

Prince Edward Island National Park

Gulls on the beach

Introducing a Park and an Idea

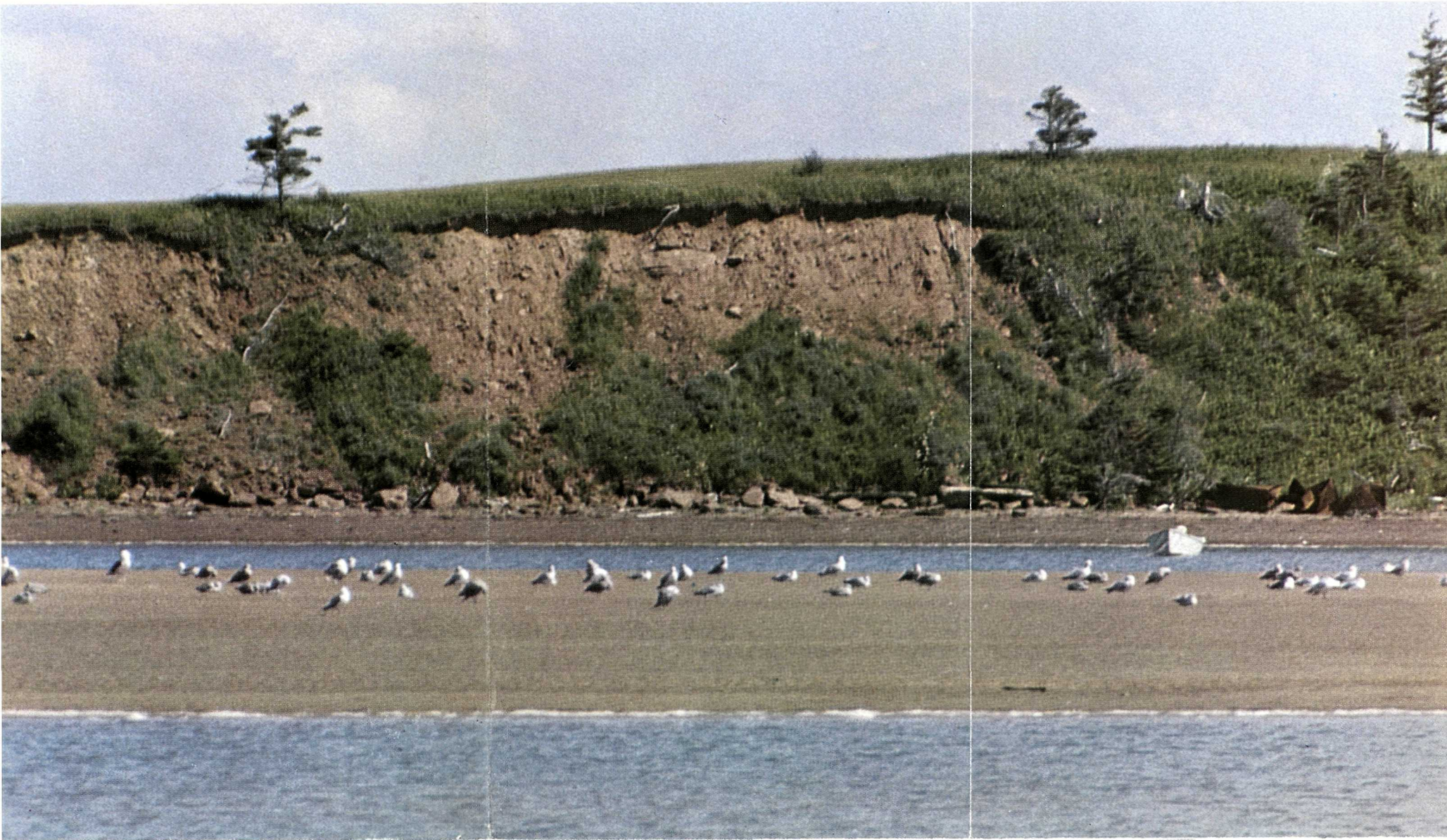
Canada covers half a continent, fronts on three oceans, and stretches from the extreme Arctic more than halfway to the equator.

There is a great variety of land forms in this immense country, and national parks have been created to preserve important examples for you and generations to come.

The National Parks Act of 1930 specifies that national parks are “dedicated to the people . . . for their benefit, education and enjoyment” and must remain “unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”

Situated 15 miles north of Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island National Park forms a narrow, 25-mile-long

Prince Edward Island



Sandstone cliffs; guided walk; lupines; Green Gables House

The skunk prefers the spruce woodlands, and can often be seen there in the early evening. The raccoon also likes the wooded areas, especially those bordering water. They feed along the edges of Long Pond, Dalvay Lake, and the Lake of Shining Waters.

Mink and muskrat both inhabit park waterways. Muskrat houses, mounds of mud and plants, can be seen in ponds throughout the park. In old fields and wooded areas, the short-tailed weasel hunts mice and hares. This quick, little hunter is rarely seen by park visitors.

The most vocal of all park mammals is the perky red squirrel. This nervous, colourful rodent can be spotted easily from woodland trails. Chipmunks are common in the Cavendish woodlands.

Bird life in Prince Edward Island National Park is varied, and includes both land and water species. Over 145 species have been recorded in this small park.

The largest and most conspicuous is the great blue heron. A rookery of these long-necked birds is situated on Rustico Island, and is one of the few known nesting colonies of this species on Prince Edward Island.

Woodland birds include the chipping, swamp and white-throated sparrow, slate-coloured junco, red-eyed vireo, hermit-thrush, flicker, and a variety of warblers.

The Savannah sparrow is by far the commonest species of the dunelands, although the horned lark is also seen regularly here. All summer, marsh hawks glide over the grassy sand hills in search of prey.

Park ponds are havens for nesting waterfowl, including blue- and green-winged teal, ring-necked and black ducks. In autumn, many species of migrating waterfowl stop over on these wetlands. They include large flocks of Canada geese, which feed on the Brackley marshlands.

From late July to early autumn, the migration of shorebirds makes the park one of the finest areas in Canada for observing curlew, plover, phalarope, many species of sandpiper, yellowlegs, and godwit.

Game fish in the park include both rainbow and brook trout. Rolling's Pond is a fine trout fishing pond, and these fish are also found in the Lake of Shining Waters and Long Pond.

A Brief Park History

The park's shoreline was well-known to Micmac Indians long before the first white settlers came to the area. Rustico Island was once a favorite native campground, and Indian arrowheads are still occasionally found on park beaches.

The first European settlers arrived in the park area in 1770, and as late as the 1930's many of their descendants still farmed the land.

In 1851 the destructive “Yankee Gale” wrecked over 70 ships along the park coast, resulting in the loss of more than 160 lives. An old burial ground in the Dalvay sec-

tion of the park contains the graves of numerous New England fishermen and sailors who drowned in this gale.

The Cavendish section of the park is the site of Green Gables House, immortalized by Canadian author Lucy Maud Montgomery in her classic novel “Anne of Green Gables”. Every year thousands of visitors tour this literary shrine.

Prince Edward Island National Park was established in 1937.

How to Get There

The park is reached easily by car or bus. Major highway approaches include Highways 15 and 25, which lead north from Charlottetown to the eastern or Dalvay section of the park. Highways 2 and 6, east from Charlottetown and west from Souris, also lead to the Dalvay section. Highways 2, 6, and 13 approach the western or Cavendish region from Summerside, Kensington, and Hunter River.

The nearest commercial airport is at Charlottetown, 15 miles south of the park, and flights from Moncton, New Glasgow, and Halifax arrive there daily. Charlottetown is also served by rail.

Prince Edward Island is accessible via car ferry from Caribou, Nova Scotia, to Wood Islands, and by car, bus, and train via ferry from Cape Tormentine, New Brunswick, to Borden.

How to Enjoy the Park

Season – The park is open throughout the year, although full facilities are provided only from May to September.

Swimming – Prince Edward Island National Park boasts some of the finest bathing beaches in Canada. The seawater temperature averages 70 degrees in July and August and is higher than at many points further south along the Atlantic Coast. In addition to a number of unsupervised swimming beaches, there are nine roped-off swimming areas, supervised by surfguards. Although these guards are usually on duty only between 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. in summer, the beaches may be used at any hour. Services in swimming areas include change houses, canteens, and toilet and shower facilities.

Boating – Saltwater boating facilities are available at Covehead Bay. Motorboats are not permitted on fresh water in the park.

Hiking – This is one of the best ways to explore the park. There are a number of trails, information about which can be obtained from wardens and naturalists. The Bubbling Spring Trail near Stanhope follows the forested edge of Long Pond, and leads to a delightful bubbling spring, deep in cool spruce woodlands.

Balsam Hollow Trail, at Cavendish, is a short brookside trail leading through a tiny wooded valley, immediately south of Green Gables House.

Beach walking during twilight hours is popular.

strip along the island's north shore. Although it encompasses only seven square miles, it preserves a surprisingly varied landscape, including some of the finest saltwater beaches in Canada, as well as woodlands, marshes, ponds, and sand dunes. One of the smallest of Canada's national parks, it is second in popularity only to Banff National Park, Alberta.

The Park Environment

Each national park has its own character, its unique story as a living outdoor museum. Prince Edward Island National Park demonstrates the relationship between sea and land. Sweeping sand dunes, high coastal cliffs, woodlands,

Bubbling Spring Trail



marshes and ponds . . . all are influenced by what Longfellow called “the magic of the sea”.

The Seacoast: Water and Wind are Masters

The entrance to Rustico Harbour, at a central point on the park's coast, neatly divides the accessible part of Prince Edward Island National Park into eastern and western segments. The visitor will soon notice a basic difference between these two areas. The eastern section contains extensive beaches and broad, shallow bays. The western portion consists mainly of high sandstone cliffs which overlook smaller beaches. Both sections contain sand dunes and spits, freshwater ponds, swampy hollows, maturing woodlands, salt and freshwater marshes, and abandoned farmlands returning to forest.

The influence of the sea upon the land is visible throughout the park. The sand beaches are a combined result of the erosion of cliffs and capes, and the sorting and deposition of sands by ocean waves and currents.

Sand, mud, and gravel, deposited by the sea, have also dammed small streams and formed ponds behind the beaches.

Dunes (high sloping hills of sand) result from the dual action of the sea, which distributes sand along the shores, and prevailing ocean winds, which carry and deposit it.

The tons of sediment carried daily by the tides have produced extensive marshlands along the shores of shallow bays. The sea even determines the species of trees that grow along the coast. Only vegetation able to tolerate salt spray and high winds can survive total exposure to an ocean environment.

The Plants: What a Walk will Reveal

The park's varied plant life can be divided into three broad categories: beach, dune, and saltwater marsh plants; roadside and field plants; and woodland and freshwater pond plants.

One of the easiest ways for a visitor to view these changing plant communities is to walk from the open beach, over the dunes, and into the forested areas toward the park's southern boundary.

Fishing – Eastern brook trout inhabit the streams and lakes of the park. Fishing is by permit, available at a nominal fee from information offices, which also can advise on arrangements for private deep-sea fishing.

Some Don'ts

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, trees, rocks, and fossils are to be left undisturbed. Even the wildflowers are not to be picked; they must be left for others to enjoy. Feeding, touching, or molesting wild animals is not permitted.

Dogs and cats may accompany visitors into the park, but dogs must be kept on leash. No permit or vaccination certificate is needed.

Where to Stay

Camping facilities are available at three major campgrounds in the area. The Stanhope and Cavendish campgrounds provide facilities for both tents and trailers. The Rustico Island campground is for tents only.

In addition, there is a small unserviced camping area at Stanhope. Water is available from a nearby spring.

There is a group-camping area at Brackley for boy scouts, girl guides and other organized groups.

Camping fees vary according to facilities, and space is allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Campgrounds open about mid-May and close about September 15, depending on the weather. The maximum allowable stay at a campground is two weeks.

A campsite permit must be purchased for all campgrounds, except for the primitive area at Stanhope. Visitors wishing to use this campground are asked to contact a park warden.

Commercial accommodation in the park ranges from a bungalow court to a famous resort hotel. Accommodation is also offered at many centres near the park. Details may be obtained from the Prince Edward Island Travel Bureau, Charlottetown.

The park also provides a variety of other visitor facilities and services. Tennis courts are situated at Dalvay, Brackley, and Cavendish. There is a lawn-bowling green at Dalvay, and an excellent 18-hole golf course at Cavendish. Playgrounds are located in beach areas, and picnic sites are scattered throughout the park.

Fires

Campfires may be lit only in fireplaces provided for this purpose, or in portable stoves. Barbecues may be used only in campgrounds or picnic areas, and all coals must be dumped into existing park fireplaces.

Anyone finding an unattended fire should try to extinguish it, or if it is beyond his control, report it at once.

Cavendish Beach area



Sea rocket and seaside sandwort edge the sand beaches. Marram grass, the park's most common plant, stabilizes the movement of dunes. Within the sheltered hollows of the dunes, crowberry, bearberry, ground juniper, bayberry, and wild rose form dense thickets.

Able to withstand large quantities of salt spray, stands of stunted, wind-pruned white spruce dominate the coastal woodlands. But farther away from the sea, trees become larger and higher. In the heart of the park's Acadian coastal forest, white, red, and black spruce, white and wire birch, red maple, balsam fir, American larch, trembling aspen, and speckled alder thrive.

Freshwater pond plantlife is especially abundant and varied, and includes sedges, rushes, pondweeds, arrowhead, pickerel weed, sweet flag and wild iris. Woodland plants sprinkle the forest floor with blossom throughout the growing season. The delicate tracery of ferns and mosses add a tender green to woodland trails.

Much of the park area was once farmed, some of it quite extensively, and the story of plantlife in these areas is twofold. Forests are once more claiming abandoned farmlands, while garden plants and weeds, many of European origin, grow beside roads and in old fields. A connection with the park's human history, these plants, too, play a role in the story of Prince Edward Island National Park.

The Animals: An Eternal Quest for Food

Each animal species has its own requirements, and can survive only when these are met.

The red fox, the park's largest mammal, prefers the low, dense, rose and bayberry thickets, where dunes and forest meet. Providing excellent sites for the construction of nests and the raising of young, these sandy hollows are inhabited by the field mouse, on which the red fox preys. Another mammal favoured by the red fox is the varying hare, or snowshoe rabbit. These animals are often seen around campgrounds, where they feed on succulent grass and clover.

The striped skunk and the raccoon, both park inhabitants, were introduced to Prince Edward Island by man.

How to Get the Most Out of Your Visit

To help you understand and appreciate the park's natural environment, you are urged to take advantage of the free interpretive program, conducted by a professional naturalist and his staff. It will provide you with an insight into how climate, sea, land formations, plants, and animals are interrelated, and it will make your stay more rewarding.

During the day there are conducted hikes and auto caravans; in the evening, talks or slide and film programs are held in campgrounds and outdoor theatres.

Self-guiding trails, on-site exhibits, and wayside signs now being planned will also interpret the park's natural features.

A naturalist will meet and address organized groups, if arrangements are made in advance.

Information on the interpretive program is available from bulletin boards, park information offices, and park staff.

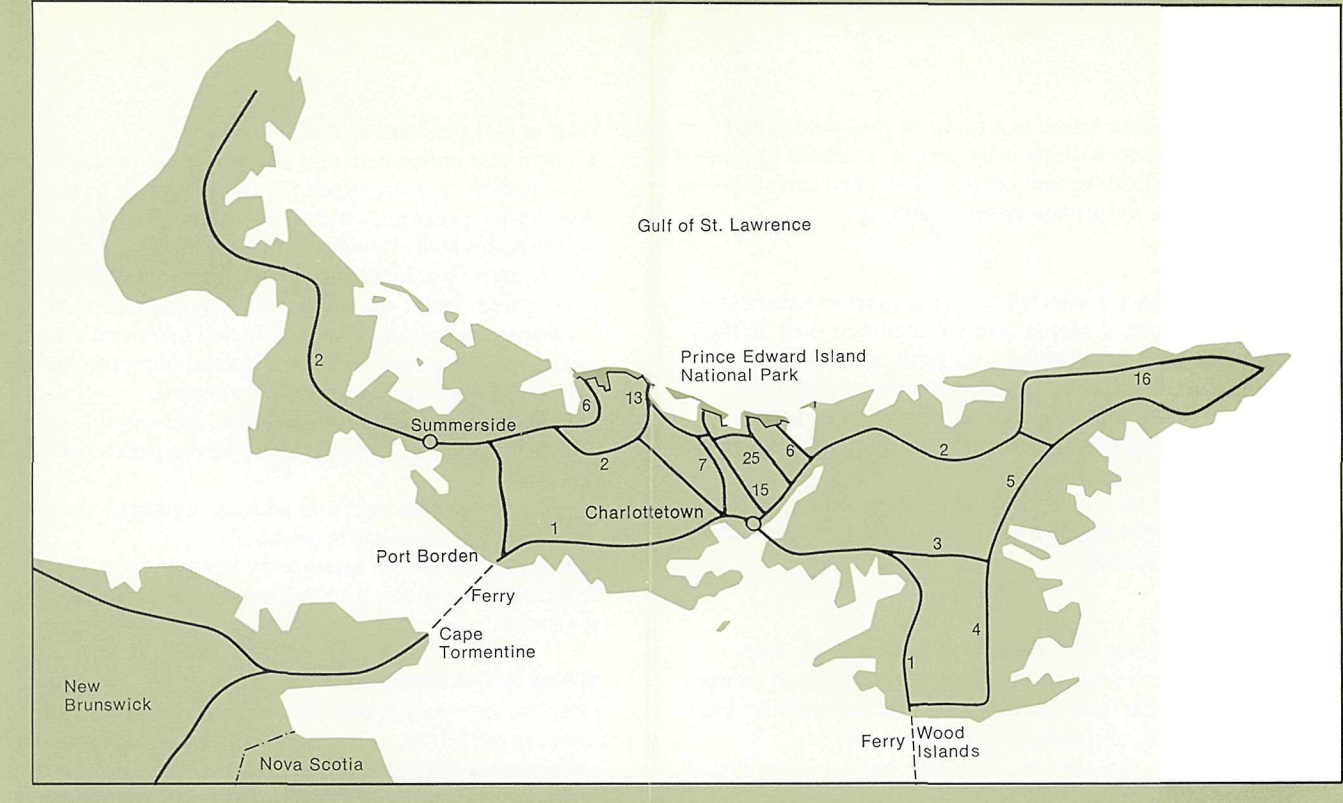
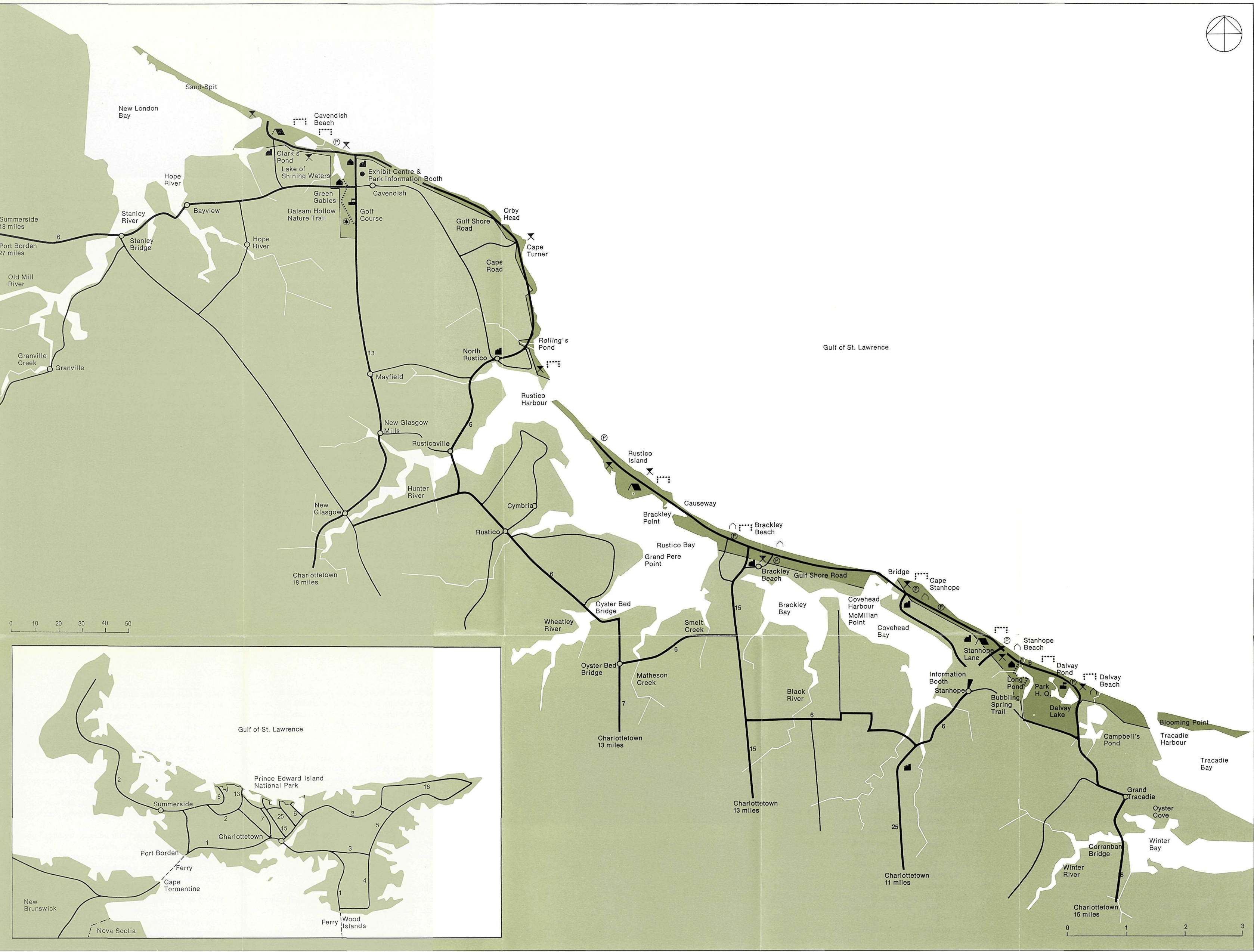
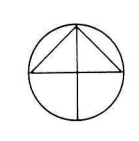
Where to Get Information

Detailed information may be obtained from park headquarters in Dalvay, at the Cavendish information bureau, and from campground offices.

Uniformed staff will answer questions, provide maps, outline travel routes, and refer visitors to various areas and facilities in the park. Special events are posted on bulletin boards.

Park wardens, though not primarily responsible for general information, will help visitors whenever possible.

Additional information on the park is available from the Superintendent, Prince Edward Island National Park, P.O. Box 487, Charlottetown, P. E. I. For information on other national parks write the Director, National and Historic Parks Branch, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Ottawa.



Prince Edward Island National Park

- Highway
- Secondary Road
- ⋯ Walking or Hiking Trail
- ▭ Lake, River, Creek
- Warden's Cabin
- ⊗ Picnic Area
- ▲ Camp Ground
- ⊕ Nature Trail
- Ⓟ Parking
- ⋯ Supervised Beach
- ▲ Accommodation
- ∧ Dressing Room
- Store

