

Message to Visitors

The need to be prepared for adverse weather conditions in Cape Scott Provincial Park cannot be overemphasized. A good tent with a waterproof fly is imperative. It is simply not possible to expect to sleep out without adequate cover. Clothing, sleeping bags and food should be kept in waterproof bags. A small Primus-type stove should be carried for cooking purposes since suitable firewood is in short supply. Wear sealed hiking boots which provide good traction and support. Moleskin is a good preventative against blisters. Proper raingear is a must, as torrential rains can be expected at any time and may last for days. A basic first aid kit should be carried and insect repellent is recommended. A hiking staff should be carried to probe quagmires and mud to check their depth.

Hiking along the coastline is dangerous and not recommended unless following designated beach routes. When hiking along beach routes watch for suspended floats and buoys indicating access to trails. No attempt should be made to traverse undesignated coastal areas at high tide or when tides are flooding (i.e., incoming). A knowledge of the tides is essential for any visitor considering travel in the coastal area. Wilderness camping is not restricted to particular sites, although the more popular spots are near San Josef Bay and Nels Bight. Fresh water is available at these sites as well as at the east end of Nissen Bight and at Guise Bay. Camping sites should be chosen carefully to: prevent flooding from incoming tides, avoid hazardous trees, minimize contamination of drinking water sources and minimize damage to the environment.

Standing structures are unstable. Please do not remove artifacts or disturb sites. Between June and September, a Park Facility Officer may be found at the cabin at Nels Bight.

Visitors can choose between a day hike or a backpacking excursion to explore the sandy beaches, rainforests and lowland bogs and muskeg of this wilderness park. Anyone contemplating a visit here should be prepared for adverse weather conditions, which are common at all times of the year.

In 1995 the Nahwitti-Shushartie coastal corridor was added to Cape Scott Provincial Park. Future plans for this area include the development of a North Coast Trail along this approximately 7,000-hectare strip.

How to Get to the Park

Trails provide the only land access into Cape Scott Provincial Park. A parking lot located at the San Josef Bay trailhead near the southeast corner of the park is on Western Forest Products land and is provided by the company for the convenience of park users. The lot is reached by a combination of public highways and private, active logging roads from Port Hardy, a distance of approximately 64 kilometres. Port Hardy is the northern terminus of Hwy 19 on Vancouver Island.

Extreme caution should be exercised on logging roads at all times. Keep headlights on.

Note: Parking areas are not patrolled. Park visitors should ensure that their vehicles are locked and all valuables removed.

Persons contemplating a visit to Cape Scott Provincial Park are reminded that the park is a wilderness area without supplies or equipment of any kind. Parts of the trail are very muddy. Holberg, 16 kilometres from the trailhead, is the nearest settlement. Visitors should be in possession of suitable maps.

Maps

National Topographic Series Maps, Scale 1:50,000, Index No. 102, Sheets i/9 and i/16, cover the Cape Scott area. These maps should be available at most map retailers in British Columbia.

Park Fees

The park is open year-round. Overnight backcountry fees are collected from May to September. Access depends on weather and snow load. If required, contact the Regional Office to confirm accessibility.

For More Information

BC Parks

<http://bcparks.ca>



Ministry of Water, Land
and Air Protection



03/2002



Cape Scott

PROVINCIAL PARK



Welcome. Cape Scott Provincial Park protects 22,131 hectares of forested uplands, salt marshes and over 100 kilometers of magnificent British Columbia coastline. Established in 1973, this park was created to exhibit and interpret part of British Columbia's colourful history and recreational wilderness.

Cultural Role

The park protects First Nation archaeological sites, early European agricultural settlements, the Cape Scott Lighthouse, and evidence of a military presence during World War II.

Conservation Role

The park conserves mature forests, remote beaches, rocky headlands, bogs and sand dunes. It encompasses an intriguing array of wildlife including wolf, black bear, cougar, seals, sea lions and Roosevelt elk. The park also safeguards important sea bird breeding grounds and is an important stopover for migrating waterfowl.

Recreation Role

Cape Scott Provincial Park provides provincially significant recreation opportunities for visitors. Wilderness hiking and camping, sea kayaking, nature study and exploring historic trails are popular activities.

Vancouver Island

Conservation

Upland areas of the park are forested with red and yellow-cedar, lodgepole pine, western hemlock and amabilis fir with some concentrations of Sitka spruce. Undergrowth is mostly salal, salmonberry, evergreen huckleberry and fern. The highest point in Cape Scott Provincial Park is Mount St. Patrick, which rises 422 metres above sea level. Eric Lake, at 44 hectares, is the largest body of fresh water.

Flowers, trees and shrubs are part of the park's natural heritage. Please do not damage or remove them.

History

Cape Scott was named in 1786 by Captain Guise and Captain Lowrie in honour of David Scott, a Bombay merchant who was one of the principal backers of a trading voyage to this area. Remote and inhospitable, the history of Cape Scott has been shaped by its heavy rainfalls and violent windstorms. There were two turn-of-the-century attempts at settlement by Danish pioneers. In 1897 and again in 1910, hardy settlers arrived at Hansen Lagoon to raise crops and to fish.

After several years of hardship – sparked by annual rainfalls that often reaches 500 centimetres and frequent severe storms – the Danes had their dreams dashed. Forced by the harshness of nature, a lack of suitable access routes and the long distance to markets, they finally gave up their struggles and left. Today, little remains of the Danish settlement except the names – Nels Bight, Hansen Lagoon, Frederiksen Point – and a few fragile buildings and other man-made relics.

Requirements of national security during the World War II led to the construction of a small radar station at Cape Scott in 1942. It remained in operation until 1945. Today, remnants of human activity can be seen throughout Cape Scott Provincial Park. Rusting tools and implements, dilapidated buildings and old wells may still be seen in some areas. Please be careful when exploring historic sites and do not remove artifacts or disturb sites.

Established in 1973 and named after the site of a lighthouse that has guided mariners since 1960, Cape Scott is characterized by over 100 kilometres of scenic ocean frontage, including numerous sandy beaches. Nels Bight (2-1/2 kilometres) and Nissen Bight (1-1/2 kilometres) with their fine-textured white sand beaches are considered by many the most impressive of the park's beaches.

Cultural Heritage

Three native peoples – the Tlatlasikwala, Nakumgilisala and Yutlinuk – shared the Cape Scott area prior to white settlement. The Yutlinuk of the Scott Islands died out in the early 1800s. The Nakumgilisala and Tlatlasikwala amalgamated in the mid-1850s and moved to Hope Island where they remained until 1954. That year, numbering only 32, they joined with the Koskimo people and moved to Quatsino Sound. Today they are known collectively as the Nahwitti. They have six reserves, three of which are within the boundaries of Cape Scott Provincial Park – two Quatsino and one Tlatlasikwala (on Cape Sutil).

What You Should Know



There are two small campgrounds located outside the park to the south, each less than a kilometre from the trailhead parking lots. Thirteen designated camp pads are located at Eric Lake, available on a first-come, first-served basis. There is no longer a campsite, hut, or pit toilet at Donaldson Farm.



Random wilderness camping is allowed. The more popular spots are near San Josef Bay and Nels Bight. No facilities, other than bear caches and toilets, are provided. Please practice Leave-No-Trace camping ethics. Beyond Mount St. Patrick visitors should be equipped with a topographic map and compass and be totally self-sufficient. Please camp on the beach whenever possible.

Temporary Shelters:

If you should choose to erect a temporary shelter, please dismantle it entirely when you are through with it and return the site to its natural state so others may enjoy the area as you have.



There are no picnic tables at Cape Scott. San Joseph Bay, accessed by a good 2.5 kilometres trail, is often used for day-use and camping.



Drinking water is not available at the Cape Scott Lighthouse. Fresh water is available at most camp areas including the east end of Nissen Bight and at Nels Bight, Fisherman River, Eric Lake, San Josef Bay and Guise Bay. Boil or treat **all** drinking water before consuming.



Only pit toilets are available. See map locations.



While fires are allowed, we encourage visitors to conserve the environment by minimizing the use of fire and using stoves instead.



There are no designated swimming areas at Cape Scott Provincial Park. There are no lifeguards on duty.



Canoeing/kayaking is becoming increasingly popular, particularly in San Josef Bay.



BC Parks' boat launch is accessed via San Josef Heritage Park, but it is a BC Parks facility. It is for canoes/kayaks and small car-toppers only. The San Josef is tidal, so do not plan on using the launch at low tide or you may be hauling over gravel bars.



Fishing is permitted as per provincial and federal fishing regulations. You will need a provincial fishing licence and/or federal tidal waters fishing licence if you plan on fishing. Licences must be obtained prior to entering the park. If you plan to gather shellfish, contact Fisheries and Oceans Canada in Port Hardy to ensure that it is safe to do so. From time to time shellfish poisoning has occurred in the park.



No cycling is permitted.



Backcountry areas are not suitable for dogs due to wildlife issues and potential bear encounters.

Pets/domestic animals must be on a leash at all times and are not allowed in beach areas or park buildings. You are responsible for their behavior and must dispose of their excrement.

Wildlife

Hansen Lagoon is a stopping place for Canada geese and a variety of wildfowl travelling the Pacific Flyway. The ubiquitous gull and other sea birds frequent the shoreline. Deer, elk, bear, otter, cougar and wolves are in evidence in the forested and open uplands, while sea otters, seals and sea lions, gray whales and orcas inhabit offshore areas.

Park users should always be aware of bears and other wildlife in our park environment. Never feed or approach them.

Wildlife Caution

- ▶ All wild animals are potentially dangerous and may be encountered at any time.
- ▶ Never approach or feed wildlife.
- ▶ Securely store food, all scented items and dishes by hanging them from a tree at least 4 metres above the ground and at least 2 metres from the trunk. Always use storage facilities where provided. Campers at Guise Bay, Nels Bight, San Josef, Nissen Bight and Eric Lake should use food caches provided for the storage of all food items.
- ▶ Do not cook or store food in your tent and keep your campsite clean.
- ▶ Do not burn or bury non-combustible refuse. Pack it out where disposal facilities are not available.
- ▶ Be alert for bear scats, tracks or trails and do not hike or camp where these are common. Make lots of noise when hiking where bear signs are found.
- ▶ Try to stay calm if a bear is encountered. Do not provoke an attack by making frightening noises, throwing things or running. Move slowly away if possible.
- ▶ If you are travelling with small children, keep them within sight at all times.
- ▶ If you have no other options, try to intimidate the bear with deterrent or weapons such as tree branches or rocks.

Refuse

Please do not litter. The park's lakes and streams are sources of drinking water. Even biodegradable soaps will pollute water; so will food scraps, fish, entrails and dirty plates. Help protect the delicate balance of the water system by washing yourself, your clothes and your dishes at least 30 metres from lakes or streams and please do not clean fish in them. Preferably use the ocean for all your washing.

Please be discreet about the disposal of human waste. Dig a small hole at least 30 metres away from campsites and water sources and cover it over after use. Please use toilet facilities where provided and pack out or burn all toilet paper and feminine products.