



## ALL SEASONS SELF-GUIDED TOUR MAP: GUIDELINES FOR TRAIL USE

All visitors to Maplewood Flats must follow the posted rules and regulations, including but not limited to:

- Have fun and remember to tag @MaplewoodFlats in your Instagram, Twitter and Facebook uploads.
- Washrooms are available during volunteer hours at both greeter hut and nature house.
- All visitors must stay on the trails. Failure to do so can

cause serious damage to the ecosystems and their inhabitants.

- There are no bikes allowed in Maplewood Flats. There is a bike rack located adjacent to greeter hut near the trail entrance.
- There are no dogs allowed in Maplewood Flats past the bridge. Even on a leash, they disturb sensitive wildlife.
- When taking a photo or making an observation, do not touch or

disturb the wildlife which you are observing (this includes no staging photographs).

- Please do not go on the beach or mudflats. These areas are particularly sensitive to disturbance.
- Report any emergencies to the police at 911.
- Keep coming back and consider joining the Wild Bird Trust online at [joinwbt.eventbrite.ca](http://joinwbt.eventbrite.ca)

## 1. THE HEDGEROW

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Tangles of brambles surrounding small trees and shrubs (alder, cottonwood, and rowan) form thickets and provide habitat for nesting birds and shelter for a wide variety of wildlife in all seasons. Prickly blackberry tangles are also excellent places for birds to seek shelter from danger. Fruit of Himalayan Blackberry (the common species here) is enjoyed by Black Bears in the summer and fall, and in the winter the dried berries provide House Finches, Song Sparrows, Fox Sparrows and Spotted Towhees with a ready source of food.

## 2. THE TIDAL FLATS

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The name “Maplewood Flats” refers to the offshore tidal flats, which provide rich habitats for a myriad of creatures including crabs, shrimp, clams and crustaceans which feed Western Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, Great Blue Heron, Killdeer, Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers. Point your binoculars seaward and observe the wooden pilings or ‘dolphins’ dotted with nest boxes. These are homes designed by Wild Bird Trust for nesting Purple Martins, a species of swallow. Every year they make a round trip migration of about 22,000 kilometres between Brazil and BC, in about 21 days.

## 3. OSPREY POINT

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From here you can view the realm of the Osprey, a fish-eating bird of prey that spends its winter in warmer climates, returning here to nest in spring. Look for it perched on a dolphin. These birds have amazing eyesight and can spot a fish from high above. They often free fall from a height, swooping upward just in time to scoop their finny prey from the water. Watch to see which way the Osprey carries its fish: head or tail first? In winter watch for Bald Eagles sitting on these dolphins. Look for Northern Harbour Seals and Northern River Otters offshore.

## 4. RIPARIAN ZONE (BARGE CHANNEL)

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Standing on the Westcoast Bridge you are now looking over the Barge Channel. In the 1940s it was used to transport gravel and now it is an important mini-estuary/stream ecosystem. Gaze down into the water.

The term riparian refers to vegetation overhanging the water. The Barge Channel is lined with red alder trees

and other shrubs, which provide cooling shade. Cooler water holds more oxygen than warmer water which is of vital importance to fish survival. Watch and listen for the Belted Kingfisher with its rattle-like call. Great Blue Herons perch in the trees overlooking the channel. If you are lucky you might spot its smaller, rarer cousin the Green Heron.

## 5. DRAGONFLY POND

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This tranquil pond is home to over 20 species of Dragonflies and Damselflies. Watch for ducks and ducklings in Spring and Summer. Rest on the bench overlooking the pond and listen to nature’s buzz.

## 6. THE EAST POND

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Looking out across the pond you will see a large wooden nest box for the locally scarce Wood Duck, a cavity nester which has suffered from loss of habitat and suitable nesting sites. Wood Ducks have successfully raised young here since the box was installed. Occasionally, this box can be used by other cavity nesters, such as mergansers.

## 7. POCKET MARSH

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Willows and mixed shrubs are the habitat of the Black-throated Gray Warbler, Wilson’s Warbler, Warbling Vireo and Yellow-rumped Warblers. This pocket marsh is a beehive of activity, especially in spring when the insects are eagerly consumed by birds. Willows here make good thickets for nesting and resting birds, and support insect larvae, such as sawflies, which are eaten by birds including warblers and chickadees. In Fall and Winter watch for roving flocks of Black-capped Chickadees and Ruby and Golden-crowned Kinglets.

## 8. OTTER POINT

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Do you notice a fishy smell? This is a haul-out for the Northern River Otter, a fish eating member of the weasel family, that is often seen along rocky shorelines. Throughout the seasons watch for Harlequin Ducks, Black Oystercatchers, Killdeer and Spotted Sandpipers.

## 9. OLD FIELD MEADOW

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This habitat consists of a variety of grasses and wild flowers such as lupine and cow parsnip, which are food plants for native butterflies. Think of it as pasture gone wild. It has been home to the Townsend’s Vole (a small

rodent) an important food in the diet of predatory birds such as owls and hawks. Watch for deer browsing in the meadow or at the forest edge. Check out the west pond (#7) from the viewing platform.

## 10. THE SALT MARSH AND PARK STREET MARSH

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The Salt Marsh and Park Street Marsh are important habitats not only for resident birds, but also for migratory species. Birds lead perilous lives and simply having shelter from nasty weather can be life saving. There are no trails to disturb its sanctuary for the deer that raise their young in the area. This distinct habitat at The Conservation Area at Maplewood Flats owes its life to a combination of marine and freshwater influences. Fed by vegetation filtered waters from the main installed wetlands, it is often full of wintering waterfowl, who feed on the abundant insect life and plant species sustaining them as they travel to distant breeding grounds in the spring.

## 11. THE WEST POND

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The Conservation Area at Maplewood Flats largest pond is visited by a variety of bird species. Bufflehead, Ring-necked Duck, Mallard, American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal and Hooded Merganser are seen mostly in late fall and winter. Can you spot a Northern Shoveler or Blue-winged Teal among them? Five species of swallow feed here in summer. Pacific Tree Frogs breed in the pond as do Rough-skinned Newts. Watch for Red-winged Blackbirds nesting here. Listen for the “witchity, witchity” song of the Common Yellowthroat. In spring, summer and fall listen for the “kiddikiddik, kiddikiddik” call of the rusty coloured Virginia Rail and try to spot it skulking in the reeds.

## 12. THE FOREST

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In spring and summer, warblers, vireos, and tanagers feed on abundant insect life in the upper canopy. The Red-eyed Vireo or “preacher bird” repeats its melodious robin-like song over and over again, thousands of times a day. A flash of colour on high may be a Western Tanager or Black-headed Grosbeak. In winter, watch for Great Horned Owl, Northern Pygmy-Owl, Barred Owl, and Northern Saw-whet Owl roosting in trail-side trees.