



View of Kellys Beach from the boardwalk

► KOUCHIBOUGUAC

NEW BRUNSWICK

ESTABLISHED 1969

239 sq km/59,000 acres

Kouchibouguac National Park covers an area of protected land on the eastern shore of New Brunswick. Representative of the maritime plain natural region and the Atlantic-Gulf of St. Lawrence marine region, it features a number of fascinating ecosystems including the Acadian forest, bogs, salt marshes, tidal rivers, lagoons, open fields, and approximately 25 km (15 mi) of fragile white-sand dunes.

Pronounced *koʊ-she-boo-gwack*, Kouchibouguac is a Mi'kmaq word meaning “river of long tides.” There are 26 known aboriginal archaeological sites in the park—a testimony to the park’s rich cultural history. Acadian, Irish, and English settlers also lived and worked here, and their legacy lives on.

More than half of the park is occupied by forests, including significant stands of rare forest vegetation that

are part of the Acadian forest. Peat bogs cover another 21 percent of the park. These bogs are about 5,000 years old and measure up to 6 m (20 ft) deep at the domed centres of the bogs. Although salt marshes are not a large part of the park, 72 plant species have been identified. As well, several species of waterfowl breed here.

The Barrier Islands—a unique feature that includes a series of dune

systems—span a small but significant portion of the park. Stretching 25 km (15 mi), these dune systems shelter estuaries, lagoons, and salt marshes in an intensely dynamic coastal environment. Influenced by the presence of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the dunes are ever changing due to the influence of tides, storms, and shifting sands.

The diverse wildlife and flora in the park includes salmon, eel, piping plovers, common terns, ospreys, mussels, crabs, and oysters along with widgeon grass and eelgrass. There are nine rare plants including the rayless aster and southern tway-blade. Recreational clam harvesting is encouraged and enjoyed.

How to Get There

The park is located in Kent County on New Brunswick’s central eastern shore in an area known as the Acadian Coastal Drive. It is a one-hour drive north from Moncton, a four-hour drive from the Quebec border, or a four-hour drive northeast of Maine. Take Hwy. 15 to Shediac and then either Hwy. 11 heading north or the more scenic Rte. 134.

When to Go

The park is open year-round. Although the warmer months (May–Oct.) are the most popular, people are discovering the joy of winter activities. There are three trails specifically designated for winter walking, three for snowshoeing, and a 22-km (14 mi) groomed trail system for cross-country skiing. Cozy warm-up huts with wood stoves are strategically placed along the trails, and winterized camping shelters are accessible by ski or snowshoe. Skis, snowshoes, and sleds for transporting young children or gear are available for rent.

How to Visit

Start at the visitor reception centre and plan to spend time at the new interpretive centre. Here you will get an overview of the natural aspects of the park, learn how it was created, and experience the four seasons through a lively audiovisual presentation. At the visitor centre you will also find detailed information about park activities.

If you have two or more days to spend, Kouchibouguac has 311 campsites (both serviced and unserviced) as well as semiprimitive campsites for those who want to rough it—but not too much. Primitive campsites, accessible only by foot, bike, kayak, or canoe, are available for those who *really* want to rough it. Dune camping, referred to as “no impact camping,” is also an option but special conditions apply. For example, no open fires are allowed, walking paths are restricted, and tents must be placed on sand and 5 m (16 ft) away from any vegetation.

The park offers Step-on-Guide Services for motorcoach tours, organized groups, or families. Simply request that a park interpreter accompany you on a specific trail or for a particular activity and this will be arranged (service available in spring,



Bicycling along a summer path



summer, and fall seasons only; advance notice is required).

HIKING & KAYAKING

With 60 km (37 mi) of bikeways, Kouchibouguac is recognized as one of the best biking destinations in Atlantic Canada. The trails are wide, relatively flat, and topped with fine gravel. If you plan to spend one day, rent a bike and choose one of the flat cycling loops. They range from 14 to 27 km (9–17 mi) and boast spectacular scenery.

If paddling is your style, rent a canoe or kayak and explore the lagoons or paddle along the **Kouchibouguac River** and see the **Great Leaning Red Pine Tree** growing out of a sandstone outcropping. The tree stretches horizontally over the river, and you can actually paddle underneath it. With eight Class I (flat-water) rivers flowing into the park, canoeing and kayaking are ideal and safe activities.

VOYAGEUR CANOE MARINE ADVENTURE

3 hours

For a unique adventure, book a three-hour excursion with a park interpreter and join a few others in the “grand canoe” for a trek to the **Barrier Islands**, where you’ll see hundreds of grey seals. There are approximately 700 in the colony. Along the way you’ll also likely see ospreys, bald eagles, and other bird species including the second largest tern colony in North America. Paddling experience is not necessary; age limit is six years and up. Reservations are highly recommended as the canoe can only accommodate eight people at a time. (506) 876-2443. Cost \$30 per

person. 186 Rte 117, Kouchibouguac, NB E4X 2P1.

VISITING WITH KIDS

If you are visiting with children, consider going to **Kelly's Beach**, where you can enjoy a swim, take part in the Puppet Theatre presentation, or join a park interpreter for a hands-on activity to see what’s lurking in a salt-water lagoon. Through the Lagoon Life Program, children learn all about crabs, sticklebacks, and moon snails.

Another option is to buy a picnic lunch at Kelly's Beach Canteen then head to **Callanders Beach** (day-use area), a great place for young children as the water is warm and shallow. If you have time, check out the self-guided **Mi'kmaq Cedar Trail**. Chances are you'll be able to join a First Nation interpreter for a Mi'kmaq cultural experience in a wigwam.

Kids aged six to ten love the Young Naturalist Club, which exposes them



Relaxing at a winter shelter

KOUCHIBOUGUAC NATIONAL PARK

(Parc national Kouchibouguac)

INFORMATION & ACTIVITIES

VISITOR CENTRE

Visitor Reception Centre Phone (506) 876-2443. Open mid-May to mid-October. Park attendants available from December to March.

SEASONS & ACCESSIBILITY

Park open year-round. Administration office open weekdays year-round.

HEADQUARTERS

186 Rte. 117, Kouchibouguac National Park, NB E4X 2P1. Phone (506) 876-2443. www.parkscanada.gc.ca/kouchibouguac.

FRIENDS OF KOUCHIBOUGUAC

Amica, Inc. Kouchibouguac National Park, 186 Rte. 117, Unit 1, Kouchibouguac National Park, NB E4X 2P1. Phone (506) 876-1234. amica@nbnet.nb.ca; www.friendsofkouchibouguac.ca.

ENTRANCE FEES

\$8 per person, \$20 per group per day; \$39 per person, \$98 per group per season. Reduced rates April to mid-June and September to end of November.

PETS

Pets must be leashed and attended at all times. Pets are not permitted on the barrier islands or on the boardwalks leading to the barrier islands.

ACCESSIBLE SERVICES

The **Salt Marsh Trail, Mi'kmaq Cedar Trail**, and boardwalk at **Kellys Beach** are wheelchair accessible. All washroom facilities are also wheelchair accessible.

THINGS TO DO

Hiking; biking (helmets mandatory); swimming (warm waters in Kouchibouguac inner bay, cooler waters in the Northumberland Strait); canoeing; and kayaking.

Bicycles and boating equipment available for rent at the Ryans Recreation Equipment Rental Centre (mid-May–mid-Sept.) near South Kouchibouguac Campground. Fishing permits \$10 per day, \$34 per year.

In winter, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and sledding. Cross-country skiing trail use \$8 per person, \$20 per group per day; \$39 per person, \$98 per group per season.

to new adventures and challenges. Children and adults can also take part in the Citizen Science Program while contributing to the park's ecological integrity. Join a group and participate in a mission to count aquatic species from the estuaries.

DARK-SKY DELIGHTS

In 2009, the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada designated Kouchibouguac a Dark Sky Preserve (see pp. 58–59). This means the park minimizes lighting at night and encourages public awareness of the cultural heritage of the night

sky. As a bonus, one of the park's interpreters is an expert astronomer and leads some of the nighttime programs for visitors.

During one of these programs, you may witness the wonders of a meteor shower, glimpse planets, and hear stories, legends, and myths from Mi'kmaq folklore and as portrayed by the stars. Visitors are also introduced to the basics of astronomy and learn why the dark sky is important to the birds, bats, insects, and amphibians that live in Kouchibouguac. You can also observe Saturn's rings, craters on the moon, galaxies, and nebulae by using the park's special light-gathering telescopes.

SPECIAL ADVISORIES

- Wear minimum SPF 15 sunscreen at Kellys Beach; there is no natural shade.
- Contact the visitor centre to inquire about jellyfish conditions in the beaches.

OVERNIGHT BACKPACKING

Fees for backcountry use and camping: \$10 per person per night, \$69 per person per year. Eight primitive campsites at **Petit-Large** open year-round and accessible by bicycle or on foot. Four canoe campsites at **Pointe-à-Maxime** accessible only by canoe and/or kayak. Four canoe campsites at **Sipu** accessible by canoe or on foot. Parking lot camping, \$19 per vehicle per night, available mid-October to April.

CAMPGROUNDS

South Kouchibouguac, open mid-May to mid-October, 311 frontcountry sites for tents and RVs; 127 have electrical hookups. Campground has fireplaces, kitchen shelters, picnic tables, playgrounds, washrooms, and showers. Unserviced campsites with washroom building (toilets and showers) \$27–\$32 per night. \$16 per night for primitive and backcountry camping. Rustic shelters available early December to late March; stove and firewood provided; accessible only by

skiing and snowshoeing. **Côte-à-Fabien**, open mid-June to early September, 32 campsites with fireplaces, picnic tables, and pit toilets. Group camping \$5 per person per night. For reservations call (506) 876-2443.

HOTELS, MOTELS, & INNS

(unless otherwise noted, rates are for a 2-person double, high season, in Canadian dollars)

Outside the park:

Auberge Le Vieux Presbytère Bouctouche, NB E4S 3B8. (506) 743-5568 or (866) 743-1880. aubergevp@nb.aibn.com; www.vieuxpresbytere.nb.ca. \$109–\$165.

Kouchibouguac Resort 10983 Rte. 134, St. Louis, NB E4X 1W6. (506) 876-4317 or (888) 524-3200. www.kouch.com. Rooms \$170–\$180, cottages \$115–\$135, and condo-chalets \$125–145.

Maison Tait House 293 Main St., Shediac, NB E4P 2A8. (506) 532-4233 or (888) 532-4233. Rooms start at \$159.

EXCURSION

BOISHÉBERT NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE MIRAMICHI, NB



During the deportation of 1755, many Acadians followed French-Canadian officer Charles Deschamps de Boishébert, taking refuge on an island of the same name. Now Beaubears Island, it achieved fame for its shipbuilding in the early 19th century. The island contains part of an old-growth Acadian forest and can be reached via a short shuttle ferry (foot passengers only) from Nelson-Miramichi. (506) 876-2443. 52 km (32.1 mi) northwest of Kouchibouguac via Hwy. 134.