GENERAL INFORMATION

REGISTRATION AND MOTOR LICENCES

All motorists entering the park must register and secure a motor licence. Licences for motor vehicles not used for commercial purposes are issued on the following basis:

(1) Single trip licence, good for a period not exceeding 30 days, provided the automobile is not taken out of the park during such period: Automobile, 25c; auto with trailer attached, 50c.

(2) Licence good for the entire season, which will also be honoured in Waterton Lakes, Prince Albert, Riding Mountain, and Point Pelee National Parks: Automobile, $1; auto with trailer attached, $2.

(3) Special licence good for the entire season, which will also be honoured in all national parks where a transient motor licence is required: Automobile, $2; auto with trailer attached, $5.

Special licences may be obtained for motor vehicles used for commercial purposes.

RECOMMENDATION

There are no hotels or holiday camps in the park, although provision has been made for camping. Excellent holiday accommodations are available in Edmonton, 36 miles distant, and limited accommodation may also be secured at Lamont.

Visitors bringing their own camping equipment will find two large parking areas also provided in the vicinity of Sandy Beach serves both campers and picnickers. Two large parking areas are also provided in the vicinity.

For each period of two weeks or less camping fees are $1 for an ordinary tent. For automobile trailers the rate is 50c per day. Camp-fires may be kindled only at places provided for the purpose. Camp-fires should be completely extinguished. Camp-fires are not permitted outside the camp-sites and other related information. Any fire observed by a park visitor should be extinguished if possible, or the nearest park officer notified promptly.

A fire in a national park may cause damage which cannot be replaced in a century. It is virtually impossible to protect these playgrounds without the close and constant co-operation of all who frequent them.

FAUNA AND FLORA

Elk Island National Park will always occupy a prominent place in the annals of wildlife conservation in Canada, particularly in the story of the "saving of the buffalo". To this park were given the remnants of the great buffalo herd that roamed the western plains before the incoming tide of white settlement resulted in their almost complete extermination.

To the early settler and trader the buffalo supply must have appeared as almost inexhaustible. But the picture rapidly changed. Individual hunters are reputed to have killed from 1,000 to 3,000 head in a season. There is reason to believe that at the beginning of this century not a single buffalo was left roaming the plains. Fortunately, through the foresight of the Canadian Government, the great herd of which was still to be found in the park.

Visitors bringing their own camping equipment will find provision has been made for camping. Excellent softball, horseshoes, and other sports may be enjoyed.

There are no hotels or bungalow camps in the park, although provision has been made for public use. Another area near the lake has been provided. A refreshment booth is also available for automobile trailers. A refreshment booth situated at Sandy Beach serves both campers and picnickers.

GOLF—A fine nine-hole golf course in the vicinity of Sandy Beach is open to park visitors. The course is laid out over the rolling terrain southeast of Astotin Lake, and is convenient to the main park highway. The fairways are flanked by beautiful growths of trees, and the greens and fairways are maintained in excellent condition. An attractive clubhouse overlooking Astotin Lake is at the disposal of visitors making use of the golf course.

RECREATION

Many forms of recreation are available in the park, including boating, boating, tennis, and golf. A large area in the vicinity of Sandy Beach on the eastern side of Astotin Lake has been laid out as a recreational area where baseball, softball, horsehorsse, and other sports may be enjoyed.

Boating—Boating is a popular recreation at Astotin Lake. Boats may be rented locally from private owners.

BATHING—Excellent bathing may be enjoyed at Sandy Beach on Astotin Lake, where three modern dressing-rooms are available for smaller animals including weasel, muskrat, porcupine, rabbit, squirrel, and gopher.

Bird life is abundant, and in midsummer the marshy portions of Astotin and other lakes are crowded with many waterfowl. Among the most common are canvasback, pintail, gadwall, buffle-head, shoveller, American merganser and rusty blackbirds, blue-winged teal, lesser scaup, coot, black tern, American bittern, and Franklin's gull. Mallard and American widgeon and several species of owl and hawk are also found in the park, as well as a large variety of smaller birds. The latter include blue jay, Canada jay, mourning dove, black-capped chickadee, robin, and evening grosbeak. Sparrow, song sparrow, blue jay, jackdaw, willet, thrush, pintailed woodpecker, and Baltimore oriole.

Fire Prevention

Visitors are requested to cooperate with park officers in the prevention of fires. Smoking materials and camp-fires should be completely extinguished. Camp-fires may be kindled only at places marked for the purpose.

Persons visiting the park should acquaint themselves with the regulations and secure particulars concerning suitable camping and other related information. Any fire observed by a park visitor should be extinguished if possible, or the nearest park officer notified promptly.

A fire in a national park may cause damage which cannot be replaced in a century. It is virtually impossible to protect these playgrounds without the close and constant co-operation of all who frequent them.
The National Parks of Canada are areas of natural beauty and special interest which have been "dedicated to the people of Canada for their benefit, education, and enjoyment." Established primarily for the preservation of the unspoiled natural landscape and for the protection of the native wildlife, they are to be "maintained and made use of so as to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." The discovery of hot mineral springs bubbling from the slopes of Sulphur Mountain by engineers exploring the route for Canada's first transcontinental railway led to the establishment of Canada's first national park. From this small area of ten square miles at Banff, Alberta, set apart in 1885, the national parks system has been extended until it embraces 25 separate areas totalling 29,660 square miles. While a few parks have been devoted chiefly to the conservation of certain species of big game animals now threatened with extinc­tion, others mark national historic sites important in the development of the country. From Port Royal in Nova Scotia, to Fort Prince of Wales on Hudson Bay, nine such sites are administered as National Monuments. This unspoiled area of natural beauty is symbolic of the goodwill engendered by these two peoples.

Visitors' Guide to Elk Island National Park

Elk Island National Park, situated in central Alberta about 30 miles east of Edmonton, is the largest fenced animal preserve in Canada. It contains an area of 25 square miles and occupies a portion of the extensive irregular region known as Beaver Hills. Evidence of the Ice Age are visible where the low hills are worn smooth, and many small lakes nestle between the ridges and in the hollows left by the retreating glaciers.

The park was originally reserved in 1906 as a sanctuary for elk, moose, and mule deer in the region, and since 1908 it has formed a habitat for part of the herd of buffalo purchased that year by the Government of Canada. It is surrounded by 54 miles of strong fencing, with fireguard strips ploughed both inside and outside the fence for fire prevention purposes.

WILDLIFE PROTECTED

As the chief purposes of Canada's National Parks require that they be maintained in their natural state, all wildlife within their boundaries is rigidly protected. For this reason hunting and the possession of firearms are strictly prohibited. As the parks are game sanctuaries, visitors must not molest any wild animals or birds or their nests. Dogs or cats are not allowed in any national park except under special permission.

Elk Island National Park may be reached by the provincial highway system of Alberta through gateways on the southern, western, and northern boundaries. The southern gateway is situated on Highway No. 16, about six miles east of Edmonton and Yeguapoo. The eastern gateway on all-weather route through the park passes the administrative headquarters on Astotin Lake.

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