

## To Reach the Park

Mira River Provincial Park is located 22 km (14 mi.) from Sydney and 17 km (11 mi.) from The Fortress of Louisbourg. Take Exit 8 off Hwy 125 and follow Hwy 22. Turn left on Brickyard Road and drive 3 km to the park entrance.



### RESERVATIONS 1-888-544-3434

9:00 am to 11:00 pm AT (7 days a week)

[www.novascotiaparks.ca](http://www.novascotiaparks.ca) (24 hours)

### FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Parks and Recreation Division  
Department of Natural Resources  
RR # 1, Belmont,  
Nova Scotia B0M 1C0  
(902) 662-3030  
parkinfo@gov.ns.ca

Department of Natural Resources  
300 Mountain Road  
Sydney, Nova Scotia  
B1L 1A9  
(902) 563-3370

Mira River Provincial Park  
(902) 563-3373  
(mid-June – mid-September)

  
NOVA SCOTIA  
Natural Resources

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# Mira River

## PROVINCIAL PARK



*Mira River Provincial Park is situated on the edge of the beautiful Mira River and perfectly placed to showcase Cape Breton's rich natural and cultural heritage. Located just minutes from both the Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Site and Sydney's best attractions, the park offers an attractive setting for a range of outdoor activities such as camping, canoeing, kayaking, swimming, or simply relaxing. Let the park be your gateway to the Mira, one of Nova Scotia's longest and widest rivers and immortalized in story and song – a perennial favourite with boaters and anglers alike.*

**Cultural History** The first inhabitants of the area were the Mi'kmaq who established seasonal camps along the river. In the early 1700's, French settlers arrived and soon began exporting timber, particularly white pine prized for ship masts, to France. The settlers also farmed as evidenced by the old orchards still found within the park.

In 1727 the French established a brick yard here to access the high quality of clay found along the river banks. The bricks were used to build the nearby Fortress of Louisbourg. Even today, a walk along the shore of the river will reveal hundreds of bricks that fell off the ships transporting them from the kiln to the Louisbourg construction site.

By 1763 the English gained control of Cape Breton Island. While some French settlers returned to France, many others remained. Later, large numbers of United Empire Loyalists and Scottish immigrants settled in Cape Breton.

**Natural History** Nova Scotia is comprised of 80 distinct landscapes. Mira River Provincial Park is located within the Sydney Plain landscape unit. This unit is located along the southeastern tip of Cape Breton Island and is characterized by Acadian coniferous and mixed-wood forest types on flat and rolling terrain. Streams and small to medium-sized rivers are found within the area as well as lakes of varying sizes. The coastline is dominated by unresistant rock cliffs and large bays and harbours.

The river lies between 320 million year old Carboniferous formations to the north, and 500 million year old Cambrian and Precambrian formations to the

south. The highly eroded bedrock is covered by a thick layer of glacial till, sands and gravels deposited during the retreat of the last ice age 15,000 years ago.

The long narrow river valley, possibly an old fault line, extends in a sweeping arch from Framboise Cove to Mira Bay. At the southern end near Victoria Bridge, glacial deposits have interrupted the river's flow, forming a chain of small lakes. Elsewhere glacial deposits form numerous peninsulas and islands.

About three kilometres (2 miles) from the mouth of the Mira, the river abruptly narrows and cuts a valley through bedrock to reach the Atlantic at Mira Gut. Here the valley is less than 50 metres (165 feet) wide, with banks 20 metres (65 feet) high.

The Carboniferous bedrock to the north of the river includes numerous coal seams – evidence of the area's environment 300 million years ago. At that time shallow lakes, bays, swamps and coastal flood plains covered much of the region.

Exposed coal seams can be seen in the cliffs between Point Aconi and Port Morien. At Point Aconi, a seam of coal 1 metre (3 feet) thick containing abundant plant fossils can be found. Fossil trees can be seen along the coastline northeast of Cranberry Head. On the south side of the Mira River, in a road cut between Marion Bridge and Albert Bridge, fossils are embedded in the Cambrian sandstone and shale. This is one of the few Cambrian exposures in northern Nova Scotia or Cape Breton Island.

The extensive coal deposits in the Sydney area have been mined for many years. Port Morien is the site of North America's first coal mining operations. Here, in 1720, French soldiers dug coal from the cliffs to supply the Fortress of Louisbourg.

Go out on the Mira on a warm afternoon.





Unwind around the camp fire.

**Plants and Animals** In the coastal areas of southeastern Cape Breton white spruce is common, while inland balsam fir is the dominant tree species. On better drained soils hardwoods such as red maple, white birch, yellow birch and sugar maple are found. Large bogs are prominent, particularly along the coast. Bakeapple is abundant on exposed headlands and other coastal bogs and barrens.

Along the coast between Fourchu Bay and Framboise Cove and at Marion Bay are staging areas for migratory waterfowl and shorebirds. Offshore islands provide important breeding habitat for seabirds. Green Island, off Gabarus, has the most southerly nesting colony of black-legged kittiwakes and ciboux. Hertford (Bird) Islands are important nesting areas for razorbill, common puffin and Leach's storm petrel.

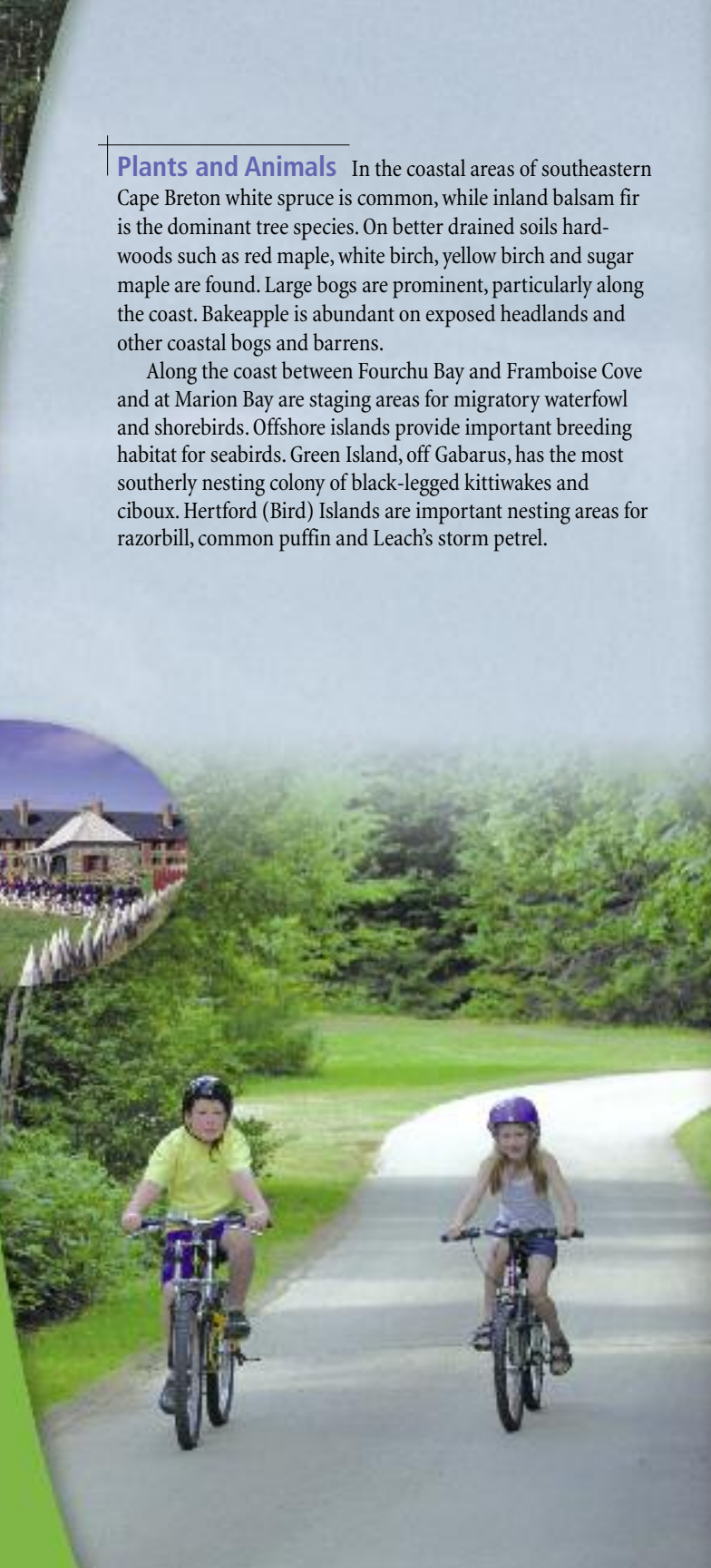
### Area Attractions

Numerous local festivals and community fairs are held during the summer including:

- June** LobsterFest, Louisbourg
- July** Rural Summer Festival, Louisbourg
- Aug** Crab Festival, Louisbourg  
John Hall Boat Races, Louisbourg



- The Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Site is Canada's largest historical reconstruction. Spend hours enjoying interpretive programs and touring homes, taverns, and barracks as they appeared in 1744.
- Two Rivers Wildlife Park features a variety of species native to Nova Scotia. The park also offers opportunities for picnicking, unsupervised swimming, hiking and canoeing.
- Petersfield Provincial Park in Westmount, contains botanical and structural remnants of four cultural periods, dating from the late 18th to mid-twentieth centuries. Walking trails, a picnic area and interpretive information make this an enjoyable spot to spend a few hours.
- The Miners Museum in nearby Glace Bay features exhibits on mining and offers a mine tour.
- Across Cape Breton Island numerous festivals, concerts and powwows celebrate Celtic, Acadian and Mi'kmaq culture.
- For information on these and other attractions please consult the Nova Scotia Doers and Dreamers Guide, visit a Visitor Information Centre or the website at [www.novascotia.com](http://www.novascotia.com)



### A Special Message to Park Visitors

#### PARK SAFETY

- Help preserve and protect this beautiful park for the enjoyment of future generations. Plants, animals and rocks are an important part of its natural heritage. Please do not damage or remove them.
- Please keep pets on a leash at all times.
- Firearms are prohibited within the park.

#### PERSONAL SAFETY

- Beaches are unsupervised and children should be watched closely in or near the water. Inflatable swimming aids should not be used.
- Contact park staff for further information about the park. They will be pleased to make your visit as enjoyable as possible.

### Mira River Provincial Park

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|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Parking               | Swimming (Unsupervised) |
| Park Office           | Boat Launch             |
| Washrooms and Showers | Campground (148 sites)  |
| Vault Toilets         | Firewood                |
| Playground            | Dumping Station         |
| Picnic Area           | Park Boundary           |
| Walking Trail         |                         |

