



## General and Wildlife Viewing Information

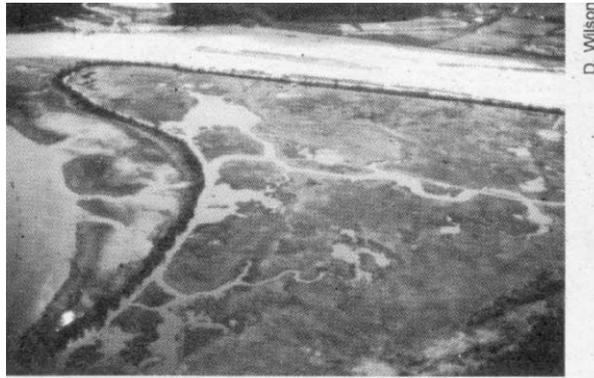
# Pitt-Addington Marsh Wildlife Management Area

north of Pitt Meadows/northeast Coquitlam

The Pitt-Addington Marsh Wildlife Management Area (PAMWMA) is of special importance to wildlife and its 2882 hectares are managed to protect wildlife and habitats. The area consists of three parcels which include primarily marsh, wetlands and tidal, freshwater mudflats, plus some upland forested areas. The 1459 hectare Pitt Unit is primarily dyked marsh and wetland. Addington Marsh is 283 hectares of marsh and wetland with some upland forest. The Pitt Lake Unit, located in the lower end of Pitt Lake, is 1140 hectares of tidal freshwater mudflat.

PAMWMA is identified and signed as a wildlife viewing site of **British Columbia Wildlife Watch**, the provincial wildlife viewing program. There is good wildlife viewing throughout the year, as well as opportunities to find and to identify a wide range of wetland and forest flowers, shrubs, trees, mosses, mushrooms and other plants.

A bird checklist is available for PAMWMA listing the bird species have been observed and their seasonal frequencies. As of March 1994, 229 bird species have been recorded in PAMWMA.



Looking southeast over Addington Marsh.

### History

The Pitt Unit, which is part of a larger area located north of Pitt Meadows known as the Pitt Polder, was originally undyked floodplain. When the area was sold in 1909, farming and wild hay cutting were attempted on a limited scale. However, this was eventually abandoned due to flooding. Following the establishment of an extensive network of drainage ditches, further unsuccessful farming attempts were made. During the 1940's and early 1950's, after an ownership change, the area was used primarily for private waterfowl hunting. In 1951, the area was sold and then dyked. Farming activities took place south of Koerner Road, the southern boundary of the wildlife management area.

Addington Marsh was originally part of the Pitt River floodplain. Until it was dyked in 1897, this area was subjected to daily tidal fluctuations. While attempts were made to farm this area, the wetland conditions persisted due to poor drainage and the lack of dyke maintenance. Between the 1930's and 1977 the marsh was used for private waterfowl shooting. In 1977 The Nature Trust of British Columbia purchased the marsh to preserve its wildlife and habitats.

The Pitt Lake Unit contains 1140 hectares of tidal freshwater mudflats which were formed by the deposition of Fraser River silts. These mudflats form the largest negatively accreting delta in the world, and Pitt Lake is the second largest fresh water tidal lake in the world.

The 2882 hectares of the Pitt-Addington Marsh Wildlife Management Area (PAMWMA) were assembled over a period of years. PAMWMA is administered by the Wildlife Branch of the British Columbia Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks. Addington Marsh is leased to the Ministry for management purposes by The Nature Trust of British Columbia for a period of 99 years.

### Wildlife Viewing Highlights

PAMWMA is an excellent area to observe a wide range of wildlife species throughout the year. The following are some of the viewing highlights:

**Great Blue Heron** - Herons are visible throughout the year. Several heron rookeries are located near PAMWMA.

**Trumpeter Swan** - PAMWMA and other local areas, including Widgeon Slough, are used by wintering swans, primarily Trumpeter but also a few Tundra Swans.

**Waterfowl** - PAMWMA provides year-round habitat for many waterfowl species, including Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Mallard and Ring-necked Duck. While some species nest in the area, the best viewing periods are during the spring and fall migrations and during the winter months.

**Osprey** - This species may be viewed from May through August. It is particularly visible along the Pitt River where many active nests are located, on the top of pilings.

**Bald Eagle** - During the winter months the area is utilized by a few wintering eagles.

**Hawks** - This area is used by many hawk species, including Northern Harrier and Red-tailed Hawk.



Osprey nesting on the Pitt River.

**Bittern and Rails** - American Bittern, Virginia Rail and Sora are easily heard throughout the marshes, especially in the spring and summer months.

**Sandhill Crane** - PAMWMA is one of only three known nesting sites in the Lower Mainland. A few Sandhill Cranes may be visible from April through September, including in the farming areas south of PAMWMA. The southwest portion of the Pitt Unit is closed to public access during the nesting season.

**Songbirds** - Passerine species may be observed throughout the year, but the greatest diversity of songbirds occurs in late spring and through the summer.

**Frog Choruses** - April through June is the best time to hear frog choruses in the wetlands.

**Beaver and Muskrats** - PAMWMA is home, to large populations of these mammals. The activities of these species are easily observed throughout the area. Beaver activity is especially visible along the Nature Dyke and from the Nature Dyke viewing tower. Many of the remaining trees on the interior dykes have been protected with wire mesh to prevent beaver damage.

**Black Bear** - At certain times of the year black bears may be encountered along the mountainside trail, particularly during the fall months.



Beaver lodge along the Katzie Slough dyke.



View from the middle hillside pavilion of the Pitt Unit marshes and the Nature Dyke.



**British Columbia Wildlife Watch** is the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks' program designed to promote viewing opportunities within British Columbia. The protection of wildlife and their habitat, and a positive, safe experience for the viewer are the primary objectives of this program. Many local communities, other agencies and public conservation groups are involved. For more information on this or other wildlife viewing sites, contact the Regional BC Environment office in Surrey [(604) 582-5200 or 1-800-665-7027; #300-10334-152A Street, Surrey, B.C. V3R 7P8].

### Viewing Ethics for Conservation

Wildlife viewing demands courtesy and common sense. For the well being of the wildlife and habitats please follow these guidelines:

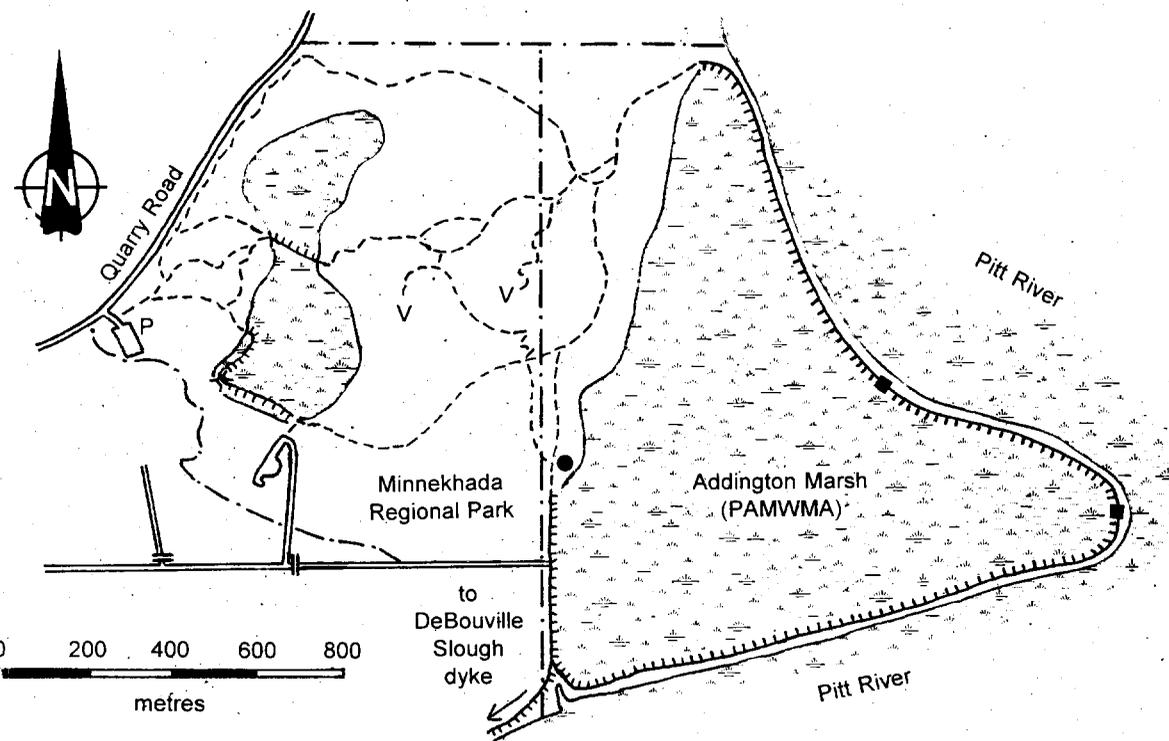
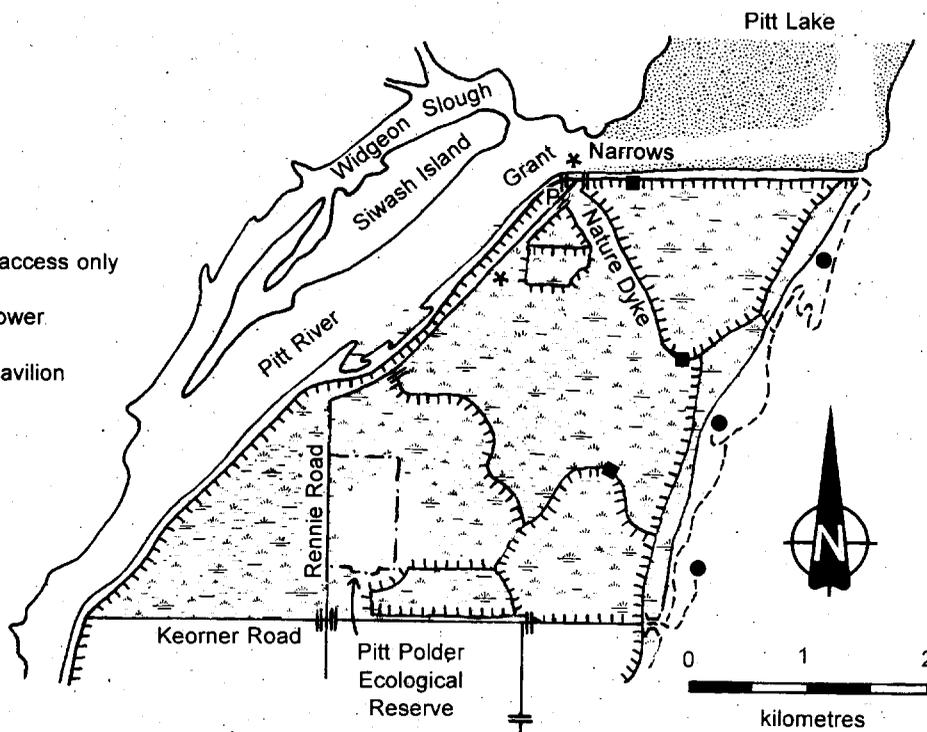
- Be Considerate of Wildlife** - Use binoculars to view wildlife from a distance rather than approaching them too closely.
- Be Considerate of Habitat** - Plants and the landscape are important parts of wildlife habitat. Please do not damage or remove them, and stay on designated trails or roads.
- Be Considerate of Other People** - Respect private property and the wildlife viewing activities of others.
- Control Pets** - Pets can harm wildlife and hinder viewing opportunities.
- Do Not Approach Young Wildlife** - Young wildlife are rarely 'abandoned' or lost. The mother is usually at a safe distance waiting for you to leave.

### Tips for Wildlife Viewers

These tips will improve your chances of seeing wildlife in their natural habitats. Remember, wildlife are 'wild' and they may choose not to be seen.

- Choose the Right Season and Time of Day** - Many species are most active during the cooler morning and evening hours. A hot, dry, sunny afternoon is usually not the best time to look for wildlife.
- Be Patient and Be Quiet** - Wildlife may be difficult to observe even though you have heard the species or detected their signs. If you remain still and quiet, wildlife will determine that you are no threat, and may become active and more visible.
- Use Binoculars or a Spotting Scope** - Visual aids can let you scan wide areas and will increase your chances to observe wildlife without disturbing them.
- Move Slowly and Reduce Visibility** - Wildlife will usually sense your presence long before you have sensed theirs. Most animals have a keen sense of hearing and smell, and most birds and large mammals have keen sight.

- marsh
- tidal mudflats
- boundary
- parking
- gate - pedestrian access only
- covered viewing tower
- covered viewing pavilion
- dyke with trail
- trail
- viewpoint
- boat launch



### Access and Facilities

To access the Pitt Unit, turn north onto Harris Road from Lougheed Highway in Pitt Meadows and follow the Wildlife Watch binocular logo signs for 17 km to the parking area at the south end of Pitt Lake. There are many looping dyke trails which provide access to three covered viewing towers. A trail along the forested mountainside provides access to three covered viewing pavilions with panoramic views of the marshes below. The mountainside trail contains several steep inclines and sturdy footwear is required.

The main access to Addington Marsh is through the trails of the Greater Vancouver Regional District's Minnehada Regional Park, also a wildlife viewing site. From Lougheed Highway in Port Coquitlam turn north onto Coast Meridian Road and follow the binocular logo and regional park signs to the Quarry Road parking lot. Addington Marsh is also accessible from the east end of Oliver Road and from the Pitt River dyke. The trail around Addington Marsh provides access to one covered viewing pavilion and to two covered viewing towers. The pavilion is about a 20 to 25 minute walk from the parking lot. Sturdy footwear is required for the Addington dyke trail, and care must be taken as the dyke may be in poor condition due to uneven ground, and to heavy brush growth.

Some areas are posted as closed to public access during sensitive nesting periods. Please respect these closures. **Do not leave valuables or personal items in your vehicle.**

### Recreation

A number of recreational activities are permitted within PAMWMA, including walking, wildlife viewing, nature study, hiking and jogging. Cyclists are asked to keep to the Pitt River dykes. Pets must be kept on a leash at all times. There is boat and canoe access at Grant Narrows to Widgeon Marsh, to Pitt Lake and to the Pitt River. Waterfowl hunting is permitted within some areas of PAMWMA on certain days during the hunting season. Look for details posted on-site, or consult the provincial hunting and trapping regulations.

This brochure has been produced by British Columbia Wildlife Watch with the assistance of the **Alouette Field Naturalists (AFN)**. Financial support was obtained by **AFN** from the **Tri-City Chapter of Canada Trust's Friends of the Environment Foundation** and from the **Federation of British Columbia Naturalists**. The *Federation of British Columbia Naturalists Foundation* supports the goals, objectives and activities of *British Columbia Wildlife Watch*.