

# OCCURRENCES OF FROGS ON ANTICOSTI ISLAND AND NEWFOUNDLAND

By FRITS JOHANSEN

**I**F ONE searches the literature for information about the occurrence of Reptiles and Batrachia upon the islands in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, apart from Prince Edward Island, one finds very little information. So much is known, however, that Reptiles are entirely absent, and that no Batrachia are native to the islands in question; but that frogs have been introduced both to Newfoundland and Anticosti Island within fairly recent times. Which species of frogs have thus been introduced and how well they have established themselves in their new home had, however, never been definitely known until I visited Newfoundland in the autumn of 1922, and Anticosti Island in the summer of 1923, and secured specimens, both of the adults and tadpoles from these two islands. These are now found in the Victoria Memorial Museum, Ottawa, where they have been identified by Mr. C. L. Patch as the Leopard Frog (*Rana pipiens*) from Anticosti Island, and the Green Frog (*Rana clamitans*) from Newfoundland. It is therefore the proper time now to bring together our present information about this matter.

The first record of the occurrence of frogs on Anticosti Island is contained in J. Schmitt's *Mono-graphie de l'Île Anticosti*, Paris, 1904, p. 288, where he says (translated):—

“With the object of diminishing the number of flies (mosquitoes) at the settled parts (of the island) we introduced, in 1899, several hundreds of the common frogs, which, in the following year, laid their eggs in the neighbouring pools. Though young frogs thus became rather numerous, the species is now decreasing in numbers, so that one may foresee its extermination soon. The great numbers of Black Ducks (*Anas obscura* Gmel.), which arrive to breed upon the island are said to be responsible for this.”

When I visited Anticosti Island in 1923, I learned from Mr. Martin-Zédé, the present Governor of the island, that these frogs had been introduced from the vicinity of Quebec City, and I soon found that Schmitt's prediction about their speedy extermination has *not* come true. I found the tadpoles numerous in the vicinity of Port Menier at Ellis Bay, in the west end of the island, particularly Lake St. George and its outlets and tributaries, as mentioned by me in *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* for November, 1924, p. 163, and several adults were seen, one of which was kept. From what I learned during my stay upon Anticosti Island the frogs (*Rana pipiens*) have apparently not spread out over the island beyond the place (the vicinity of Ellis Bay), where they were “planted” in 1899; but they have certainly in-

creased considerably in numbers during the last twenty-five years.

Turning now to Newfoundland, we find the first record of the occurrence of frogs there, in the form of a note by E. Maret, contained in Vol. I, Part 3 of *Proc. Nova Scotia Inst. Scien.*, Halifax, 1867, p. 6, which reads:—

“Contrary to my former experience, I find that frogs do exist in Newfoundland, and several colonies of them inhabit the ponds and lakes about St. Johns, though whether introduced or indigenous, or whether the same as those of Nova Scotia, I cannot say; at all events, they are not numerous.”

When I visited Newfoundland in 1922, I found frogs fairly common in the freshwater bodies around St. Johns, and secured specimens both of adults and tadpoles, as mentioned in *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* for January, 1926, pp. 3, 5. The species is, as said above, *Rana clamitans*, so common in the Maritime Provinces.

Mr. Arthur English, of St. Johns, who has a good knowledge of the natural history of Newfoundland, tells me in a letter that all the information he can give me about the subject is that these frogs occurring around St. Johns are supposed to have been introduced (with hay?) from Nova Scotia less than a century ago; that they are *not* found outside the Avalon Peninsula, and that they were first generally observed in a swampy meadow on the edge of St. Johns about thirty years ago.

We thus see an interesting parallel between the distribution (since introduction) of *R. pipiens* on Anticosti, and of *R. clamitans* on Newfoundland, namely that they have not spread much beyond the area where they were originally placed, but that both species are well established in their new home, and in years to come probably (if left undisturbed) will increase in numbers and populate a larger area, both on Anticosti and Newfoundland.

It is interesting that Batrachians are entirely absent on the Magdalen Islands, though some of the larger ones of these islands contain suitable lakes and ponds, as ascertained during my visit there in 1917. An introduction of frogs to Alright, Amherst, Grindstone and Grosse Islands, from Prince Edward Island (which has regular steamship connection with the Magdalens during the summer) would probably show as good results as has been the case on Anticosti Island and Newfoundland.





Johansen, Frits. 1926. "Occurrences of Frogs on Anticosti Island and Newfoundland." *The Canadian field-naturalist* 40(1), 16–16.

<https://doi.org/10.5962/p.338600>.

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