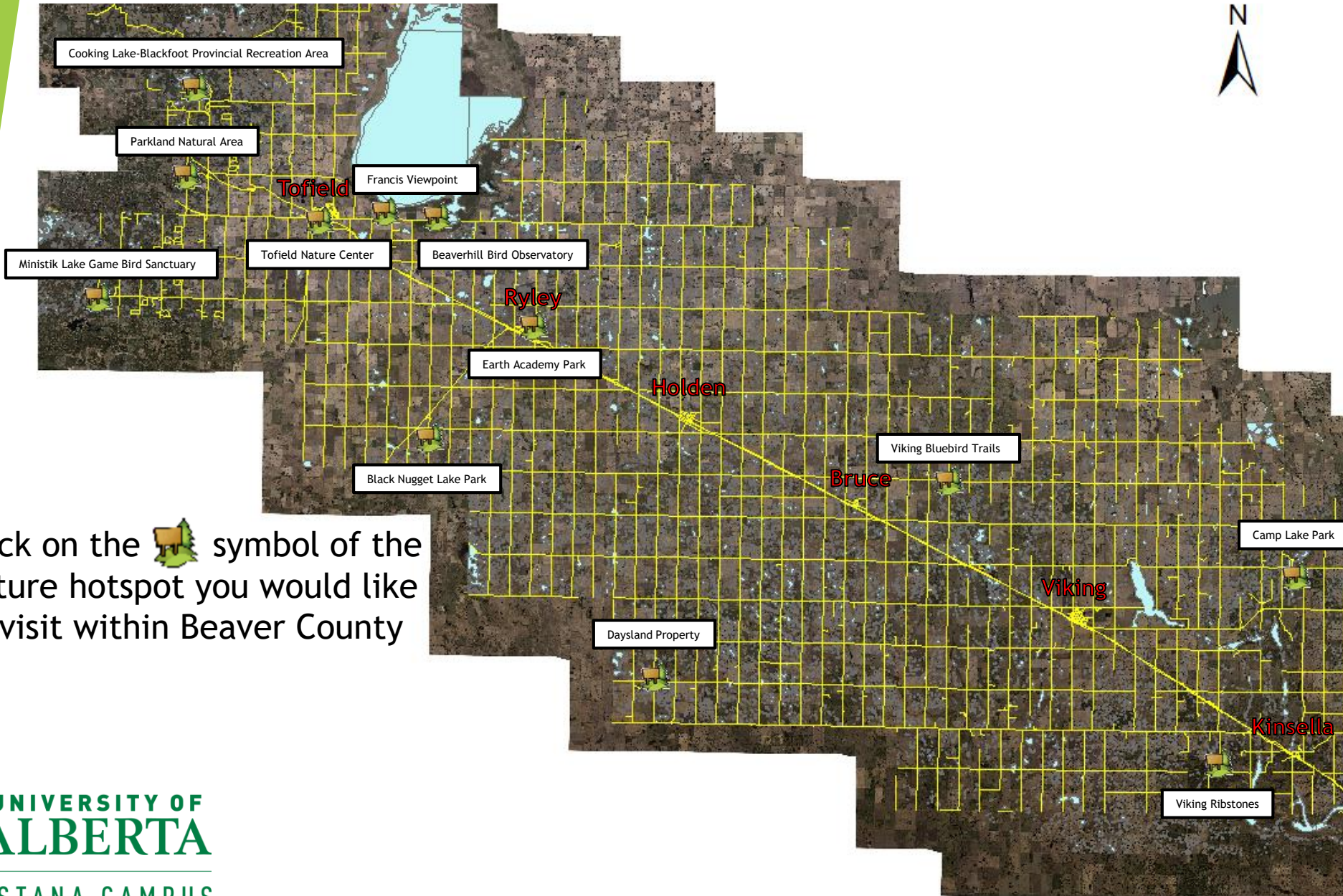



# Nature Hotspots of Beaver County



For Tips and Etiquette of Nature Viewing Click "i" Above

Click on the  symbol of the nature hotspot you would like to visit within Beaver County

# Beaverhill Bird Observatory

The Beaverhill Bird Observatory was established in 1984 and is the second oldest observatory for migration monitoring in Canada. The observatory possesses long-term datasets for the purpose of analyzing population trends, migration routes, breeding success, and survivorship of avian species. The observatory is located on the edge of Beaverhill Lake, which was designated as a RASMAR in 1987. Beaverhill Lake has been recognized as an Important Bird Area with the site boasting over 270 species, 145 which breed locally. Just a short walk from the laboratory one can commonly see or hear white-tailed deer, tree swallows, yellow warblers, house wrens, yellow-headed blackbirds, red-winged blackbirds, sora rails, and plains garter snakes.

For more information and directions visit: <http://beaverhillbirds.com/>



Return  
to map

# Black Nugget Lake Park

Black Nugget Lake Park contains a campground of well-treed sites surrounding a human-made lake created from an old coal mine. At this site one can fish for trout from the stocked lake, use non-powered boats, canoes, and kayaks, and enjoy seeing and hearing a variety of waterfowl and songbirds. A single hiking trail wraps around the east side of the lake and offers a beautiful view of the waterbody. One can view American white pelicans, red-winged blackbirds, lesser scaups, blue-winged teals, yellow warblers, and white-tailed deer on the property.

For more information and directions visit:

<http://www.beaver.ab.ca/tourism/campgrounds>



# Cooking Lake-Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area

The Cooking Lake-Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area is nestled within the Cooking Lake Moraine. This site provides opportunities for grazing, skiing, horseback riding, hiking, and biking. With 3 different staging areas, one can tailor their day accordingly. As you wander the recreation area, be on the lookout for white-tailed deer, coyotes, beavers, and a variety of snakes and amphibians. One may also view red-necked grebes and a diversity of songbirds.

For more information on access, activities, and trails visit:  
<https://www.albertaparks.ca/parks/central/cooking-lake-blackfoot/>



# Parkland Natural Area

The Parkland Natural Area, located west of Tofield, offers a pristine example of parkland habitat. With multiple wetlands and plenty of trees, visitors can expect to see moose, white-tailed deer, and a variety of waterfowl and songbirds. The site has one semi-groomed trail that cuts west into the property; signs are visible at the starting point. Access is best achieved by travelling north on range road 201 off of highway 14 West.

For more information visit:

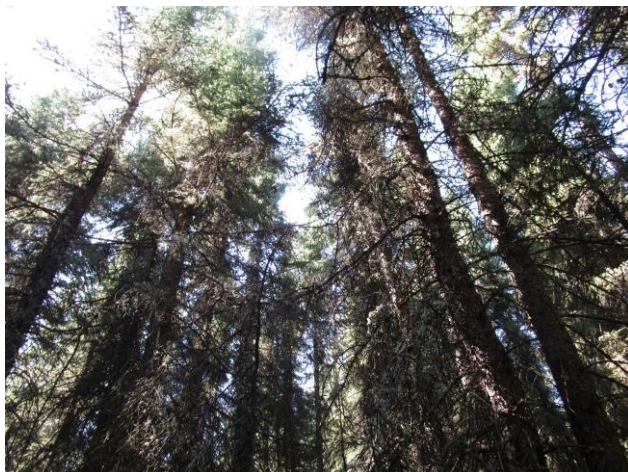
<http://www.albertaparks.ca/parks/central/parkland/>



# Ministik Lake Game Bird Sanctuary

The Ministik Lake Game Bird Sanctuary, established in 1911, was the first bird sanctuary within Alberta. The sanctuary is home to a large variety of wildlife on an enormous 7,349 hectare area. The sanctuary hosts many species of songbirds and waterfowl, in addition to deer, moose, coyotes, and rabbits. The area contains informal old trails and one marked formal trail known as “Waskahegan Trail.” Activities welcomed include horseback riding, snowmobiling, and hiking. To access the sanctuary travel west on Township 510 between Range Roads 205 and 212.

Trail map and directions: <http://www.tri-county.ab.ca/trail-maps>



# Earth Academy Park - Ryley

Earth Academy Park is located at the north end of Ryley, and offers a collection of groomed trails, along with picnic tables and an outhouse. Cedar waxwings commonly occupy the park, as well as yellow-bellied sapsuckers. Be sure to be on the lookout for other birds visiting this park.

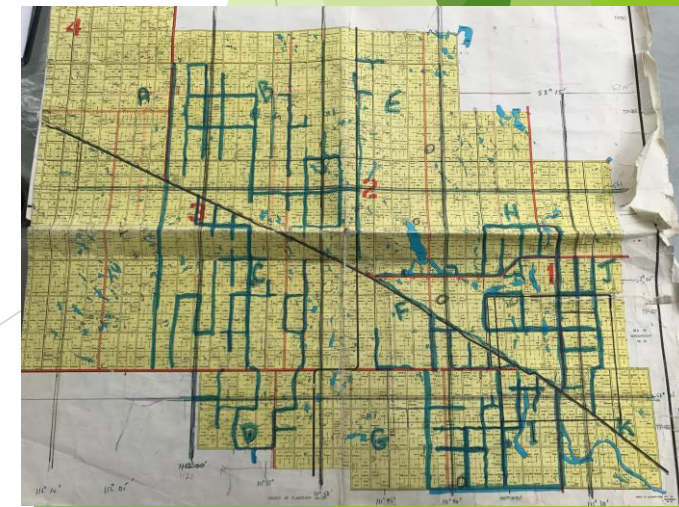


# Viking Bluebird Trails

The summer of 2017 marked the 41<sup>st</sup> year that the Viking Bluebird Trail had nest boxes available for breeding mountain bluebirds. Starting with just 200 nest boxes in 1977, the trail now boasts 1215 boxes. The trail itself is over 250 miles of country roads, offering one of the most dense concentrations of mountain bluebirds in the province. This impressive feat of environmental stewardship is led by Pres Winter of Viking (pictured right). Pres has devoted countless hours to support conservation of this avian species. While the entire trail system is extensive and complex, Pres has labeled 3 easy-to-navigate trails to provide opportunities for the public to see one of the most colourful birds in central Alberta. For more information on these trails please visit the next page.



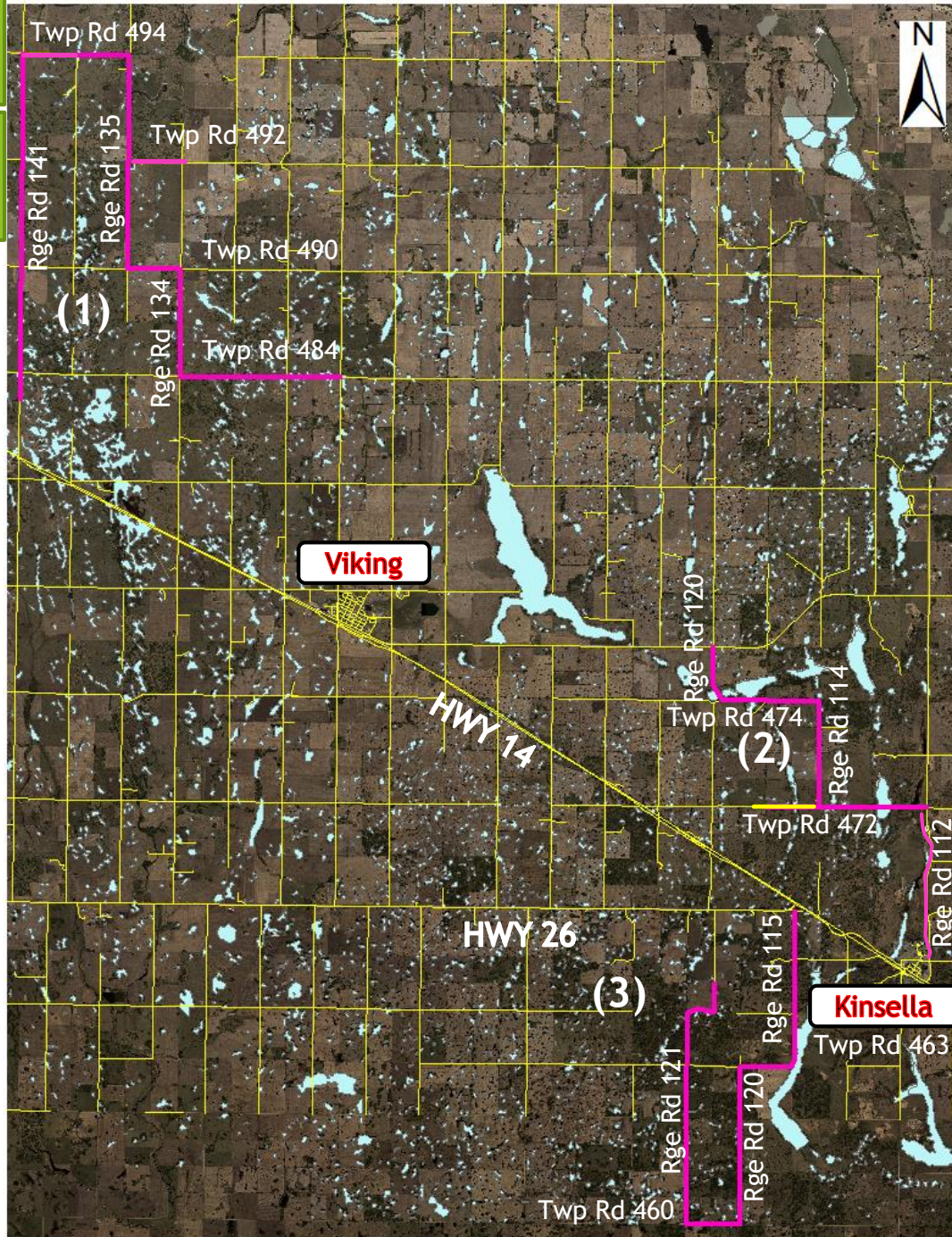
Interested in volunteering or a guided tour?  
Click here for more information!





[Return to map](#)

[Return to previous page](#)



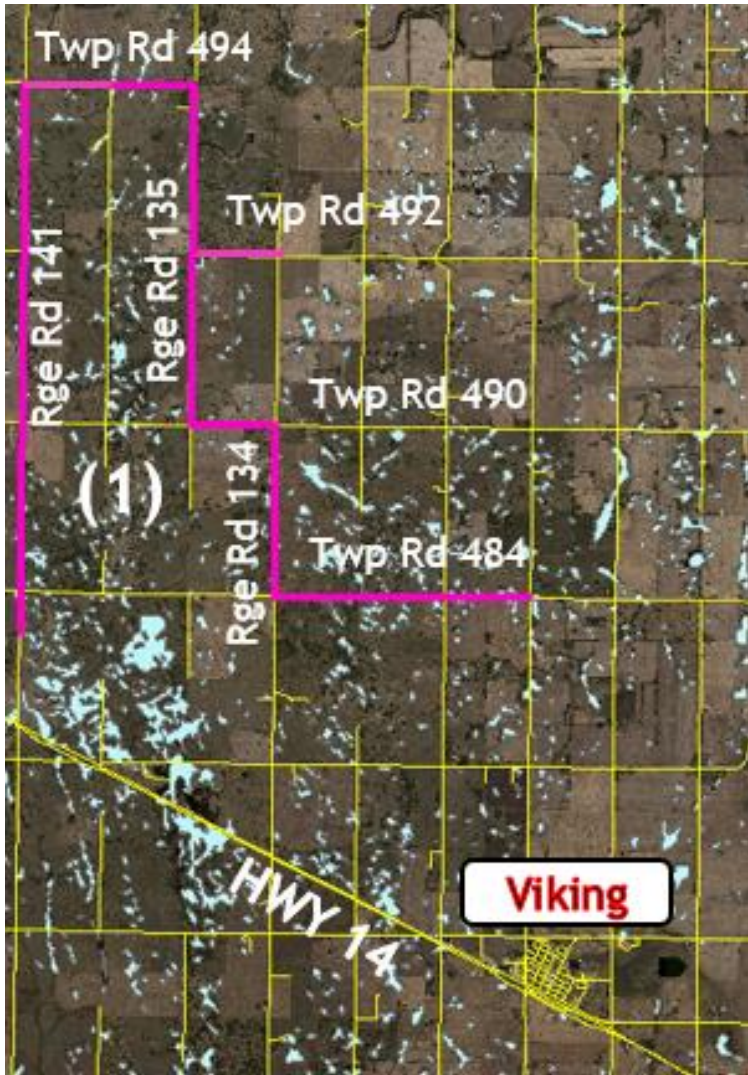
1) Torlea Road Bluebird Trail

2) The Hunter Trail

3) The Ribstone Trail

Return  
to main  
map

Return to  
bluebird  
map



### 1) Torlea Road North Trail

Travelling from the west on highway 14 you will turn north on the Torlea Road (Range Road 141), which is halfway between Bruce and Viking. The first nest box is about 1 mile north and is box number 705, which is on the east side of the road. Continue north for 6.5 miles, turn east on Township Road 494 and continue for 2 miles to Range Road 135 where the trail turns south for 2 miles. Turn east on Township Road 492 for 1 mile. The boxes on this 1 mile stretch are usually occupied 60-70% with mountain bluebirds. Now turn around and go back west for 1 mile back to Range Road 135 and travel south for 2 miles. Turn east on Township 490 and then turn south on Range Road 134 after 1 mile. Continue on Range Road 134 for 2 miles. From here turn east on to Township Road 484 for 3 miles where you will meet highway 36. The town of Viking is 4 miles south on highway 36.

Return  
to main  
map

Return to  
bluebird  
map



## 2) The Hunter Trail

In 2017 the nest boxes on this trail were 61% occupied by mountain bluebirds. Travel east from Viking for 6 miles on highway 619 and turn south on to Range Road 120. Go south for 1 mile and turn east on Township Road 474. The trail begins here. Continue driving east for 2 miles where the road turns south and becomes Range Road 114. Go south for 2 miles and then turn east for 2 miles. Turn south on to Range Road 112, travel south for 3 miles. You are now at the entrance road into the hamlet of Kinsella. For more bluebird watching, turn east here and follow this “ridge road” which travels from southwest to northeast of a section of land. It is a high road and the view is beautiful in all directions and eventually comes out on Township Road 470. Go a short distance east and turn south on to Range Road 111. Now go south for 2 and a half miles where the trail ends at highway 14. Turn right (west) to return to Kinsella.

Return  
to main  
map

Return to  
bluebird  
map



### 3) The Ribstone Trail

This has been one of our best trails over the past years with 50-70% of the nest boxes being occupied by mountain bluebirds.

From Kinsella travel west for just over 2 miles on highway 14 and turn left on highway 615 (Highway 26) towards Camrose. Within 200 meters turn left. The trail begins Range Road 115 and Township 470.

From Viking travel 7-8 miles east on highway 14 towards Kinsella and then turns back towards Camrose on highway 615 (Highway 26) and once again turn left within 200 meters.

From Camrose travel east on highway 26 to just before where this highway meets highway 14. Turn right at Range Road 115 and Township Road 470.

Begin this trail by travelling south for 3 miles the nest boxes are on the west side of the road. After passing nest box 250 the trail turns west for 1 mile. Now turn south on Range Road 120 and proceed for 3 miles where you will turn west on Township Road 460, which is the road that divides the County of Beaver from the County of Flagstaff. Continue west for 1 mile then turn north on Range Road 121 and travel for 4 miles up to Township Road 464 where the road turns back east for half a mile and then turns back north for a quarter mile where the ribstone trail ends at nestbox 356.

# Viking Ribstones

The Viking Ribstones are 2 large boulders that were carved into the form of an animal's ribcage. Ribstones are very rare within the province with only 9 being discovered so far. First Nations peoples historically relied heavily on the buffalo and these Ribstone Shrines served as a site to express gratitude and prayers to Old Man Buffalo, who was the spiritual protector of the buffalo herds. At this important spiritual site, offerings of tobacco, prayer cloths, and coins are still left. While visiting this site, be on the lookout for a variety of song birds in the bordering trees and thirteen-lined ground squirrels which occupy the hillside.

For more information and directions visit:

<http://townofviking.ca/visitors/things-to-do-points-of-interest/182-local-history-and-culture/536-viking-ribstones>



Return  
to map

# Tofield Nature Center

The Tofield Nature Center is located on the southern outskirts of town and shares a parking lot with the Country Boyz gas station. This facility offers a hands-on experience with natural artifacts and provides education about the natural history and wildlife of the area. Exhibits contain birds, fish, semi-aquatic mammals, terrestrial mammals, and even a variety of insects.



# Natures Marsh

Located just behind the Tofield Nature Center is Nature's Marsh, a wetland with self-guided trails that allow visitors to see and interact with wetland plants and wildlife. Around this wetland, one can see an abundance of cattails and red-winged blackbirds along the trails and a boardwalk.



# Francis Viewpoint

Francis Viewpoint is located just east of Tofield between the town and the Beaverhill Bird Observatory. The displays provide an impressive amount of information about the birds around this viewpoint. The trail that leads out to the blind is lined with bird feeders and nest boxes hosting multiple species. Commonly seen around this area are mountain bluebirds, tree swallows, barn swallows, thirteen-lined ground squirrels, and a variety of sparrows. From Tofield head east down Highway 626 after passing the intersection for Highway 834 travel approximately 3 kilometers east and the turnoff for Francis Viewpoint will be on the north side of the road.





# Camp Lake Park

Camp Lake Park, located east of Viking, offers a variety of activities such as boating, waterskiing, swimming, and hiking. The park has two beaches, a boat launch, and multiple picnic shelters and cookhouses. While visiting Camp Lake Park, be on the lookout for white-tailed deer, waterfowl, and a variety of songbirds. In 2014 a black bear was even sighted within the area.

For directions and maps please visit:

<http://www.beaver.ab.ca/tourism/campgrounds/camp-lake-park>



<http://www.beaver.ab.ca/public/download/documents/8236>



<http://zkahlina.ca/eng/2016/06/26/camping-at-the-camp-lake/>



<http://www.beaver.ab.ca/tourism/campgrounds/camp-lake-park>

# Daysland Property

The Daysland Property is managed by 3 partners, the Alberta Conservation Association, Alberta Parks and Environment, and Ducks Unlimited. This 964 acre site consists of habitats ranging from grasslands to treed uplands, all dotted with wetlands. The varying habitat supports a large variety of wildlife including deer, moose, songbirds, waterfowl, shorebirds, and an array of small mammals. Although this site lacks trails, visitors are encouraged to explore it on foot. The south side of this property offers an abundance of wild raspberries and saskatoons for berry pickers to enjoy. From Holden travel south down Highway 855 to Township Road 472. This junction marks the sites southeast corner.

For more information visit:

<http://www.albertadiscoverguide.com/site.cfm?grid=D3&number=69>



Return  
to map

Return to  
previous  
page

Pres Winter is happy to provide guided tours, depending on his availability, and is always welcoming of volunteers. To inquire about either opportunity contact Pres Winter at:

Pres Winter  
Box 218  
Viking, AB T0B 4N0  
1-780-336-2576  
[winterp@telusplanet.net](mailto:winterp@telusplanet.net)



# Tips and Etiquette to Viewing and Enjoying Nature

## Tips:

- 1) Move slowly
- 2) Have gear and clothing of neutral colours
- 3) Refrain from using scented items prior to heading out
- 4) Have the right equipment (binoculars)
- 5) Have identification guides on hand
- 6) Time of day - Dusk and dawn are peak viewing times
- 7) Leave pets at home - pets may startle and even kill wildlife
- 8) Use all your senses to help locate wildlife, listening and actively looking are key

## Etiquette

- 1) Avoid disturbing/surprising wildlife
- 2) Pack in pack out - leave what you came with
- 3) Be mindful of rare species that could be at risk or vulnerable animals, such as young
- 4) Never feed wild animals

For more information visit:

<http://www.env.gov.yk.ca/animals-habitat/tips.php>



<https://www.theweathernetwork.com/photos/view/outdoor-activities/sunset-on-islet-lake-close-to-tofield-alberta/19061678>