

trunks probing the bark for insects. Another small forest-dweller is the **Red-breasted Nuthatch** which scurries down tree trunks head first. Other birds to look for in the coniferous woods at any time of year are **Golden-crowned Kinglets**, **Downy Woodpeckers** and **Hairy Woodpeckers**, and the crow-sized **Pileated Woodpecker**. Look for elongated holes and fresh woodchips at the base of a 'wildlife tree' (or snag), signs of recent **Pileated Woodpecker** activity.

Both **Ruffed Grouse** and **Blue Grouse** inhabit the Park but tend to be fairly secretive, except in spring when their loud booming calls can be heard anywhere in the Park. One of the better locations to find **Ruffed Grouse** is along the North Trail. **Winter Wrens** are abundant and their long, musical song is one of the prettiest to fill the woods.

Brushy thickets along the marsh attract a number of species including **Song Sparrows**, **Rufous-sided Towhees**, and **Marsh Wrens**. **Great Blue Herons** feed in the marsh year-round, along with **Mallards** and **Wood Ducks**.

**SPRING:** By March, **Tree Swallows** can be found swooping over the marsh with the very similar **Violet-green Swallows**. **Barn Swallows**, and in smaller numbers, **Cliff Swallows** and **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** also occur.

**American Bittern**, **Sora** and **Virginia Rail** along with the fish-eating **Pied-billed Grebe** should all be looked for in the South Marsh. Did you know that many species of grebes, including the **Pied-billed**, consume large quantities of their own feathers? Some biologists believe they do this because they cannot properly digest fish bones and the feathers act as stomach padding, protecting them against punctures from sharp bones. Scan the North Marsh for waterfowl including **Red-breasted Merganser** which, although a common species elsewhere, is seldom seen in the Park.

From the **Panabode Trail** a short side-trail leads outside Park boundaries to a lookout offering superb views over **Addington Marsh** and the **Pitt River**. From there scan the marsh for ducks including **Cinnamon Teal** and **Blue-winged Teal** which have returned by mid-spring. If lucky you may see a **Sandhill Crane**. From a distance these stately birds can be confused with herons, but in fact they are quite different and belong in a separate family. **Sandhill Cranes** have slaty gray plumage, sometimes tinged with brown, a distinctive red patch on their forehead, and a considerably shorter bill. If you see them in flight notice the long, straight neck. Herons fly with their neck held in an s-curve. **Northern Harriers**, readily identified by their long tail, slender wings,

and white rump patch, can be found hunting low over the marsh.

Spring migration can sometimes yield the unexpected. One year a **White-throated Sparrow** turned up in April at the end of **Oliver Road** adjacent to the Park.

**SUMMER:** By summer most species are well into the business of rearing young, and some early nesters are on their second broods. Standing dead trees, also called **wildlife trees**, provide sites for cavity nesting **Tree and Violet-green Swallows**, **Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers**, chickadees, nuthatches, and a host of other species.

A number of neotropical migrants return each year to nest in the Park. Swallows, flycatchers, vireos, warblers, grosbeaks, thrushes and tanagers all spend most of their lives in the tropics, coming north only to breed. **Swainson's Thrushes**, **Black-headed Grosbeaks**, and **Western Tanagers** are amongst the later arrivals. Look for them in mid to late May. **Hermite Thrushes**, told from the very similar **Swainson's Thrush** by their rufous tail, are usually found in the coniferous woods along with **Townsend's Warblers** and the tanagers.

Riparian (streamside) vegetation along the marsh and by **Addington Marsh** provides nesting habitat for many species. Listen for the easily recognized 'fitz-bew' song of the **Willow Flycatchers**. You might be fortunate enough to see male **Common Yellowthroat** warblers performing showy display flights in which they may rise up to 30 metres in the air, singing loudly as they go... all to attract a female. **Yellow Warblers**, **Wilson's Warblers**, **Marsh Wrens** and **Red-winged Blackbirds** are some of the other species that find a home in this habitat.

Alder dominated woods form only a small section of the Park but they provide habitat for **Warbling Vireo** and **Red-eyed Vireo**. In the dense understory **Bewick's Wrens** find safe nest sites in downed logs or brushy piles.

If you walk quietly along the ditches by **Addington Marsh** you might flush the uncommon **Green-backed Heron** which nests in nearby **DeBouville Slough**. **Eastern Kingbirds** are sometimes seen in the vicinity of the marsh and the rare **Western Kingbird** has been observed in front of the Lodge.

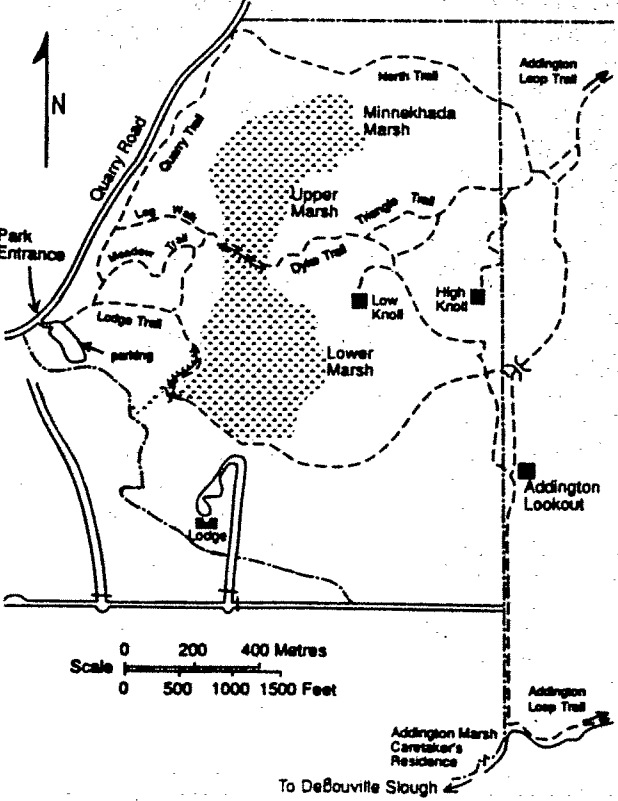
From the **Dyke Trail** head up to the **Low Knoll** which offers a birds-eye view of the North and South Marshes. From here you may spot a resident **Red-tailed Hawk** or even a **Turkey Vulture**, a rare summer visitor to the area. On days when the clouds lie low, flocks of both **Black and Vaux's Swifts** can be enjoyed from this vantage point. Swifts fly on stiffly-held wings that seldom seem to move.

If you are feeling ambitious, a trek to the top of the **High Knoll** will provide even more wide-ranging views including across **Addington Marsh** to the **Pitt River** where you will probably see **Ospreys** fishing the river.

Rarities don't occur only during migration, and it is best to keep your eyes and ears open throughout the year for unexpected surprises such as the **Chipping Sparrow** which turned up one June. Also in June there was an unconfirmed report of an **American Redstart** warbler. Erratic species such as many 'winter finches' can arrive at any season and **White-winged Crossbills** were observed in the summer of 1985.

**FALL:** As the days shorten birds get ready for their long southward journey. By mid-September most of the swallows have departed, followed over the next few weeks by warblers, flycatchers, vireos and other migrants, their numbers swollen as birds from further north pass through the area.

Many overwintering species begin arriving by October. The pasture in front of the Lodge and the old-field habitat across **Oliver Road** often hold **Northern Shrikes**, once known as 'butcherbirds' from their habit of impaling prey on thorns. **Short-eared Owls** frequent this habitat along



with **Rough-legged Hawks**. Various sparrows begin to make their appearance as fall progresses. The rather elusive **Lincoln's Sparrow** can be found in shrubby thickets around the marsh. **Fox Sparrows** are often confused with **Song Sparrows**, but look for a chunkier build, an unstriped head, very heavy breast streakings, and a pale lower bill. The **Fox Sparrow** overwinters in the area. Look also for **Golden-crowned Sparrows** and **White-crowned Sparrows** in brushy thickets along the marsh and by cleared areas. Over the years, some interesting species have turned up in the **Minnehada Park** area. Perhaps the most noteworthy to date was the **Common Poorwill** found dead on **Quarry Road** by the Park in October 1987. This species is considered accidental in the **Greater Vancouver Region**.

**WINTER:** Waterfowl numbers increase in the winter months and many of the twenty-three species counted in the Park and area are found during this season. One of the best places locally to see **Ring-necked Ducks**, identified by the ring around their bill, is in the North Marsh of the Park. Look also for the common **Green-winged Teal**, **Bufflehead**, **Hooded** and **Common Mergansers**, **Northern Shovelers**, and **American Wigeon** amongst many other species.

**Northern Pygmy Owl** has been seen during the winter near **Addington Marsh** at the east end of **Oliver Road**, and on the **Low Knoll** in the Park. **Great Horned Owls** are easier to find in late winter when they begin breeding. Look for them especially along the **Panabode Trail** near the picnic area by the Lodge.

Raptors are more readily found at this time of year. Both **Sharp-shinned Hawk** and **Cooper's Hawk**, two small woodland hawks nearly identical in plumage and shape, can be found along the forest edges. Falcons are identified by their long tail, pointed wings, rounded head and, generally, a moustache stripe. Look for **American Kestrel**, the large **Peregrine Falcon**, and the smaller, darker **Merlin**.

Winter can bring other interesting birds such as **Townsend's Solitaire**, a gray thrush with white outer-tail feathers. Look for it especially in front of the Lodge. **Bohemian Waxwings** are more often found in winter when they can occur in large flocks seeking berry and fruit trees. However, they are considered an 'erratic' species, their appearance each winter by no means guaranteed! Although similar to the smaller **Cedar Waxwing**, which also occurs in the Park, the **Bohemian** has a pale gray belly, chestnut under the tail and a patch of white on the wings.