

Vancouver Island Nature Viewing Region

Parksville/Qualicum Area

Hamilton Marsh



Floating Wharf at Hamilton Marsh: photo by Krista Kaptein



Hamilton Creek: photo by Krista Kaptein

The largest wetland in the mid-Vancouver Island area, Hamilton Marsh is a peaty marsh which supports a great diversity of life, including red and blue-listed species, and is an important reservoir for the surrounding French Creek watershed.

[Photo Gallery](#)

Geographical Description	Large wetland in the French Creek watershed, between Inland Island Highway 19 and Alberni Highway 4 at Qualicum.
Ecosection	Nanaimo Lowlands
Area/ Trail Length	Wetland= 37 ha. Surrounding area of interest = 390 ha. 2 km trails.
Seasons to Visit	Year round. Winter & spring for waterbirds, summer for dragonflies.
Habitat	Second growth forest; riparian, marsh, fen, shallow water, creek.

Viewing Highlights	<p>The marsh is home to over 120 species of birds, including Northern Pygmy Owl, American Bittern, Western Screech Owl, Band-tailed Pigeon, and Great Blue Heron. Sandhill Cranes have been seen in the marsh. Wood duck nesting boxes at marsh.</p> <p>Exceptional dragonfly habitat.</p> <p>Resident Cutthroat, Coho Salmon, and Three Spine Stickleback.</p> <p>Amphibians include Red-legged Frogs, Tree Frogs, Salamanders - Longtoe, Clouded, Northwest Redback, and others.</p> <p>Large Douglas-fir, Sitka spruce. Culturally modified cedar trees near start of eastern trail.</p>
Other Features	Water level markers in marsh.
Main Access	<p>From Inland Island Highway 19 at Qualicum, travel .9 km southwest on Alberni Highway 4, turn northwest on Hilliers Rd. South. Main parking area 1.2 km along Hilliers Rd. Right-hand-side trail leads directly to the marsh.</p> <p>Map</p>
Secondary Accesses	<p>Secondary parking area 160 m along Hilliers Rd. from junction with Alberni Highway 4. Trail follows along Hamilton Creek.</p>
Cautions	<p>Some trails will be wet or even flooded in winter & spring. Use caution at floating dock. Evidence of sign vandalism at eastern trailhead parking.</p>
Jurisdiction	Private forest company land (Island Timberlands) Trails may be used at your own risk.
Regulations	No dumping.
Facilities	Parking areas. Floating dock at marsh.
Other Recreational Activities	Trail biking.
Other Connections	
History	<p>Hamilton Marsh history</p> <p>Efforts to purchase the land by Ducks Unlimited Canada, the Regional District of Nanaimo & others have been unsuccessful to date.</p>
FMI Links	<p>Friends of French Creek Conservation Society, Hamilton Marsh Committee</p> <p>Visit Parksville/Qualicum Beach</p> <p>Arrowsmith Naturalists</p> <p>VI Wilds- Hamilton Marsh</p> <p>Hamilton Marsh</p>

