

Lower Mainland Nature Viewing Region

Metro Vancouver Area

George C. Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary (Delta)



Sandhill Cranes: photo by Bill Kinkaid



Ponds: photo by Bill Kinkaid

Probably the single most outstanding birding site in Western Canada; nearly 300 species have been recorded here, with rarities seen on an almost regular basis. Dyking and water management of the Fraser Estuary has created a number of easily accessible managed wetlands and natural freshwater marsh ponds and sloughs. Admission charge.

[Photo Gallery](#)

Geographical Description	Fraser Estuary
Area/ Trail Length	300 hectares
Seasons to Visit	Year round.
Habitat	Tidal foreshore and fresh water marsh wetlands, red alder/black cottonwood bottomlands, riparian.

Viewing Highlights A major wintering area for waterfowl and raptors, and a major stop for migrating shorebirds, especially in spring.

Thousands of wintering Lesser Snow Geese arrive each October from their breeding grounds in Siberia.

Sandhill Cranes, hard to see in other parts of the Lower Mainland, are resident breeders and easily seen.

Viewing tower and several viewing blinds and platforms.

Interpretive displays and signs; regularly scheduled guided walks.

Other Features Museum featuring the Leo Malfet Bird Collection, over 500 stuffed specimens; not generally open to the public but available for group events and educational purposes.

Main Access Free parking at the end of Westham Island Road.
No transit nearby. The entrance is 8.8km from Ladner village; this is a pleasant cycling trip but part of the road is narrow with no shoulder so use caution, especially on weekdays.

Secondary Accesses None.

Cautions The parking area is often overrun by Mallards and other birds in fall and winter, so use caution when parking. Do not feed birds in the parking area.
Cranes, geese and ducks can be very aggressive, especially during nesting season.
Some areas of the refuge are closed to the public; respect all signs.

Jurisdiction Land owned by Government of Canada, managed by the British Columbia Waterfowl Society and Ducks Unlimited.

Regulations No camping, fires, dogs or cycling.

Facilities Flush toilets and picnic tables at the main parking lot; port-a-potties near the viewing tower.
Gift shop and membership office.
Warming hut near entrance.

Other Recreational Activities
Other Connections

History Realtor and brewer George C. Reifel bought property here in 1927 when it was separated, from Westham Island by natural river channels which dissected the island. Over the years he and his family contained more land, and created a family retreat and farm. His son, George H. Reifel, granted a lease to the British Columbia Waterfowl Society for a bird sanctuary to be named for his father. In 1972, the family sold and donated land to the federal government, who established the farm site as the Alaksen National Wildlife Area (not open to the public) with the remainder becoming the George C. Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary.

FMI British Columbia Waterfowl Society 604-946-6980

Publications A Nature Guide to Boundary Bay, by Anne Murray. Published by Nature Guides BC, 2006.

Tracing Our Past - A Heritage Guide to Boundary Bay, by Anne Murray. Published by Nature Guides BC, 2008.

Links
[Reifel Bird Sanctuary](#)
[Delta Naturalists](#)
[Nature Guides BC](#)
[Important Bird Areas](#)