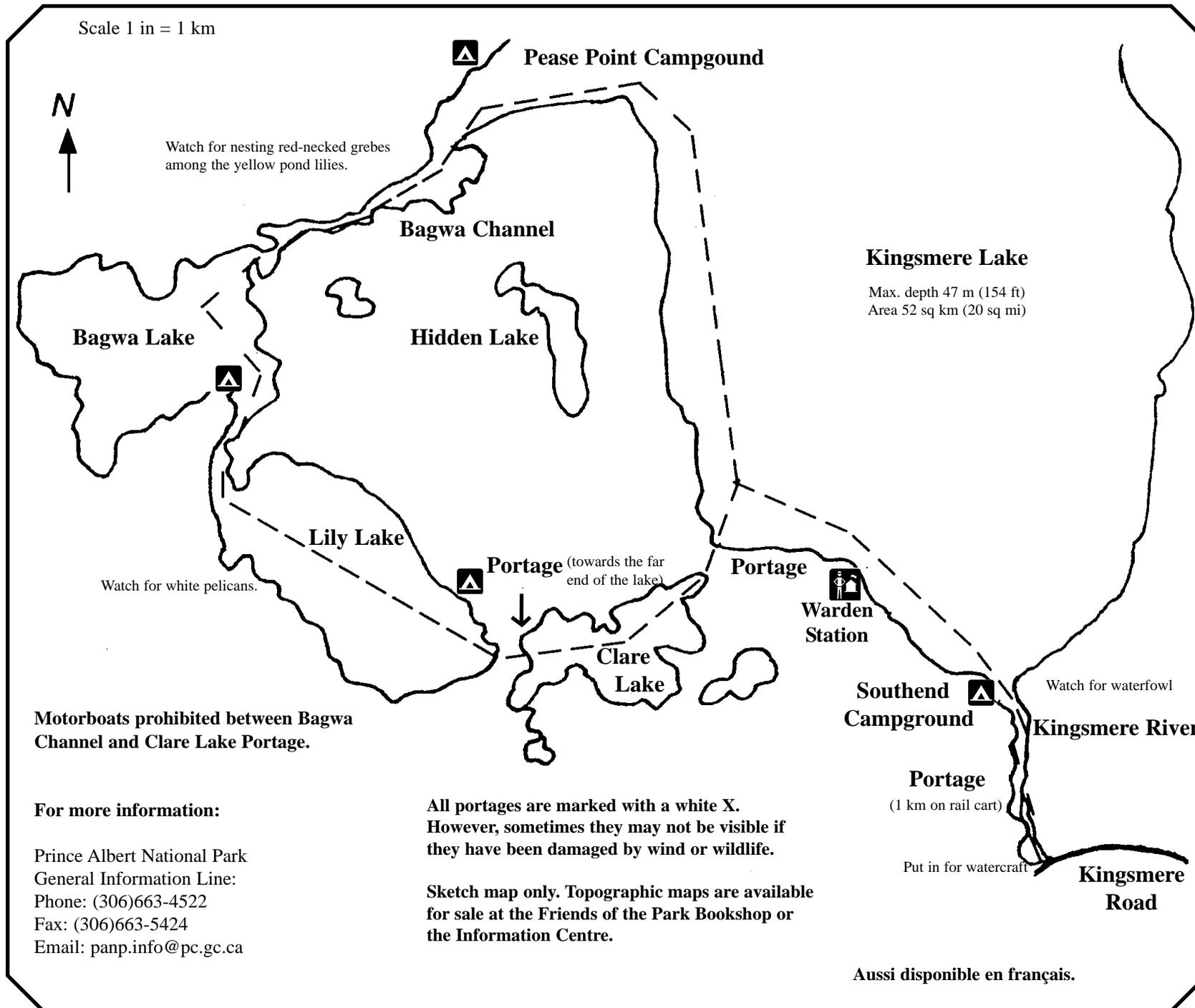
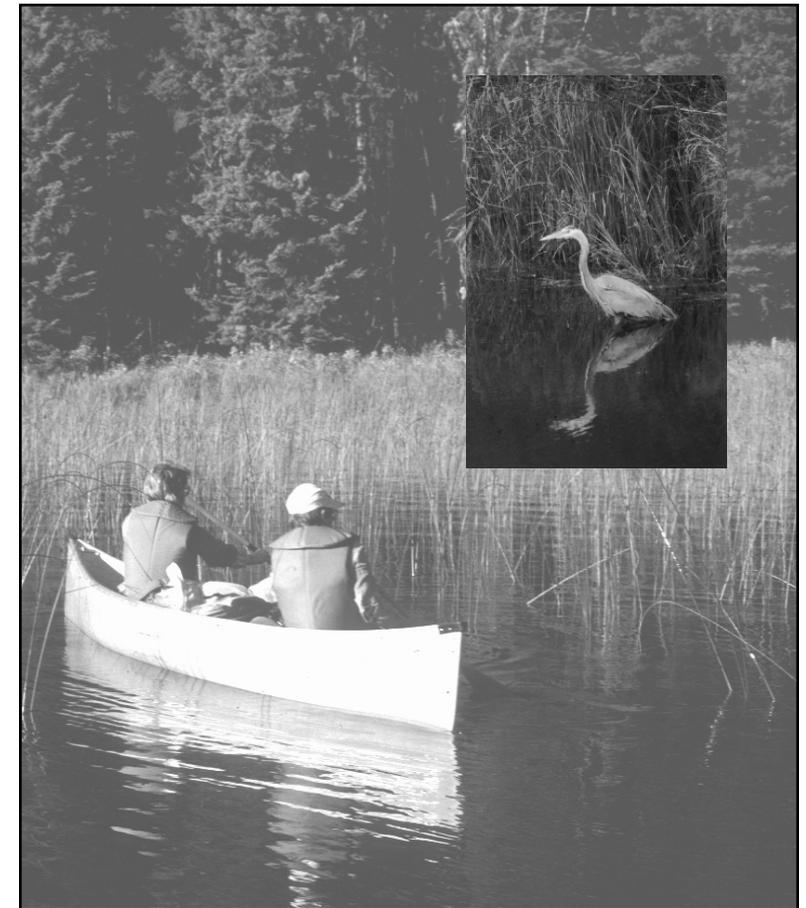




BAGWA CANOE ROUTE

Prince Albert National Park of Canada



On The Southern Edge of the Great Northern Forest



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The Bagwa Canoe Route

One of the most accessible and 'user friendly' places to experience the park by canoe is the Bagwa Canoe Route which begins on Kingsmere Lake, northwest of Waskesiu. The following information will help you plan your trip.

To reach Kingsmere Lake, drive north toward the Main Marina and the Hanging Heart Lakes (13 km), then follow the good gravel road the remaining 17 km to the Kingsmere River. A parking lot and day use area are located at the end of the road.

The entire route, starting from the parking lot, takes approximately 7-10 hours to paddle, but is much more enjoyable when stretched into an overnight trip.

The Red-necked Grebe

The members of the grebe family are some of the most perfectly adapted birds for an aquatic existence, ranking high along with loons. Grebes possess partially-webbed feet and can dive and swim rapidly. On their dives they use their slender, pointed bills with saw-like edges to catch small fish such as shiners and sticklebacks, as well as many types of aquatic insects. Grebes are unique in that they also eat their own body feathers. Even chicks a few days old have been found to have wads of feathers in their stomachs. Why they "indulge themselves" is not understood.



The Bagwa Channel is home to a loose colony of red-necked grebes during the nesting season. They are shy birds around their floating nests, which are built of reeds, rushes and pond weeds. While a canoe or kayak is a quiet, gentle craft, paddlers should still be careful not to approach or disturb the nests, especially during May, June or early July.

Starting Out

Launch your canoe or kayak from the parking lot and paddle north (upstream) for about 400 metres to the large dock and footbridge. This is the start of the 1 kilometre rail portage that takes you around the rapids. There are two carts available: a larger, four-wheeled unit that can accommodate boats as well as smaller craft, and a two-wheeled one meant specifically for canoes and kayaks. (You may have to go to the other end of the portage to get the rail cart.) Remember to use the handbrakes on the heavier cart and never to allow anyone to ride on any cart. Please let park staff know about any maintenance problems when you return. Also, do not moor your vessel overnight anywhere except at the campground on the lake where you are registered.

When you are back on the water, proceed with caution. The river is extremely shallow where it leaves the lake. A slow, silent journey also affords the opportunity to observe water birds such as blue-winged teal and great blue heron close up. You may even catch a glimpse of a beaver swimming under your canoe!

Once on Kingsmere Lake, stay close to the west shore, heading for Southend and the Warden patrol cabin. The Bagwa Canoe Route itself is accessed at either Pease Point or the Kingsmere-Clare Lake portage on the west side of Kingsmere Lake.

If weather conditions are favourable, it is best to enter the route from Pease Point, thus shortening the distance that must be travelled on Kingsmere Lake when you return. The mood of this large lake is forever changing. Still and glass-like at one moment, it can rapidly become a churning and dangerous body of water. Use great caution on the lake. In extremely windy weather, it may be necessary to wait for calmer conditions.

The Route

At Pease Point you will enter the Bagwa Channel, which is dotted with yellow pond lilies and nesting red-necked grebes. Boat motors are not permitted on the Bagwa route, resulting in less disturbance of the aquatic life. Turn over a leaf and observe the myriad of aquatic invertebrates attached to the underside. Close observation of the water itself reveals bright red water mites among the many creatures who call the channel home.

At the end of the channel, head south (left) and watch for the white marker on the southwest shore which marks the Bagwa Lake campground. The channel to Lily Lake is about 200 metres south of the campground. The Lily Lake campground is located about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way down the lake on the northeast shore. Paddle easterly to the end of Lily Lake. The portage is well-maintained and about 200 metres in length. It begins at a small, sandy beach and ends at the bottom of a small hill overlooking Clare Lake.

Small and shallow, Clare Lake is home to many water birds. You might see a loon chick catching a ride on its parent's back. The Clare-Kingsmere portage begins at a wooden dock, nestled in the sedges on the far eastern shore. About 200 metres away is Kingsmere Lake. A short paddle takes you back to Southend and the Kingsmere River.

Camping Information

- All overnight visitors must register at the Information Centre in Waskesiu prior to their trip. A park use permit will be issued and backcountry camping fees apply.
- All garbage must be packed out of the backcountry.
- Use bear caches for all food, garbage and toiletries.
- Use only wood provided at the campgrounds, do not gather deadfall, and remember to bring an axe.
- Pit privies are located at the campgrounds. Pit privies may also be used for the disposal of grey water.
- Water is obtained from the lake - boiling before use is recommended.
- A National Park fishing licence is required by anglers. Available at the Information Centre, entry gates or any campground kiosk. Lake Trout endorsement available only at the Information Centre in Waskesiu or at South Gate.
- Registered backcountry campers using the Bagwa Canoe Route are permitted to deposit fish offal into the following lakes at a minimum depth of 6 metres (20 feet): Kingsmere, Bagwa and Lily.
- There are two sites at Bagwa and one double and one single site at Lily. Tents should be placed on tent pads only.
- Before starting your trip, please read the '**You are in Black Bear Country**' brochure available at all park offices.