

Vancouver Island Nature Viewing Region

Comox Valley Area

Simms Park, Lewis Park, Condensory Park



Common Merganser:
Bill Heybroek drawing



Simms Millenium Park pavillion: Krista Kaptein photo



Green Heron: Robert Bartsch photo

[Photo Gallery](#)

Simms Park, Lewis Park and the lower Puntledge trail provide scenic riverside walks just steps from downtown Courtenay. South of the Old Island Highway just before the Fifth Street Bridge, Simms Park borders the Courtenay River and Slough. A wide, easy trail loops through a riparian forest of black cottonwood, red alder and bigleaf maple. Bald Eagles and Harbour Seals can often be seen from the viewing platforms, and sometimes a Green Heron may be spotted here. The river provides habitat for many species of salmon including Pink, Chinook, Chum and Coho. Across the highway, two totem poles mark the entrance to Lewis Park. Take a stroll along the banks of the Courtenay River and watch for Common Mergansers and Great Blue Herons. A more wooded section of trail can be found at Condensory Park: off of Anderton Avenue on the town side of the Fifth Street Bridge. A flat gravel trail leads through a mixed second growth forest along the Courtenay River, eventually reaching the confluence of the Tsolum and Puntledge Rivers. These three city parks are great places to explore nature along Courtenay's riverways.

[Site Map](#)

Geographical Description	Lower Puntledge River from Condensory Bridge to confluence with Courtenay River; along Courtenay River to Courtenay Slough .
Area/ Trail Length	Simms Park: 4 ha park: 1.7 ha wooded area, 2.3 ha developed recreational area .6 km perimeter loop. Lewis Park: .5 km. along Courtenay River. Both parks: wide, flat gravel trails, no elevation gain. Condensory Park: 1 km. along Puntledge/Courtenay River confluence. South part: flat gravel trail, north part : muddy, roots.
Habitat	Riparian 2nd growth forest.
Highlights	Bald eagle & nest; back channel & slough of river. Great number of amenities in small naturalized area in centre of city.
Best Season	Spring for flowers; year-round for woods.
Main Access	Simms Park and Lewis Park: east end of Fifth St. bridge. Condensory Park: between 60 and 80 Anderton Ave.
Secondary Accesses	Lewis Park: at junction of Ryan Rd. and Old Island Highway.
Cautions	Trails can be wet in winter & flood occasionally; trails may be unsafe during strong winds.
Jurisdiction	Two adjacent City of Courtenay Parks; City of Courtenay greenway.

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Birds	Bald Eagle & nest, Great Blue Heron, Kingfisher, Green Heron, Downy Woodpecker, Mallard, American Wigeon, Common Goldeneye, Common Merganser, Northwestern Crow, Red-winged Blackbird, Yellow Warbler, Bushtit, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Brown Creeper, Pacific Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Dark-eyed Junco, Song Sparrow, House Finch, American Robin, Pine Siskin, European Starling. Bird List
Mammals	Seals, River Otter, Mink, Beaver, occasional Sea Lion. Black Bear possible around confluence of Tsolum & Puntledge Rivers.
Reptiles	
Amphibians	
Fish	Spawning salmon: Pinks start first week Aug., peak first week Sept., end at end Sept.; Fall Chinook start first week Sept., peak mid Sept., end mid Oct.; Chum start mid Oct., peak end Oct., end mid Nov.; coho start first week Oct., peak mid Nov., end at end Dec.
Invertebrates	
Insects	
Trees	Sitka spruce, red alder, black cottonwood, redcedar. Many ornamental species in landscaped areas.
Shrubs	Salmonberry, snowberry, blackberry sp., red-flowering currant, rose spl, thimbleberry.
Flowering Plants	Skunk cabbage, bleeding heart, false lily-of-the-valley, fringecup, western meadowrue, northern rice root.
Ferns, Lichens, Mosses	Sword fern.
Other Species	
Invasive/Non-native species	Invasive: holly, ivy, Himalayan blackberry. Non-native: daffodils. Paleobotanical garden in Simms Park landscaped area.
Mushrooms	
Geology	Flood plain of Courtenay River.
Regulations	Dogs on leash; no motorized vehicles.
Facilities	Simms & Lewis Parks: Parking lots, Bike racks, Indoor washrooms, Music pavilion, Gazebo, Viewing stands, Benches, Picnic tables, BBQ shelter (by arrangement with Knights of Columbus), Playground, Kayak dock, Marina, Interpretive sign. Lower Puntledge River trail: roadside parking.
Other Features	Simms Park: Memorial brick walls, Memorial signs. Piling remnants in river from logging days.
Other Connections	Across Fifth St. Bridge south to Courtenay Riverway.
FMI	City of Courtenay Parks City of Courtenay Official Community Plan K'omoks Important Bird Area Canada's Historic Places: Simms Millenium Park Fish Species in the Courtenay River Estuary and Baynes Sound 2001 pdf eBird Hotspot