

# Vancouver Island Nature Viewing Region

## Comox Valley Area

### Trent River Estuary and Gartley Point



Red-breasted Merganser:  
Bill Heybroek drawing



Trent River Estuary: Krista Kaptein photo



Northern Pintail: Krista Kaptein photo

#### [Photo Gallery](#)

The Trent River estuary is an exceptionally rich ecosystem, with diverse habitats of intertidal, salt marsh, riparian, farm fields and mixed forest. Gartley Point and the Trent River delta are situated near the Village of Royston, between Comox Harbour and Baynes Sound. The intertidal is very productive, with seaweed, green shore crabs, and a variety of other invertebrates that are the food source for waterfowl and shorebirds. There are also extensive eelgrass beds that are nurseries for young salmon and are the feeding grounds for Brant Geese. The saltmarsh is significant, with plants such as seashore saltgrass, pickleweed and sea milk-wort. Birds flourish at the estuary - look for raptors such as Northern Harriers and Bald Eagles, and numerous ducks including American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, Common Merganser, Northern Pintail and Northern Shoveler. Watch for shorebirds like Black-bellied Plovers, Dunlin and Western Sandpipers. In 1987 the Comox Valley Naturalists did a thorough inventory of the Trent Estuary, studying all aspects of its natural history, which was published as a government report.

#### [Site Map](#)

<b>Geographical Description</b>	Significant estuary at southern side of Comox Bay, opposite Goose Spit.
<b>Area/ Trail Length</b>	West side of Trent River: 10 ha. salt marsh & riparian, cobble beach & intertidal (Crown Land) East side of Trent River: 8.5 ha. salt marsh & cobble beach (Crown land)
<b>Habitat</b>	Salt marsh, cobble beach, riparian forest.
<b>Highlights</b>	Extensive intertidal area & salt marsh estuary within larger estuary of Courtenay River/Comox Bay. 150 vascular land plants catalogued.
<b>Best Season</b>	Winter & spring for water birds, summer for low tide life.
<b>Main Access</b>	Gartley Point is accessible at tides lower than 3.3 m. West side of the Trent River Estuary accessed from north end of Carey Place, or from the south end of Marine Drive in Royston. East side of the Trent Estuary accessed from north end of Gartley Point Rd.
<b>Secondary Accesses</b>	West side of Trent River Estuary can be accessed from east end of Marine Drive in Royston.
<b>Cautions</b>	Be aware of tides. Trails may be wet. Use caution while hiking cobble beach. Caution at eroding river banks.
<b>Jurisdiction</b>	East side of estuary: Nature Trust property. West side of estuary: private land above high water mark. Intertidal zone: Provincial MOE; Fish & fish habitat: Federal DFO.

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**Birds** Canada Goose, Brant, Great Blue Heron, Mallard, American Wigeon, Pintail, Common Merganser, Glaucous-winged Gull, Mew Gull, Killdeer, Black-bellied Plover, Ring-necked Pheasant, Northern Flicker, Red-winged Blackbird, Northwestern Crow, Song Sparrow, Towhee, European Starling.

[Bird List](#)

**Mammals** Seals.

**Reptiles**

**Amphibians**

**Fish**

**Intertidal Life** Butter clam, varnish clam, oyster, limpet sp., barnacle sp.

**Other species** Common land snail.

**Insects**

**Trees** Douglas-fir, Sitka spruce.

**Shrubs** Common snowberry, rose sp., salmonberry.

**Flowering Plants** Gumweed, mullein, yarrow.

**Ferns, Lichens, Mosses** Antlered perfume.

**Other Species**

**Invasive/Non-native species** Scotch broom, daphne laurel, ivy, tansy in the riparian area.

**Seaweeds** Rockweed.

**Mushrooms**

**Geology**

**Regulations** No shellfish harvesting. Illegal for pets to chase wildlife.

**Facilities** Limited roadside parking. Picnic table at Gartley Pt. Rd.

**Other Features** Fish Hatchery at Gartley Pt Rd. Retention pond, bridge over outflow.

**Other** West to Royston waterfront at low tide.

**Connections**

**FMI** [Nature Trust of BC](#)

[K'omoks Important Bird Area](#)

[Fish Species in the Courtenay River Estuary and Baynes Sound 2001.pdf](#)

[Tide Tables](#)

[eBird Hotspot](#)