

Visit Our Wildlife in Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows

Northeast Greater Vancouver



The communities of Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows are located in the lower Fraser Valley in the northeast section of the Greater Vancouver area. Situated along Lougheed Highway (Highway 7) and the Fraser River, and between Port Coquitlam and Mission, the Ridge-Meadows area is about a 60 minutes drive from Vancouver. Despite on-going urban growth, there are still large areas of farmland and numerous natural areas.

This brochure contains information for 12 sites where you may visit our wildlife. These areas are recognized by British Columbia Wildlife Watch, the provincial wildlife viewing, program, as sites offering good viewing and educational opportunities. Some of these sites are situated on or near private lands. Please keep to the roads and respect private property.

The area covered in this brochure includes habitats from valley wetlands and streams to low mountain forests and rivers. Besides bird watching, there are many fish viewing opportunities.

Golden Ears Provincial Park

The forest, marshy areas, streams and lakes of this provincial park provide for the needs (food, water and cover) of birds and other wildlife. By visiting different habitats, you will see a greater variety of species. For more information contact BC Parks, Lower Mainland District [(604) 924-2200; 1610 Mount Seymour Drive, North Vancouver, B.C. V7G 2R9].

Access - From Lougheed Highway (Highway 7) turn north onto 228th Street. At Dewdney Trunk Road turn right and then left at 232nd Street. Follow the park signs onto Fern Crescent and continue to the park. The nature trail is wheelchair accessible.

Viewing Highlights - In the main areas of the park look and listen for Brown-headed Cowbird, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Swainson's Thrush and Steller's Jay. Osprey may be seen over Alouette Lake. Douglas Squirrels and Yellow-pine Chipmunks frequent the campgrounds. Mountain Goats are infrequently seen on high mountain rock faces. Trails leading into the sub-alpine areas provide viewing opportunities for Blue Grouse and Hermit Thrush. A British Columbia Wildlife Watch bird checklist is available for the park (137 species to August 1995).



Did you know?

A female Belted Kingfisher is easily identified. In addition to a slate blue breast band (like the male), she has a rust-coloured belly band.

Golden Ears Provincial Park - Mike Lake

Located along the park's boundary with the UBC Research Forest, the Mike Lake area is located a short drive off the main park road. A trail leads around the lake (about 45 Minutes round-trip) and provides good views of the open water and marsh areas. For more information contact BC Parks, Lower Mainland District [(604) 924-2200; 1610 Mount Seymour Drive, North Vancouver, B.C. V7G 2R9].

Access - From Lougheed Highway (Highway 7) turn north onto 228th Street. At Dewdney Trunk Road turn right and then left at 232nd Street. Follow the park signs onto Fern Crescent and continue to the park. Once in the park follow the signs to Mike Lake.

Viewing Highlights - The lake area is home to a small population of Beaver. Look for recently removed trees and other vegetation. Common Loon and Pied-billed Grebe are common winter visitors when the lake is not frozen over. Flycatching birds are observed in spring and summer, including Cedar Waxwing, Willow Flycatcher and several species of swallow.

Golden Ears Provincial Park - Spirea Nature Trail

Boardwalk and trail loops provide access around the bog areas. For more information contact BC Parks, Lower Mainland-District [(604) 924-2200; 1610 Mount Seymour Drive, North Vancouver, B.C. V7G 2R9].

Access - From Lougheed Highway (Highway 7) turn north onto 228th Street. At Dewdney Trunk Road turn right and then left at 232nd Street. Follow the park signs onto Fern Crescent and continue to the park. This area is located along the main park road just south of the Alouette Lake day use area. There is a small parking lot.

Viewing Highlights - Summer visitors include Cedar Waxwing, MacGillivray's Warbler, Song Sparrow and several species of swallow. Listen for woodpeckers and chickadees. In addition to birds, the bog is home to many interesting plants, including the insect-eating sundew plant.



Did you know?

The Steller's Jay is the provincial bird of British Columbia?

Pitt Polder Farmlands

The farmlands located in the northern portion of Pitt Meadows are known as the Pitt Polder. Portions of these lands are often covered with water from late fall through early spring. This habitat attracts many wildlife species. For more information contact BC Environment, Lower Mainland Region [(604) 582-5200; 10470 -152nd Street, Surrey, B.C. V3R 0Y3].

Access - There is road access throughout the farmlands of the Pitt Polder. From Lougheed Highway (Highway 7) turn north onto Harris Road. Continue to McNeil Road and turn right. At Rennie Road turn left and continue north towards the Pitt-Addington Marsh Wildlife Management Area. From Harris Road you can also turn right onto Dewdney Trunk Road and then left onto Neaves Road. Neaves Road becomes Rennie Road. Please remember to stay on the roads and to keep off private property. When stopping or parking on local roads, pull well off the road and do not block driveways.

Viewing Highlights - Coyotes are often seen in the fields. During the winter months, especially December and January, Trumpeter Swans are commonly observed feeding in firm fields. Fields covered with water are used by many species of waterfowl. Throughout the year, Northern Harrier and Red-tailed Hawk may be seen. In spring and early summer watch for Sandhill Crane.

Kanaka Creek Regional Park - Fish Fence

The fish fence is located on Kanaka Creek in Kanaka Creek Regional Park. You can participate in a special event at the fish fence during the annual return of spawning salmon. Return of the Salmon is a free event held in October. For more information contact the East Area Office of GVRD Parks [(604) 530-4983; 1558 - 200th Street, Langley, B.C. V2Z 1W5].

Access - From Lougheed Highway (Highway 7) turn north onto 240th Street. Cross the bridge over Kanaka Creek and turn left onto Kanaka Creek Road. A small parking lot is located on the left.

Viewing Highlights - Throughout the year, this section of Kanaka Creek is visited by Great Blue Heron, ducks and Belted Kingfisher. In October, Chum Salmon and Coho Salmon are migrating upstream to spawn. A counting fence allows Bell-Irving Hatchery staff to count the number of returning fish and to remove some to provide hatchery stock.

Kanaka Creek Regional Park - Riverfront

This portion of Kanaka Creek Regional Park is located along the estuary section of Kanaka Creek immediately south of the Lougheed Highway (Highway 7). A wide trail along Kanaka Creek to the Fraser River is accessed from a large parking area. At the Fraser River turn right and continue over the bridge and along a loop trail that leads through several habitat types, including open meadow and cottonwood forest. In the 1920's, the mouth of Kanaka Creek was home to the log dumping facility of the Abernathy and Lougheed Logging Company. Steam trains loaded with logs from nearby lands, including what is now Golden Ears Provincial Park, came to this site. For more information contact the East Area Office of GVRD Parks [(604) 530-4983; 1558 - 200th Street, Langley, B.C. V2Z 1W5].

Access - From Lougheed Highway (Highway 7) turn south onto 240th Street, cross the railroad tracks, and continue westward to the park entrance. There is a large parking area with washroom facilities.

Viewing Highlights - Viewing opportunities vary throughout the year. Great Blue Heron, Belted Kingfisher, Black-capped Chickadee and Canada Goose are common. Bufflehead Common Merganser, Mallard and a few Hooded Merganser are best seen in the winter months. Spring and summer are the best times to watch for woodpeckers, swallows and other song bird species. It is unusual for a careful observer to visit this area without seeing some birds.

Alouette River Dykes

The dykes along the Alouette River are popular with local residents. On foot or by bicycle, visitors will see a variety of wildlife. The dyke tops provide views of the river and adjacent farmlands. For more information contact BC Environment, Lower Mainland Region [(604) 582-5200; 10470 - 152nd Street, Surrey, B.C. V3R 0Y3].

Access - There are many access points to the dykes. The best parking is located at the Alouette River bridge on Harris Road. From Lougheed Highway (Highway 7) in Pitt Meadows, turn north onto Harris Road and continue to the bridge and parking area. You can also access the dykes at the corner of Dewdney Trunk Road and 210th street - see the directions for the Alouette River Heronry site.

Viewing Highlights - In winter, watch for Bald Eagles and occasionally Trumpeter Swans in the fields. Great Blue Herons and hawks are common throughout the year. Waterfowl use the river corridor and some nest along the river banks. Morning and early evening periods from spring through late summer are best for songbirds. Coyotes may be seen in the fields.



Did you know?

A Northern Harrier is easily identified by its white rump patch.

Pitt River Dykes

There are many kilometres of dykes along the Pitt River. From the dyke tops there are views of the river, adjacent farmlands and nearby mountains. For more information contact BC Environment, Lower Mainland Region [(604) 582-5200; 10470 -152nd Street, Surrey, B.C. V3R 0Y3].

Access - There are several main access points. For access north of the Pitt River bridge there is limited parking off Dewdney Trunk Road at Lougheed Highway. For access south of the Pitt River bridge there is parking along Kennedy Road. Another access point is at the north end of Harris Road. The best parking is found at the Alouette River bridge on Harris Road - see Alouette River Dykes site. Remember to never leave valuables unattended anywhere in your vehicle.

Viewing Highlights - Numerous Osprey nests are located along the Pitt River. Throughout the spring and early summer look for these nests located on top of pilings. Hawks are common, including Redtailed Hawk and Rough-legged Hawk. From spring to fall watch for Short-eared Owls. Winter is best for Bald Eagles. Watch for waterfowl, woodpeckers and songbirds. Coyotes may be seen in the fields.



British Columbia Wildlife Watch is the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks' program designed to promote viewing opportunities within British Columbia. For more information contact the Environment and Lands regional office in Surrey [(604) 582-5300; 10470 - 152nd Street, Surrey, B.C. V3R 0Y3].

Wildlife viewing information, including festivals, special events and site specific information, is available at the British Columbia Wildlife Watch web site www3.telus.net/driftwood/bcwwhome.htm.

For tourism information on the Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows area contact the **Chamber of Commerce Serving Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows in Maple**. Ridge [(604) 463-3366; 22238 Lougheed Highway, Maple Ridge, B.C. V2X 2T2] or in Pitt Meadows [(604) 460-8300; 12493 Harris Road, Pitt Meadows, B.C. V3Y 2J4]. Both Visitor Centres are open year-round. Local information is available on their web site at www.mapleridge-chamber.bc.ca but changing soon to www.mrpmchamber.ca.



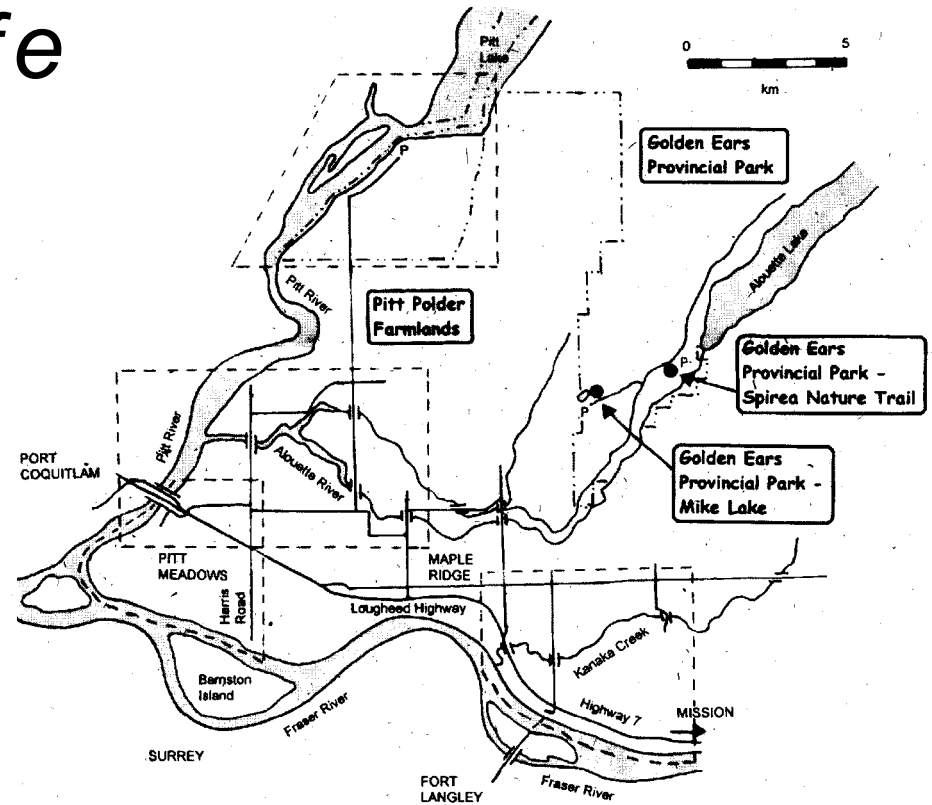
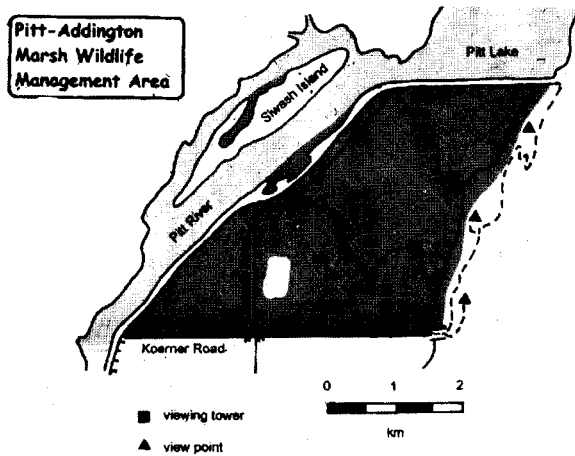
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For more information on **WBT Wild Bird Trust of British Columbia** write #124 -1489 Marine Drive, West Vancouver, B.C. V7T 1B8, phone/fax (604) 924-2581 or e-mail minerva@direct.ca.

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Visit Our Wildlife



Pitt-Addington Marsh Wildlife Management Area

The management area is 2972 hectares in size and is managed to protect wildlife and habitats. The area consists of four separate units that include primarily marsh; wetlands and tidal freshwater mud flats, plus some forested uplands. There are many kilometres of dyke top trails and several viewing towers. A British Columbia Wildlife Watch bird checklist is available (229 species to March 1994). For more information contact BC Environment, Lower Mainland Region [(604) 582-5200; 10470 - 152nd Street, Surrey, B.C. V3R 0Y3].

Access - There is a large paved parking area at Grant Narrows Regional Park. From Lougheed Highway (Highway 7) in Pitt Meadows turn north onto Harris Road. Continue north to McNeil Road and turn right. Follow McNeil Road to its junction with Neaves Road/Rennie Road where you turn left and head north to Pitt Lake and Grant Narrows.

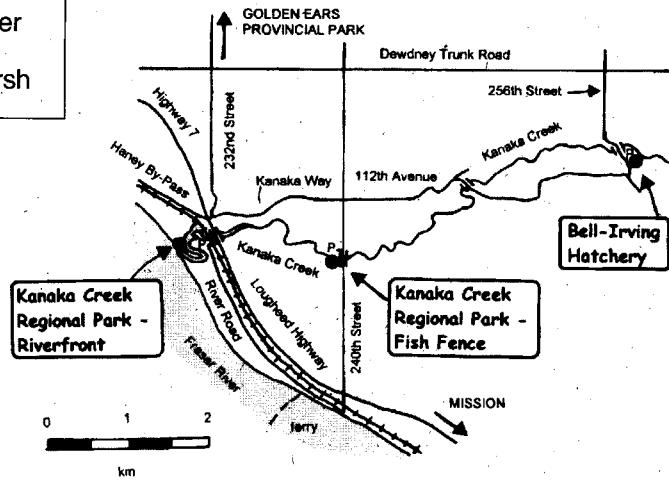
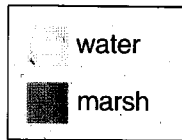
Viewing Highlights - There is good wildlife viewing throughout the year. There is year-round habitat for waterfowl, including Canada Goose, Wood Duck and Gadwall. Whiff some species nest in the area, the best viewing periods are during the spring and fall migrations and during the winter months. Trumpeter Swan are common during the winter months. Many raptor species may be viewed, including the many Osprey that nest on pilings along the Pitt River from mid April to September. During the winter months look for wintering Bald Eagle. Northern Harrier and Red-tailed Hawk are common. The marshes are home to many other birds including American Bittern, Virginia Rail, Sora and many species of songbirds. The marshes of the management area are one of only three known nesting sites in the Lower Mainland for Sandhill Crane. A few cranes may be visible between April and September. Listen for the crane's low pitched *garoo* call. In addition to birds, watch for signs of Beaver and Muskrat activity. Frog choruses are best from April to June.

Pitt Meadows Farmlands

The open farmlands in and around the Pitt Meadows Airport provide good viewing. For more information contact BC Environment, Lower Mainland Region ((604) 582-5200; 10470-152nd Street, Surrey, B.C. V3R 0Y3).

Access - From Lougheed Highway (Highway 7) turn south onto Harris Road. Cross the railroad track and turn right onto Ford Road. At the junction of Ford Road and Baynes Road, turn left and continue to the main airport parking area which provides access onto a dyke along the Fraser River. Alternatively, from the junction, you can drive through the farmlands, ending up at Lougheed Highway via the Ford Road Detour, Woolridge Road and Kennedy Road. Please remember to stay on the roads and to keep off private property. When stopping or parking on local roads, pull well off the road and do not block driveways.

Viewing Highlights - During the winter months many species of waterfowl may be viewed in flooded fields, occasionally including Trumpeter Swan. This area is best for hawk watching, especially Northern Harrier, Rough-legged Hawk and Red-tailed Hawk. During the summer months, Short-eared Owl are often seen hunting the open fields during daylight hours.



Bell-Irving Hatchery

This facility is located in Kanaka Creek Regional Park. It is open to visitors year round. Several trails lead along the creek from the hatchery parking area. To arrange a group tour contact GVRD Parks at (604) 530983. For more information contact the Bell-Irving Hatchery, Kanaka Creek Regional Park [(604) 462-8643; 11450 -256th Street, Maple Ridge, B.C. V2W 1H1].

Access - From Dewdney Trunk Road turn south onto 256th Street. Cross the bridge over Kanaka Creek and turn left into the hatchery parking area.

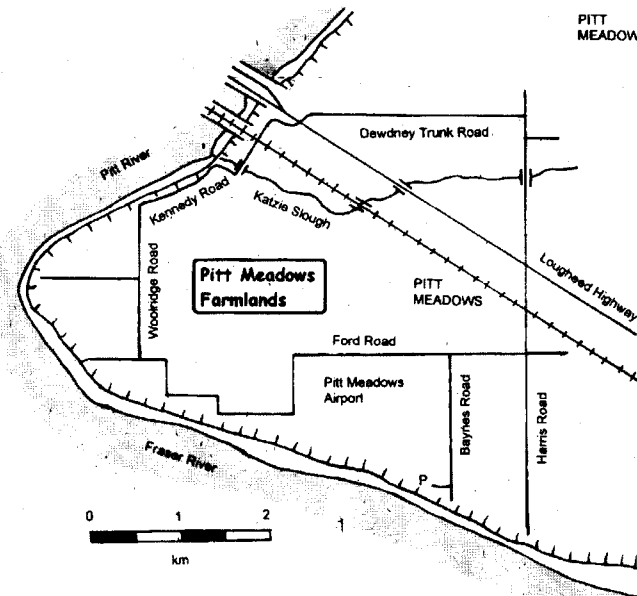
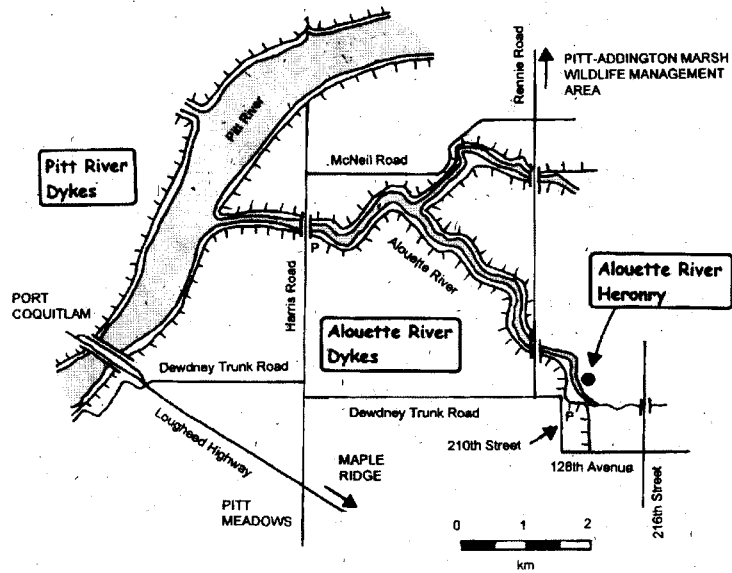
Viewing Highlights - A series of ponds, tanks and troughs contain Chum Salmon and Coho Salmon. The hatchery building contains some displays. Several special public events are held at the hatchery throughout the year, including the Chum Salmon fish lease in late April.

Alouette River Heronry

In the Lower Mainland, Great Blue Herons are a common sight throughout the year. These prehistoric looking birds nest communally in large deciduous trees. Nesting herons are easily disturbed by visitors getting, too close to the nest site. This often results in nest abandonment, even when young are still in the nest. For more information contact BC Environment, Lower Mainland Region ((604) 582-5200; 10470 - 152nd Street, Surrey, B.C. V3R 0Y3).

Access - From Lougheed Highway (Highway 7) in Pitt Meadows turn north onto Harris Road and then right onto Dewdney Trunk Road. Continue straight to 210th Street where the road turns right at the dyke. There is a small parking lot and access onto the Alouette River dyke. From here you can look across and see the heronry. The heronry is located on private property across the river.

Viewing Highlights - Heron activity begins in March when the adults begin claiming nests. They are, most visible before the (saves are on the trees. Once the young are born adult herons can be observed all day long entering and leaving the colony. Viewing will usually continue to late July.



Feeding Wildlife

Feed yourself not the animals! Cheese puffs, candy bars and white bread are not what nature intended as a healthy diet for wildlife. If you think feeding wildlife is harmless, think again. When wild animals become dependent on handouts they may lose their natural fear of people and/or vehicles. This may put them, and you, into potentially dangerous situations. Instead, spend some time to watch and learn what natural foods they prefer.

Wildlife Are Everywhere

While opportunities to observe or to learn about wildlife and fish populations are highlighted at 12 sites, remember, wildlife are everywhere. Visit these sites to develop your observation skills. Once you do, you will see, hear and find evidence of creatures everywhere you go. When visiting these areas please remember that you are visiting wild creatures in their home. Leave their homes clean, and keep your pets under control on a leash at all times. Some animals are only present for short periods of time, so it is best to plan your visit when they are at home.