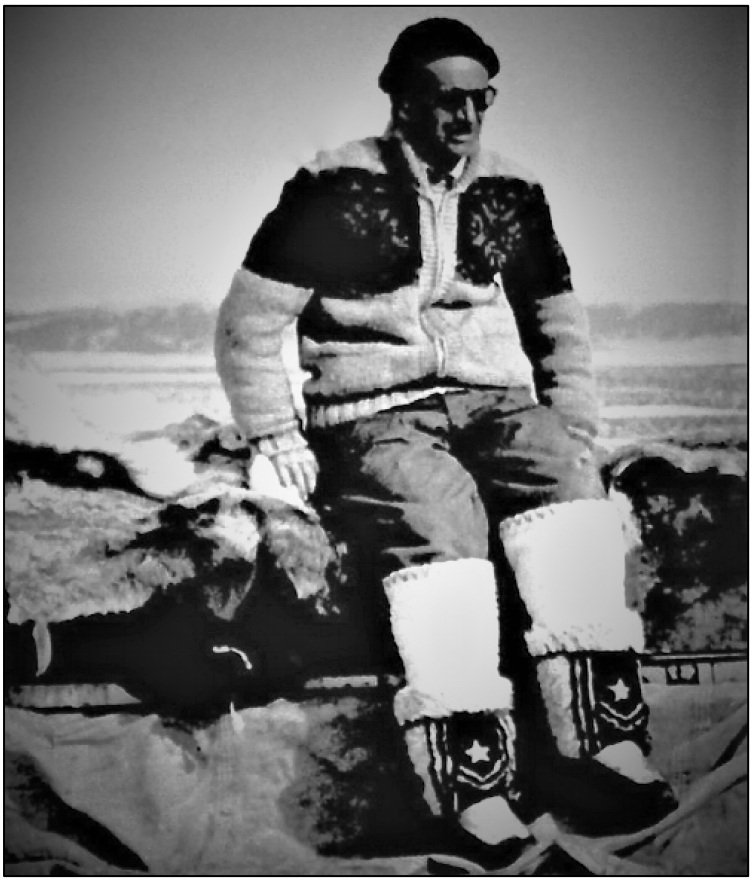
Leslie M. Tuck



Dr. Leslie “Les” Mills Tuck was a Newfoundlander and is to be remembered for his early monographs on Murres and Snipes, and the founding of the Newfoundland Natural History Society.

“Les” Tuck was born at Shoal Harbour, Trinity Bay, Newfoundland, on July 22, 1931. At an early age, he taught school and continued his studies at Memorial University in St. John's Newfoundland, and Harvard University in Cambridge, MA USA. He collected land snails, mosses, bryophytes and insects for the Carnegie Museum, some of which had never before been described. Dr. Tuck was noted for his enthusiasm for learning and his outstanding way telling others about the natural world. In 1950, he founding president of the Newfoundland Natural History Society. During the 1950’s he did pioneering work on marine ornithology in the Canadian Arctic. Although he worked on Kittiwakes and Storm Petrels, his primary focus was on the reproductive ecology of Murres on islands in Ungava Bay, Hudson Strait, and Lancaster Sound in the Arctic.

Dr. Tuck was appointed Newfoundland’s first Dominion Wildlife Officer in 1949, and his association as a research scientist with the Canadian Wildlife Service lasted 27 years until his retirement in 1976. During this time, Dr. Tuck produced some 60 professional

and popular publications. He is the only Canadian to have received the Wildlife Society's Terrestrial Publication Award twice, once for his monograph on Murres in 1961 and once for his monograph on Snipes in 1973. All of this was a result of his summer research in the Arctic and winters in the Southern US States (particularly Louisiana), Venezuela and Guyana.

Les Tuck was awarded an honourary degree of Doctor of Science from Memorial University in 1965. In 1975, he was elected as a Fellow of the American Ornithologist's Union. He received a second honourary degree of Doctor of Science from Acadia University in 1977, when he also was appointed as the J.L. Paton Professor (Research) in the Department of Psychology at the Memorial University. He cherished this position and continued to work on a definitive book on the birds of Newfoundland. Unfortunately, he passed away from a five-year battle with blood cancer on May 11, 1979, and never completed the book.