

Prince Edward Island National Park

CANADA

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LOCATION

Prince Edward Island National Park lies along the north shore of Prince Edward Island and is about 15 miles north of the City of Charlottetown. It forms a long narrow strip along the sea-coast and has three main sections of little depth except at the eastern and western ends.

The detailed map in this folder has been prepared especially to assist visitors to identify readily the various features of the Park.

PURPOSE

Prince Edward Island National Park is one of Canada's 18 National Parks that form a chain of nature sanctuaries from Mount Revelstoke in British Columbia to Terra Nova in Newfoundland. These Parks, with a vast area of more than 29,000 square miles have been established for the preservation of selected areas in their natural state for the benefit, education, and enjoyment of present and future generations of Canadians and are administered by the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources.

NATURAL FEATURES

GEOLOGICAL

Prince Edward Island National Park is an area of superb beaches, red sandstone cliffs, offshore bars, and submerged estuaries on the side of the Island which faces the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

The low lying land mass of Prince Edward Island is an extension of a larger lowland which covers a large area in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. This extensive flat has been developed on rocks which are about 220 million years old, that is, they belong to the upper part of the Carboniferous Period. In fairly recent times streams have cut shallow valleys into the old flat surface and this gives the country its rolling, undulating



Erosion by wind and wave has formed these dunes and beaches

appearance. Submergence of this gently rolling landscape has resulted in the development of a number of estuaries which are quite clearly of the same shape as the ancestral valleys.

Waves and currents along the shores have made profound changes in the shape of the flooded shoreline of Prince Edward Island. Promontories and points have been worn off by wave erosion. The water offshore is shallow. The bottom has been scoured by waves and sediments have been picked up and moved forward to the line of breakers where they have been deposited to form long lines of bars, spits and beaches. Here and there along the shore low cliffs of the reddish sandstone and siltstone, which underlie most of Prince Edward Island, are exposed to the waves. Erosion of these rocks has produced overhanging cliffs, caves, and occasional marine stacks or remnants offshore.

The sand in the beautiful beaches of Prince Edward Island has come from erosion of the

shallow bottom offshore, erosion of the cliffs of reddish sandstone and siltstone in the promontories and headlands, and reworking of glacial debris found everywhere on the surface of the country.

Visitors to the beaches of Prince Edward Island National Park can enjoy sun bathing and swimming, vistas of beaches stretching into the distance, the breakers, and the beautiful sunsets over the sea. They can watch an endless variety of interesting natural processes for the beach is a place of constant change, of sorting and mixing, cutting and filling, grinding and rounding. Even on a calm summer's day the lapping of the small waves on the shore tells us of some activity there. A handful of sand presents a whole new microscopic world of crystals and grains of pink and white quartz, black magnetite, shiny flakes of muscovite or white mica, and many other minerals of different composition and appearance.

The surface of the sand is constantly being changed at and below the wave line. At low tide an array of ripple-marks stretches along the beach and appeals to the artistic imagination as well as the mind interested in workings of nature. Delicate traceries of light coloured grains of sand mark the foremost edges of waves as they wash in on the sands. Lines of pebbles and shells, an endless variety of patterns made by receding currents around pebbles on the flat beaches, trails made by slow creeping, snail-like organisms and others on the sea bottom, the constant rearrangement of the sand in shallow water by the moving waves—all are on display on almost any part of the beach.

PLANTLIFE

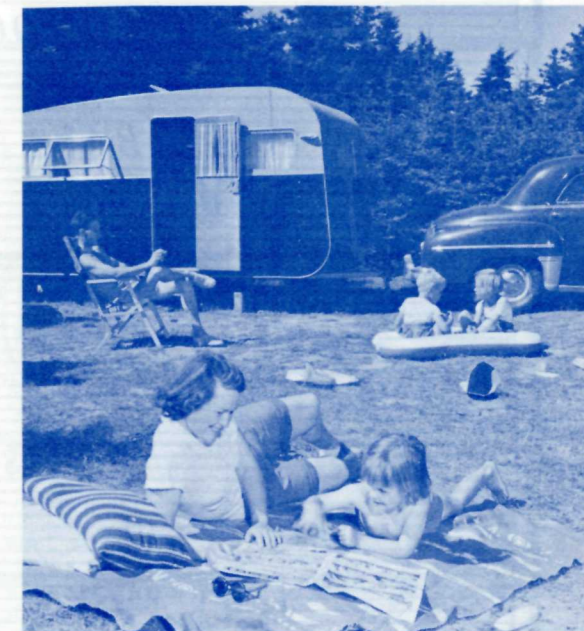
Although the Park is small, the plantlife is abundant, varied, and attractive. The extensive sand dunes with their alternate hills and slacks, the wide sand beaches, tidal flats, salt water bays, fresh water ponds and lakes and the cultivated fields of former times now grown to trees, all have their own unique plant cover.

Prince Edward Island is in the Acadian forest region of Canada, and here, on the north shore, a few more northern trees are present than in other sections of the Island. White spruce, black spruce, red spruce, balsam fir, yellow birch, grey birch, white birch, red maple, sugar maple, trembling aspen, choke cherry and mountain ash are some of the trees commonly seen in the park.

Forest trees can grow only where other plants have preceded them, stabilizing and enriching the soil. Along the edge of the sea and among the sand dunes trees are not yet able to grow, but the pioneer grasses, shrubs, and other small plants make these areas extremely interesting.

On the shifting sand dunes, beach or Marram grass is about the only plant that can grow under such harsh conditions. Its numerous and lengthy roots enable it to survive where other less specialized plants perish.

In the small valleys or slacks between the dunes where conditions are less rigorous, beach pea, sea-rocket, sea lavender, and the Gulf of St.



Peaceful forest glades offer sanctuary to the family

Lawrence aster are a few of the plants that make the landscape colourful.

On the windswept headlands and areas near the coast the vegetation varies according to whether or not the soil is moist or dry. Here bay berry or wax myrtle, Labrador tea, sweet fern, large cranberry, three-toothed cinquefoil, ground juniper, black crowberry, wild rose, silverweed cinquefoil, wild strawberry and sometimes Star-flowered False Solomon's-Seal scantily or densely clothe the ground.

The shallow water of the sea is also the home of interesting, unique plants. Generally they are submerged and thus hidden from view but during storms fragments of these plants are tossed on the beaches where they may be examined. Eel grass and the various marine algae or seaweeds, some of which are used in commerce, are especially interesting. Often these plants are piled in windrows, the size of which depends upon the severity of the storm and the thickness of the submerged beds of plants.

BIRDLIFE

Sea, fresh water, and land birds make Prince Edward Island their home, or pass through the area during their migrations. About 200 kinds of birds have already been catalogued in the Island and many of these may be seen in the Park during some portion of the year.

A walk along the Bubbling Spring Nature Trail is an excellent way to see birds. A *Provisional Check-List of the Birds of the Island* is available free at Park Offices.

There is a colony of Great Blue Heron on Rustico Island. These large, long-legged birds nest here in the tops of high trees.

WILDLIFE

Red fox, muskrat, mink, red squirrel, and snowshoe hare are common, and raccoon and striped skunk have been introduced and are now common animals of the Park.



An Alert Great Blue Heron

Occasionally dead whales and other large marine mammals are washed up on shore.

FISH

Modern methods of fish management are followed to improve angling in the lakes and streams of the Park and a regular stocking program is carried out. Rainbow and Eastern Brook trout may be taken. Fishing information may be obtained from the Information Centres and Park Wardens, and visitors are advised to consult these sources concerning licences, seasons, and catch limits.

HOW YOU CAN LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PARK

To help you to know the Park better and to obtain greater enjoyment from your visit, the National Parks provide an Interpretation Service. This includes an Interpretive Officer during the summer months who conducts tours and campfire talks to explain the purposes and natural features of this National Park. Some of the nature talks are illustrated by slides and films. A well-marked nature trail of a self-guiding type is established in the Dalvay area and another similar trail is under development in the Stanhope area.

HOW TO SEE THE INTERESTING FEATURES

While the roads in the Park lead to many of the interesting features, the recommended way to gain a full appreciation of nature in the Park is to make use of the trails. A large number of people derive considerable satisfaction from walking over the many well-kept trails.

Of special interest is the Bubbling Spring Nature Trail along which many species of trees, shrubs, and wildflowers are identified for the convenience of the Park visitor.

GENERAL INFORMATION PARK ADMINISTRATION

A resident Superintendent is in charge of the Park. The protection of the Park and the visitor is in the hands of the Warden Service assisted by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Visitors may obtain detailed information from the nearest Park Warden.

SEASON

The Park is open throughout the year, but it is only from May to September that all facilities are provided.

CAMPING

Ideal camping conditions exist in the Park where the climate is most agreeable to those who enjoy tenting and like to live close to nature.

Campgrounds are located in scenic surroundings and are either on the shore front or, at most, only a short distance from the sea. Facilities such as water, electricity and other amenities are available at these places for visitors seeking healthful, outdoor relaxation.

The main campgrounds are at Stanhope Beach and Cavendish Beach.

Trailer parks supplying electricity, water, sanitation and laundry facilities are located at Cavendish and Stanhope Campgrounds.

Picnic areas and wayside tables are located throughout the Park as indicated on the map. The majority of these free picnic sites have a shelter with firewood, water, and sanitary facilities.

ACCOMMODATION

A variety of accommodation is offered in the Park, details of which are listed in the *Accommodation Directory—Canada's National Parks* available at all Park Information Centres. There are also additional accommodations of various types adjoining the Park boundary.



Foxes may also be seen

PRESERVATION

National Parks are selected areas set apart as nature sanctuaries and special care is taken to maintain them *in their natural state*. For this reason, all birds, animals, wildlife, trees, rocks and fossils are to remain undisturbed. Even the wildflowers are not to be picked; they are to be left for others to enjoy.

Please help protect your own Park for future enjoyment. It is part of your national inheritance.

PREVENT FIRE

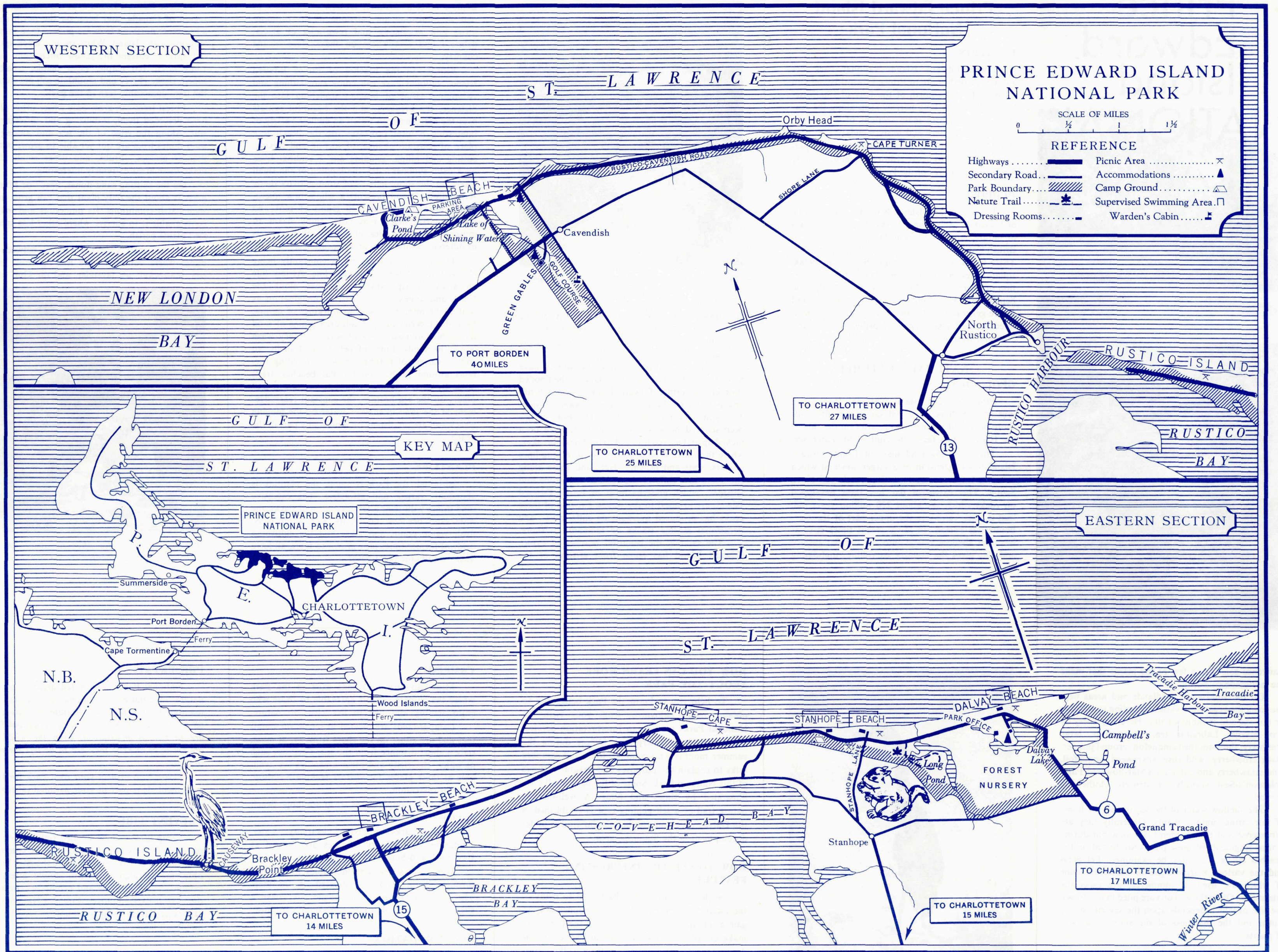
Camp-fires may be kindled only in fireplaces provided for this purpose and must be completely extinguished before campers leave the site. Visitors observing an unattended fire should attempt to extinguish it if possible and promptly report it to the nearest Park employee. Fire in a National Park can cause damage which cannot be repaired in a hundred years.

SWIMMING AREAS

Seven supervised swimming areas are located along the 25 miles of sandy beaches where swimming is enjoyed in water that is warmer than at many points hundreds of miles south along the Atlantic Coast. These areas were selected where there is the least likelihood of undertow. Lifeguard stations are manned full-time by lifeguards qualified in rescue and first aid. Swimming instruction is provided by the lifeguards in some locations, and by other qualified instructors at the larger beaches. Extra precautions are taken to help safeguard swimmers. It is not permissible to use beach balls, air mattresses, or other inflatable objects in the water. Visitors are urged to swim only in the areas where supervision is provided.

PETS

Dogs and cats may accompany visitors into the Park. For the protection of park animals, however, dogs must be kept on leash.



PREPARED AT THE SURVEYS AND MAPPING BRANCH, OTTAWA

MOTOR-BOATS

Motor-driven boats are not permitted in the Park waters. Boat docking and launching facilities are available in the Covehead Bay area. Sea trips and cruises are offered by commercial interests at various locations outside the Park.

HOW TO REACH THE PARK

The Park is served by all modern transportation services, rail, air, bus and car. Two ferry services from the mainland provide access to the Island as shown on the accompanying map. From the two ferry landings, and also from the Charlottetown airport, provincial highways reach the several sections of the Park.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PARK

Prince Edward Island National Park was established in 1937 and is seven square miles in area.

When the first white men arrived, early in the 16th century, the Island was inhabited by the Micmac Indians. Discovered by Jacques Cartier on his first voyage in 1534, he described the area as land "low and flat and the fairest that may possibly be seen". It was also known by the aboriginal Indians as "Abegweit" meaning "cradled on the wave".

The largest portion of the area selected for the establishment of this National Park in 1937 was agricultural land owned by direct descendants of the pioneer settlers, some of whom came to the Island as early as 1770.

A Park Superintendent was appointed in 1938

and Park Headquarters established in the Dalvey Area.

In the Dalvey area near the entrance to the Bubbling Spring Nature Trail is an old burial ground where the gravestones of some early settlers may still be seen. Many unnamed graves are there including those of some victims of the terrible "Yankee Gale" of 1851 when about 74 ships were wrecked and about 160 lives were lost including a number of fishermen and mariners from the New England States.

In the Cavendish Section of the Park is the farmstead where Lucy Maud Montgomery, author of the "Anne of Green Gables" books, spent many of her childhood years. The house has been refurbished as a public museum and contains some of Mrs. Montgomery's personal possessions, including the original typewriter used in writing her books.

Although the Park has been set apart primarily to preserve its natural features for the benefit, education, and enjoyment of present and future generations, the Parks Service also provides such recreational facilities as an 18-hole golf course, club house, tennis courts, lawn bowling green, playgrounds, and a recreation hall.

Persons wishing additional information concerning the Park may address their inquiries to:

The Superintendent
Prince Edward Island National Park
STANHOPE R.R. No. 1, P.E.I.

or
National Parks Branch
Department of Northern Affairs and
National Resources
OTTAWA, Canada.

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