

Message to Visitors

Newcastle Island became a Provincial Marine Park in 1961 when the nearby city of Nanaimo granted it to the province who acquired the island from the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1955. The park is situated in Nanaimo harbour within site of both Vancouver Island and the towering Coastal Mountains of the Lower Mainland.

To stroll this beautiful island is to witness centuries of history. Indian middens offer evidence of at least two Salish Indian villages. Subsequent decades saw the island's fortunes rise and fall as it went through various incarnations as a fish-salting operation, a sandstone quarry, a shipyard and, later, a pleasure resort.

Newcastle Island Marine Park benefits from excellent nearby commercial facilities. Shopping, recreation and entertainment are available in the City of Nanaimo. During July the annual Nanaimo-to-Vancouver Bathtub Race departs from the Inner Harbour. Petroglyph Provincial Park, just south of the city has some excellent native rock carvings. There are a variety of marinas offering boats and fishing gear for salmon found in the surrounding waters. At Departure Bay is the Pacific Biological Research Station which has public displays.

How to Get to the Park

Newcastle Island Provincial Park is available only by boat. Once you've reached Nanaimo (mainland visitors can ferry over via Horseshoe Bay), take the foot-passenger ferry for the 10-minute ride from Mafeo-Sutton Park behind the Civic Arena, just north of downtown Nanaimo on the island highway (see map inset). Boat owners can simply tie up to the wharf at the entrance to Mark Bay. Berthing facilities for more than 50 boats are available at the island. For ferry service information call (250) 754-7893.

Park Fees

Open all year. Fees are collected for services from March to October. During the winter months, November to March, only the showers and washrooms are open. All other services or facilities are not provided.

Check-in: 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. **Check-out:** 11 a.m. The park opens at 7 a.m. and closes at 11 p.m.

For More Information

BC Parks

<http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/bcparks>



Ministry of Water, Land
and Air Protection

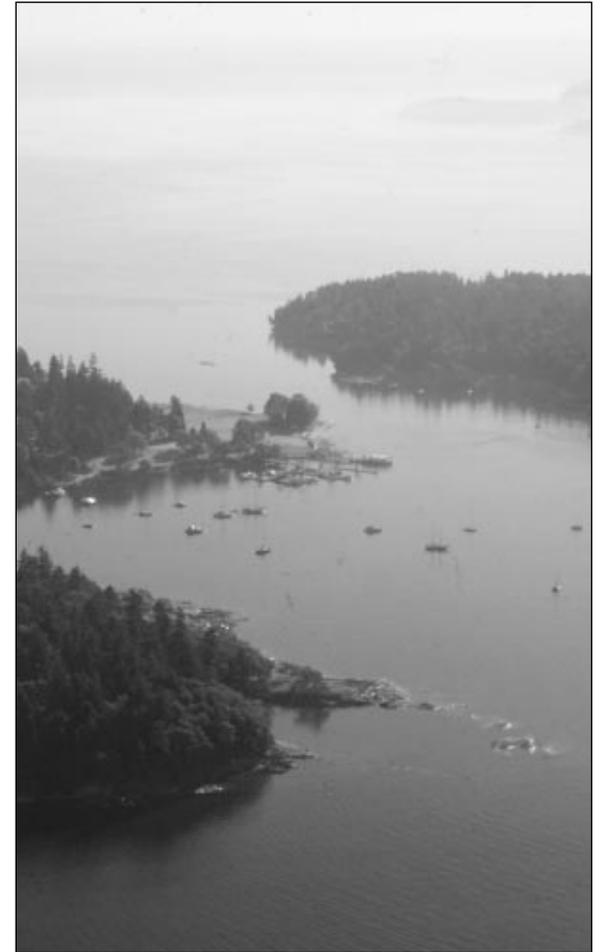


04/2002



Newcastle Island

PROVINCIAL PARK



Welcome. This 306-hectare marine park, rich in natural and cultural history, offers camping, day-use, hiking and boating. Access is by foot-passenger ferry from Nanaimo or boat to the public wharf.

Vancouver Island

Conservation

The park offers an island shoreline dominated by steep sandstone cliffs and ledges punctuated by beaches. Caves and caverns exist along the shoreline and provide a marked contrast to the interior of the island studded with Douglas-fir, arbutus, Garry oak and dogwood trees.

Flowers, trees and shrubs are part of the park's natural heritage, please do not damage or remove them.

History

A walk around Newcastle brings you to the site of Saysetsen Village, where recovered native artifacts record the life of a Salish Indian village that was deserted some time before coal was discovered in 1849. For centuries the Salish occupied this village between the months of September and April, leaving every spring to fish for cod and gather clams and tubers on Gabriola Island.

Although the Salish were among the island's first coal miners, they were soon "supplemented" by boatloads of British. These men christened the island after a famous coal town in northern England and worked the mines until 1883. Newcastle Island's supplies of sandstone lasted longer than the coal. This attractive material, used in many buildings on the west coast, was quarried from 1869 until 1932.

Newcastle Island played a role in the fishing industry of the province. By 1910 the Japanese, who dominated fisheries, established a small settlement just north of Shaft Point on the west side of the island. The saltery and shipyard operated until 1941 when all the Japanese-Canadians who lived along the coast were sent to internment camps in the Interior in the interests of national security during wartime.

In 1931 the Canadian Pacific Steamship Company purchased the island and operated it as a pleasure resort, building a dance pavilion (now the visitor centre), teahouse, picnic areas, change-houses, soccer field and a wading pool. An old ship named Charmer (later replaced by the Princess Victoria) was tied to the dock at Mark Bay (Echo Bay) and served as a floating hotel. The island became very popular for company picnics and Sunday outings, with ships from Vancouver bringing as many as 1,500 people at a time. The advent of the Second World War caused a decrease in the number of ships available for pleasure excursions and Newcastle Island suffered a consequent decline in popularity.

The Pavilion

The Pavilion was the focal point of Newcastle Island from 1931 until the Second World War caused a decline in the popularity of the island's holiday resort. Now grandly restored, the Pavilion has a dance floor and full restaurant amenities. The Pavilion may be booked for use by groups and organizations. For information call (250) 755-1132 (May to September) and (250) 478-9414 during the rest of the year.

Wildlife

Park users should always be aware of racoons and other wildlife. Never feed or approach them.

Wood ticks are most prevalent between March and June. These potentially disease-carrying parasites live in tall grass and low shrubs and seek out warm-blooded hosts. Protect your legs by wearing gaiters or pants tucked into socks. After any outdoor activity, thoroughly examine yourself, children and pets. If you find a tick embedded in your skin, the best way to remove it is by grasping and pulling it, gently, straight up and out with a small pair of tweezers, and disinfecting the site with rubbing alcohol. You may wish to save the tick in a small plastic or glass container for later inspection by your doctor especially if a fever develops, or the area around the bite appears to be infected.

What You Should Know



The public wharf has accommodation for over 50 boats.



There are 18 walk-in campsites at this park available on a first-come, first-served basis.



There are no wilderness/walk-in campsites at this park.



There are group campsites available. For more information refer to the BC Parks website or call (250) 754-7893.



There is a day-use/picnicking area with picnic tables.



The Pavilion and some facilities in the park are wheelchair accessible. Contact the Regional Office for more information.



Cold water taps are located throughout the park. Taps are shut off during the off season.



9 pit and 12 flush toilets are located throughout this park.



There are shower facilities at this park.



Firewood may be available for purchase. Campfire pits are provided. Group campfire facilities and/or limited burning hours may be designated at some campgrounds. Fire bans may be implemented during extremely hot weather conditions. Be prepared to bring a portable stove for cooking.



There is a well-developed trail system that provides access to all locations on the island. Of special interest is Nares Point at the northwest tip of the island, which includes the spectacular views from Giovando Lookout.

For your own safety and preservation of the park, obey posted signs and keep to designated trails. Shortcutting trails destroys plant life and soil structure.



There is an adventure playground at this park.



Food service is available in the Pavilion from early May to early September



Pleasant swimming is offered at Kanaka Bay and off of the dock area. There are no lifeguards on duty at provincial parks.



Canoeing and kayaking are permitted.



Children will enjoy fishing from the wharf. Salmon fishing in nearby waters can be rewarding. All anglers must have a valid tidal waters sport fishing licence for salt-water fishing or a valid non-tidal licence for fresh-water fishing. For salt-water licences, please refer to the current *BC Tidal Waters Sport Fishing Guide*. For fresh-water licences, please refer to the current *BC Environment Fishing Regulations Synopsis*.



Bicycles are permitted on the Kanaka Bay and Mallard Lake trails only and may not be ridden anywhere else in the park.



No horseback riding at this park.



Pets/domestic animals must be on a leash at all times and are not allowed in beach areas or park buildings. You are responsible for their behavior and must dispose of their excrement.