

# Vancouver Island Nature Viewing Region

## Comox Valley Area

### Paradise Meadows, Strathcona Provincial Park



Hermit Thrush:  
Bill Heybroek drawing



Paradise Meadows, Jutland Mountain: Krista Kaptein photo



Pink mountain-heather: Krista Kaptein photo

#### [Photo Gallery](#)

Paradise Meadows is part of Strathcona Provincial Park, a 250,000-hectare wilderness area and the oldest provincial park in BC. Access is via the Strathcona Parkway, then Nordic Road. The trailhead is at the parking lot at the Strathcona Park Wilderness Centre. From there, the 2 km long Centennial Loop, and the further 1.2 km Paradise Meadows Loop, wander through a large meadow, fen and forest passing numerous ponds. Beyond the meadows a well-marked route takes visitors over groomed trails and boardwalks with some steps and gently rolling hills. The sub-alpine plateau features several lakes and a variety of trees, bushes and flowers, which produce a splendid display of colour in the fall. Visitors often see friendly Gray Jays, sometimes called whiskey jacks, and the occasional Black Bear. The endangered Vancouver Island Marmot is sometimes spotted on the adjacent ski slopes of Mt. Washington. Snow can fall by the end of October and can linger into the summer months so check conditions before you go.

#### [Site Map](#)

<b>Geographical Description</b>	Approx. 160 ha. portion of Plateau area on east side of Strathcona Provincial Park.
<b>Area/ Trail Length</b>	2 km. Centennial loop, suitable for all mobility devices; additional 1.2 km Meadows boardwalk loop, some steps; 8 km. lake & forest loop, some hills & bridges.
<b>Habitat</b>	Sub-alpine fen, meadow, heath and forest.
<b>Highlights</b>	Variety of sub-alpine trees & flowers; Gray Jays; possibility of seeing Vancouver Island Marmot on adjacent ski hill, and Black Bear by roadside.
<b>Best Season</b>	Summer for flowers, early autumn for colourful foliage & migrating birds.
<b>Main Access</b>	From Highway 19, take Exit #130 west, follow Strathcona Parkway for 17.5 km, then turn left & follow the Nordic Rd. for 2.4 km. Parking at BC Parks trailhead.
<b>Secondary Accesses</b>	From Forbidden Plateau area of Strathcona Park.
<b>Cautions</b>	Can be late snow conditions well into the summer months. Boardwalk can be slippery when wet or frosty.
<b>Jurisdiction</b>	BC Provincial Park.
<b>Mammals</b>	Black Bear, Black-tailed Deer, Beaver, Red Squirrel.

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<b>Birds</b>	Great Blue Heron, Sandhill Crane, Bald Eagle, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Northwestern Crow, Common Raven, Common Goldeneye, Spotted Sandpiper, Common Snipe, Sooty Grouse, Common Nighthawk, Red breasted Sapsucker, Pileated Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Three-toed Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Rufous Hummingbird, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Steller's Jay, Gray Jay, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Pacific Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, Varied Thrush, American Robin, Spotted Towhee, Red Crossbill, White-crowned Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, House Finch, Pine Siskin. <a href="#">Bird List</a>
<b>Reptiles</b>	Garter snake.
<b>Amphibians</b>	Pacific tree frog, western toad, northwestern salamander.
<b>Fish</b>	Rainbow trout, cutthroat trout.
<b>Insects</b>	Butterflies: pine white, purplish copper, satyr comma. Dragonfly sp., water strider, white-spotted sawyer beetle, cicada.
<b>Other species</b>	
<b>Trees</b>	Mountain hemlock, western hemlock, amabilis fir, subalpine fir, western white pine, shore pine, yellow cedar.
<b>Shrubs</b>	Oval-leaved blueberry, Alaskan blueberry, black huckleberry, Cascade huckleberry, dwarf blueberry, bog blueberry, false azalea, white flowered rhododendron, white mountain-heather, pink mountain-heather, crowberry, western bog-laurel, five-leaved bramble, Arctic willow, Sitka mountain ash.
<b>Flowering Plants</b>	False hellebore, clasping twistedstalk, northwestern twayblade, white bog-orchid, leatherleaf saxifrage, partridgefoot, Sitka burnet, early blue violet, stream violet, mountain arnica, pearly everlasting, alpine white marsh-marigold, globeflower, false bugbane, Arctic lupine, bracted lousewort, sickle-topped lousewort, fern-leaved goldthread, three-leaved goldthread, Jeffrey's shootingstar, bunchberry, deer cabbage, Sitka valerian, swamp lantern, buckbean, round-leaved sundew, common butterwort, fireweed.
<b>Ferns, Lichens, Mosses</b>	Horsehair lichens (Bryoria sp.), witch's hair (Alectoria sp.), beard lichens (Usnea sp.), reindeer lichen (Cladina portentosa), pelt lichens (Peltigera) including P. britannica or P. aphthosa, bone lichens (Hypogymnia sp.), ragbag (Platismatia glauca), dust lichens (Lepraria sp.), lipstick cladonia (Cladonia macilentata)
<b>Other Species Regulations</b>	No bicycles, no motorized vehicles, no horses. Pets/domestic animals must be on a leash at all times. No smoking, no fires.
<b>Invasive/Non-native species</b>	Engelmann spruce <a href="#">Plant List</a>
<b>Mushrooms</b>	
<b>Geology</b>	<a href="#">Strathcona Park Geology</a>
<b>Facilities</b>	Wilderness Centre open July- Sept.; Trail signs; Parking lot; Camping; Picnic area at Centre; Outdoor amphitheatre; Plant signs in summer; Drinking water in summer; Pit toilet; Accessible indoor washroom in summer; accessible boardwalk loop trail.
<b>Other Features</b>	Traffic counter near start of trail.
<b>Other Connections</b>	To Forbidden Plateau area of Strathcona Park.
<b>FMI</b>	<a href="#">Strathcona Provincial Park</a> <a href="#">Strathcona Provincial Park Important Bird Area</a>

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[Alpine Flowers of Vancouver Island](#)

[Plant List of Paradise Meadows and Vicinity by Hans Roemer](#)

[Strathcona Wilderness Institute](#)

[Paradise Meadows On-line Plant ID Guide](#)

[Hiking Trails 3: Northern Vancouver Island](#)

[eBird Hotspot](#)

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