

THE ATLANTIC PROVINCES

The easternmost part of Canada consists of four provinces — New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island (known collectively as the “Maritimes”) and the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Prince Edward Island is known as the “Cradle of Confederation” because it was the site of the 1864 meeting that led to the formation of the Canadian nation. New Brunswick and Nova Scotia were two of the original provinces of Confederation, and Newfoundland became the newest province in Canada when it joined the country in 1949.

The past is very much in evidence in Atlantic Canada, but the region has a vital modern aspect as well. It is perhaps best appreciated on the renovated waterfronts of the harbour cities, in the busy shopping districts, restaurants and pubs, and in the centres of high-tech industry and research. Entertainment and the arts are thriving on the east coast, home to such well-known artists as Alex Colville and Mary and Christopher Pratt, and to award-winning novelists Antonine Maillet and David Adams Richards. The region has classical music, rock, folk and jazz, theatre, dance, comedy, and French- and English-language film industries.

Geography

The largest of the Atlantic provinces is Newfoundland and Labrador, with an area of 405 720 km². The mainland, Labrador, is bordered by northeastern Quebec and is separated from the island of Newfoundland by the Strait of Belle Isle. Newfoundland is the most easterly part of North America and is as close to Ireland as it is to Saskatchewan. The terrain of Newfoundland and Labrador varies from boreal forests, glacial valleys and mountains to fiords and Arctic tundra.

The second-largest Atlantic province is New Brunswick, with an area of 73 440 km². Although the



Rustico Beach, P.E.I.



SSC

Caraquet, New Brunswick



Halifax, Nova Scotia

ISTC

Halifax Tourist Bureau

province borders on Nova Scotia, Quebec and the state of Maine (U.S.), its geography is such that it is bounded on the north, east and south mainly by water. Productive forest covers 85 per cent of the land surface, the remainder comprising farmland, rivers and lakes.

Bordering New Brunswick on the southeast is the province of Nova Scotia, which is made up of a 580-km-long peninsula and the island of Cape Breton. Nova Scotia is 55 490 km² in area and is surrounded by more than 3 800 coastal islands. The tides of the province's Minas Basin rise 17 m — the highest in the world.

Canada's smallest province, Prince Edward Island (P.E.I.), is crescent-shaped and measures 224 km from tip to tip. It ranges from 6 to 64 km wide. Because over half the island is

farmland, it has been called the “million acre farm.” The province is known for its bright red soil, high sand dunes and 800 km of first-class beaches.

Population density is approximately 1.4 persons per square kilometre for Newfoundland, 9.7 for New Brunswick, 15.7 for Nova Scotia and 22.4 for Prince Edward Island. In real terms, though, P.E.I. has the smallest population: 126 646. Next is Newfoundland with 568 349, New Brunswick with 709 445 and Nova Scotia, 873 180.

People and History

The Atlantic region was inhabited as early as 10 000 years ago by aboriginal populations such as the Maritime