

***The Funk Island - Great Auk  
Exhibition is ongoing.  
It's never over.***



***The beauty and genius of a work of art  
might be reconceived***

***Though its first material expression  
be destroyed***

***A vanished harmony  
may yet again inspire the composer***

***But when the last individual  
of a race of living things breathes no more***

***Another heaven and earth must pass  
before such a one can be again***

***William Beebe (1906)***



***During 2010-2011, the Funk Island - Great Auk Exhibition was renovated and upgraded. Mayor Gary Dawe and Town Manager Blanche Bennett of Seldom-Come-By and Gordon Slade of the Shorefast Foundation were instrumental in this effort which was supported by ACOA.***

***The exhibition is created in the spirit and independence of the Fogo Island Fisherman's Union and dedicated to the People of Fogo Island.***

***For More Information***

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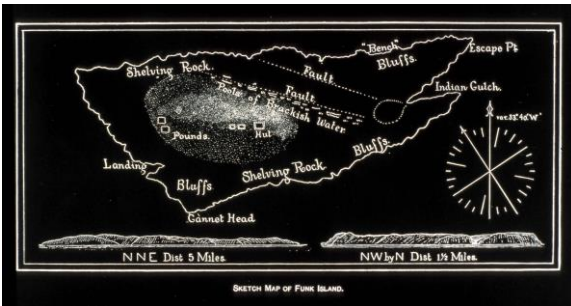
Marine Interpretation Centre: (709) 627-3366

## **The Funk Island Great Auk Exhibition**

**Marine Interpretation Centre  
Seldom-Come-By  
Fogo Island**



**Bill Montevacchi, Ph. D**  
University Research Professor  
Memorial University of Newfoundland



Funk Island map by F. A. Lucas (1890): stippling shows density and extent of Great Auk remains

**Spanish mariners.**

During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, crews from Fogo Island and Bonavista Bay over-killed the auks for down feathers for mattresses and quilts. The auks were driven past the point of recovery.

These “Penguins of the North Atlantic” are a world conservation icon about why we must not over-exploit wildlife. We have not taken that lesson to heart – we must.

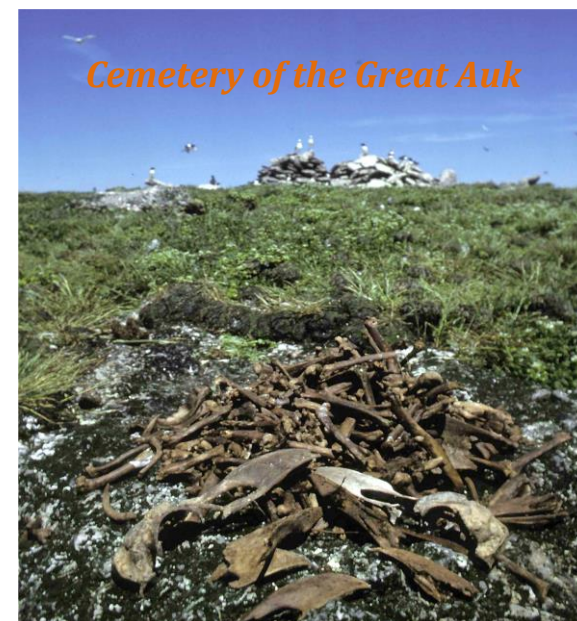
Local fishers plied their trade in the waters around the Funks, though few do now. Decades of seabird research by Dr. Leslie Tuck laid a foundation for the ongoing efforts of Memorial University scientists on Funk Island.

Described as a “marvelously terrible place”, Funk Island is a small remote bird-covered rock 50 km off the NE Newfoundland coast. Once home to the last flightless bird of the northern hemisphere – the extinct Great Auk – Funk Island is a global Seabird Capital shrouded in lore and legend.

Today, eight species of seabirds, including the world’s largest colony of Common Murres and a large colony of Northern Gannets, breed on Funk Island. Northern Fulmars, Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls, Black-legged Kittiwakes, Thick-billed Murres, Razorbills and Atlantic Puffins also nest. In previous centuries, Arctic Terns bred on the island which was the site of the Great Auks’ largest known colony.

Beothuk canoed to Funk Island to collect the eggs of the Aponatz or Great Auk. Like the auks, they too are gone. Fogo – the Portuguese word for fire – indicated the significance of aboriginal fires on the island 500 years ago. We need to resolve our connections with those who were here before.

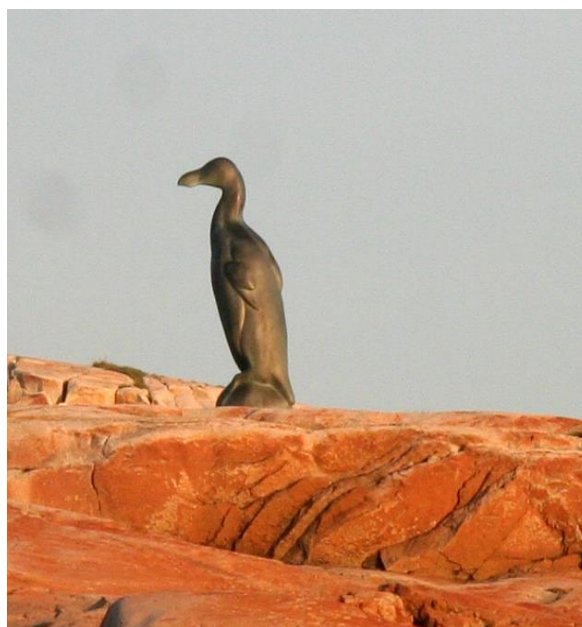
During New World voyages in 1535 and 1536, Jacques Cartier stopped at Funk Island to provision crews with the large flightless auks. Through the next 3 centuries, Funk Island served as North America’s first fast-food takeout for Basque, French, English and



Skulls and bones of the extinct Great Auk exhumed from the grassy meadow on Funk Island

Photo: Bill Montevecchi

This exhibition was inspired in 1996 through the vision of Bernadette Dwyer of Tilting and Dr. Leslie Harris, President of Memorial University of Newfoundland who realized the significance of the Funk Island Ecological Seabird Reserve.



Great Auk Sculpture by Todd McGrain at Joe Batt’s Point, Fogo Island

Photo: Bill Montevecchi



Beothuk ocean-going canoe