

TRAIL 13

→ Lake Newell/Kitsim

The area south and west of Brooks contains two major reservoirs, Lake Newell and Kitsim Reservoir. (Kitsim lies west of Highway 36 but is so close to Brooks and is such a good birding area it is necessary to include it in this trail guide.) The description proceeds in a westerly direction from Brooks and then circles in a counter clockwise direction. The opposite direction works equally well.

From Brooks take the Trans Canada Highway west turning south on Hwy 36. Take the west turnoff to Cassils, viewing the sloughs along this road for shorebirds. Continue on TP RD 190 to a T intersection. Turn left, and then right after crossing the railway tracks. Proceed approximately 5 km west to the turnoff to Antelope Creek Ranch **(A)**. This ranch welcomes birders and ecotourists to their trails through grasslands and large wetlands. Access map and information is available on their website: www.antelopecreekranch.ca. This ranch is maintained by Alberta Fish and Game Association to demonstrate how ranching, gas production and wildlife can co-exist.

From Cassils, follow RGE RD 155 (turns into RGE RD 160A) south as far as Hwy 539. Several sloughs **(B)** along this road are excellent for shorebirds. Ferruginous Hawk and Burrowing Owl have also been seen along this road. Once you arrive at Hwy 539 turn right (west) and follow the highway until you get to the Kitsim Reservoir inflow canal. Follow the canal, on the right bank (west side) to the Kitsim Reservoir **(C)** and then drive along the dam to the east end and out to Hwy 36. Again depending on water levels, the southwest end of Kitsim Reservoir can be an excellent habitat for shorebirds. Caspian Tern and American Bittern are often found here. On the reservoir itself, in addition to a large variety of waterfowl, a good colony of Western Grebe nest here and Clark's Grebe have been found as well. On the east side of Kitsim one can find a variety of sparrows as well as Chestnut-collared Longspur.

After completing the Kitsim portion of Trail 13 turn right (south) onto Hwy 36 and then left (east) onto Hwy 873, which travels along the south side of Lake Newell. Follow Hwy 873 east and then north. Along the northern portion of the road view the sloughs **(D)**, particularly on the west side of the highway, for a variety of shorebirds and other species. A 1.6 km side trip east on Hwy 535 could be worthwhile as the sloughs **(E)** on either side of the highway have had good concentrations of migrating shorebirds. As one travels north along Hwy 873 you get to a turnoff to Kinbrook Island Provincial Park **(F)**. This large and very busy park has campgrounds, playgrounds, boat docks, a swimming area and a small store and confectionary. The campground and cabin area is heavily treed with mature poplars and can produce a wide variety of passerines. Although the causeway into the park contains abundant waterfowl, it would be much safer to bird this area from the well-maintained adjacent trails. The trail on the north end of the Park follows a spit between the main lake and the wetlands to the east. This trail should be hiked as it can turn up a good variety of species. In the past this trail has produced Long-eared Owl along with a variety of passerines and waterfowl.

Black-crowned Night-Heron
Bob Frew

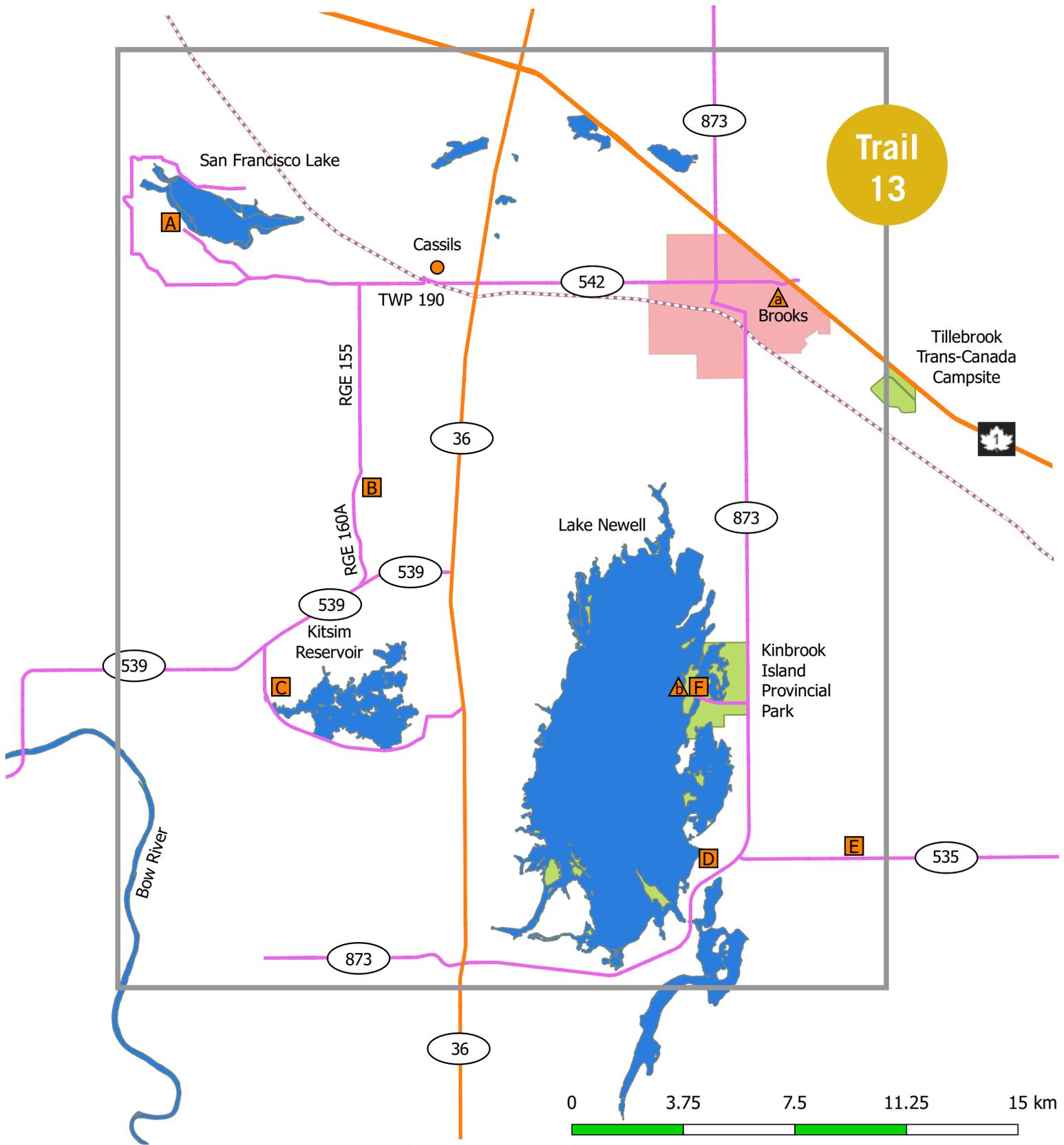


American Bittern
Milt Spitzer



Kitsim Reservoir
Milt Spitzer





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| | Observation Points | | Amenities |
| | Antelope Creek Ranch | | Brooks: all amenities |
| | Sloughs along Rge. Rd. 160A | | Kinbrook Island Provincial Park: camping, restrooms and store* |
| | Kitsim Reservoir | | |
| | Sloughs southeast side of Lake Newell | | |
| | Shorebird Slough on either side of Hwy. 535 | | |
| | Kinbrook Island Provincial Park | | |

*Some light snacks not open all the time.

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