



Elk Island
National Park
parksCanada.gc.ca



ELK ISLAND

National Park

Visitor Guide



Aussi disponible en français



Parks
Canada

Parcs
Canada

Canada 

Fuel for the soul

REJUVENATE YOURSELF

Breathe in the invigorating fresh air. Relax to the sound of song birds. Dream under the stars.

NOURISH YOUR IMAGINATION

Explore nature’s unexpected art. Fill your inquisitive mind. Uncover stories of the past.

RELEASE YOUR INNER CHILD

Wander the forest floor. Skip to your next adventure. Have fun in nature’s playground.

FREE YOUR SPIRIT

Conquer trails. Canoe down the wind. Lose yourself in the scenery.



*Discover the power to
move your spirit and
rejuvenate your soul as
you journey through this
special place.*

Welcome

Have you ever visited a place where you were scared to blink your eyes in fear of missing a single moment? Ever seen something so beautiful that it took your breath away? Experienced something that made the hairs on the back of your neck stand up?

The staff and I at Elk Island welcome you to a place of wonder and adventure! I encourage you to learn about Elk Island; to appreciate its many wildlife species, both big and small; and to enjoy this amazing place while leaving it untouched, so that others may also enjoy it after you. Please take in the many interpretive and special events that are offered for your enjoyment and learning. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to ask our friendly and knowledgeable staff. We will make every effort to ensure that your visit is one that becomes a very special memory for you. The untamed beauty of Elk Island will impress you for a lifetime.

Stephen Flemming
Superintendent

CONTACT INFORMATION

General Information	780-992-2950
Interpretive Programs	780-992-2965
Visitor Centre	780-922-5790
Sandy Beach Campground (seasonal)	780-992-0017
Sandy Beach Group Camping	
Reservations (seasonal)	780-992-0017
Oster Lake Backcountry Group	
Tenting Reservations	780-922-5833
Parks Canada Campground	1-877-737-3783 (1-877-RESERVE)
Reservation Service	1-866-787-6221 (TTY)
	www.pccamping.ca
Elk Island Golf Course	780-998-3161
	www.elkislandgolf.com

EMERGENCY

RCMP/FIRE/AMBULANCE	911
24-hour Dispatch Line	780-992-6389
Parks Canada Wildlife Watch	1-888-927-3367
Alberta Environment	
Report-A-Poacher	1-800-642-3800
Weather	780-468-4940
Write to:	
Superintendent	
Elk Island National Park	
Site, 4 RR 1	
Fort Saskatchewan, AB T8L 2N7	
Fax: 780-992-2951	
Email: elk.island@pc.gc.ca	
Website: www.parkscanada.gc.ca/elkisland	

PARK USER FEES

National park user fees support the maintenance, conservation and protection of Elk Island National Park. Park fees are an investment in the future, so that generations to come will also enjoy this beautiful place.

Day Pass:
Valid from the date of issue until 4 p.m. the following day. Children under 6 are free. For longer stays you can use your day passes as a credit to upgrade to an annual pass within 30 days of date of purchase.

To Purchase Your Park Pass:

- call us at 780-992-2950 or email elk.island@pc.gc.ca
- call toll free at 1-888-773-8888 or visit www.parkscanada.gc.ca to purchase online
- Parks Canada Discovery Passes are available for purchase at the Park Gates, Visitor Centre or Park Operations
- Day passes are available 24-hours a day from Automated Pass Machines located at each entrance gate; major credit cards, cash or coin are accepted

Early Bird discounts are available for Elk Island National Park Annual Passes from Dec. 1 to March 31.

Vehicles must display a valid park pass at all times.

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JOBS @ PARKS CANADA

Parks Canada is always hiring. Visit www.parkscanada.ca to learn about the type of work Parks Canada staff do, the staffing process and information for students and others.

Explore with a park interpreter or on your own!



THEATRE PRESENTATIONS

Laugh, learn and participate in fun and informative theatre performances at the Astotin Lake Theatre.



OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

Pond dip with interpreters while learning about the drama and diversity of life in Astotin Lake. Explore animal tracks and traces to discover creatures big and small.



GUIDED HIKES & TOURS

Join an interpreter for a walk of discovery or tour a bison handling facility. Learn how Elk Island protects wildlife, our history and nature's diversity.



EXPLORA

Let your smartphone be your guide! Using GPS technology, Explora tells you Elk Island's stories using images, sounds, videos and quizzes while guiding you through a gentle 3km hike. Don't have a smartphone? Borrow an Explora device from the Astotin Lake Theatre.



STORIES & STAR GAZING

Escape the city lights for a starry night and listen to campfire stories told by a park interpreter or guest speaker. View stars with experts and their telescopes.



ASTOTIN LAKE THEATRE

Touch real animal mounts and artefacts displayed in the theatre. Chat with park staff and learn about the unique transition zones that exist in Elk Island captured on a stunning wall sized mural.



SPECIAL EVENTS

Special events are a great way to learn more about Elk Island. Come and discover new, fun experiences with your family! For a schedule of interpretation activities and special events, visit Park Information boards, ask a staff person, visit the Elk Island website or call 780-992-2950. All events and interpretive programs are free with park admission.

Something For Everyone...

VISITOR CENTRE

Located just after the south entrance off Highway 16, the Visitor Centre welcomes you to Elk Island National Park. Watch out for the bison stampede as you open the door! Check out the stunning wall-sized park mural, while friendly staff assist you with your visit!



UKRAINIAN PIONEER HOME

In 1951, Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent officially opened this replica of a typical home built by early Ukrainian settlers. Located in the Astotin Lake Area, the 60 year old home is federally designated as the oldest purpose-built Ukrainian museum in Canada.

GOLF

Established in 1936, the Elk Island Golf Course celebrates 75 years of service by offering visitors a beautiful 9-hole course surrounded by the scenic beaver hills landscape. Club and cart rentals are available. Enjoy a hot meal or cool refreshment at the licensed café.



PAVILION



Come inside and become a part of history. Originally constructed in 1934, the Pavilion welcomes generations of visitors. The Pavilion is the oldest building in the Astotin Lake Area and remains a popular gathering place for family and friends to share a rustic meal or a warm campfire.

ASTOTIN LAKE

Astotin Lake is a place to enjoy any time of the day. Stroll down the Living Waters boardwalk and watch mist rise off the lake highlighted by the sunrise. Listen to birds sing good morning to you as you jump in your canoe for an early paddle; what a way to start the day! Have a seat on a park bench and watch the breathtaking sunset as colours reflect off the lake. Finish the evening off right and enjoy a spectacular view of the starry night sky or northern lights.



BISON LOOP ROAD

Located just north of the south gate, drive this 1 km loop twisting through open prairie and scattered aspen. In spring, watch orange coloured bison calves clinging to their mothers. Listen to the constant deep low roar of bull bison during mating season as they impress the females (mid-July to mid-August). It surely is a sight to see! Remember, bison are wild animals and may charge if they feel threatened. Give animals a wide birth and never come between a cow and her calf.

TAWAYIK LAKE TRAIL

Get out into the thick of nature, bring your binoculars and see if you can spot any of the over 250 species of birds found in Elk Island. Located just north of the south gate, walk, cross country ski or snowshoe this 16.5 km trail. At the trailhead, cap off your day by relaxing and enjoying a marshmallow over a campfire.



WOOD BISON TRAIL

Looking for an invigorating day hike? Cross Highway 16 and visit one of the longest trails in Elk Island. 16 km in length, this trail offers great views of wood bison, elk, moose and waterfowl. Hike or snowshoe the trail; choose your own adventure!



Choose your camping adventure!



**Reserve
Relax
Experience**

To reserve sites in the Sandy Beach Campground call 1-877-RESERVE (1-877-737-3783) or visit www.pccamping.ca

SANDY BEACH CAMPGROUND

Located in the Astotin Lake Area, this picturesque campground is open from the May long weekend to Thanksgiving (weather permitting). Reserve a site in the **Main Loop, Walk-in Tenting or RV Loop**. Each site is equipped with a picnic table and a fire ring. Flush toilets, showers, drinking water, wood supply (with purchase of a fire permit), sani-station and a pay telephone are just a short distance away. Self-registration is first-come, first-served in non-reserved sites only when no campground attendant is present at the kiosk. All sites are primitive (without power or water). Some areas are wheelchair accessible.



TEEPEE CAMPING

Enjoy a Plains Cree teepee camping experience! Teepees sleep up to 6 people and sit on raised wooden platforms with sleeping pads. Teepee campsites are equipped with a fire ring and picnic table. Communal fire ring and seating is also available for groups to enjoy.



SO MUCH TO EXPLORE!

Many trails offer unique experiences that will tantalize your senses. Watch the ever busy beaver as it constructs its dam, listen to the songbirds as they sing you a tune, or smell the fresh air as the wind caresses your skin. Most trails offer parking, exhibits, viewpoints, picnic facilities, fire rings, wood, washrooms, and garbage facilities. During winter many trails are groomed for cross-country skiing or snowshoeing; visit parks canada.gc.ca/elkisland for updated trail reports.



*Let the stars tuck
you in at night and
the sun greet you
in the morning.*

GROUP CAMPING

Want to be close to all of the action and amenities? Then reserve the **Sandy Beach Group Camping Area!** Located in the Astotin Lake Area, this large site accommodates groups of up to 60 people (minimum of 10) and is suitable for tents, trailers or R.V.'s. The area is available May to September except on long weekends. To reserve call 780-992-0017 (in season) or 780-992-2972 (off season).
Want to rough it and experience nature at its best? Then reserve the **Oster Lake Backcountry Group Tenting Area!** Located on the west shore of Oster Lake, this large tenting site can accommodate up to 75 people and is accessible by hiking, cross-country skiing or snow-shoeing Shirley Lake Trail (6 km) or the Oster Access Road (6 km) starting at the Tawayik Lake Picnic Area. To reserve call 780-922-5833.



WINTER CAMPING

Enjoy the winter season at its best! Winter camping is permitted free of charge for self-contained vehicles in the RV Loop of Sandy Beach Campground in the Astotin Lake Area. A valid park permit (day pass or annual pass) must be displayed.



*In every walk
with nature one
receives far
more than
he seeks.*

John Muir



Exploring on trails has never been easier thanks to modern GPS technology.

Geocaching is an entertaining high-tech adventure activity where participants use GPS (Global Positioning Satellite) receiver technology to “hunt” for various locations using mapping coordinates. Caching Elk Island is a GPS based learning experience and entertaining adventure activity highlighting the people, places and heritage unique to Elk Island. Visit www.geocaching.com or call the park general information number to learn more about where the caches in Elk Island can be found.

LIQUOR FREE LONG WEEKEND

In Elk Island, families can enjoy an abundance of activities, reconnect with nature and experience a national park at its best. To encourage this memorable experience the possession and consumption of alcohol is prohibited in the campground on all long weekends from May to September.

FIRE BAN

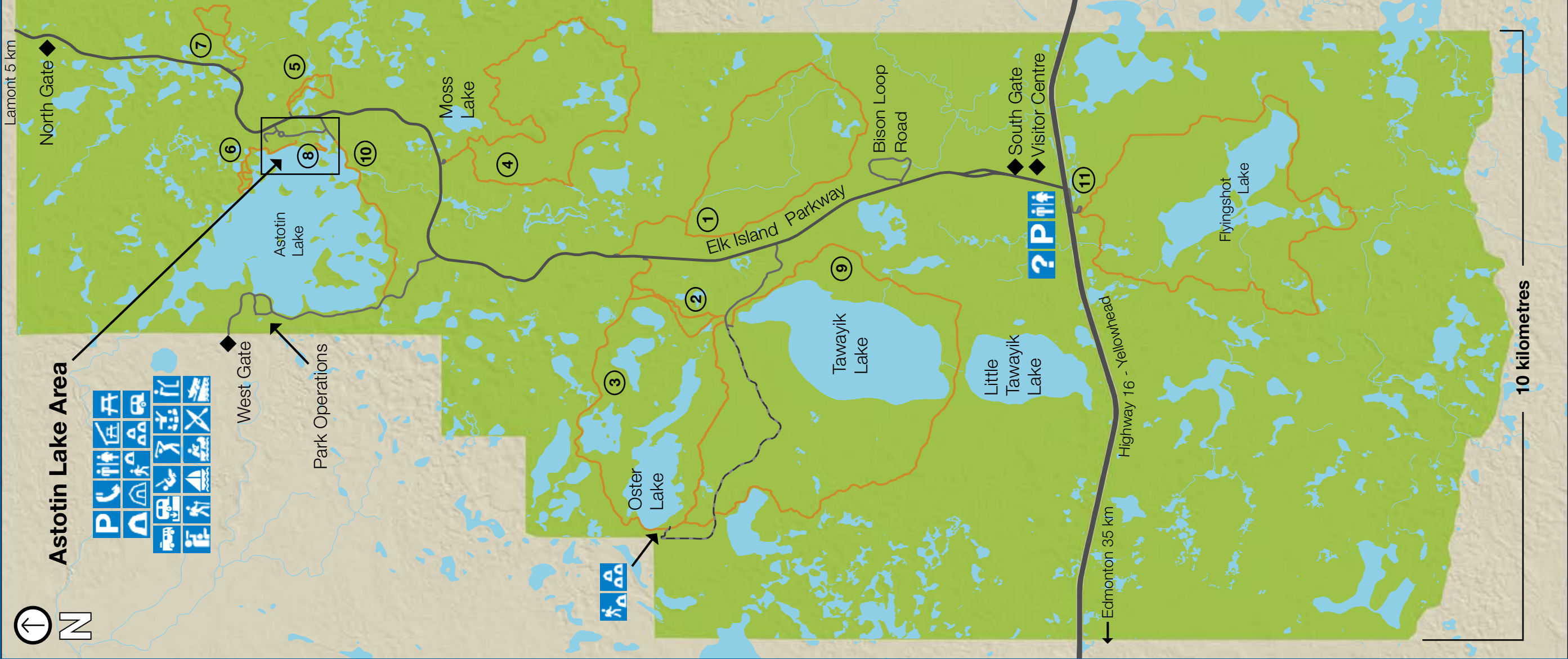
When a fire ban is in place, propane and gas cooking stoves only are permitted.

BARE CAMPSITE PROGRAM

Store all food and any other items that attract wildlife in a hard-sided vehicle when not in use to discourage animals from approaching your campsite. The “BARE” campsite program is in effect for your safety, enjoyment and to help keep the wild in wildlife.

SAFETY TIPS TO INCREASE YOUR ENJOYMENT WHILE ON PARK TRAILS

- Take along a trail map.
- Be prepared for rapid changes in weather.
- Dress in layers; carry sufficient water, insect repellent and sunscreen.
- Travel with others on established trails during daylight hours.
- Pick trails suitable for your fitness level.
- Let someone know where you are going and when you expect to be back.



Discover Our Trails

- 1

Hayburger Trail (3-4h)
10 km, flat terrain
FEATURES: Exhibits, mix of spruce bog, open aspen forest and meadows. Remain on the trail; areas of quicksand may be encountered. Good for viewing bison, moose and elk.
- 2

Simmons Trail (1-2h)
3.5 km, moderate terrain
FEATURES: Aspen forest, meadows and beaver ponds. Good for viewing bison, moose and elk.
- 3

Shirley Lake Trail (3-4h)
10.5 km, moderate terrain
FEATURES: Aspen forest and meadows. Good for viewing bison, moose and elk.
- 4

Moss Lake Trail (3.5-4.5h)
13 km, moderate terrain
FEATURES: Picnic tables, camp-fire and exhibits. Mixed wood forest, great for viewing beaver and waterfowl.
- 5

Amisk Wuche Trail (1-1.5h)
2.5 km, moderate to steep terrain
FEATURES: Boardwalks through marsh and forest. Rich in aquatic life.
- 6

Lakeview Trail (1-2h)
3.5 km, gentle terrain
FEATURES: Poplar and spruce forest, good views of Astotin Lake, islands, beaver and waterfowl.
- 7

Beaver Pond Trail (1-2h)
3.5 km, gentle terrain
FEATURES: Aspen forest and sedge meadows, good for viewing bison, moose and beaver.
- 8

Living Waters (.05-1h)
300 m boardwalk, gentle terrain
FEATURES: Floating boardwalk and exhibits. Great view of Astotin Lake, islands, beaver, waterfowl, and aquatic life.
- 9

Tawayik Lake Trail (4-5h)
16.5 km, moderate terrain
FEATURES: Picnic tables, picnic shelter, camp-fire, exhibits and lookout. Aspen forest and meadows; great for viewing elk, bison and waterfowl.
- 10

Shoreline Trail (2-3h)
6 km return, gentle terrain (pavement)
FEATURES: Parking lot across from Golf Course. Mixed wood forest, good view of islands, beaver and waterfowl. Beaver Bay Picnic Area; picnic tables and camp-fire.
- 11

Wood Bison Trail (4-5h)
16 km, moderate terrain
FEATURES: Aspen forest, great for viewing wood bison, moose, elk and birds.

Legend

	Information		Accessible		Interpretation
	Parking		Exhibit		Trailer Dumping
	Washrooms		Lookout		Camping
	Telephone		Picnic Area		Overflow Camping
	Golf		Picnic Shelter		Walk-in Camping
	Hiking		Canoeing		Back-country Camping
	Cross-country Skiing		Kayaking		Group Camping
	Snowshoeing		Sailboating		Trailers
	Playground		Boat Launch		Recreational Vehicles
	Trail		Water		Park
					Drive/Hike
					Drive

Elk Island has one of the highest densities of grazing animals in the world!



Bison or Buffalo? So what is the difference anyway?

Simply put, the correct term for the largest land mammal in North America is bison. Bison may resemble their relatives but they are a different species than that of the Asian water buffalo and African buffalo that live in Southeast Asia and Africa. There are three distinct sub-species of bison in the world today. European bison live in Poland and European portions of the former Soviet Union. Plains and wood bison are exclusive to North America. We have both at Elk Island.

“Kindness” Kills Wildness



Human food may be difficult for some animals to digest and may condition them to being fed, resulting in the loss of their ability to fend for themselves.



Birders Paradise

The variety of upland habitat and extensive wetlands in Elk Island provides opportunities for many species to forage and breed. Of the 253 species recorded in the park, 137 are known to breed here. Astotin Lake is a major wetlands area where waterfowl can be seen on the lake. Walk Shoreline Trail (#10), Lakeview Trail (#6), Living Waters (#8) boardwalk, or drive the road along the south west shore of Astotin Lake and park on one of the road side pull offs to get a spectacular view of wetland birds. Don't forget about the many other walking trails in Elk Island that are home to birds that exist in the mixed wood and aspen forests, black spruce bogs, and grassland habitats.

Tip: transition areas are where you will spot the highest variety.

Having a safe visit...

You are in bison country.

- Stay in your vehicle, drive slow and do not approach bison on foot along the roadside
- During the mating season known as the rut (mid-July to mid-August), bulls are aggressive
- Avoid approaching bison where their escape routes are limited
- Do not approach bison while hiking; make them aware of your presence, walk slowly around them at a safe distance, always keeping an eye on them. If necessary, return to the trail head
- Never enter a heard of bison on foot or come between two animals, especially a cow and her calf
- Dogs must be kept on a leash at all times while in the park to prevent conflicts

CHECK OUT THE BIG SIX!

WHERE TO VIEW



WOOD BISON

Size: average length 3.9m
Average Weight: bull 840kg
Diet: grasses and sedges



Track



Scat



PLAINS BISON

Size: average length 3.4m
Average Weight: bull 730kg
Diet: grasses and sedges



MOOSE

Size: largest member of deer family at 6 to 7 feet tall
Average Weight: bull 450kg
Diet: twigs, leaves and aquatic plants for salt



Track



Scat



ELK or WAPITI

Size: second largest member of the deer family at 4 to 5 feet tall
Average Weight: bulls up to 450kg
Diet: grasses, sedges and twigs



Track



Scat



WHITE-TAILED DEER

Size: smaller and more solitary than mule deer
Average Weight: buck 90kg
Diet: buds and twigs of shrubs, and saplings and needles of evergreens



Track



Scat



MULE DEER

Size: larger and stockier than white-tailed deer
Average weight: buck 100kg
Diet: twigs, saplings and shrubs

- Wood bison are found south of highway 16 and plains bison are on the north side of the highway
- Walk a trail or drive the Bison Loop Road to get a closer look
- Bison begin to breed (rut) mid-July; listen for the deep low roar of bull bison as they entice females
- Seen around marshes and boggy areas foraging for tasty aquatic plants
- Easy to see in fall and winter when trees are bare
- Moose begin to breed (rut) in late September; listen for males grunting at females
- Quietly watch for elk while walking a trail or follow the boundary roads along the fence line
- Easier to see in fall and winter when trees are bare
- Elk begin to breed (rut) mid-September; listen for males bugling at females
- Quietly watch for deer while walking a trail or turn off your vehicle at a road side pull off
- Deer avoid noisy areas and will take refuge in bushes and trees
- Deer begin to breed (rut) in November; listen as males grunt at females

How close is too close?



Keep at least 3 bus lengths (30 metres/100 ft) away from large animals.

Elk Alert!

- Cow elk can be aggressive during calving season (mid-May to late June)
- Bull elk are aggressive during the mating (rut) season (mid-September to the end of October)

If you are approached by a predator

- Large predators are not resident in Elk Island, however black bears and cougars have been known to pass through the area on occasion.
- Yell, don't run and slowly move away
 - Do anything you can to make yourself look bigger
 - Fight back aggressively, if attacked

Enjoy Elk Island National Park anytime of the year...

SPRING & SUMMER

AUTUMN & WINTER



- Bird watch
- Wildlife viewing; calves are born in spring (bison, elk, moose, deer), bison mate in late summer
- Canoe, kayak or sail
- Camp
- Picnic
- Hike a trail
- Photography
- Paint
- Fun day programs
- Evening theatre programs
- Special events
- Play horseshoes or soccer
- Geocache

- Golf
- Star gaze
- Watch colourful sunrises & sunsets
- Relax on a bench or find a cozy spot on the grass
- Watch busy beavers at dusk & dawn
- Drive the Bison Loop Road
- Scenic drives; pull-offs available along the Elk Island Parkway & south west shore of Astotin Lake
- Visit knowledgeable park staff

- Bird watch
- Wildlife viewing; moose, elk & deer mate in autumn, animals are easy to see with less foliage
- Study animal tracks
- Canoe, kayak or sail; watch waterfowl stage on Astotin Lake before flying south for the winter
- Winter camp
- Hike, cross-country ski or snowshoe trails
- Picnic; get warm & cozy around a camp fire

- Star gaze; view the northern lights
- Interpretive programs for students
- Scenic drives: pull-offs available along the Elk Island Parkway & Administration Road
- Kite Ski
- Build a snowman
- Visit knowledgeable park staff
- Special events
- Photography

Weekend visit?

Camp at Sandy Beach Campground or hike into and backcountry camp at Oster Lake, hike a 3 to 5 hour trail (see map), have a picnic and camp fire, visit park staff, enjoy an evening theatre program, watch wildlife, or take in a spectacular sunset on Astotin Lake.

Here for a day?

Hike a 1 to 2 hour trail (see map), walk the Living Waters boardwalk and enjoy the view of Astotin Lake, drive the scenic Elk Island Parkway, stop and have a picnic and cozy campfire along the way at Tawayik Lake picnic area.

Only have an hour?

Drive the Bison Loop Road and view plains bison, stop at Astotin Lake and take stunning photographs of waterfowl, or learn Elk Island’s history on interpretive panels by Astotin Lake.

Did you see something amazing???

Come and tell us about it! Visitors are our greatest adventurers and are out and about all hours of the day. There is a very good chance you will see something unique and exciting and we want to hear about it. Stop any park staff and share your story.

Take a walk back in time...



IN THE BEGINNING

For over 5000 years, Aboriginal people travelled through the western landscape. The Beaver Hills provided relief along the journey; a place to hunt, gather and rest. Elk Island has more than 200 archaeological Aboriginal sites; most were campsites and places where the Tssu T’ina (Sarcee), Nehiwyaw (Plains Cree), Nakota (Assiniboine), Kainai (Blood), and Siksika (Blackfoot) people hunted for game.

MEN OF VISION

On March 28, 1906 Canada’s first wildlife sanctuary was established. Five local men pledged by bond to the Dominion Government of Canada to protect one of the last remaining herds of elk in Canada. The men signed a \$5000 bond to establish Elk Park, a 41km² fenced enclosure around Astotin Lake. In 1908, Elk Park was renamed Elk Island Park.

RETURN OF THE PLAINS BISON

The plains bison in Elk Island originated from a private herd owned by Charles Allard and Michael Pablo of Ronan, Montana. For \$245 a head, the Dominion Government of Canada purchased Pablo’s share of the herd. In 1907, approximately 400 plains bison were shipped to the park by railway, via Lamont, en route to their final destination, Buffalo National Park at Wainright. Forty-eight animals eluded capture; their offspring remain in Elk Island to this day. Their return represents one of the most significant events in Canadian conservation history.

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

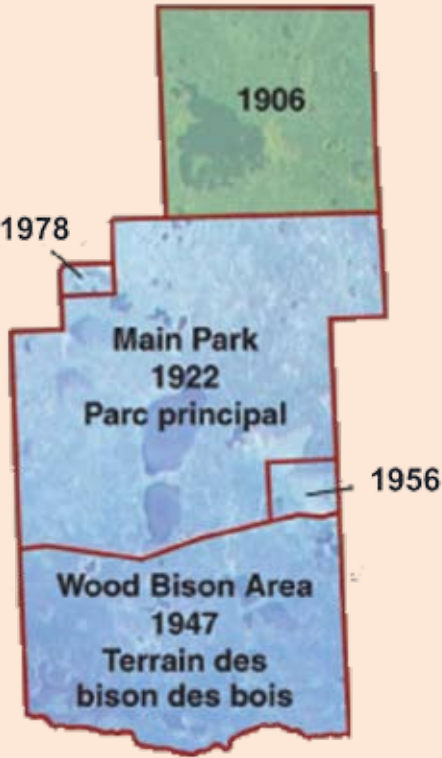
Elk Island Park was granted federal park status in 1913. By 1922 the park was increased in size to allow for growing wildlife populations. Development for visitor use began in 1923 and by 1924 the Elk Island Parkway was constructed from the north to the south. Elk Island was designated as an official national park under the *National Parks Act of 1930*.

PRESERVATION & RECREATION

New recreation facilities were constructed after World War II including two bungalow camps, a dance hall, a band shell, tennis courts and a service station. Sandy Beach Campground opened in 1947. In keeping with the preservation mandate, a program was initiated to bring back the beaver to the Beaver Hills after centuries of over trapping. Today more than 1000 beaver reside in the park.

WOOD BISON

Thought to be extinct, a small herd of pure wood bison were located in 1957 in a remote corner of Wood Buffalo National Park. For conservation purposes, 23 animals were transported to Elk Island National Park in 1965. Most wild populations of wood bison that currently exist in North America can be traced back to the Elk Island herd.



Elk Island is home to North America’s largest and smallest land mammal; wood bison and pygmy shrew.

Elk Island is Canada’s only fully fenced national park.

Shoreline Trail used to be the park’s only public access road until 1923.

Did you know???

National parks play an important role in regional conservation, providing a safe home for wildlife species by maintaining healthy ecosystems.

Protecting Cultural History

The landscape of Elk Island is rich in human history and the evidence is here in over 200 Aboriginal archaeological sites. Most sites reflect a short term use where people sat and waited for game to appear or repaired their stone tools and left small stone chips behind in the process. People have always been an intimate part of this ecosystem.



Moose Survey

In order to better monitor the causes of moose mortality in Elk Island, animals have been radio collared. When a collared moose dies the radio emits a signal so that staff can locate the carcass, then do a necropsy and collect tissue samples to determine the cause of death. Collars are monitored daily and can last for up to 5 years.



Trumpeter Swans

Trumpeter swans nearly disappeared from this area in the 1800s due to over-hunting and loss of habitat. In 1987, Elk Island began a trumpeter swan reintroduction program hoping to recover the swan population. After an absence of over a hundred years, the largest waterfowl in North America has once again firmly established itself in the park.



Friends of Elk Island Society

The Friends are a non-profit cooperative association, which work with Parks Canada to protect, preserve and promote Elk Island National Park. Make a lasting contribution to Elk Island by becoming a member of the Friends! To find out more information visit www.elkisland.ca



Fire Management

In 1979, fire was reintroduced into the park through carefully planned prescribed burns. After decades of fire suppression, the aspen forest in Elk Island began to dominate the grassland areas. Fire became recognized as an essential tool to re-establish the balance of forest, grassland and other types of vegetation, thus maintaining healthy ecosystems.

Vegetative Communities

Elk Island National Park is a unique transitional area defined by its gentle blend of plains and plateau where aspen dominate the lower mixed wood boreal forest. Vegetation patterns change constantly due to the park's geography, climate and a variety of other natural processes. The park includes a variety of habitats for plant and animal life. Rolling terrain creates a variety of micro climates that support a rich mosaic of lakes, wetlands, aspen forest, boreal mixed-wood forest, sedge meadows, shrubs and grasslands.



BEAVER HILLS INITIATIVE (BHI)

At the turn of the millennium, the BHI was established in collaboration with Elk Island National Park, municipal partners, environmental groups, the provincial government and local industry. Its mission is to support cooperative efforts to sustain the quality of water, land, air, natural resources and community development. To learn more visit www.beaverhills.ab.ca



Ungulate Management

Elk, moose, plains bison and wood bison undergo close monitoring in order to sustain pure and disease free herds. Elk Island houses both elk and bison handling facilities in order to support this process.

What happens to surplus animals?

Elk Island National Park is renowned for its conservation efforts as a source herd for reintroducing elk and bison populations back into their historic habitats. When animal populations reach a specified capacity they are donated to other conservation initiatives throughout North America and even Russia in an effort to build these wildlife populations.

Beaver Hills Dark Sky Preserve (BHDSP)

On September 3, 2006, the BHDSP was designated through a partnership amongst Alberta Tourism, Parks, Recreation and Culture, the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada – Edmonton Centre and the Parks Canada Agency. The BHDSP includes all of Elk Island, Cooking Lake-Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area, Strathcona Wilderness Centre and the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village for a total protected area of 293 km². The BHDSP protects nocturnal habitats for present and future generations and encourages public enjoyment and awareness of the night sky. Come to Elk Island on Labour Day long weekend and other special times to celebrate the dark sky!

Management Planning

We want to hear from you! Help guide Parks Canada to protect this great park, connect visitors and Canadians with nature and our history, and engage the public, stakeholders and partners. To find out how to get involved visit www.parksCanada/elkisland.

National parks work in cooperation with other conservation agencies to deter poaching, conserve wildlife and protect natural resources; this includes killing wildlife, collection of wildlife parts such as skulls, horns and antlers, removal of eggs and picking of flowers, plants, berries and mushrooms. Unlawful or suspicious activities can be reported anytime to the 24 hour Dispatch Line 780-992-6389.

A Personal Invitation: Become Part of the Conservation Legacy

It all began with five men in 1906 who sought to protect some of the last elk in the region. Since then, Elk Island has re-introduced native species to the park and has played a critical role in recovering elk and bison populations throughout North America—a remarkable story, that is not yet complete!

The second century of conservation for Elk Island poses many new challenges; yet holds just as much promise as the first century for people wanting to make a real difference. I encourage you to get involved, learn more about the accomplishments of the past and help shape the future of Elk Island. There will be many opportunities to help the park and its partners with hands-on ecological monitoring and wildlife management. Along the way you can expect to have a great deal of fun and make new friends around camp fires and social events. Join us in the next century of conservation; get involved, this is your park. Become part of Elk Island's conservation legacy!

Stephen Flemming
Superintendent



Parks Canada Parcs Canada

Canada 