



IMMEDIATELY

NATIONAL MUSEUMS ACQUIRE RARE BIRD SPECIMEN

The National Museums of Canada have acquired one of the few remaining specimens of the Labrador duck, a bird that has been extinct for the past 90 years.

The new acquisition will be on a long-term loan basis at the National Museum of Natural Sciences at Metcalfe and McLeod Streets where it will be on display in the rotunda for the next three months.

There are only three specimens of this extinct duck now in Canada out of a total of 54 remaining specimens in institutions of the world.

The duck has been loaned to the museum by Dalhousie University, Halifax, whose officials felt this rare specimen should be in a National Museum where it can be displayed to the public from time to time. The museum now has examples of the extinct passenger pigeon and Carolina parakeet, as well as the nearly extinct ivory-billed woodpecker and Eskimo curlew.

The Labrador duck became extinct about 1878 when the last known specimen was captured near Elmira, New York. Nothing is known of its exact breeding grounds or of its feeding habits and no one knows why it became extinct, since it was not considered very good eating. It was also swift on the wing.

Some suggest that during the nesting season it concentrated in only a few colonies, making it more vulnerable than most ducks. Its nesting areas are thought to have been on the easily accessible Labrador coast where yearly egg and feather collecting expeditions drastically eroded its population. During moulting season it was, like other ducks, unable to fly and was an easy mark for hunters.

The specimen acquired by the National Museums came originally from the private collection of Rev. MacCulloch of Pictou, N.S. and was taken prior to 1860 probably near Pictou, N.S. Later, Professor MacCulloch presented the bird to Dalhousie University Museum, where it has been maintained in good condition for many years.

- 30 -

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NATIONAL MUSEUMS OF CANADA - LES MUSÉES NATIONAUX DU CANADA

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL SCIENCES
LE MUSÉE NATIONAL DES SCIENCES NATURELLES
OTTAWA

OUR FILE NO.
NOTRE DOSSIER NO

Ottawa 4, September 23, 1968.

Mr. E.B. Mercer,
Assistant to the President,
Dalhousie University,
Halifax, N.S.

Dear Mr. Mercer:

Attached please find a copy of our news release concerning the loan of the Labrador duck by Dalhousie University to the Museum of Natural Sciences. The specimen will go on display in our rotunda this morning.

Yours sincerely,

A.W.F. Banfield

A.W.F. Banfield,
Director.

Copy of letter + enclosure to Mr Mann *sent Sept 30/8* *2340*
281 *Duck 1*
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