

Point Pleasant Park

01

Welcome to your Point Pleasant Park BioKit Circuit. Use the activities in this circuit, along with the HRM Urban BioKit, to explore the natural treasures and unique places in this park – utilizing your keen powers of observation. In addition to the material needed for the BioKit, you will need a **clear plastic jar**.

Location: Point Pleasant Park is located at 5718 Point Pleasant Drive on the southern tip of the Halifax Peninsula. The park is about 2.5 kilometres from downtown Halifax.

Pond Life



GPS: N 44° 37.606' W 63° 34.217'

Scientists believe that there may still be undiscovered species of amphibians living in Canada. So you never know what mysteries may lie below the murky waters of a pond!



Birch Road Pond

Photo: © HRM

Look for pond life!

- 1) Start by examining the pond's edge.
- 2) Choose a mid-sized rock close to the side of the pond and flip it over.
- 3) Quickly put your plastic jar upside down on muddy ground.
- 4) Count the number of creatures you see around the jar and inside of it.
- 5) Return the rock exactly as you found it.

Be careful – many of these animals are very delicate!

How many creatures did you count? _____

How many different species did you find? _____

Describe the most common species you saw and name it, if possible. If you don't know the name, make one up! _____

Leopard frog

Photo: © Parks Canada, W. Lynch



HISTORY

Point Pleasant Park is one of the most notable natural landmarks in Halifax. It is home to a rich natural ecosystem and a fascinating military history. Although many of the fortifications present in the park were rebuilt or modified several times over the last 200 years, some have fallen into decay and are being reclaimed by nature. In 1866, the British military offered the land to the City on a 999-year lease.

Today, despite natural disturbances such as Hurricane Juan and the spread of invasive species, like the brown spruce longhorn beetle, the park is still home to a large, diverse community of plants and animals. The biodiversity of this park includes:

- 153 species of birds, 39 of which have nested here
- 6 or more species of mammals
- 20 species of fish (in the waters around the park)
- 4 species of amphibians and several reptiles



Map: © HRM

OLD WALLS

2 At Prince of Wales Road Wall

GPS: N 44° 37.346' W 63° 34.017'

Throughout Point Pleasant Park, some sections of the path and road are supported by stone walls. Many of these walls were constructed in the 1800s, to make transportation in Point Pleasant easier for the military. This wall is one example of several military structures that remain in Point Pleasant. Walk off the path to get closer to the wall.

Try peering between the cracks and holes in the stone.

Observe how, over time, this wall has become part of nature by creating a habitat for small animals and plants.

Notice the burrows of insects and possibly even rodents in the wall, especially at the bottom.



Photo: © HRM

On the Edge

3 GPS: N 44° 37.215' W 63° 33.918'

The majority of trees on the ocean-side were blown over when Point Pleasant was hit by Hurricane Juan. With the loss of large trees, plants such as grasses and shrubs are beginning to receive more sunlight and rain, allowing them to flourish. Two different worlds are now present on either side of the path; take your time to explore both.



Plains World Photo: © HRM

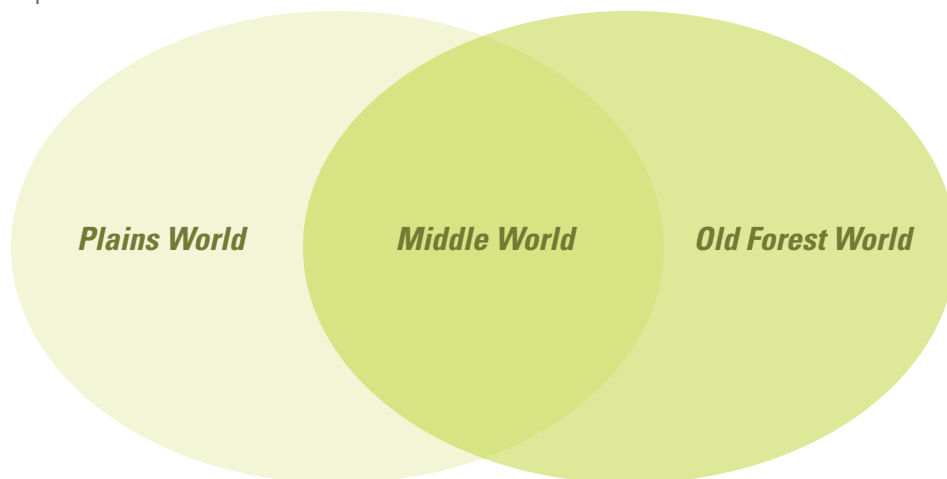


Old Forest World Photo: © Parks Canada, S. Leslie

Two worlds

When entering the "old" forest, imagine yourself walking through a gateway between two worlds. Think about how this world is different from "Plains World" on the ocean-side of the path. Observe the animals, plants, ground and sky in both worlds, to truly appreciate their differences.

1. Write down five characteristics of the "Plains World," in the light green circle below. Use at least one of your five senses to describe each characteristic.
2. Write down five characteristics of the "Old Forest World," in the dark green circle below. Again, use your senses.
3. Standing in between the two worlds, write down what you see or feel in the "Middle World" space.



Can you clearly see two different worlds (Yes/No)? _____



02

Citizen Science: Forest Growth

Close to Rear Admiral Walter Hose Memorial

GPS: N 44° 37.251' W 63° 33.860'

In 2003, a great storm called Hurricane Juan devastated much of the forest in Point Pleasant Park. At one time, everything you now see in front of you was a forest. Today, several years after the hurricane, the forest is slowly beginning to grow back.



Point Pleasant Park after Hurricane Juan

Photo: © Parks Canada

Take a photo of the new forest in front of you to help complete your BioKit challenge. Keep your photo for comparisons when you return to the forest in coming years.

SHORELINE BINGO

4 On the beach, close to Rear Admiral Walter Hose Memorial GPS: N 44° 37.070' W 63° 33.996'

Explore the shoreline and try to find as many plants and animals as possible. The bingo chart below contains a variety of species, and various objects, that are commonly seen in or around Point Pleasant Park. For each one that you observe, enter an "X" in the box. Complete the challenge by doing the following:

1. Check off a whole row or column.
2. Find more than 14 of the objects in the bingo chart.
3. **Bonus:** Check one box for every two plant species or every five animal species you find that are not listed below.

<input type="checkbox"/> Shorebird Photo: © Getty Images	<input type="checkbox"/> Kelp Photo: © Parks Canada, S. Leslie	<input type="checkbox"/> Blue mussels' shells Photo: © Parks Canada, J. Butterill	<input type="checkbox"/> Crab Photo: © Parks Canada, J. G. Beliveau	<input type="checkbox"/> Sea urchin Photo: © Parks Canada, E. Le Bel
				
<input type="checkbox"/> Starfish Photo: © Parks Canada, L. Falardeau	<input type="checkbox"/> Duck Photo: © Parks Canada, W. Lynch	<input type="checkbox"/> Floating debris Photo: © Getty Images	<input type="checkbox"/> Garbage (pick up a piece) Photo: © Getty Images	<input type="checkbox"/> Barnacles
				
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Blue Heron Photo: © Parks Canada, A. Guindon	<input type="checkbox"/> Garbage (pick up a piece) Photo: © Getty Images	<input type="checkbox"/> Algae Photo: © Parks Canada, J. Pleau	<input type="checkbox"/> Seal Photo: © Getty Images	<input type="checkbox"/> Gull Photo: © Parks Canada, B. Morin
				
<input type="checkbox"/> Empty shell Photo: © Parks Canada, J. Butterill	<input type="checkbox"/> Kingfisher	<input type="checkbox"/> Garbage (pick up a piece) Photo: © Getty Images	<input type="checkbox"/> Empty crab shell Photo: © Parks Canada, L. Falardeau	<input type="checkbox"/> Boat Photo: © Getty Images
				

Note: Always use gloves when handling sea garbage!



BIRD FEEDERS

Bird feeders are very common in Point Pleasant Park, and are a great way to observe urban wildlife in action. They are the centre of bird activity, especially during winter. Be patient and you will probably encounter a common songbird, the Black-capped Chickadee. These small, friendly birds are identifiable by their black caps and white cheeks, as well as their distinct song pattern "chickadee-dee-dee-dee."

Just For Fun!

Try building a bird feeder for your backyard; it's easy. To find out how, consult the Resources section at the end of this page.

Did You Know...

Hundreds of years ago, there were almost no trees in Point Pleasant Park. The British military cut them down so that cannons could be aimed at potential enemies sailing into the harbour. As well, many of the old trees were cut down to make forts and ship masts.

Resources:

- Point Pleasant Park
pointpleasantpark.ca
- Shakespeare by the Sea
Theatre Company
shakespearebythesea.ca
- How to build a birdfeeder
Project FeederWatch
bsc-eoc.org/volunteer/pfw
- Hinterland Who's Who
www.ca/hww2.asp?id=224
- Biosphere
ec.gc.ca/biosphere

Mi'kmaw Feast

5 **Close to the Chain Rock Battery**
GPS: N 44° 37.215' W 63° 33.918'

This part of the park is a very special, ancient space that was used by the Mi'kmaq First Nations as the site of their annual feast. Many ancient Mi'kmaw stories describe this site as a place of peaceful meetings between tribes.

The Mi'kmaq, like many First Nations people, lived off the land and used many species of plants and animals for food, medicine and in traditional ceremony. Many of the plant species used by the Mi'kmaq still grow in this park. **Explore** the surrounding forest and try to **identify some plants** traditionally used by the Mi'kmaq using the pictures below.

Photo: © Parks Canada, P. Lalonde



Alder: The alder was used as medicine for rheumatism, stomach and kidney ailments, fever, and headaches.

Photo: © Parks Canada, M. Labrador



Threeleaf goldthread: This plant was used as medicine for blood purification, diarrhea, colds, influenza and diabetes. It was also used to treat external sores such as chapped lips and minor cuts and scrapes.

Photo: © Parks Canada, J. Pleau



Ground juniper: This plant is commonly found in Nova Scotia. The Mi'kmaq used it to make a tonic for kidney ailments and bladder infections. The tonic was made by boiling the ends of juniper twigs.

Photo: © Parks Canada, E. Le Bel



Bunchberry: This plant was used to treat kidney ailments and was given to children in tea form to prevent bedwetting. Bunchberry leaves were also applied to wounds to stop bleeding and promote healing.