

Is There a **WETLAND** In Your Neighbourhood?



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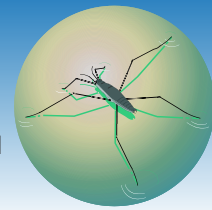
There are a lot of reasons to fall in love with Okanagan Valley wetlands!

Each part of these wonderfully complex ecosystems are intimately connected to the others.

Wetlands are places where land and water meet. You'll find characteristics of both terrestrial and aquatic eco-systems in these "half-way" worlds.

Bugs that walk on water?

Hairy pads on the bottom of pond skaters' feet repel water and prevent them from sinking.



HIDDEN AQUATIC HEROES AND OTHER WILDLIFE:

THE IMPORTANT ROLES THAT WETLANDS PLAY:

- Wetlands act like giant sponges; they quickly absorb water. By storing and slowly releasing rainfall, and spring run-off, wetlands can reduce flooding
 - Sphagnum moss can absorb 100 times its own weight in water and has antibiotic properties too. Found in bogs, this "peat moss" is used for fuel, insulation, conditioning soil, and as a surgical dressing for burn treatment
 - Okanagan wetlands contain crucial habitat for some rare species, including Tiger Salamander and Great Basin Spadefoot Toad
 - You'll see something new each time you visit a wetland. Wetlands change from season to season and from year to year
 - **Wetlands are among the most important places on earth. They provide vital habitat for aquatic insects and wildlife.**
- Bacteria, fungi, and other microscopic organisms are the wetland's hidden heroes. They break down dead plant and animal material and create food for many smaller organisms. These heroes are the foundation for a giant food web

Mallard's Landing
(Cook Rd.)



- What's in the mud?
Buds and roots of plants, eggs, dormant insect larvae, frogs and worms all waiting for spring

WETLAND WATERFOWL:

- Feeding waterfowl discourages the natural migratory instincts and encourages over-wintering in areas that may not be able to support the bird population during harsh conditions.
- Alkali lake marshlands act as staging areas for migratory shorebirds and waterfowl. Grebes, American Avocets, Yellow-Headed Blackbirds, and Red-Winged Blackbirds are known to frequent these unique wetlands
- Wherever there's water you'll find dabbling ducks tipping their rear ends for seeds, snails, weeds, and algae

A detailed illustration of a dragonfly larva. The larva is green and yellow, with long, thin legs and a segmented body. It is shown in a crouching position, ready to pounce on its prey. The background is a dark purple gradient.

TERROR OF THE POND!

Dragonfly larvae spend several years underwater hunting aquatic insects, tadpoles and small fish.

Eventually they emerge from the water and transform into winged, adult dragonflies. Did you know adult dragonflies can consume their own weight in mosquitoes and gnats in several hours?

From egg to tadpole to adult - a frog might spend its whole life in one pond.

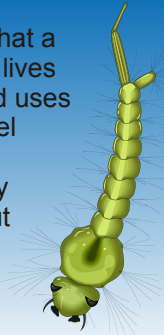


- Duckweed floats thanks to air pockets within its leaves. During the winter these plants sink to the bottom then rise to the surface again in the spring
- **The Okanagan valley's wetlands are the most endangered habitat in the entire ecoregion because of excessive draining, in-filling, and water diversion**

- Webbed feet and water repellent fur are special adaptations that help mink, muskrats, otters and other wetland mammals to move around in water

- What has long legs and stands motionless hunting for food? Great Blue Herons. These birds can be sometimes found in Okanagan Valley wetlands. Heron nesting colonies are found in trees but are still very susceptible to human disturbance

Did you know that a mosquito larva lives underwater and uses a built-in snorkel near its rear to breathe? Many insects start out in water but take to the air as adults.



Maude-Roxby
(Francis Ave.)

- Cattails are plants that actually change wetlands! Particles trapped between their roots eventually become soil, which can begin to fill in a wetland. In a constructed wetland, this may result in the need for periodic cleaning of the accumulated material.

FEEDING WILDLIFE:

WETLANDS BENEFIT WATER & AIR QUALITY:

- Like kidneys, wetlands filter pollutants. They are effective systems for improving the quality of water
- Bogs help prevent global warming by trapping carbon dioxide--a greenhouse gas. In a bog's acidic environment, plant material containing carbon forms peat instead of breaking down and releasing carbon dioxide
- Created wetlands help to maintain natural conditions in urban areas by improving water quality and trapping sediment

- Please **DO NOT FEED** the ducks and geese at our local wetlands. How healthy would you be if a major portion of your diet consisted of bread, doughnuts, popcorn, and french fries? Even a healthy diet of whole grains containing a proper balance of minerals and vitamins can result in problems for waterfowl, if the food source does not remain constant and regular



Great Blue Heron

- Unfortunately, feeding ducks and geese will result in an increase in resident populations over-wintering and upsetting the birds' normal migratory patterns

- Artificially high populations of resident ducks and geese can have detrimental affects on water quality with an increase in coliform bacteria at local beaches



Oasis Marsh (Richter St. - Casorso Rd.)

- Canada has an estimated 24% of the world's wetlands.
- 204 of Canada's 578 bird species require wetlands.
- 42 of Canada's endangered, threatened, and rare plants and animals depend on wetlands.
- Perhaps, as much as 98% of the Okanagan's wetlands have disappeared in the last 80 years as a result of human activities.

- All wildlife have an inherent right to survival in a natural, safe, and balanced environment. Please do not alter natural feeding habits by introducing an unnatural food source

SOME OF THE UNIQUE AND IMPORTANT WETLANDS FOUND IN THE KELOWNA AREA ARE:

- 1 Bubna Slough (Glenmore Drive)
- 2 Carney Pond (Adams Rd)
- 3 Casorso Marsh (near Spiers Road)
- 4 Chichester Pond (near Fitzpatrick Rd)
- 5 Valley Glen (constructed) Wetlands
- 6 Maude-Roxby Marsh (end of Francis Ave)
- 7 Michael Brook (constructed) Wetlands (Mission Sports Fields)
- 8 Oasis Marsh (Casorso & Richter St)
- 9 Pandosy Marsh (Casorso & Benvoulin Rd's)
- 10 Robert Lake (Valley Rd. North)
- 11 Rotary Marshes at Brandt's Creek (constructed Wetlands, at mouth of Creek)
- 12 Wilson Creek Slough (near Gordon Dr. & Cook Rd)
- 13 Munson Pond (Munson Rd)
- 14 Central Park



We can always use more help keeping these wonderful wetlands litter free, adding planting or with park watch. To find out more about how you can maintain or enhance these wonderful areas, please call the Environment Division at 862-3341.

Kelowna's Wetlands

Feeding waterfowl is strictly prohibited and is a ticketable offence. Please DO NOT FEED the waterfowl.