

Riding Mountain National Park

MANITOBA, *Canada*





Buffalo near Lake Audy

The National Parks of Canada

CANADA'S SYSTEM of National Parks is one of the largest and finest in the world. Set aside by statute for the use and enjoyment of the people, the national parks include regions of outstanding scenic beauty, natural phenomena, historic interest, and unique fauna and flora. Diverse in character and varied in purpose, they conserve the original wildlife of Canada under natural conditions, help maintain the primitive beauty of the landscape, and preserve sites memorable in the nation's history. As recreational areas they also provide, under ideal conditions, unequalled opportunities for the enjoyment of outdoor life.

The National Park system in Canada was instituted more than 70 years ago when the Federal Government, in 1885, set aside for public use an area of ten square miles surrounding hot mineral springs in the Canadian Rockies at Banff, Alberta. Two years later this area was enlarged and established as Rocky Mountains, now Banff National Park. Other outstanding scenic areas in the Rocky and Selkirk Mountains were also reserved for national park purposes, and formed the nucleus of the great chain of national playgrounds which now extends across Canada.

This publication is compiled in co-operation with the National Parks Branch, Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources. Additional information concerning these parks may be obtained from the Park Superintendents, or from the Canadian Government Travel Bureau, Ottawa, Canada.

Issued under the authority of

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East End of Clear Lake

RIDING MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK

MANITOBA

RIDING MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK has a setting and character unique for any location in a prairie province. Situated on the fringe of the Great Plains region that extends northwards from the Mississippi Valley into Central Canada, it occupies the vast plateau of Riding Mountain which rises to a height of 2,200 feet above sea-level. On the east and north-east, the park presents a steep escarpment, towering nearly 1,100 feet above the surrounding country and affording magnificent views of the fertile plains below. Sweeping westward for nearly 70 miles, the park contains an area of 1,148 square miles, heavily forested and set with numerous crystal lakes, some of which are several miles long.

The park is a natural home for species of big game native to the region, including deer, elk, moose, and bear. Wild fowl are numerous, song-birds and birds of brilliant plumage enliven the forests, beaver live along the streams, and a herd of buffalo, descendants of the great herds that once roamed the western plains, feed on the rich meadows near Lake Audy.

On Clear Lake, the largest and most beautiful in the park, a picturesque summer resort, Wasagaming, has been developed, in which is located the park administrative headquarters. Here the natural attractions of the area have been supplemented by facilities for the enjoyment of outdoor life and recreation, and by grounds

and buildings designed to harmonize with the surroundings.

Situated about 125 miles north of the International Boundary and 175 miles northwest of Winnipeg, and served by modern highways from the south, east and north, Riding Mountain National Park is an unsurpassed holiday ground.

Early History

The origin and early history of Riding Mountain Park are of interest, for many of its natural features were shaped by the great glaciers of the Ice Age. The steep escarpment of Riding Mountain itself is mainly the result of pre-glacial erosion, and later, with the surrounding country, it lay under an immense sheet of ice.

Evidence of glacial movements remains in the depressions now filled by small lakes and by moraine and boulders that are found in many parts of the park. As the ice receded, large lakes formed in the surrounding valleys, and towards the east lay a vast inland sea of which Lakes Dauphin, Winnipegosis, Manitoba, and Winnipeg are all that remain.

Some idea of the immensity of this watery expanse may be gained from the view of the vast panorama that is available from vantage points or lookouts along the eastern escarpment. Here the prairie unfolds in a great checkerboard of farmlands—green, brown, russet, and gold.

These plains were at one time Indian territory



Cooling off at Clear Lake



Lunch in a Shady Grove

—the home of the Assiniboines and Crees. With the acquisition of firearms, tribal sports and hunting eventually gave way to savage hostilities, and raids into rival territories ensued. As the buffalo, staple source of supply for the western tribes, began to disappear, the Assiniboines moved westward, and left the Crees in possession of the region. The ridges are believed to have been Indian highways for years, and one of the early explorers records that shale outcroppings near the summit of Riding Mountain were used by the Indians for making clay pipes.

The first exploration of the region appears to have been carried out by a Canadian Government expedition under Henry Youle Hind in 1858. This party explored the country between the South Saskatchewan and Red Rivers and, arriving at the southern end of Dauphin Lake in October, climbed the steep heights of Riding Mountain. Hind was greatly impressed by the outlook, describing it in his book *Red River and Saskatchewan Expeditions*: "The view from the summit was superb, enabling the eye to take in the whole of Dauphin Lake and the intervening country, together with part of Winnipegosis Lake. The outline of Duck Mountain rose clear and blue in the northwest, and, from our point of view, the Riding and Duck Mountains appeared continuous, and preserved a uniform, precipitous, bold outline, rising abruptly from a level country lying 800 to 1,000 feet below."

Approaches to the Park

Riding Mountain National Park is easily reached both from Canadian and United States points. It is linked with the main provincial and state highway systems by all-weather roads and is provided with three main entrances accessible by southern, eastern, and northern approaches.

The southern approach to the park is by way of Provincial Highway No. 10, which is a direct route from the International Boundary. From Minnedosa, this picturesque route provides views of some of the most charming pastoral countryside in the province, and leads to the southern gateway at Wasagaming, the park townsite.

From Winnipeg, the Provincial capital, Highway No. 1 may be followed to Portage la Prairie, and from there, Highway No. 4 leads to Minnedosa. An alternative route from Winnipeg may be followed over Highway No. 1 to Brandon and thence north to the park by Highway No. 10. The distances from Winnipeg to the park over these routes are 175 and 207 miles respectively. Four main routes from the southern part of the province also converge on Brandon.

From the east, approach is made over Highway No. 5 from Neepawa to Norgate, and from there westward over Park Highway No. 19 to Wasagaming. This route provides the visitor with a full realization of the mountainous character of the park, as the road ascends the steep escarp-

ment of Riding Mountain by long, easy grades. Within a travelled distance of about 3 miles an elevation of more than 1,000 feet is gained, and at various points are excellent views of the plains below that stretch away into the distance.

From the north, access is provided by Highway No. 10, which crosses the park boundary about 8 miles south of Dauphin. By this route, the northern escarpment of Riding Mountain is climbed, passing through green forests and skirting several small lakes. At Dauphin Lookout, near the summit, an observation platform has been built, where a pause may be made to view the wonderful panorama of prairie farmlands. The town of Dauphin and Lake Dauphin are visible on clear days. About 31 miles from Dauphin, the highway turns eastward and skirts the western end of Clear Lake to merge with Highway No. 19 near the park golf course. Approach from Dauphin also may be made by Highway No. 5 to the Norgate intersection and from that point west to Clear Lake.

Riding Mountain Park is easily accessible from the United States. Six main highways lead from the International Boundary, four of which converge on Brandon, and two on Winnipeg. One of the most popular approaches is via the Canal-to-Canada Highway through Dunseith, North Dakota to the International Peace Garden on the International Boundary. From there,

Highway No. 10 is followed north to the park through Boissevain, Brandon, and Minnedosa.

During the summer months, buses connecting with the main provincial bus-line services of Manitoba and Saskatchewan leave Minnedosa and Dauphin twice daily for Riding Mountain National Park. A through bus service from Winnipeg to Wasagaming also enters the park daily. Points near the park from which railroad service is available include Neepawa, Norgate, Dauphin, and Erickson on the lines of the Canadian National Railways, and Neepawa and Minnedosa on the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Natural Attractions

The natural attractions of the park have a broad appeal. Eighty-five miles of excellent motor roads wind through luxuriant forests of white and black spruce, jack pine, aspen, white birch, tamarack, balsam fir, green ash, elm, and Manitoba maple. The contrasting colouring of bark and leaves, mingled with the deep shade of evergreens, provides a delightful show of Nature's wonders. Smaller trees such as mountain ash, wild plum, and serviceberry are common, and shrubs of many kinds including hazel, high-bush cranberry, saskatoon, and dogwood are interspersed among the trees. In the autumn the shrubs combine with larger species to produce a marvellous colouring of the landscape. Wild flowers grow in great profusion and blossom in



Bowling Green at Wasagaming



Spectators watch a golfer putt on the 9th green of the Golf Course

a riot of colour. At varying periods may be seen wild roses, twinflower, marsh marigold, orange lily, pasque flower, bunchberry, wintergreen, fireweed, Indian paint brush, and Indian pipe, as well as golden-rod, violet, and brown-eyed susan.

The park originally comprised the Riding Mountain National Forest, and for over a quarter of a century its timber resources have been under scientific management. A forest experiment station, open to visitors, has been established near Clear Lake for the investigation of problems relating to the growth, development, and wise use of the timber species of the region.

The lakes of the park are among its great charms. Lying between green ridges, they vary in size from small tarns to bodies of water several miles long. Clear Lake—the largest—is also the finest in the park. Nine miles long, it varies in width from one to two and a half miles, and has a shoreline of more than forty miles. Through its crystal-clear waters may be seen bubbles from the many springs by which it is fed. Between the headlands are inviting coves and inlets where canoeists may linger and bathe. On placid summer afternoons its limpid surface reflects the marvellous colouring of trees, boulders, and sandy pebbled beaches. From such vantage points as the golf course at the head of the lake, the breakwater, or main beach, may be enjoyed the full magnificence of the Manitoba sunset.

Wild Animal Life

The park forms a natural home for wildlife. Black bear, mule deer, white-tailed deer, and moose are found in the undisturbed forests, and beaver along the streams. One of the largest herds of elk in Canada ranges the plains and woodlands in the park and may often be seen on the meadows near Audy Lake, or on some outlying trail.

In a special fenced area of 2,000 acres near Lake Audy is a small exhibition herd of buffalo. Seen grazing in the lush meadows of the park, these animals recall to mind thrilling stories of the days when Indians, armed only with bow and arrow, pursued thundering herds across the vast reaches of the prairie to the west.

Bird Life

Lovers of bird life will find many interesting varieties. Migratory birds, following the skyways to and from their nesting grounds in Northern Canada, find rest and shelter on the lakes and marshes. Wild ducks, Canada geese, swans, cormorants, and pelicans are picturesque transients; loons and bitterns feed around the lakes and sloughs. Songsters which gladden the air include the white-throated sparrow, song sparrow, purple finch, red-winged blackbird, rose-

breasted grosbeak, baltimore oriole, catbird, and meadowlark. Birds of brilliant plumage, such as the blue jay, kingfisher, pileated woodpecker, cedar waxwing, Bohemian waxwing, evening grosbeak, and ruby-throated hummingbird gather in numbers. The Canada jay, also known as "whiskey-jack" or "camp robber," is particularly active around camp-sites at mealtime, and sharp-tailed grouse, owls, and hawks are also native to the park.

Townsite and Headquarters

Wasagaming, an attractive summer resort on the southern shore of Clear Lake, is the park townsite and contains the administrative headquarters. Here are graded and hard-surfaced streets, smooth green boulevards, well-kept walks, and buildings constructed to harmonize with the natural beauty of the surroundings. The townsite contains a number of hotels, several stores, restaurants, outdoor roller skating rink, beauty salon, drug store, theatre, souvenir shops, service garages, and other business concessions.

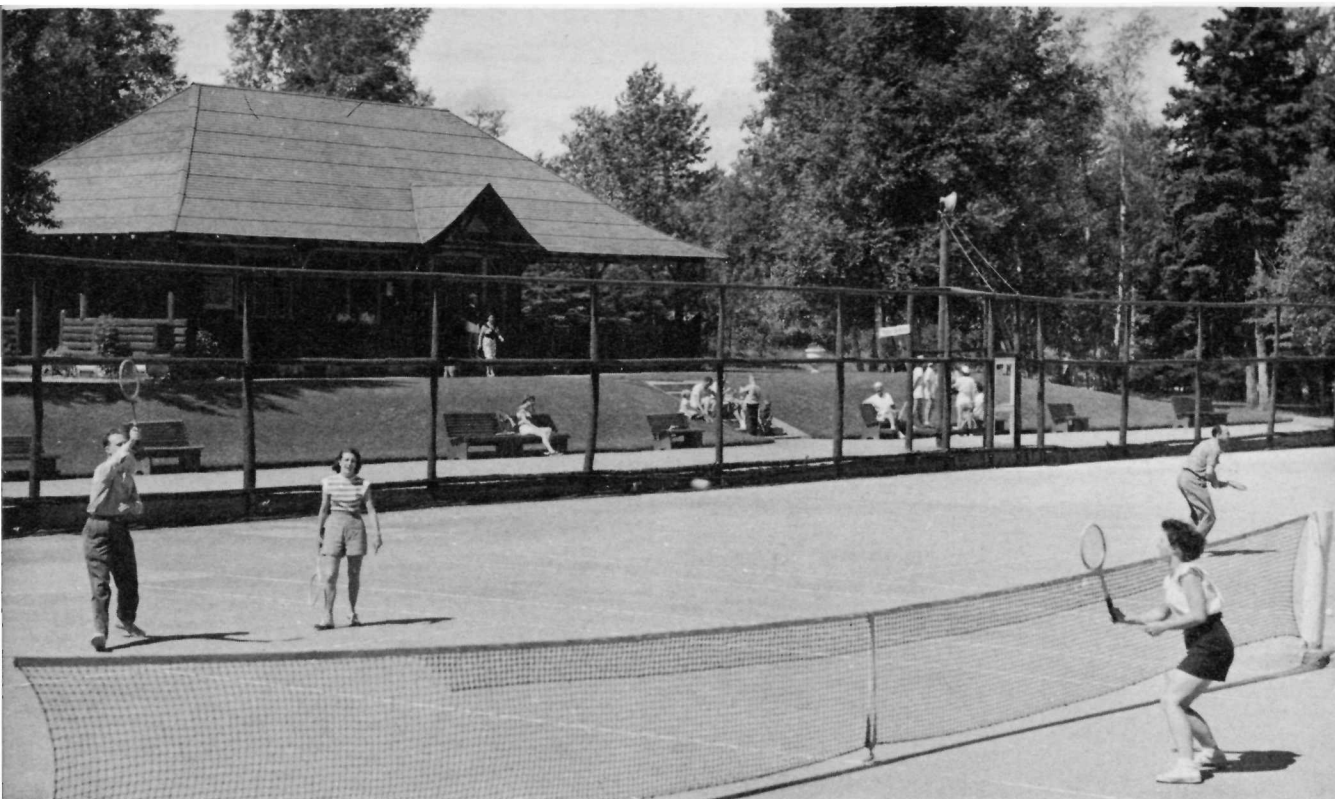
In the centre of the townsite, adjoining the lake shore, a large park area has been laid out, with artistic walks, pergolas, flower beds, hedges, and other botanical displays. Near the centre of this area is the park administration building. The park information bureau is located at the south end of Wasagaming Drive.

An outstanding point of interest in the townsite is the Museum Building, constructed of natural logs and stone. It contains mounted wildlife exhibits and Indian, geological, and other displays relating to the Riding Mountain area. In the building is also a lecture hall where conferences, church services, and entertainments are held. Community rooms, suitably furnished, are available to visitors.

Another attraction in the vicinity is a promenade that extends for more than 8,000 feet along the main beach providing an excellent vantage point from which to view the lake. Wasagaming Drive, the main artery of travel through the townsite, is completely hard-surfaced. The name Wasagaming is an Indian word meaning "clear water."

Accommodation

Good accommodation is available to visitors at moderate rates. Several modern summer hotels and bungalow camps are operated by private enterprise. The bungalow camps contain both single and double cabin units, and the majority are equipped with housekeeping facilities. Meals may be obtained at the restaurants in the townsite. In addition, there are a number of rooming and boarding houses where visitors may secure accommodation.



Practising for the Tournament



Fishing at Clear Lake

For visitors travelling with cabin trailers or carrying their own camping equipment there is accommodation in the Government camp-ground. It is situated in a beautiful grove west of the business section of Wasagaming facing Clear Lake, and within easy reach of stores, restaurants, and garages. Camp privileges are available on payment of a small fee, and include the use of a camping lot and community kitchen shelters equipped with stoves, tables, firewood, and running water. Modern toilet buildings are also located in the camp-ground. Convenient taps furnish an ample supply of clear, pure water. Camp-grounds, less completely equipped, are also available at Lake Katherine, Moon Lake, Lake Audy, and Whirlpool Lake.

Opportunities for Recreation

Riding Mountain National Park is admirably suited for the enjoyment of outdoor recreation. Sports open to visitors include swimming, boating, riding, hiking, tennis, golf, and lawn bowling—in addition to motoring along the scenic roads. A horseshoe pitch, checkerboard and children's playground will be found near the public camp-ground at Wasagaming. A picnic ground, equipped with table, benches, and stoves is also available. A motion picture theatre, an outdoor roller skating rink, bowling alleys, and a fine dance pavilion operated by private enterprise in Wasagaming extend the day's enjoyment. There

are also a number of picnic areas located along the main highways and roads in the park.

Of the numerous beaches in the park, the one on Clear Lake, which stretches for a mile and a half along the townsite of Wasagaming, is outstanding. A breakwater constructed in the lake forms a sheltered bay. With a clean, sandy bottom shelving out gradually, it provides safe and delightful bathing. Free swimming classes are available to children and lifeguards are constantly on duty. Boating and yachting are popular forms of sport, and boats may be rented at the pier. Motor launches also make regular sightseeing trips up and down the lake. Boats are also available for hire at Lake Audy.

For tennis enthusiasts there are eight clay courts at Wasagaming which rank with the best in the province, and are available for use at a nominal fee. A large pavilion with spacious verandas and dressing rooms overlooks the courts.

Another outstanding attraction is the park golf course. Built to a high standard of play, it has eighteen holes that are exceptionally interesting and challenge the skill of the average golfer. The course commands a magnificent view of Clear Lake and includes rolling terrain crossed by a winding stream appropriately known as Bogey Creek, which forms interesting hazards at several points. An attractive club-house overlooks the eighteenth green and contains facilities for rest

and refreshment. A nominal fee is charged for the use of the course, and a full line of supplies is carried by the professional shop.

Fishing, riding, hiking, and motoring help to make leisure hours more enjoyable. Clear Lake has been stocked with lake trout and pickerel and great northern pike, whitefish, and perch are also taken.

Riding enthusiasts have a choice of several fine trails over which to explore the region. Popular rides include those to Lake Katherine, 6 miles and to Beaver Lodge, 8 miles. A bridle path follows the north shore of Clear Lake for about 5 miles and offers a fine ride or hike within sight of the water's edge.

The motor roads of the park reveal a varied and ever-changing panorama. One of the fine shorter drives starts at Wasagaming and skirts the eastern end of the golf course for 3 miles to the "Wishing Well," a bubbling spring flowing into Bogey Creek near the golf course. From there, the "Glen Beag Drive," built through a delightful wooded area, may be followed, returning by way of main Highway No. 10 which circles the golf course. The park highways also lead to Dauphin Lookout, 29 miles distant, and to Norgate Lookout, 19 miles away, where fine views of the prairies may be obtained. To the visitor interested in wild animal life, the trip to

the animal enclosure at Lake Audy, 25 miles from Wasagaming, is well worth the time and effort.

In vivid contrast to the surrounding plains, Riding Mountain National Park is a revelation to the first-time visitor. The environment of dense green forests, blue lakes, and glistening sand beaches is far from the popular conception of a park in the Prairie Provinces. With its natural beauties unspoiled, its trees, flowers, wild animal and bird life carefully conserved and protected, and its gradual development adequately supervised, Riding Mountain Park is rapidly becoming one of Canada's most popular summer playgrounds.

Description of Game Fish in Riding Mountain National Park

PIKE (*Esox lucius*)—Sometimes called northern pike or jackfish. Dark olive body grading to silver or white on lower side, back and sides mottled with white. Long bill-like snout, numerous needle-like teeth. Scales smooth, fins often pink.

YELLOW PIKEPERCH OR WALLEYE (*Stizostedion vitreum*)—Sometimes called pickerel. Ranges from yellow to dark olive brown mottled with brassy flecks. Pointed head, long slender round body, numerous needle-like teeth, scales rough. Two dorsal (back) fins, the forward one with stiff spines.

YELLOW PERCH (*Perca flavescens*)—Back and sides greenish and golden yellow; broad vertical dark green bars crossing each side; belly whitish. Pointed head; body deep with flattened sides. Spine at extreme end of opercle. Numerous small needle-like teeth; scales rough. Two dorsal (back) fins, the forward one with stiff spines.

LAKE TROUT (*Cristivomer namaycush*) — General colour grey to greyish green with paler spots. Dorsal and caudal fins with darker markings. Tail fin (caudal) forked.

A brochure containing information on the procuring of fishing licences and the regulations which apply to angling in the national parks may be obtained from the park superintendents concerned or from the Canadian Government Travel Bureau, Ottawa, Canada.

Angling Areas and Species

CLEAR LAKE — Pike, lake trout, pickerel and perch. This lake is adjacent to the townsite. East end of the lake is closed to any angling. Boats usually available at townsite.

LAKE AUDY — Pike. By road, 16 miles west from Highway 10 at point where highways turn north from north shore of Clear Lake.



BACK COVER PHOTO: Family Picnic Party

KATHERINE LAKE — Eastern brook and rainbow trout. By road one-half mile south of a point on Norgate Road, 1 mile east of Highway 10.

MOON LAKE — Pike. Adjacent to east side of Highway 10, about 12 miles north of Clear Lake.

WHIRLPOOL LAKE — Pike. By road 1 mile north of Norgate Road at point 4½ miles from Highway 10.

MILE 143 LAKE — Pike. Accessible by a rough trail about 1¼ miles long which leaves Highway 10 at about Mile 143 and proceeds westerly.

LAKE ANN — Pike. Accessible by rough trail 1¼ miles off Norgate Road on north side ½ mile from Highway 10.

JACKFISH CREEK — Pike. Crossing Lake Audy Road about 10 miles off Highway 10.

WHIRLPOOL RIVER — Pike. Crossing Norgate Road about 3 miles east of Highway 10.

Boats may be rented through boat livery operators at Clear Lake and Lake Audy.

