

Birding and Nature Hotspots around Camrose

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In consultation with the Wildrose Outdoor Club, Camrose, Alberta

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The prairie pothole and parkland habitats around Camrose are one of Alberta's treasures. Within the aspen forests, wetlands, native prairie, and other productive habitats, you will find many natural features of interest. The goal of this webpage is to direct you to some of these amazing hotspots within about 50 km (or ½ hour drive) of Camrose. We have chosen sites that represent a breadth of habitats, diverse wildlife, easy access, and with little sensitivity to disturbance.

Each entry provides a short description of the hotspot, access details, target species or habitats, and helpful websites, if any. The entries are divided into six parts: Camrose, Northwest, Southwest, Southeast, Northeast, and Further Beyond. Please respect wildlife and other users at all times. Enjoy your outings!!

We welcome any updates, corrections, and or suggestions to this list. Please contact Glen at glen.hvenegaard@ualberta.ca

You may find the following resources useful:

- Waskegan Trail Guide: <http://www.waskahegantrail.ca/index.html>
- County of Camrose map: can be purchased from Map Town at http://www.mapstore.ca/county_maps.htm
- Camrose Wildlife and Greenspace Stewardship Project: <http://www.camrose.com/leisure/cwgsp/>
- Birds of Camrose: from the Bill Fowler Centre by Mirror Lake in Camrose or at http://www.tourismcamrose.com/files/Birds_of_Camrose.pdf or <http://www.tourismcamrose.com/files/birdmap.jpg>
- AB Wildlife Viewing Guide: <http://www.srd.gov.ab.ca/fishwildlife/viewingguide/>
- Edmonton Nature Club birding locations: <http://enc.fanweb.ca/PDF/EBCBirdingLocations.pdf>
- Birding Alberta Hotspots: <http://www.camacdonald.com/birding/caalberta.htm>

Within Camrose

- Stoney Creek Valley: Flowing through the city from north to south, Stoney Creek (also called Camrose Creek on many maps) offers a range of habitats, multiple access points, and year-round trails. A description and map of the Camrose Urban parks system can be found at: <http://www.camrose.com/leisure/parks.htm>. As you walk and drive around the city, watch for Red Fox, Mule Deer, Merlins, and large flocks of Waxwings (Bohemian in winter, Cedar in spring/summer). Even a Badger has been spotted in recent years.

- Bullrush Park: Located off of 50 Avenue, near 50 Street. Good walking and biking trails. Lots of willow and bulrush along Stoney Creek. Can see bats in evening, many songbirds, beavers, herons, and soras.
- Mirror Lake: Can access the paved walking and biking trails at many points in the centre of the city. The lake has beaver and muskrat, Trumpeter Swans (free-swimming in spring to fall, but captive in winter), and a wealth of waterfowl and waterbirds (occasional cormorants). A description of the Camrose Swan program can be found at <http://www.camrose.com/leisure/parks.htm>
- Jubilee Park: Located just south of the hospital off of 52 Street. Good paved walking and biking trails along Stoney Creek
- Stoney Creek Park: Includes the entire area south of 44 Avenue to Camrose Drive. Good paved and unpaved walking and biking trails. Highlights include spring and summer flowers, fall colors, waterfowl, beaver activity, songbirds, and deer. Check out the Purple Martin nesting boxes near the Four Seasons Outdoor Centre. More about the Purple Martin project at: <http://www.camrose.com/leisure/cwgsppmp.htm>
- Southern part of Stoney Creek: Includes area south of Camrose Drive. The winter cross-country ski trails make great hiking and mountain biking trails in the summer. Much beaver activity found throughout. Lots of songbird, Red-tailed Hawk, and Great-horned Owl activity.
- Sewage Lagoons: Located south of Camrose. Head south on 50 Street from Camrose Drive for 1.5 miles. Some lagoons visible from the road host many geese, ducks, and swans in the spring and fall. Check the rocky shorelines for shorebirds.
- Storm Sewer (East Industrial Holding Pond): This newly-constructed holding pond can be accessed by traveling east on 48 Avenue to the east side of the tracks. Turn south on 41 Street, and then east on 44 Avenue. The road is a little rough, but is an easy walk. Lots of waterfowl in the pond, sparrows in the adjacent grasslands, and many songbirds singing from the nearby aspen forest.
- Camrose Railway Station and Park: This unique museum and park is located at the corner of 47 Avenue and 44 Street. It has a flower garden, nest boxes, xeriscaping, and other attractions for birds and wildlife.

Northwest of Camrose

- Lyseng Reservoir: Located 5 miles north of Camrose on Highway 833, then 2.5 miles west on Twp Rd 480. Stop on the north side of the road, near an interpretive sign introducing the main birds present. Lots of waterfowl, shorebirds, and amphibians.
- Duggan Ponds: On Highway 13, head west ½ mile of 73 Street, then north on Rge Rd 204 for 3.5 miles. The ponds are often best viewed from the car to avoid disturbing the waterfowl nearby. Great for waterfowl (including migrating swans) and other waterbirds (including Marsh Wrens and Sora).
- Breton Pond: Located on the north side of Highway 13, just 1 mile west of 73 Street. Many geese, ducks, and swans group here while on migration. Many stay to nest. Black-necked Stilts have been sighted here.
- Olson's Woods: From 48 Ave in Camrose, travel north on 68 street to Twp Rd 472, and then 1 km west. The Legal description is SE 16-47-20-W4. Lots of forest songbirds (summer breeders: Northern Oriole, Yellow Warbler, Cedar Waxwing), and winter residents (Black-

capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, woodpeckers, and Great-horned Owl).

- Hutterite Ponds: Located 5 miles north of Camrose along Highway 833. Depending on water levels, these ponds offer great shorebird watching. Lots of waterfowl in the lakes. Check nearby fields and shorelines for shorebird activity (including Black-necked Stilts and Hudsonian Godwits).
- Spoklie Lake: Travel north of Camrose on Hwy 833 for 11 miles, then west on Hwy 617 for 5.5 miles. The lake attracts abundant waterfowl and shorebirds.
- Trowel Lake: Travel north on Hwy 21. About 1 mile north of the Armena junction, turn west on Hwy 616 for 5.5 miles. Then travel north on Rge Rd 221 for 2 miles. The lake is next to the road. This saline lake is great for grebes.
- Middlestadt Wetland: Located 3 miles west of Hay Lakes and then 1.5 miles south on Rge Rd 222. Good for shorebirds.
- Miquelon Lake Provincial Park: Located 11 miles north along Highway 833, then west on Highway 617 for 3 miles, then north on Highway 623 for 3 miles. Access to the park is to the north. Along the lake, one can see lots of waterfowl and gulls (including significant island of nesting colonies of California and Ring-billed Gulls). The hiking trails will offer many chances to hear and see songbirds, and to take you beside beaver-managed wetlands. Moose and deer throughout the park. At least 4 species of owls present. Lots of frogs and a well-studied population of plains and red-sided garter snakes. Good examples of landforms representative of the Cooking Lake Moraine.
 - <http://www.srd.gov.ab.ca/fishwildlife/viewingguide/edmonton/edmomlpp.aspx>
 - http://gateway.cd.gov.ab.ca/pubsandmedia/Miquelon_web.pdf
- Ministik Bird Sanctuary: Take Highway 833 north from Camrose for 11 miles, take a jog 1 mile east at the T intersection, and then continue north on Highway 833 again. Head west on Twp Rd 502 to the parking lot at the edge of the Sanctuary. The Sanctuary has aspen forest and wetlands habitats for many species.
- Telegraph Park, Hay Lakes: Take Highway 21 north to Hay Lakes, then east on Highway 617 just before the town, where you'll find the campground (south side of Highway 617) and pond with many waterfowl species and Black-crowned Night-herons.
- Bittern Lake: Located 7.5 miles west of Camrose, access is easy on the northwest corner of the Town of Bittern Lake. Trails take hikers through the aspen forest, through prairie and shrub groves, and to the edge of the lake. Can also access the lake along the west side, following Rge Rd 222 (especially Ritter DU Wetland on west side). Lots of songbirds, shorebirds, waterfowls, and raptors.
- Bittern Lake Sloughs: Located just ½ mi west of Bittern Lake along Highway 13. Many shorebirds, including American Avocets, visible along these sloughs if shoreline is exposed.
- Coal Lake: Located 14.5 miles west of Camrose along Highway 13. Access is at the bottom of the valley, heading north on Highway 822 for about 1 mile. One can see swans, pelicans, and other waterbirds along the lake. One can also access the lake from the west side.
- Big Hay Lake: Travel north on Highway 21. Just past Armena, turn west on Highway 616. Travel for about 7.5 miles, then turn right on Rge Rd 223 for 1.5-2 miles when you reach the lake. Lots of waterfowl.
- Joseph Lake: Take Highway 623 west of Miquelon Lake Provincial Park. Turn right on Rge Rd 221 for about 3 miles to Joseph Lake. Drive or walk onto a pump jack service road to access the lake. Alternatively, to go to the Joseph Lake campground, go 2 miles north on Rge

Rd 221, and then go east on Twp Rd 500 for 1 mile. Joseph Lake has abundant shorebirds, waterfowl, pelicans, cormorants, and the chance for Bald Eagles.

Southwest of Camrose

- Ross's Flats: Located 5 miles south of Highway 13 on Highway 21. The Waskehegan trail proceeds to the east and west along the Battle River. Many wildflowers. Good white spruce habitat on south side. Abundant mushrooms in September. Waterfowl along the river.
- Battle River: At high water, one can canoe several stretches of the Battle River. Possible access points include Rge Rd 220 (South Bittern Lake Road), Rge Rd 214 (Bittern Lake Rosenroll Cemetery Road), Highway 21 (Ross's Flats), and the Aberhart Bridge (where Rge Rd 202 crosses and becomes Twp Rd 260). The river meanders greatly, so budget lots of time. Lots of waterfowl and Great Blue Herons.
- Little Beaver Lake: Located 15-18 miles south of Highway 13 on Highway 21. At 15 miles, you can access the west side of the lake via Little Beaver Road. At 17 miles, you can access the east side via Ferintosh. At 18 miles, you can access the south side of the lake along Twp Rd 440. Lots of waterfowl on the lake and songbirds along the riparian vegetation and aspen forests.
- Pelican Point on Buffalo Lake: Access from either Highway 21 or Highway 56. From Highway 21, at Bashaw, take Highway 53 east for 6 miles, then south on Pelican Point Road (Rge Rd 204) for 4 miles to a campground, walking trails, and beach. From Highway 56, travel west on Highway 56 for 6 miles, then south on Pelican Point Road (see above). Lots of waterfowl. Songbirds along trail.
- Red Deer Lake: Travel south on Highway 21 to Highway 611. Turn west for 6 miles, then south on Rge Rd 222 for about 4 miles to a campground. There are shorebirds and waterfowl on the lake and songbirds in the aspen forests.
- Chickadee Trail: Access from Highway 13 via Gwynne (east access point near school). Pass through the town heading west, over the creek, and toward the train tracks. Turn left onto a gravel road toward the ski hill. Park at a small parking lot opposite of the ski hill. Walk up the steep cutline. When you are about 10 m from the gravel road, you'll see the trail begin toward your right (sign sometimes visible). The trail extends for several km. With some bird seed in your hand, you can attract Black-capped Chickadees to land (and occasional White-breasted Nuthatch). Watch for woodpeckers, other songbirds, and porcupine.

Southeast of Camrose

- Driedmeat Lake: Take Highway 13 east of Camrose for about 1 mile, then take Driedmeat Lake Road south for 8 miles. From Tillicum Beach, you can see many waterfowl, along with Double-Crested Cormorants and White Pelicans. Songbirds in the aspen forests. Canoeing is possible on the lake.
- Battle River and Highway 56: Located where the Battle River exits Driedmeat Lake and cross Highway 56. Lots of waterfowl.
- Battle River: Canoeing is possible through this area of aspen parkland and badlands. Access points include Highway 56, Rge Rd 184, and Highway 854. Budget lots of time to travel through the meanders.

- Ferry Point: Travel south from Highway 13 on Rge Rd 184 for about 13.5 miles. Good access to the riparian area from the campground.
- Camrose and District Fish and Game Association Pond – Pleasure Island: Located about 2 miles east of Camrose on Highway 13, then south on Rge Rd 194 for ½ mile. A short gravel road takes you to a pond with walking trails and picnic area. Waterfowl on the pond, songbirds and other prairie birds along the riparian vegetation and into the fields.

Northeast of Camrose

- Black Nugget: From Camrose, head east on Highway 26, then north on Highway 834. This old coal mining area has been transformed into a nice campground with lots of waterfowl. Look for songbirds in the trees and shrubs along the shore and shorebirds along the shore and in the fields.
- Beaverhill Lake: Travel east from Tofield along Rowan's Route and follow the signs or the maps on the websites below. Songbirds in the forest, shorebirds along the shore, and abundant waterfowl in the lake. Variable lake levels. See the following websites:
 - <http://www.srd.gov.ab.ca/fishwildlife/viewingguide/edmonton/edmobna.aspx>
 - http://www.beaverhillbirds.com/docs/bbo_trailmap.pdf
 - <http://www.beaverhillbirds.com/directions.php>
- Marten Project: Travel north of Camrose for 7 miles on Hwy 833. Turn west on Twp Rd 482 for 1 miles, then north on Rge Rd 203 for 1.25 miles. Walk or drive on the lease road to the west. Good for waterfowl and shorebirds.

Further Away from Camrose (up to 1 hour)

- Cooking Lake - Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area: From Camrose, drive north on Highway 833 to Highway 14. Then west on Highway 14, then north through Lindbrook and North Cooking Lake. A visitor centre on the west side of the reserve provides access to many trails. Great hiking through aspen forests and wetlands. More information at: <http://gateway.cd.gov.ab.ca/siteinformation.aspx?id=23>
- Elk Island National Park: A beautiful setting with many trails and roadside access points. Some conifer stands in the north have many northern species (eg. Boreal Chickadee). Many nesting species not normally found elsewhere. Most dense concentration of ungulates in North America. From Camrose, drive east on Highway 26, then north on Highway 83r, through Tofield to Highway 16, then east to the Park. More information at:
 - <http://www.srd.gov.ab.ca/fishwildlife/viewingguide/edmonton/edmoeinp.aspx>
 - http://www.pc.gc.ca/pn-np/ab/elkisland/index_E.asp
- Big Knife Provincial Park: Drive about 33 km Southeast of Camrose on Highway 13, then just east of Daysland, turn south on Highway 855 (following the two small jogs to the east). Just past the Battle River, turn west into the Park. Located where the Big Knife Creek and Battle River valleys join, there are diverse habitats: riparian, spruce, aspen, shrub, badland, and prairie. Lots of songbirds in the forests, waterfowl on the lake and nearby cooling pond of the coal plant (even in winter). Campground available (50 sites). More information at: <http://gateway.cd.gov.ab.ca/siteinformation.asp?id=11>
- Rochon Sands Provincial Park: Drive southeast of Camrose on Highway 13, then south on Highway 56 to Highway 601 (north of Stettler). Drive west and then north to access the park.

Beautiful beach on the southern shore of Buffalo Lake, with aspen forests all around. Many waterfowl. More information at: <http://gateway.cd.gov.ab.ca/siteinformation.asp?id=116>

- Boss Hill: Drive south of Camrose on Highway 13, then Highway 56 to an access road just south of Highway 53. Take this windy, gravel access road into the Boss Hill site on the northeast shore of Buffalo Lake. Boss Hill (with an important archeological site) is to the south, but on private property. Great waterfowl viewing to the lake, and songbirds in the forest around the campground.
- Ellis Bird Farm: A nice oasis in the prairie/parkland zone. Focused on conserving cavity-nesting birds like Mountain Bluebirds, Purple Martins, Tree Swallows, and more. More information at: <http://www.ellisbirdfarm.ab.ca/>
- J.J. Collett Natural Area: A great natural area for exploring habitat edges. Lots of wildflowers and songbirds. Accessed off Highway 2A south of Wetaskiwin, turning through Morningside, and then south. Follow the signs from there. More information at: <http://gateway.cd.gov.ab.ca/siteinformation.aspx?id=448>
- Telford Lake: Found within Leduc. Part of William F. Lede Regional Park, ample walking paths give you opportunity to see waterfowl on the lake.