

Celebrating five years of research at the Joggins Fossil Cliffs UNESCO World Heritage Site

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The Joggins Fossil Cliffs, a Carboniferous coastal section in the Bay of Fundy, has recently celebrated its fifth anniversary as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Cliffs represent the finest example in the world of the terrestrial tropical environment and ecosystems of the Pennsylvanian (Late Carboniferous). The Joggins Fossil Cliffs have a long history of scientific research with more than 100 site- specific publications in over 150 years. Recent research has become broader, reaching far beyond the broad categories of paleontology, geology, and historical study. Inscription on the World Heritage List and its close proximity to the Fundy Biosphere Reserve has also made the site of interest to economists, biologists, and geographers. Highlighted here are very recent studies (recently published or in progress) that span the broad range of research at the site: from trace fossil taxonomy to bird migration to regional economic impacts of a World Heritage Site. Much of this work has been undertaken by Maritime institutions that include universities and provincial and federal governmental departments. While research from the past 150 years has made large strides in our understanding of the Late Carboniferous, many questions remain to be resolved and interest in the site is clearly expanding into new fields.