

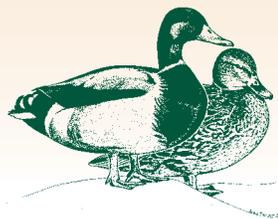
Walking WITH Waterfowl



A pocket guide to the
Sackville Waterfowl Park

Welcome to the Sackville Waterfowl Park

The Sackville Waterfowl Park was established in 1988 as a joint venture of the Town of Sackville and Ducks Unlimited Canada. The cooperation of Mount Allison University, the Province of New Brunswick, the Canadian Wildlife Service of Environment Canada, and many corporate and individual supporters in the realization of this project is gratefully acknowledged.



Mallard

Welcome

As you explore the 4 km (2.5 miles) of trails and boardwalks that wind through these 22 hectares (55 acres) of water, woods, marsh, and meadows, you will discover a world most people never know—the richly varied natural community of our native wetlands. More than 180 species of birds and close to 200 species of plants have been recorded in the Park.

This brochure is designed to lead you on a self-guided tour of the park. Interpretive signage at many locations will help you discover its wonders. In addition, at certain times, guided tours of the park are available through the Sackville Visitor Information Centre.

A Brief History

Originally, the park site was part of a vast saltmarsh, flooded daily by the Fundy tides. To the native Micmac people, the marshes were a valuable resource. Waterfowl were abundant. Cattail roots were a nutritious source of food and grasses were used for basket-weaving.

Acadian settlers came to the area in the late 1600s. They began ditching and draining the marshes to claim the rich soil for farming, an activity that continues to the present day.

Today, wetlands are valued as water reservoirs, natural purification systems, and important wildlife habitats. In recent years, thousands of acres of wetland around the upper Bay of Fundy have been secured by building structures to control water levels in large freshwater marsh impoundments.

Park Etiquette

For humans, the Sackville Waterfowl Park is an interesting place to visit. For the many kinds of wildlife that live here, it is home. Please respect their needs by observing the following courtesies:

1. Visit only during the daylight hours.
Night visits may disturb resting waterfowl.
2. Please do not feed the ducks. Their natural diet is healthy and abundant.
3. Leave no litter. Garbage receptacles are provided for trash.
4. Keep pets under control (on leash) at all times in the park.
5. Stay on the trails and boardwalks to protect nests and wildflowers.
6. The trails are for pedestrians only. For safety's sake, cycling is prohibited.

Meredith Fisher



Touring the Park

Note: This tour description begins and ends at the Sackville Visitor Information Centre at the foot of Mallard Drive.



It may be followed in any order, however, simply by reading the appropriate notes, indicated by number, when you come to the corresponding point on the map. Watch for colour-coded locator signs to help identify where you are. See map on pages 16-17.

1 An Overview

From the deck of the Sackville Visitor Information Centre, a panoramic view spreads before you. Pause at the top of the embankment to scan the landscape. To your left, across the Trans-Canada Highway, lie the Tantramar Marshes, once a vast tidal saltmarsh but now largely converted to agricultural purposes. The area immediately in front of you, formerly a drained pasture, was impounded and flooded to create the Sackville Waterfowl Park in 1988. Descend the stairs to begin your tour.

2 Getting Started

At the foot of the slope, turn left into an area of marsh grasses and burr-reed. This is a good spot to see *Swamp Sparrow* and *American Goldfinch*. From mid-July to late September watch for the many *dragonfly species* that frequent these shallow, reedy waters. Keep your eyes open, too, for ducks flying to and from the Tantramar Wetlands Centre impoundment, which lies just across the nearby highway.

The boardwalk skirts the north side of the park until it comes to the Tantramar section of the Trans-Canada Trail, built on the roadbed of an old railway line to Prince Edward Island. At this point, turn right and follow the raised walkway for about 1 km.

3 Open Water

On your right, the deepest water in the park—more than 2 meters in some places—is the preferred habitat for diving waterfowl such as the *Ring-necked Duck*. It is also a favourite hunting ground for the *Pied-billed Grebe*, a pint-sized, grey-brown bird with a fat, black-and-white striped bill. This voracious predator dives in pursuit of small fish, such as *golden shiners* and *sticklebacks*. From mid-summer on, watch for fuzzy, zebra-striped young grebes, begging noisily to be fed, or hitching a ride on their parents' backs. In the air, you will almost certainly see the park's "mosquito patrol"—squadrons of *Tree Swallows*, *Bank Swallows* and often a few *Barn Swallows*.

If you are visiting in June or July, watch for *Bobolink* in the wet meadow to the left of the trail, and *Savannah Sparrow* lurking in the trailside grasses. Further along, varied backyard plantings adjoining the park provide excellent shelter for a wide variety of birds, including *American Robin*, *Downy Woodpecker*, *Black-capped Chickadee* and *Song Sparrow*.

Among the cattail stands that rim the open water you may catch sight of a *muskrat*. This fur-bearing rodent not only feeds on cattails; it also uses the stalks of the plants to build its winter lodge, a mound of mud and vegetation rising above the surface of the water. Another marsh resident to watch for among the cattails is the *American Bittern*, a long-billed, beige and brown striped bird, almost the size of a turkey. Its cry, a deep,



hollow, booming, is one of the strangest sounds of the marsh at dusk.

4 An Urban Interlude

Nearing the southern end of the **Trans-Canada trail** you have a choice of routes. A turn to the right, behind a large metal storage building, takes you on a return loop through the park. Straight ahead lie the art galleries, gift shops and restaurants of **downtown Sackville**. It's a perfect time to pause, enjoy a snack or a cool drink, and shop for film, books, sunscreen, snacks, or souvenirs.

When you are ready to return to the park you may either retrace your steps to rejoin the trail or proceed along Main Street, with the Town Hall on your left and Cranewood, the official residence of the President of Mount Allison University, on your right. Just before St. Paul's Anglican Church, a stone cairn marks an entrance to the park. Turn right here to resume your tour at point (5).

Alternatively, if you prefer to see a bit more of the university campus, continue along Main Street to Rectory Lane, passing the Swan Pond and the Marjorie Young Bell Conservatory of Music on the left. At Rectory Lane, turn right and proceed to the end of the street. Just beyond the parking lot, you will rejoin the park trail system at point (7).

5 Among the Cattails

The densest stands of cattail in the park grow in the area adjacent to the zig-zag boardwalk that leads from the Anglican Church to the centre of the park. Two species of cattails—*Narrow-leaved* and *Broad-leaved*—grow here, along with a hybrid that combines characteristics of both.

The cattails provide shelter for nesting *Red-winged Blackbirds*. The black males with their scarlet and gold shoulder patches proclaim their presence with a loud “rusty hinge” call while the brown-striped females tend their nests, feeding the young on marsh insects. Another bird to look for here is the *Sora*, a common but seldom-seen member of the Rail family. You may not always see



Red-winged Blackbird

this small, yellow-billed marsh-dweller but in June and July you will almost certainly hear its eerie, descending whinny.

At the end of this section of boardwalk, turn right on the raised gravel path that cuts across the park. This is the bed of an old railway spur line that served a prosperous foundry and a busy stone quarry in the days when Sackville was a centre of heavy industry.

6 At the Bridge

A short distance on the gravel footpath brings you to a miniature covered bridge spanning a channel that links the inner and outer sections of the impoundment. Stop here for a moment to scan the waters on either side. These are favourite areas for dabbling ducks such as *Mallard*, *Black*, *Northern Shoveler*, *Green-Winged* and *Blue Wing Teal*, *Gadwall*, and *American Wigeon*.

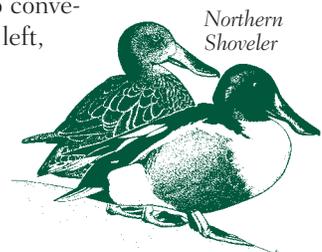
This is also a good place to observe flocks of migrating shorebirds, from the tiny *Semipalmated Sandpiper* to the long-legged, long-billed *Yellowlegs*. Many shorebird species nest in the Arctic, but stop here from mid-July to late August to feed on the rich marshes and mudflats before continuing their long trek to wintering grounds in Central and South America.

After inspecting the covered bridge, go back a few paces and proceed along the curving boardwalk on your right, turning right again when you come to point (9).

7 The Transition Zone

If you have chosen to re-enter the park by way of Rectory Lane, you will find yourself on a gravel path that follows an old railway right-of-way, through a zone of shrubbery and trees.

Straight ahead stand two convenient pit toilets. To your left, on either side of the trail, stand the United Church Home for Senior Citizens and Jennings Hall,



Northern Shoveler



of half a dozen sources of fresh water for the park.

This section of the tour provides living evidence of pioneer settlement in the Sackville area. Cultivated garden plants such as *yellow loosestrife* and *forget-me-not* have become naturalized along the stream bank. Further along the trail grow tall *European osier willows*. Their long, pliable twigs were often woven into wicker baskets. Urban birds, such as *Common Grackle*, *European Starling*, and *House Sparrow* are common along this path and you may spot a *Flicker* drumming on one of the large poplar trees.

8 Between Meadow and Marsh

A short distance along the old rail line, a left turn through a thicket of alders leads to a boardwalk tracing the margin between a former upland meadow and shallow water. Shrubs, such as *rhodora*, a native species of *azalea*, grow on the upland. With the passing years much of the meadow has changed to woodland as *willow*, *birch* and *poplar* saplings become established. *Yellow Warbler* and *Common Yellowthroat* are at home in this moist habitat. In some years, the damp meadow provides a good nesting habitat for *Common Snipe*.

Virginia Rails have been observed in the shoreline tangle of reeds and grasses and broods of ducklings regularly feed in the shallow water. At certain times of the year, a rust-colored deposit appears in these shallows, and an oily film may be seen on the surface. These are not signs of pollution but

Mount Allison University's principal dining hall. Turning to your right, note the small stream that parallels the trail on the right hand side. It is the largest

indicate the presence of masses of bacteria that extract and excrete traces of iron and oils from the decomposing debris on the bottom.

At the end of this section, you have a choice of routes. To the left, the main trail leads towards an observation tower and mixed woodlands. To the right, a boardwalk crosses the main impoundment and loops back to the central, gravel path near the covered bridge at the centre of the park. (Please see Note 6 for a description of this section).

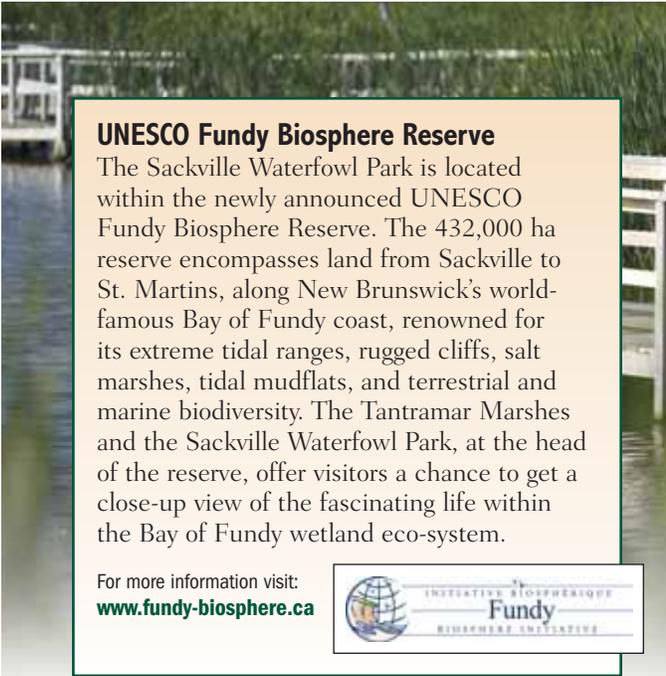
9 Into the Woods

The boardwalk here skirts the water's edge for about 100 metres before coming to a gravel path in a lightly wooded area. At this point, a turn to the right leads to a wooden observation tower. After enjoying a panoramic view from this vantage point, turn and follow the trail deeper into the woods. A short walk will bring you to an intersection. Straight ahead lies an alder swale and an exit from the park, just off Main Street. The right-hand trail will take you to a raised "island" in the marsh, crowned by large birch and spruce trees. Watch for woodland birds such as *American Redstart*, *Veery* and *Blue Jay*. *Fox* and *mink* have occasionally been observed here as well.

10 And Finally

A branch of this trail leads to the Atlantic Regional Office of the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS). However, the main trail turns sharply to the right, through a dense stand of shrubs and small trees, such as *rhodora*, *wild spiraea*, and *mountain ash*, before returning to the main park entrance at the *Sackville Visitor Centre*. There, a wetlands interpretive display and knowledgeable guides are waiting (during the summer months) to answer your questions.





UNESCO Fundy Biosphere Reserve
 The Sackville Waterfowl Park is located within the newly announced UNESCO Fundy Biosphere Reserve. The 432,000 ha reserve encompasses land from Sackville to St. Martins, along New Brunswick's world-famous Bay of Fundy coast, renowned for its extreme tidal ranges, rugged cliffs, salt marshes, tidal mudflats, and terrestrial and marine biodiversity. The Tantramar Marshes and the Sackville Waterfowl Park, at the head of the reserve, offer visitors a chance to get a close-up view of the fascinating life within the Bay of Fundy wetland eco-system.

For more information visit:
www.fundy-biosphere.ca



BIRDWATCHING

Wetlands Adventure!



Discover wetlands and wildlife at the *Sackville Waterfowl Park* with a close-up view of birds and plant species, and historical interpretation of the Tantramar Marshes • 1½-hour guided tour of park with use of binoculars • Refreshments and snack • Family Fun Kit to take home • \$5 per person • \$10 per family (2 adults, 2 children).

Mid-May to end of August

SACKVILLE WATERFOWL PARK
 34 Mallard Drive, Sackville, NB
506 364-4967/1 800 249-2020
visitor@sackville.com / www.sackville.com



Sackville/Fundy Coastal Drive

Checklist of Birds of the SACKVILLE WATERFOWL PARK

About 180 species of birds have been reported within the 22 hectares [55 acres] of the park and along its perimeter. Of these, 35 have been confirmed to date as breeding in the park. The following list observes the order and nomenclature of the American Ornithologists' Union (A.O.U.) Checklist of North American Birds, 7th edition, 1998.

Many migratory species appear only for a short time or in certain seasons. A letter code indicates when they are most likely to appear:

SP = Spring F = Fall s = Summer w = Winter

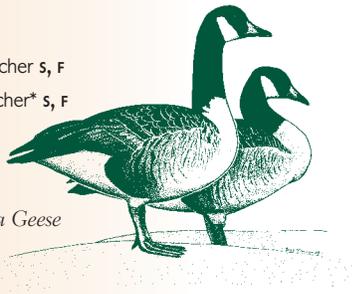
Species for which breeding has been confirmed appear in bold type.

- * Indicates uncommon species in the park.
- ** Indicates species that have been recorded only once or twice.
- *** Indicates species that have been reported, but without confirmation.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| q Common Loon** SP | q Green-winged Teal SP, S, F |
| q Red-necked Grebe** | q Redhead*** |
| q Pied-billed Grebe SP, S, F | q Ring-necked Duck SP, S, F |
| q Double-crested Cormorant* S, F | q Greater Scaup* SP, F |
| q Great Cormorant** | q Lesser Scaup* SP, F |
| q American Bittern SP, S, F | q Common Eider** SP, F |
| q Glossy Ibis** | q Surf Scoter** SP |
| q Great Blue Heron* SP, S, F | q Black Scoter** SP, F |
| q Black-crowned Night Heron** SP | q Long-tailed Duck** |
| q Great Egret** SP | q Bufflehead** SP, F |
| q Little Blue Heron** SP | q Common Goldeneye* SP, F |
| q Snow Goose** | q Hooded Merganser* SP, S, F |
| q Canada Goose * SP, S, F | q Red-breasted Merganser** SP |
| q Wood Duck* SP, S, F | q Ruddy Duck* S, F |
| q Gadwall SP, S, F | q Osprey* SP, S, F |
| q American Wigeon SP, S, F | q Bald Eagle* SP, S, F |
| q American Black Duck SP, S, F | q Northern Harrier* SP, S, F |
| q Mallard SP, S, F, W | q Sharp-shinned Hawk* SP, S, F, W |
| q Blue-winged Teal SP, S, F | q Broad-winged Hawk** SP, F |
| q Northern Shoveler * SP, S, F | q Red-tailed Hawk** SP, F |
| q Northern Pintail** SP, S, F | q Rough-legged Hawk** SP, F, W |
| | q American Kestrel** |
| | q Merlin* SP, S, F, W |



- q Peregrine Falcon** s
- q **Ring-necked Pheasant** *SP,S,F,W*
- q **Virginia Rail*** *SP, S*
- q **Sora** *SP, S, F*
- q **Yellow Rail*****
- q **Common Moorhen****
- q **American Coot*** *SP, S, F*
- q **Black-bellied Plover**** *SP, F*
- q **Semipalmated Plover*** *SP, S, F*
- q **Killdeer*** *SP, S, F*
- q **Greater Yellowlegs** *SP, S, F*
- q **Lesser Yellowlegs** *SP, S, F*
- q **Solitary Sandpiper**** *SP, S, F*
- q **Willet*** *SP, S*
- q **Spotted Sandpiper** *SP, S, F*
- q **Hudsonian Godwit**** *S, F*
- q **Red Knot**** *F*
- q **Sanderling**** *F*
- q **Semipalmated Sandpiper** *S, F*
- q **Western Sandpiper**** *F*
- q **Least Sandpiper** *SP, S, F*
- q **White-rumped Sandpiper*** *S, F*
- q **Pectoral Sandpiper*** *S, F*
- q **Stilt Sandpiper****
- q **Ruff****
- q **Short-billed Dowitcher** *S, F*
- q **Long-billed Dowitcher*** *S, F*
- q **Common Snipe** *SP, S, F*
- q **American Woodcock*** *SP, F*
- q **Wilson's Phalarope**** *SP, F*
- q **Laughing Gull*****
- q **Black-headed Gull****
- q **Bonaparte's Gull****
- q **Ring-billed Gull** *SP, S, F, W*
- q **Herring Gull** *SP, S, F, W*
- q **Iceland Gull*** *SP, W*
- q **Great Black-backed Gull*** *SP, S, F, W*
- q **Caspian Tern**** *S, F*
- q **Common Tern**** *S, F*
- q **Black Tern*** *S*
- q **Rock Pigeon** *SP, S, F, W*
- q **Mourning Dove** *SP, S, F, W*
- q **Great Horned Owl**** *SP*
- q **Common Nighthawk**** *S, F*
- q **Chimney Swift*** *S*
- q **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** *SP, S, F*
- q **Belted Kingfisher** *SP, S, F*
- q **Red-bellied Woodpecker*** *F, W*
- q **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker****



Canada Geese

- q **Downy Woodpecker** *SP, S, F, W*
- q **Hairy Woodpecker** *SP, S, F, W*
- q **Northern Flicker** *SP, S, F*
- q **Eastern Wood-Pewee*** *S*
- q **Willow Flycatcher****
- q **Alder Flycatcher** *SP, S, F*
- q **Least Flycatcher**** *SP*
- q **Eastern Kingbird** *SP, S*
- q **Northern Shrike*** *SP, W*
- q **Blue-headed Vireo*** *SP, F*
- q **Warbling Vireo****
- q **Red-eyed Vireo** *SP, S, F*
- q **Blue Jay** *SP, S, F, W*
- q **American Crow** *SP, S, F, W*
- q **Common Raven** *SP, S, F, W*
- q **Purple Martin**** *SP, S*
- q **Tree Swallow** *SP, S, F*
- q **Bank Swallow** *SP, S, F*
- q **Cliff Swallow*** *SP, S*
- q **Barn Swallow** *SP, S, F*
- q **Black-capped Chickadee** *SP, S, F, W*
- q **Red-breasted Nuthatch*** *SP, S, F, W*
- q **White-breasted Nuthatch**** *SP*
- q **Brown Creeper**** *W, SP*
- q **Marsh Wren**** *SP, F*
- q **Golden-crowned Kinglet*** *SP, F, W*
- q **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** *SP, F*
- q **Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher****
- q **Veery*** *SP, S*
- q **Swainson's Thrush*** *SP, S*
- q **Hermit Thrush*** *SP, F*
- q **American Robin** *SP, S, F, W*
- q **Gray Catbird** *SP, S, F*
- q **Northern Mockingbird**** *W*
- q **European Starling** *SP, S, F, W*
- q **American Pipit**** *F*
- q **Bohemian Waxwing*** *S, F, W*
- q **Cedar Waxwing** *SP, S, F, W*
- q **Tennessee Warbler*** *SP, F*
- q **Nashville Warbler*** *SP, F*
- q **Northern Parula** *SP, S, F*
- q **Yellow Warbler** *SP, S, F*
- q **Chestnut-sided Warbler** *SP, F*
- q **Magnolia Warbler** *SP, F*
- q **Cape May Warbler*** *SP, F*
- q **Yellow-rumped Warbler** *SP, F*
- q **Black-throated Green Warbler*** *SP, F*
- q **Blackburnian Warbler*** *F*



Purple Loosestrife

- q Yellow-throated Warbler**
- q Palm Warbler SP, F
- q Pine Warbler**
- q Bay-breasted Warbler* F
- q Blackpoll Warbler * SP, F
- q Black-and-white Warbler* SP, F
- q **American Redstart** SP, S, F
- q Ovenbird** SP
- q Northern Waterthrush* SP
- q Mourning Warbler** SP, F
- q **Common Yellowthroat** SP, S, F
- q Wilson's Warbler* SP, F
- q Canada Warbler** SP, F
- q Yellow-breasted Chat**
- q American Tree Sparrow* SP, F, W
- q Chipping Sparrow* SP, S, F
- q Savannah Sparrow SP, S, F
- q Fox Sparrow* SP
- q **Song Sparrow** SP, S, F, W
- q Lincoln's Sparrow** SP, F
- q **Swamp Sparrow** SP, S, F, W
- q White-throated Sparrow* SP, S, F, W
- q White-crowned Sparrow** SP
- q Dark-eyed Junco SP, F, W
- q Snow Bunting* W
- q Indigo Bunting**
- q Rose-breasted Grosbeak*** SP, S, F
- q Bobolink* SP, S, F
- q **Red-winged Blackbird** SP, S, F
- q Rusty Blackbird* SP, F
- q **Common Grackle** SP, S, F
- q **Brown-headed Cowbird*** SP, S, F
- q Orchard Oriole**
- q Baltimore Oriole** SP, S
- q Pine Grosbeak* F, W
- q Purple Finch SP, S, F, W
- q House Finch**
- q Red Crossbill** W
- q White-winged Crossbill** SP, F, W
- q Common Redpoll SP, F, W
- q Pine Siskin SP, S, F, W
- q **American Goldfinch** SP, S, F, W
- q Evening Grosbeak* SP, F, W
- q House Sparrow* SP, S, F, W

Common Snipe



Duplicate copies of your daily trip checklists would be greatly appreciated. Please drop them off at the Welcome Centre on Mallard Drive or mail them. Contact us at:

**Town of Sackville
Tourism Department**
110 Main St., Box 6191
Sackville, NB E4L 1G6
www.sackville.com

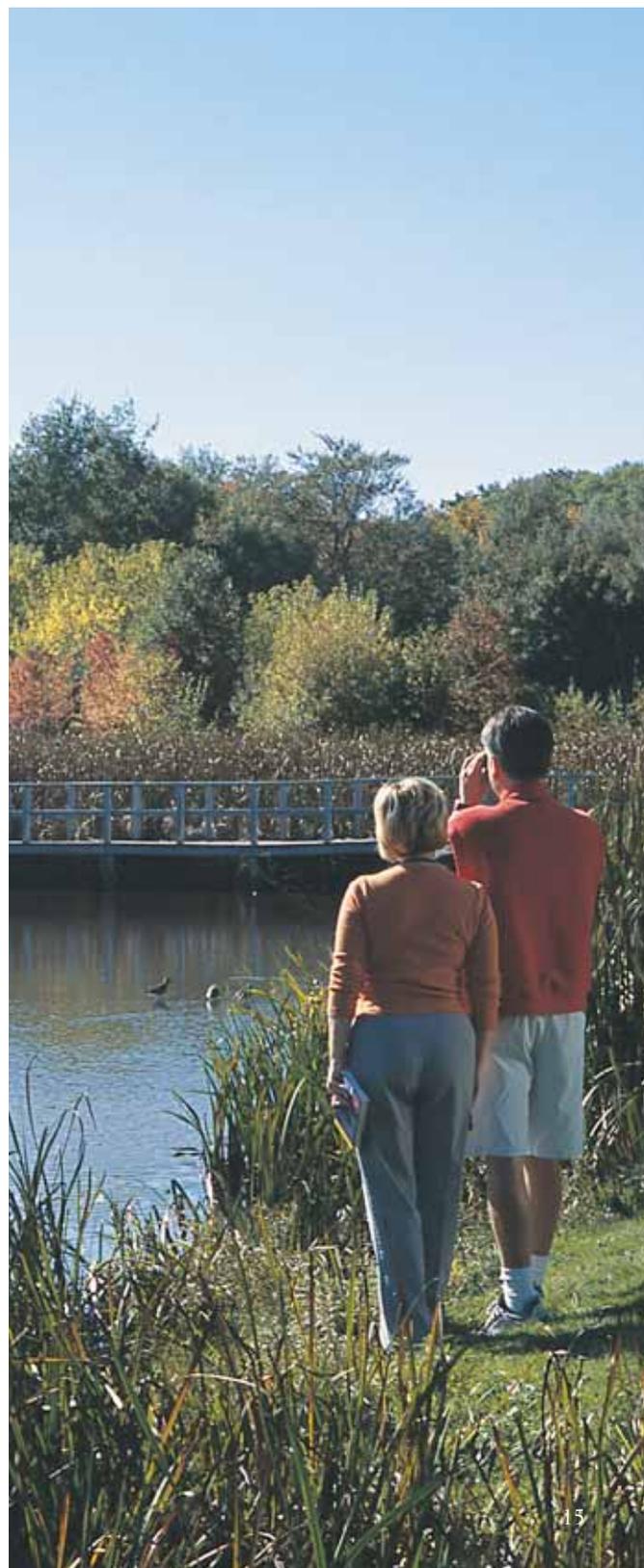
Partners' sites
Ducks Unlimited Canada
www.ducks.ca

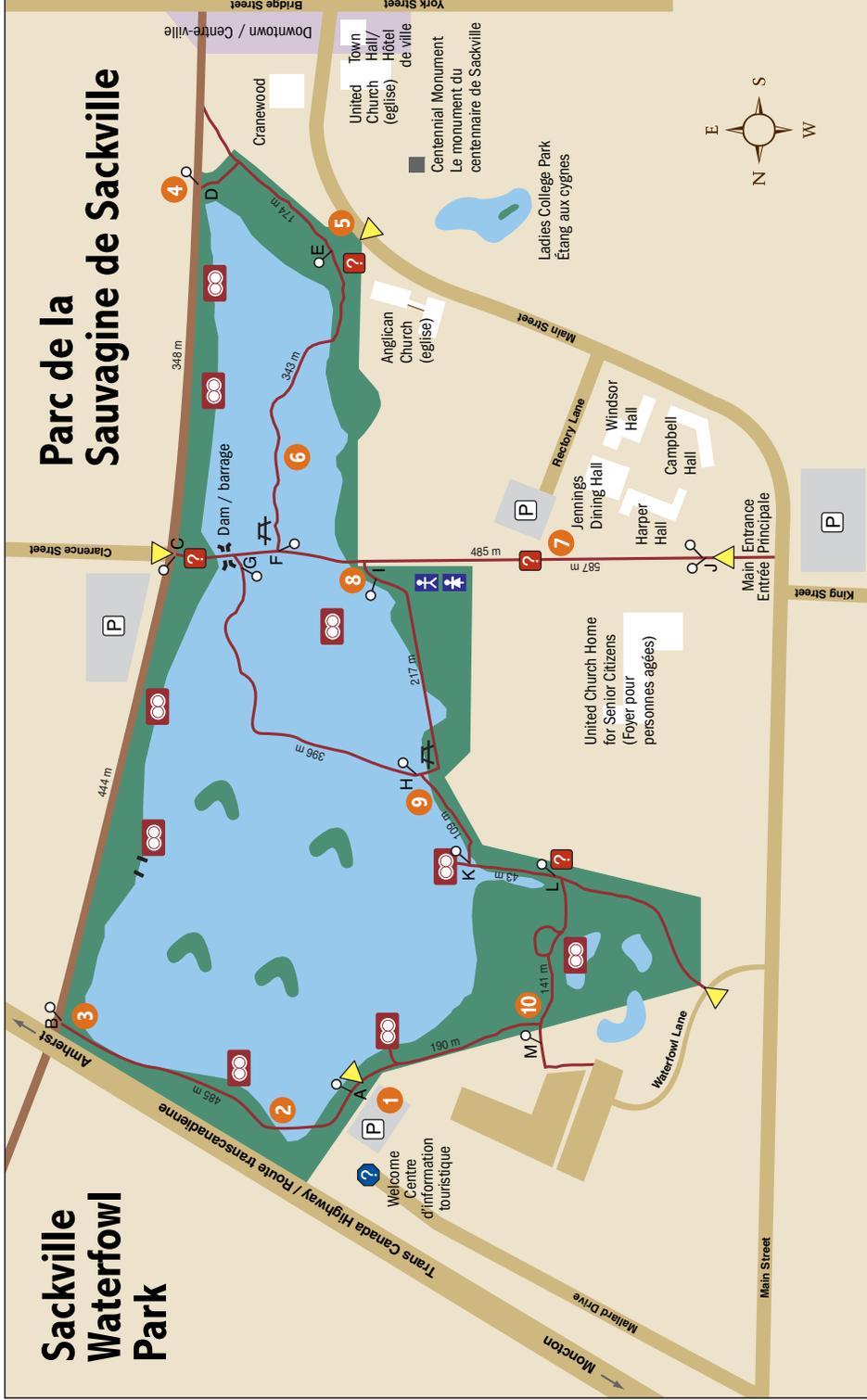
Mount Allison University
www.mta.ca

Province of New Brunswick
www.gnb.ca

Canadian Wildlife Service
www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca

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Text by Sandy Burnett
Cover photo by Robert Lyon





Entrance / Entrée	Information / Signage Panneau d'information	Picnic area Aire de pique-nique	Women's Toilet Toilettes/Femmes	Common Paths:	Distance
Yellow Triangle	Red Question Mark	Picnic Table	Blue Square with 'F'	A-B-C-I-K-L-M-A	2384 m
Blue Question Mark	Red Question Mark	Red Circle with 'O'	Blue Square with 'M'	A-M-L-K-I-F-E	1159 m
Blue 'P' in Square	Red Line	Red Circle with 'O'	Blue Square with 'M'	E-F-C-B-M-L-I-F-E	2338 m
	Red Line	Red Circle with 'O'	Blue Square with 'M'	E-D-B-M-L-I-F-E	2415 m
	Red Line	Red Circle with 'O'	Blue Square with 'M'	A-B-C-D-E	1256 m

Men's Toilet Toilettes/Hommes	Former Railway (now Rails to Trails) Andenne voie ferrée (actuellement Sentier rail)
Blue Square with 'M'	Red Line

Information / Signage Panneau d'information	Trails & Boardwalk Sentiers et passerelles	Accumulated Distance Accumulé Distance
Red Question Mark	Red Line	Red Line with '14.1 m' marker

Women's Toilet Toilettes/Femmes	Men's Toilet Toilettes/Hommes
Blue Square with 'F'	Blue Square with 'M'

Information / Signage Panneau d'information	Trails & Boardwalk Sentiers et passerelles	Accumulated Distance Accumulé Distance
Red Question Mark	Red Line	Red Line with '14.1 m' marker

Entrance / Entrée	Welcome Centre d'information	Parking Stationnement
Yellow Triangle	Blue Question Mark	Blue 'P' in Square