

Big Grass Marsh

Autumn sunsets on the prairies offer unmatched beauty. The setting sun, combined with the dust of harvest, produces a dazzling array of colours. Combine those red-hues of a brilliant prairie sunset with the honking and squawking of thousands of geese as they swirl into the marsh, and you have a spectacle that will never leave your memory. Big Grass Marsh is the place to spend an autumn evening. This world-class wetland is one of the most important waterfowl staging areas on the continent.

Big Grass Marsh was the first restoration projects carried out in Canada by Ducks Unlimited in 1938. Big Grass Marsh is comprised of Jackfish Lake and Chandler Lake. It is globally significant based upon the numbers of Snow Geese, waterfowl, and nesting Franklin's Gulls (5,000 birds). During the spring and fall migrations, as many as 200,000 Snow Geese, 79,000 ducks, and 6,500 Sandhill Cranes have been seen.

An all-weather road bisects the marsh from east to west, and a good sampling of waterfowl and marsh life can be seen from various points along the way including Ruddy Ducks, American Bitterns, and marsh hawks. There are many other access points on all sides of the marsh, some are more accessible than others, but they can provide unequalled wildlife viewing opportunities for those who prefer to get off the beaten path.



American Bittern



Ruddy Duck



Great Blue Heron



Western Grebe

Big Point

Part of Lake Manitoba's Quiet Beauty

Big Point lies on the west side of Lake Manitoba and, as the name implies, extends far out into the lake. Starting in the late 1800's the area was homesteaded by a predominantly Icelandic community. The shoreline is characterized by tumbled rocks and boulders with intermittent stretches of sandy beach.

The extremity of the point is easily accessible by an all weather road running 11 km east out of Langruth. Once at Big Point the shoreline can be traversed on foot for some distance (except in years of unusually high water).

Species seen at Big Point include: American White Pelicans (often), Ring-billed Gulls, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Herons, and the American Bittern.

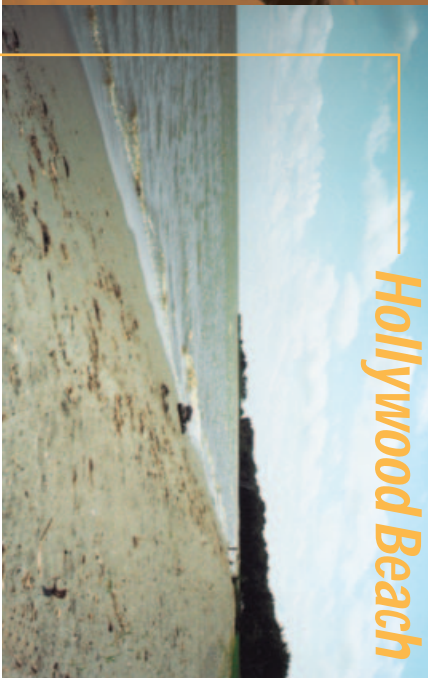
Lake Manitoba is one of the largest fresh water lakes in the world. In winter, commercial fishers travel by bombardier across the lake to set their nets to catch pickerel and perch. With the aid of binoculars, it is sometimes possible to see coyotes out on the ice scavenging rough fish.

In summer, as you face the open water with the breeze in your face, you can hear the gulls screech, and perhaps see a flock of American White Pelicans drift by in formation. Many shorebirds make their home among the pebbles of the rocky shoreline. In the spring, the nearby marshy ecosystems are home to breeding colonies of Western Grebes.



American White Pelican

Hollywood Beach



Hollywood Beach is located on the west shore of Lake Manitoba and North of Big Point. The beach follows a broad shallow bay and provides ample viewing opportunities for birdwatching, both along the shore and within the adjacent marsh (from the road or by canoe).

Unserviced, free camping spots are readily available. Access to the Beach is provided by a good summer road. The fall season provides particularly good birdwatching opportunities as large numbers of migratory birds gather along the beach.

Species seen at Hollywood Beach include: American White Pelican (often), Ring-billed Gull, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Yellow-headed Blackbird and the American Bittern. Shorebirds and Piping Plovers have used Hollywood



Yellow-headed Blackbird



Ring-billed Gull

Beach during migration and nesting seasons. Piping Plovers are listed as an endangered species in Manitoba and numbers of Piping Plovers have declined from 100 pairs in the late 1980s to less than 20 pairs. The Piping Plover is a small, thrush-sized bird that blends well into its setting. It is primarily the colour of dry sand, but has distinctive black markings (a black collar or breastband, a black band above the white forehead, and a partially black tail), a white rump and bright orange legs.

Piping Plovers arrive on their breeding grounds in Canada in late April or May. Clutches usually contain four eggs and incubate for 27 days. By mid-July the female abandons the family, leaving the male to care for the young until they can fly independently, usually 30-35 days after hatching.

As part of the IBA Community Conservation Plan, the "Rocking Project" saw large rocks placed along Hollywood Beach in 2001 to prevent vehicles from damaging Piping Plover nesting habitat.



Piping Plover



Red-winged Blackbird

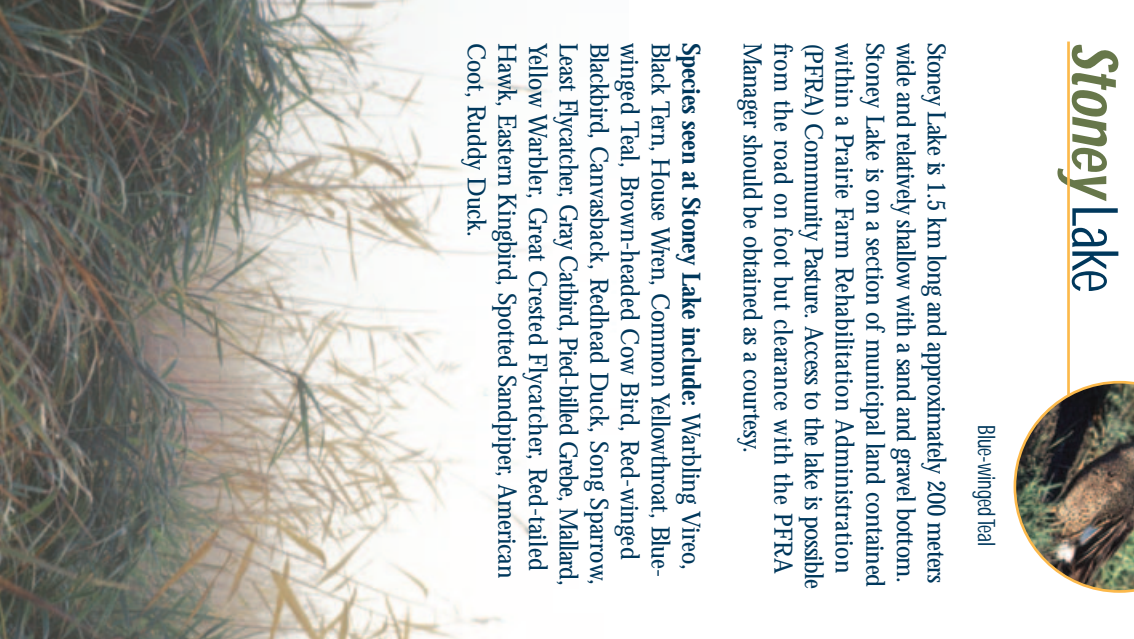


Blue-winged Teal

Stoney Lake

Stoney Lake is 1.5 km long and approximately 200 meters wide and relatively shallow with a sand and gravel bottom. Stoney Lake is on a section of municipal land contained within a Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) Community Pasture. Access to the lake is possible from the road on foot but clearance with the PFRA Manager should be obtained as a courtesy.

Species seen at Stoney Lake include: Warbling Vireo, Black Tern, House Wren, Common Yellowthroat, Blue-winged Teal, Brown-headed Cow Bird, Red-winged Blackbird, Canvasback, Redhead Duck, Song Sparrow, Least Flycatcher, Gray Catbird, Pied-billed Grebe, Mallard, Yellow Warbler, Great Crested Flycatcher, Red-tailed Hawk, Eastern Kingbird, Spotted Sandpiper, American Coot, Ruddy Duck.



How to find Birding Areas...

Hollywood Beach and the nearby town of Langruth are an easy two hour drive from Winnipeg or Brandon. Go six miles north of Langruth to Road 17, then drive five miles east to Hollywood Beach.

Big Point From Langruth follow the signs and drive seven miles east to Lake Manitoba.

Big Grass Marsh Take Hwy. 50 to Langruth, then go eight miles west on Provincial Road 265 to take you into the heart of Big Grass Marsh.

Stoney Lake is located on the south side of Provincial road #265 approximately 4 miles west of Langruth.

For more information on birding in the Langruth area please contact:

Lakeview Initiatives
Community Development Corporation
Box 129 R0H 0N0
Langruth, Manitoba

Phone: 204-445-2243
Fax: 204-445-2162
Email: tmlakeview@mts.net

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Find Out More About IBA

www.manitobanature.ca



The Canadian Important Bird Areas Program (IBA) was established by the Canadian Birdlife Partners, the Canadian Nature Federation and Bird Studies Canada, as part of an international effort to identify and conserve sites important to all bird species worldwide. In Manitoba, the IBA program is being delivered by the Manitoba Naturalists Society.

Some materials were taken from "Scenic Secrets of Manitoba" by Bill Stilwell (Prairie Mountain Publishers.)



American Avocet

"Bird Watching Capital of Manitoba"

Langruth

- RM of Lakeview Important Bird Area

Comprised of **4** significant bird habitats:

- 1 Big Grass Marsh**
Globally significant for Snow Geese and Waterfowl.
- 2 Hollywood Beach**
Significant for Piping Plovers and Shorebirds.
- 3 Stoney Lake**
Significant for Waterfowl.
- 4 Big Point**
Significant for Colonial Waterbirds and Shorebirds.

www.birdsoflakeview.ca