



Welcome to the Shaw Wilderness Park



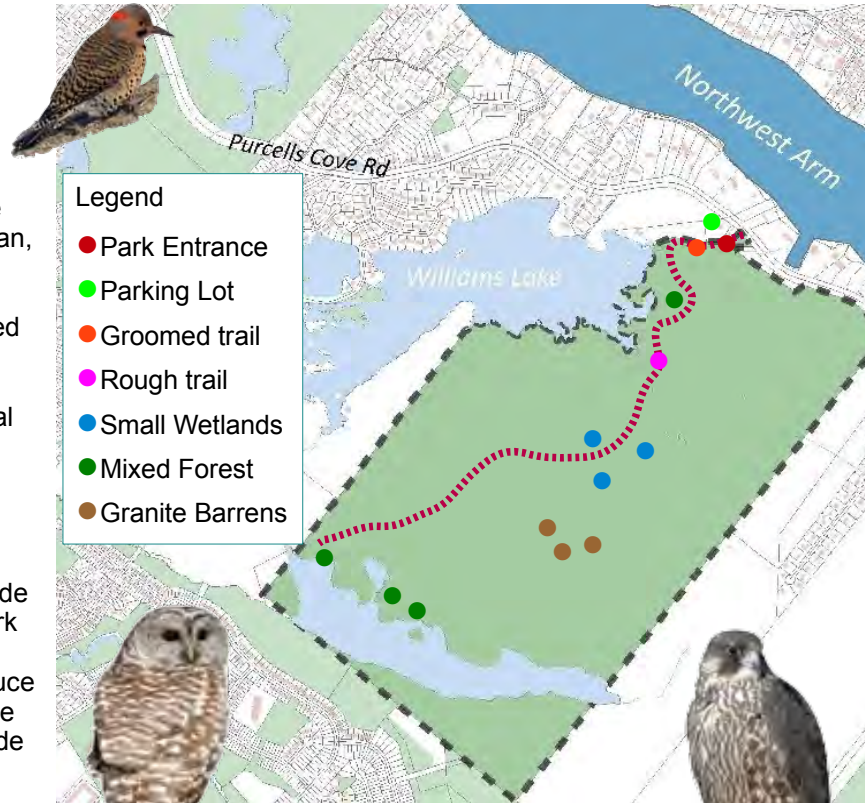
The Shaw Wilderness Park (SWP) is a wonderful natural landscape to explore, and it's right here in Halifax's backyard.

Lumps, bumps and boulders

The visible history of the area began 20,000 years ago when glaciers from the last ice age scraped most of the land clean, leaving fascinating landforms behind. A walk in the park will take you by small wetlands, past narrow gullies full of jagged rock falls, over exposed granite 'whalebacks', and by giant boulders left behind in the glaciers' wake, called glacial erratics.

The arrival of humans

The first people to arrive were groups of Mi'kmaq who called the area Wabanaki, "land of the sunrise". Everything they made for daily life came from nature – birch bark canoes, baskets and shelters, wooden arrows, traps and cradleboards, and spruce root "rope" to stitch things together. In the 1700s European settlers arrived and made the area a base for quarrying rock, harvesting ice and milling goods. The remains of their rock walls and imported stones may still be seen in places. A WWII ruin remains in the park to this day.



Barred Owl



Peregrine Falcon

Find out more

SWP is located at 2379 Purcells Cove Road
Please visit us at WilliamsLakeCC.org
Additional information is at BacklandsCoalition.ca

Many hands make light work

Produced with funding from HRM Community Grants Program
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John Brett (Barred Owl) and Philip Howard (Belted Kingfisher)

Nature on the wing

But the most fascinating aspect of the park is its current inhabitants, and none are more varied and specialized than the birds. The SWP is part of the Purcells Cove Backlands, home base for at least 95 species that nest, hunt, forage and dive in the waters, woods, meadows and wetlands. Each species of bird is finely adapted to survive in the niches that nature provides. They can be spotted on the wing, tending nests, or foraging for food, and they can often be heard calling even when they can't be seen. A walk through SWP is an opportunity to witness nature in action.

One park – many microhabitats

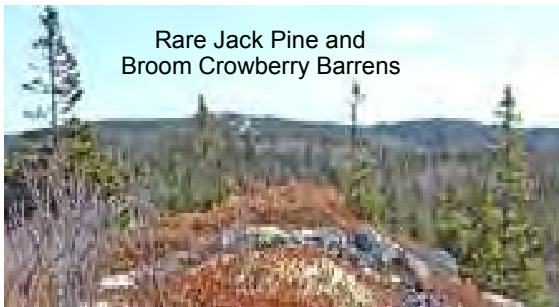
The rough single trail is marked with blazes on trees, and will take you past wooded areas, by marshy wetlands, uphill to high granite barrens with wonderful views, and to the edge of lakes, where waterbirds may be spotted. Mixed forests occur near Colpitt and Williams Lake. Each area has its own bird species that favour that location.

Knowing where to look & what to look for

Turn over this guide to meet a few of the avian inhabitants, and find out where they can best be spotted.

Getting Around

We hope you enjoy exploring the park. Watch out for tripping hazards and follow this simple rule: take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints.



Rare Jack Pine and Broom Crowberry Barrens



Downy Woodpecker



American Black Duck

A fascinating mix of history, geology and wildlife right on your doorstep

A Beginners Guide to Bird Watching in the Shaw Wilderness Park



Bird Species found in Wetlands, Forest, Lakes and High Granite Barrens