

**WELCOME
TO
SIFTON BOG**

**LOCATION
DESCRIPTION
HISTORY
USES/TRAIL
HABITAT
WETLAND**

LOCATION

The Sifton Botanical Bog is located on the south side of Oxford Street, west of Hyde Park Road in the City of London, Ontario. It is owned by the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority and jointly managed with the City of London.

There is a small parking lot at the entrance to this 28 hectare natural area. There is ample parking across Oxford St. at Oakridge Mall.

DESCRIPTION

The Sifton Bog is a Class 2 Provincially Significant Wetland. Bogs of this type are often found in more northern climates. Sifton Bog is the most southerly large acidic bog in Canada and therefore an invaluable study area, especially since it is located in a large urban area. The bog is surrounded by upland forest including some Carolinian species. This makes it a very interesting natural area to visit. There is a wide variety of habitat to experience.

The bog depression was once a large block of ice. The ice block was left when the last glacier melted about 13,000 years ago. There is a thick layer of peat under the vegetation. This sits on the stony soil that once surrounded the ice block. When the block melted, the depression or kettle remained.

Today a central pond, called Redmond's Pond, is surrounded by a floating bog and a swampy lowland wooded area. This area is surrounded by upland deciduous forest slopes. There is a trail and boardwalk that leads through the lowland woods, across the floating bog to the central pond.

The Sifton Bog has been previously disturbed by many human influences including a gravel pit, agriculture, and residential development, however, through time the bog has continued to be self-sustaining.

HISTORY

Some interesting facts about Sifton Botanical Bog:

- One of the earliest uses for the Sifton Bog was as a hunting ground by Aboriginal People.
- From 1854-1900 the Redmond Family and George Foster owned the property that contains Redmond's Pond. During this time the bog was known as Byron Bog.
- During WWII the Alder Buckthorn was removed for use in the production of gunpowder.
- In 1957, W.W. Judd, of University of Western Ontario, led a movement to preserve Byron Bog.
- In 1958, the owners of Byron Bog were: William Duyker, Arthur Thompson, Clare Wright and Mowbray Sifton. Each owned a different tract of land on which the Byron Bog was located.
- From 1958-1966 the four owners sold their properties to UTRCA (Upper Thames River Conservation Authority).

- During 1962-1967 there were negotiations made to have the bog preserved.
- On September 23, 1966 the UTRCA (Upper Thames River Conservation Authority) acquired the area through both a grant from the Province of Ontario and a donation from the Sifton Construction Company. It was then renamed the Sifton Botanical Bog.

A HISTORY OF MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

During the 20th Century the owners of the Sifton Bog tried to exploit the Bog's natural resources in several different ways. They attempted to drain the land to grow celery, removed layers of peat for sale, and sold Black Spruce for Christmas Trees.

Some of the management practices that have taken place at Sifton Bog are:

After the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) purchased the property, the property was made to be more easily accessible to the public. Some of the improvements were:

- 🔗 Parking lot built in 1968
- 🔗 Field house constructed in 1968
- 🔗 Hanging sign erected at the edge of Oxford Street in 1968
- 🔗 Trail system developed in 1968
- 🔗 Boardwalk built leading from the property entrance to Redmond's Pond in 1973
- 🔗 Permanent sign erected at the entrance gate in 1974

TRAILS

From the main parking lot, a trail leads through part of the lowland swamp to the boardwalk. The boardwalk leads over the open, floating sphagnum mat area of the “quaking” bog and ends at an observation platform at the edge of Redmond’s Pond. Visitors must stay on the boardwalk because there are many fragile plants in the bog. Many people come here to walk among nature and to take photographs of the wildlife that live in the wetland habitat. It is presently being used for educational and passive recreational purposes by natural history clubs, service clubs, local residents and students of all ages.

HABITAT

The Sifton Bog Natural Area is rich in diversity of habitat. There are four different types of ecosystems. There is a wooded slope habitat, a low woodland habitat, a floating bog habitat, and a pond (aquatic) habitat. Deciduous upland forest can be found on the slopes and swampy lowland forest species can be found surrounding the floating bog vegetation. In the center of the bog there is Redmond’s pond. The central bog communities are relatively undisturbed and are the most significant feature of the area. Sifton Bog is a Class 2 Provincially Significant Wetland.

WETLANDS AT THE SIFTON BOG

The Sifton Botanical Bog is a floating mat of sphagnum moss that is alive at the surface and decaying below. The mat is underlain by up to 33 feet of saturated peat. This community tends to incorporate marsh and bog vegetation. Many shrubs can reach up to 20 feet high with the occasional tree species as you move toward the forested area. Some of the ground cover vegetation found at Sifton Bog:

Sphagnum Moss
Highbush Blueberry
Black Huckleberry
Pussywillow
Leatherleaf
Mud Sedge
Tawny Cotton-grass
Brown-fruited Rush

Bog Rosemary
Smalls Spike-rush
Short-stalked Bedstraw
Sensitive Fern
Marsh Fern
Dyer’s Bedstraw
Glossy Buckthorn
Three-fruited Sedge

Many of the species found at Sifton Bog are considered nationally, provincially, or regionally rare. This means that these species numbers are declining due to habitat loss, human influence or environmental concerns. The following plants are considered rare and are mostly found within the wetland and aquatic habitats.

Atlantic Sedge	Horned Bladderwort
Dodge's Hawthorn	Dyer's Bedstraw
Yellow Pond-lily/Spatterdock	Brown-fruited Rush
American Ginseng	Swamp fly Honeysuckle
Smith's Club-rush	Three-leaved False
Solomon's Seal	Snake Mouth
Dragon's Mouth	Bog Laurel
Water-shield	Bog Rosemary
Grass-pink	White Beak-rush
Brownish Sedge	Northern Dewberry
Hairy-fruited Sedge	Purple-flowering Raspberry
Mud Sedge	Pitcher Plant
Stunted Sedge	Smooth White Violet
Three-fruited Sedge	Sundew
Leatherleaf	Spikerush
Olive-fruited Spike-rush	Black Spruce
Tawny Cotton-grass	Cranberry
Short-stalked Bedstraw	Northern St. John's Wort

There are five species of carnivorous plants found at Sifton Bog. There are the Pitcher-plant, two Sundews, and two Bladderworts. Carnivorous plants eat insects to obtain nutrition because the bog peat does not contain many nutrients.

The following insects are found in this natural area because of the acidic bog vegetation:

- Pitcher-plant Moth
- Bog Copper Butterfly
- Bog Elfin
- Bog Crickets
- Mosquitoes

GENERAL INFORMATION ON WETLANDS

A wetland is an area that has standing water at or near the surface for most of the year. Wetlands may be located along shorelines and riverbanks or can often be found in isolated depressions or hollows. Wetlands are very important within nature for the following reasons:

- A. Wetlands provide **habitat** (food, water, shelter and space) for mammals, reptiles, amphibians and many bird species.
- B. Wetlands act like a giant sponge, holding water that reduces flooding.
- C. Wetlands release water slowly, supplying water to other communities.
- D. Wetlands help to control erosion.
- E. Wetlands act like water filters.

There are four types of wetlands found in Ontario; ***marshes, swamps, bogs and fens.***

MARSHES

These are found along the edges of rivers, streams, ponds and lakes. They support many plants that are rooted in the soil and grow out of the water called ***emergent plants***. *Cattails and Arrowheads* are two examples of emergent plants. Marshes receive their water from the body of water next to them, groundwater, rain or snow. As a result of this the water levels can vary from a few centimetres up to two metres.

SWAMPS

Swamps can be either isolated or found along rivers, streams and lakes. They are formed as a result of flooding during the spring snowmelt. They are covered with water for most of the year, although they do not flood as deep as marshes and can dry up during periods of drought.

Some of the trees that can be seen in a swamp include:

Eastern White Cedar, Balsam Poplar, Red Maple, Silver Maple, Black Ash, Tamarack and Spruce.

A variety of shrubs are located here: *Alder, Willow, Button Bush, Winterberry and Dogwood.* The ground is carpeted with mosses, ferns and wildflowers including *Marsh Marigold, Skunk Cabbage and Orchids.*

BOGS

Bogs are commonly found in the northern parts of the province. They are located in deep, bowl-like depressions and are filled with layers of *peat* (slowly decaying plant material). The water becomes covered with floating and decaying vegetation. The dominant vegetation here is *sphagnum moss*. Some tree species found here are *Black Spruce, Tamarack and White Cedar*. Plants include *Leatherleaf, Labrador Tea, Bog Rosemary, Blueberries, Cranberries, Three-leaved-Solomon's Seal, Sundew and Pitcher Plants*.

FENS

These are areas that are usually located in low-lying areas of Northern Ontario. Within Fens water slowly flows in and out of the peat layers. However, fens may dry up in the warmer months. They are one of the most interesting wildflower and insect habitats and are a great place to find Orchids and other rare plants.

Fens are dominated by grasses, rushes, and sedges. Other plant life consists of: *Horsetails, Brown Moss, Tamarack, Black Spruce and Birch*. Wildlife in a Fen can include *shrews, mice, voles, lemmings, coyote, muskrat, raccoon, beaver and weasels*.

The following is a general species list of life you might find in a marsh, swamp, bog or fen.

LIFE IN A WETLAND

BIRDS	<input type="checkbox"/> Tundra Swan <input type="checkbox"/> Canada Goose <input type="checkbox"/> Mallard Duck <input type="checkbox"/> American Black Duck <input type="checkbox"/> Wood Duck <input type="checkbox"/> Hooded Merganser <input type="checkbox"/> Gadwell <input type="checkbox"/> Northern Shoveler <input type="checkbox"/> Red-winged Blackbird <input type="checkbox"/> Sandhill Crane <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Greater & Lesser Scaup <input type="checkbox"/> Common Goldeneye <input type="checkbox"/> Bufflehead <input type="checkbox"/> Green-winged Teal <input type="checkbox"/> Pied-bill Grebe <input type="checkbox"/> Horned Grebe <input type="checkbox"/> American Bittern <input type="checkbox"/> Northern Harrier <input type="checkbox"/> Least Bittern <input type="checkbox"/> Snow Goose <input type="checkbox"/> Pine Grosbeak	<input type="checkbox"/> Green Heron <input type="checkbox"/> Great Blue Heron <input type="checkbox"/> Great Egret <input type="checkbox"/> Solitary Sandpiper <input type="checkbox"/> Common Moorhen <input type="checkbox"/> American Coot <input type="checkbox"/> Greater & Lesser Yellow Legs <input type="checkbox"/> Wilson Phalarope <input type="checkbox"/> Evening Grosbeak	<input type="checkbox"/> Pectoral Sandpiper <input type="checkbox"/> Dowitchers <input type="checkbox"/> Common Snipe <input type="checkbox"/> Belted Kingfisher <input type="checkbox"/> Killdeer <input type="checkbox"/> Virginia Rail <input type="checkbox"/> Yellow Rail <input type="checkbox"/> Sora Rail <input type="checkbox"/> Marsh Wren <input type="checkbox"/> Sedge Wren <input type="checkbox"/> Marsh Hawk <input type="checkbox"/> Spotted Sandpiper <input type="checkbox"/> White-winged Crossbills <input type="checkbox"/> Pine Siskins
MAMMALS	<input type="checkbox"/> Beaver <input type="checkbox"/> Mink <input type="checkbox"/> Red Fox <input type="checkbox"/> Weasel <input type="checkbox"/> Coyote <input type="checkbox"/> Raccoon	<input type="checkbox"/> Various Mole Species <input type="checkbox"/> Various Vole Species <input type="checkbox"/> Various Shrew Species	<input type="checkbox"/> Skunk <input type="checkbox"/> Grey Squirrel <input type="checkbox"/> Opossum <input type="checkbox"/> White-tailed Deer <input type="checkbox"/> Muskrat	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES	<input type="checkbox"/> American Toad <input type="checkbox"/> Green Frog <input type="checkbox"/> Spring Peeper <input type="checkbox"/> Wood Frog <input type="checkbox"/> Bull Frog <input type="checkbox"/> Pickerel Frog <input type="checkbox"/> Leopard Frog <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Mudpuppy <input type="checkbox"/> Red Spotted Newt <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Spotted Salamander <input type="checkbox"/> Red-backed Salamander <input type="checkbox"/> Four-Toed Salamander <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Snapping Turtle <input type="checkbox"/> Map Turtle <input type="checkbox"/> Painted Turtle <input type="checkbox"/> Blandings Turtle <input type="checkbox"/> Spotted Turtle <input type="checkbox"/> Five-lined Skink <input type="checkbox"/> Brown Snake <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Garter Snake <input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Milk Snake <input type="checkbox"/> Ribbon Snake <input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Hognose Snake <input type="checkbox"/> Smooth Green Snake <input type="checkbox"/> Black Rat Snake

INSECTS	<input type="checkbox"/> Dragonflies <input type="checkbox"/> Damselflies <input type="checkbox"/> Mayfly Nymph <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Mosquito <input type="checkbox"/> Various Species of Flies <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Various Species of Bees and Wasps <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
PLANTS	<input type="checkbox"/> Cattail <input type="checkbox"/> Bulrush <input type="checkbox"/> Various Sedge Species <input type="checkbox"/> Various Grass Species <input type="checkbox"/> Pond Weed <input type="checkbox"/> Swamp Milkweed <input type="checkbox"/> Jewelweed <input type="checkbox"/> Rose Pogonia <input type="checkbox"/> Grass-pink	<input type="checkbox"/> Waterfoil <input type="checkbox"/> Pickerel Weed <input type="checkbox"/> Arrowhead <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Flag <input type="checkbox"/> Smartweed <input type="checkbox"/> Marsh Marigold <input type="checkbox"/> Dense Blazingstar <input type="checkbox"/> Skunk Cabbage	<input type="checkbox"/> Choke Cherry <input type="checkbox"/> Crab Apple <input type="checkbox"/> Hawthorns <input type="checkbox"/> Autumn Olive <input type="checkbox"/> Red-Osier Dogwood <input type="checkbox"/> Sundew <input type="checkbox"/> Pitcher Plant <input type="checkbox"/> Leatherleaf <input type="checkbox"/> Bog Laurel <input type="checkbox"/> Tawny Cotton-grass	<input type="checkbox"/> White Birch <input type="checkbox"/> White Elm <input type="checkbox"/> White Ash <input type="checkbox"/> White Cedar <input type="checkbox"/> Trembling Aspen <input type="checkbox"/> Red Maple <input type="checkbox"/> Silver Maple <input type="checkbox"/> Ironwood <input type="checkbox"/> Poplar <input type="checkbox"/> Black Spruce <input type="checkbox"/> Tamarack

VISITING A NATURAL AREA

DRESS APPROPRIATELY

You want to enjoy your nature experience

long sleeves
long pants
a hat
shoes and socks
sun screen and bug spray

RESPECT THE AREA

Many species make this area their home

don't litter
take only pictures
don't disturb anything
don't pick flowers
if you observe something place it
back where you found it

STAY ON TRAILS

You could trample wildlife and plants

don't damage vegetation
don't disturb dead wood, it is
decaying
stay away from leaflets three, it is
poison ivy
minimize human impact on the area

ENJOY YOUR VISIT!

Your natural area is important to you

the quieter you are, the more you
will see
leave everything in its natural
setting
come back and visit again

