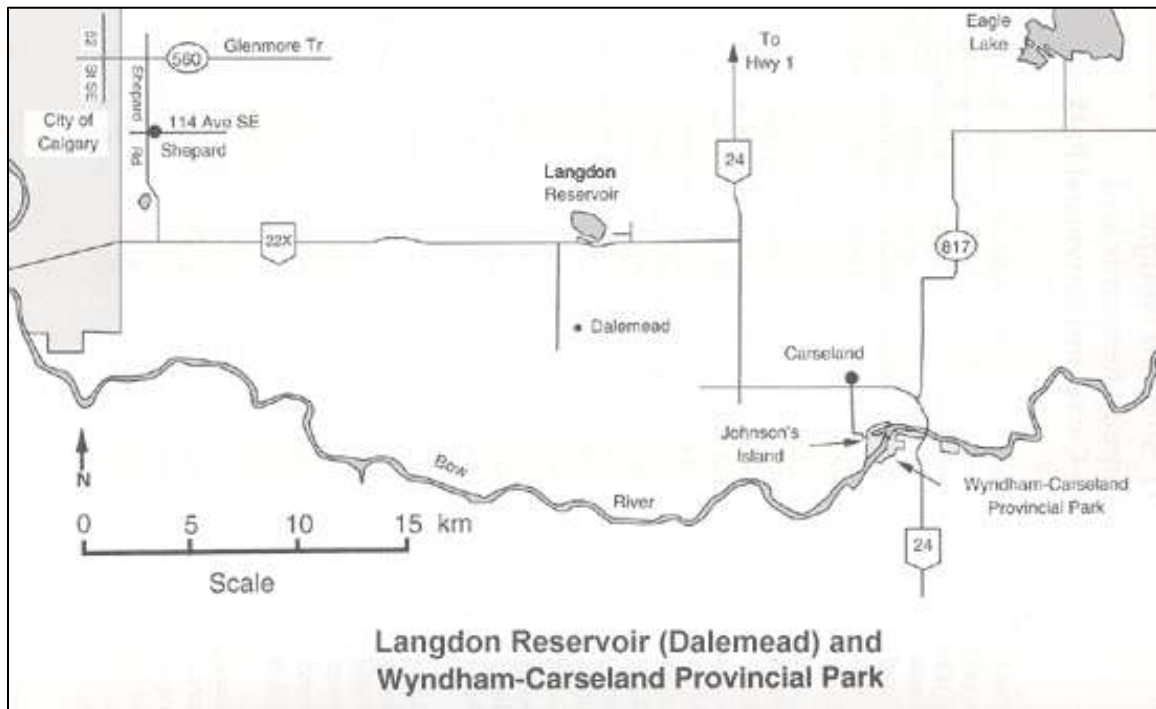


Langdon Reservoir and Wyndham-Carseland Provincial Park by Andrew Slater & Dave Otway – revised 2009 and Sep/2012

This route is most rewarding during the migration months (late March to early June and from mid-July to late October) when large numbers of waterfowl and shorebirds should be found, together with good numbers of raptors. At least five hours are needed to cover the 120 km roundtrip to Johnson's Island. During the peak fall migration period, Langdon Reservoir (formerly Dalemead Reservoir) and the Carseland Weir area may each require that amount of time to bird thoroughly.

Drive east on Hwy. 22X to the junction with an unnumbered road to the right marked "Langdon". Ahead of you the road begins a gentle curve. Slow down and watch for a dirt track on the left, 0.8 km past the Langdon junction. Although there are no signs posted, this is the access to the southwestern corner of Langdon Reservoir. Turn left here and then right, parallel to the fence. If the track looks at all muddy, PARK HERE AND WALK, as it has mired several unwary birders' vehicles. If the track is dry, it can be safely, but slowly, driven for 0.6 km to a stile through the fence marked with a "No Propellers" sign, which presumably means that powerboats are prohibited. Lighting conditions are best here in the afternoon.



Langdon Reservoir is a large irrigation storage reservoir that is usually full of water in spring and early summer, but has a reduced level in late summer and fall. Consequently, there is an abundance of waterfowl present during spring migration, but usually few shorebirds.

During fall migration however, large numbers of many species are present. In recent years this has been probably the best location for fall shorebirds in the Calgary Region. The area most commonly birded is the southern one third of the shoreline, as the easiest access points are at the southeastern and southwestern corners. However, if sufficient time is available it would probably be worthwhile walking north along the eastern and western shorelines. There is virtually no cover present - the whole area behind the shoreline consists of rough grassland and weedy areas, with cultivated fields beyond.

To reach the southeastern access point from the stile, return to the highway, turn left and continue 2.6 km east past the power lines, to the first road heading north. Turn left here then, immediately before the bridge over the irrigation canal, turn left again onto a narrow dirt road (only if the road surface is bare and dry) along the south side of the canal to a parking area and another stile. It is necessary to walk for a short distance along the canal bank (this can be good for shorebirds when the water level is low) to reach the reservoir embankment. The light is best at this access point early in the morning.

Retrace your route back to Hwy. 22X, turn left and continue eastward to the intersection with Hwy. 24. Turn right (south), then left at the 4-way stop with a red flashing light, following Hwy. 24. The village of Carseland with its grain elevators is now visible ahead on the left.

Opposite the access road to the village, turn right onto a gravel road marked Johnson's Island (Carseland Weir). This road is the entrance to a reliable migrant trap for waterfowl, shorebirds and passerines. About 2.3 km south of the highway, the gravel road turns sharply left through a Texas gate and proceeds 0.8 km eastward along the edge of the escarpment, with spectacular views of the Bow River valley. Then it makes a hairpin turn to the right and descends to the valley bottom by means of switchbacks. At the bottom of the hill, follow the right fork to the parking area by the river's edge. This 7 km roundtrip from the highway is not recommended after a heavy rain or snowfall, when the switchback portion may not be passable by automobiles.

The reservoir formed in the Bow River by the weir is one of the first

places in the Calgary Region to become ice-free in spring, and usually has a good assortment of waterfowl present before the end of March.

North of the parking area, along the bottom of the escarpment, is a backwater channel. The mudflats here can be very productive for shorebirds in both spring and fall. The trail which heads east along the shore of the backwater reaches the river downstream of the weir; the gravel bars here are used for resting by several species of gulls, ducks and Canada Geese. Between the gravel bars and the shore are more mudflats. This is the best location in the immediate vicinity for shorebirds. The trail may be followed southward along the river's edge to the weir and along the top of the levee back to your vehicle.

If time is short, you can retrace your route up the escarpment back to Hwy. 24 where you turn left for the return to Calgary. The quickest route is via Hwy. 22X to Hwy. 2. An alternative route to north Calgary would be to continue north on Hwy. 24 to the Trans-Canada Highway (Hwy. 1).

If time permits during late August, warbler watching is usually better on the south side of the Bow River than at Johnson's Island. From Carseland, turn right (east) onto Hwy. 24 and continue past S.R. 817, cross over the bridge and watch for the entrance to Wyndham-Carseland Provincial Park on the right hand side of the road (5 km). The access road forks immediately, with the left fork leading through open farmland to a parking area at the south end of the weir; good views of waterbirds can be obtained from here.

The right fork enters the park (day use free), and turns left immediately on entering the campground. This is situated in a large tract of riparian woodland. The road continues westward for about 2 km through the campground before emerging into a parking and picnic area by the river, opposite the gravel bars. A wide variety of warblers and other small woodland birds may be seen from the riverbank trail, which passes through abundant dogwood and willow shrubbery. Watch for raptors along the escarpment at any season. Upstream towards the weir, the trail passes through a lawn area with scattered bushes-this can be rewarding for sparrows.

There are pit toilets at the picnic area and throughout the campground. Gas and food are available in Carseland.

Caution: During the fall waterfowl hunting season, which runs from mid-September to early December seven days a week, locations such

as Langdon Reservoir, Carseland Weir, Eagle, Namaka and McGregor lakes, and the Brooks area can be heavily shot over.

The Shepard area is now built up and birding opportunities in that area are fewer.