many other parts of the Canadian Arctic west to Banks Island (rarely), north to Ellesmere Island, and commonly southward to waters off Newfoundland, but not Hudson Bay." Although one of the commonest birds at sea off Labrador from late April to early October (Austin, 1932; Todd, 1963) and regular off Newfoundland throughout the year (Peters and Burleigh, 1951; Tuck, 1967) it has not previously been found breeding in these regions.

Between July 23 and 29, 1973 during a census of breeding seabirds in Witless Bay, Newfoundland, Montgomerie found 6 fulmar nests, all of which contained young, on the northwest corner of Great Island (47°11'N, 52°49'W), located off the southeast coast of the Avalon Peninsula. The nests were located together on a steep rock cliff on ledges ranging from 9 to 34 metres above the sea. At least one adult was observed at each nest, and all were light-phase (Fisher's LL and L forms—see Fisher, 1952); all the downy young were light grey. Adults were also observed at four other nearby ledge sites, but no evidence of nesting was found.

Hitherto the fulmar has been known in Newfoundland only as a common non-breeding visitant. Fulmars displaying behavior usually associated with breeding or prospecting (e.g. loafing on cliff ledges, etc.) have been noted previously in Labrador (Nettleship and Lock, 1973) and Newfoundland (Baccalieu Island—D. N. Nettleship; Green Island and Funk Island—L. M. Tuck, pers.

comm.), but nesting was not established. The fact that the Witless Bay islands, and in particular Great Island, are among the most closely studied seabird islands in eastern Canada suggests that this colony on Great Island is of recent origin, especially as Nettleship did not find breeding fulmars during his seabird studies there between 1967 and 1969 (Nettleship, 1972). It also seems likely that this southward expansion into temperate North American waters is related to the increase of boreal nesting fulmars noted throughout the species' North Atlantic range (Fisher, 1952; Salomonsen, 1965).

Attempts should be made to revisit the site systematically in the future to provide some documentation of the colonizing process.

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¹An investigation associated with the program. "Studies on northern seabirds," Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment Canada (Report Number 23).

²Canadian Wildlife Service, 2721 Highway 31, Ottawa, Canada.

³Biology Department, McGill University, Montreal, Canada.