

Bird Viewing around Prince George



COTTONWOOD ISLAND PARK

LOCATION: The park is located close to downtown at the junction of the Nechako and Fraser Rivers, along River Road.

HABITAT: The park takes its name from the abundant cottonwood trees, many of which are over 200 years old. Thick bushes border the old river channels that weave through the park.

BIRD SPECIES: The large cottonwoods attract a variety of birds including Great Horned Owls, Pileated Woodpeckers, and cavity-nesting ducks. Shorebirds can be seen on the gravel bars. The willow and alder thickets attract American Redstarts, Northern Waterthrushes, and many other birds of bottomland habitat. Vaux Swifts soar above the tall trees while you walk along the many nature trails of this 32 hectare park.

NOTES: Watch for beavers and muskrats busy at work in the river. If you are lucky a fox may pass, but don't pass Cottonwood Island Park by on your birding trip!

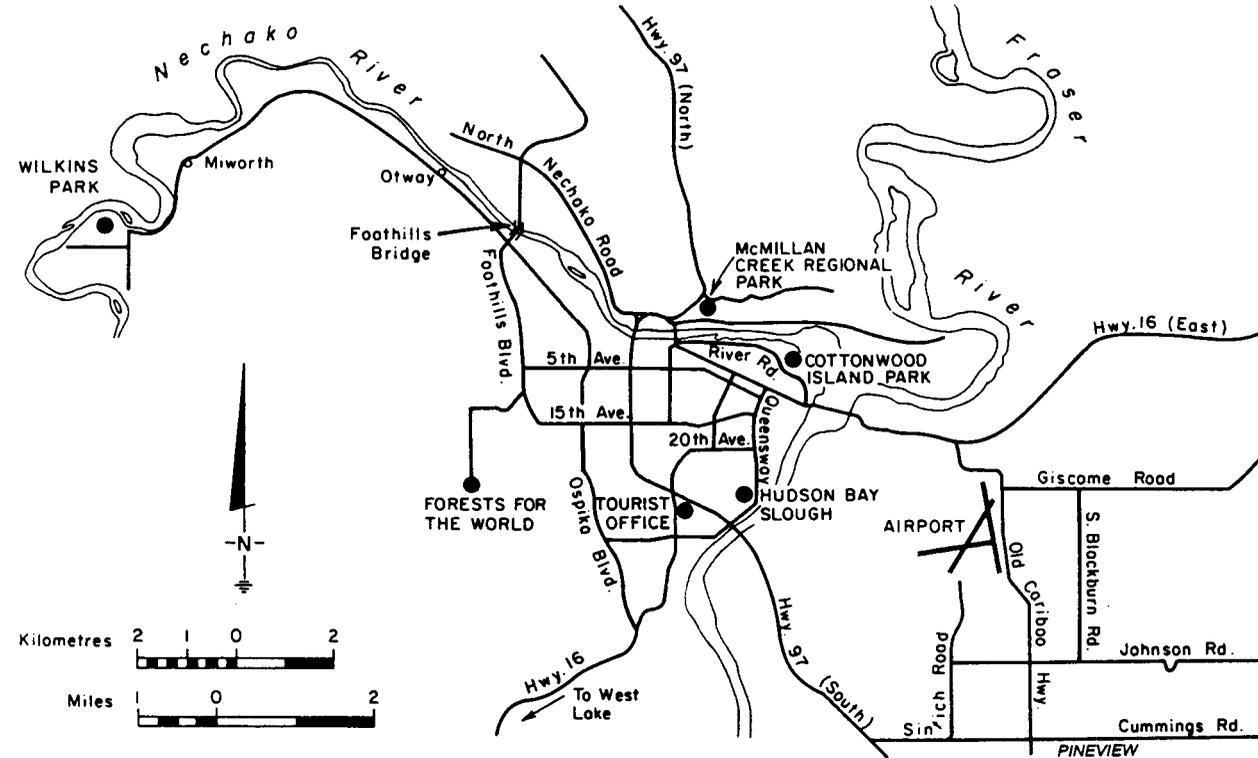
WILKINS PARK

LOCATION: Follow Otway Road 11.3 km west from Foothills Bridge and turn right onto Wilkins Road.

HABITAT: The habitat is similar to Cottonwood Island Park but with more conifer trees and thicker undergrowth.

BIRD SPECIES: Great Horned and Northern Sawwhet Owls nest in cavities while Belted Kingfishers burrow into the banks across the river. This bottomland habitat is excellent for flycatchers and other songbirds, such as Western Tanager, Winter Wren, kinglets, warblers, and thrushes. Ruffed Grouse drum in the spring.

NOTES: Wilkins Park was named after a local pioneer, who farmed nearby.



FORESTS FOR THE WORLD

LOCATION: Turn off Foothills Blvd. just north of Fifteenth Avenue. Follow the winding road up Cranbrook Hill 1.5 km and turn left onto Sinden Road. Proceed another 2 km to the parking lot.

HABITAT: An extensive network of trails lead through a young forest with some patches of mature trees.

BIRD SPECIES: Listen for the Hermit Thrushes and flycatchers along the trail to Shane Lake in the spring. Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, and Barrow's Goldeneye breed on this lake. White-throated Sparrows, Orange-crowned Warblers, Rufous and Calliope Hummingbirds are common summer residents. Townsend's Solitaires may be seen during migration.

NOTES: Beaver, moose and other water-loving animals are attracted to the area. A viewpoint provides a panoramic view of the city of Prince George and area mountains.

MCMILLAN CREEK-REGIONAL PARK

LOCATION: Go north on Highway 97, about 2.3 km after crossing the Nechako River. At the top of the hill, turn right onto Hoferkamp Road (watch closely for it). The parking lot is 0.4 km from the highway on the right.

HABITAT: The walking trail leads over a creek, through a spruce stand, and into a mixed forest, ending at a viewpoint.

BIRD SPECIES: Red-breasted Nuthatches, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Three-toed Woodpeckers, Hermit, Swainson's and Varied Thrushes, and Warbling Vireos are among the many forest birds found here. From the viewpoint, swallows and Ospreys may be seen flying over the river.

NOTES: This park is located on top of the Nechako River cutbanks and overlooks Prince George. If you have time, there are other trails to explore.

PINEVIEW-AIRPORT AREA

LOCATION: Follow signs to the airport via Highway 16 or Highway 97. The many country roads in the vicinity of the airport are excellent for birding any time of the year. **HABITAT:** Open farmland with deciduous and conifer groves.

BIRD SPECIES: One of the highlights of this area is the spring migration of Rough-legged and Redtailed Hawks. They are readily seen perched on fenceposts surrounding the airport. Northern Harriers can often be seen "mousing." Other migrants include Canada Geese, Snow Buntings, Sandhill Cranes, and American Pipits. Savannah Sparrows are abundant during the summer. Western Meadowlarks, Mountain Bluebirds and Clay-coloured Sparrows are less frequently encountered. Year-round residents include Blackbilled Magpies, Common Ravens and Blackcapped Chickadees.

NOTES: Watch the fields for coyotes and foxes hunting.

HUDSON BAY SLOUGH

LOCATION: Just off Queensway, south of 20th Avenue, there is a small parking lot which provides access to Hudson Bay Slough.

HABITAT: A trail follows the south bank through a mixed wood forest, overlooking open water and a cattail marsh.

BIRD SPECIES: American Wigeon, Barrow's Goldeneye, and Mallard raise their young on this pond. Cinnamon, Green-winged and Blue-winged Teal are frequent visitors. The cattails provide cover for noisy Red-winged Blackbirds and the secretive Soras. Purple Finches, Yellow Warblers, Song Sparrows and Northern Flickers are common in the summer.

NOTES: This is part of the Heritage Trail system.

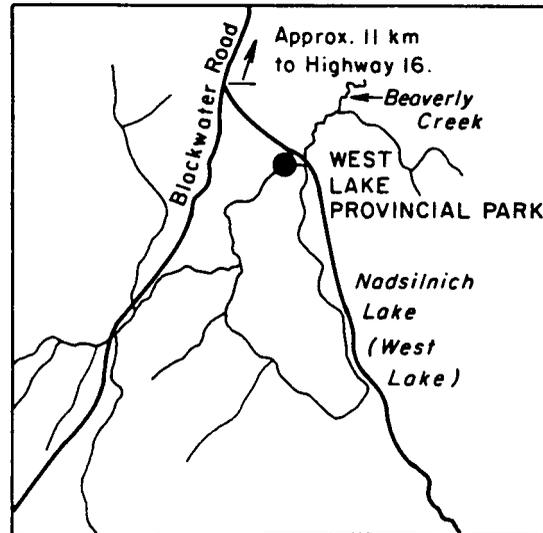
WEST LAKE PROVINCIAL PARK

LOCATION: Head out Highway 16 West, 9.4 km from the Tourist Information office, turn left onto Blackwater Road. Follow the blue and white Provincial Park signs south along the Blackwater Road.

HABITAT: Several habitats can be found within the park, including aspen groves, Black Spruce forest, cattail marsh and a sandy beach.

BIRD SPECIES: Spotted Sandpipers may be feeding along the water's edge. Listen for the yodel of Common Loons. In the spring the Bonaparte's Gulls bob in the water down the lake, while Red-necked Grebes begin nest building. Scoters stop here in early May. Ospreys and Belted Kingfishers dive for fish in the creek at the east end of the beach. Common Yellowthroats, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Black-capped Chickadees live in the bushes along the creek. You may be lucky enough to see a Sandhill Crane or hear a Bittern's unusual "slough-pump" call.

NOTES: Watch for Red-tailed Hawks, Northern Harriers, and American Kestrels on the drive out to the park. For best birding, arrive early in the morning before the picnickers.



NOTES

WILDLIFE VIEWING ETHICS

Wildlife viewing demands courtesy and common sense. To keep our birds/wildlife healthy and wild, please follow these rules:

- Keep to designated trails and roads to reduce your impact on nature.
- Keep your distance from nesting and roosting sites to reduce stress on the birds.
- Feeding wild birds in a natural setting may disrupt their natural feeding patterns and encourage "camp robbers."
- Do not litter.
- Take home only pictures and memories and leave only footprints.
- Keep pets on a leash; or, for the wildlife's sake, leave them at home.
- Respect private property by not entering private land without permission.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Wildlife Watch Program

BC Environment, Wildlife Branch
780 Blanshard Street
Victoria, B. C. V8V 1X4

or

#325, 10111-4th Avenue
Prince George, B.C., V2L 3H9

Prince George Naturalist Club

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