

Kaweenakumik Ecological Reserve

Backgrounder

Land Designation

Ecological reserves play a key role in Manitoba's Protected Areas Initiative by protecting unique, rare and representative examples of plants, animals, geological features and ecosystems. They are the most protected of the provincially designated sites within Manitoba's network of protected areas.

Landscape Description

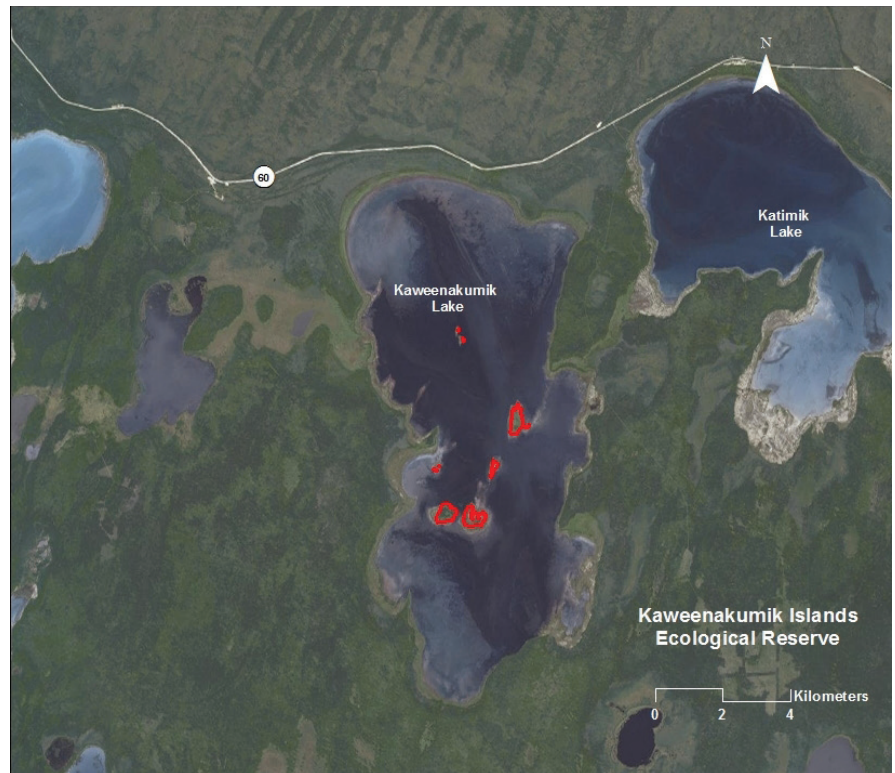
The 20 hectare Kaweenakumik Islands Ecological Reserve is located in Kaweenakumik Lake, 15 kilometres southeast of the Chemawawin First Nation on the east side of Lake Winnipegosis. Situated on the edge of the Manitoba Lowlands Natural Region in the Mid-Boreal Lowland sub-region, this site is made up of eight flat islands used by colonial nesting birds.



Outstanding Features

The Kaweenakumik Islands Ecological Reserve is a group of eight sparsely vegetated small islands in Lake Winnipegosis that is nesting habitat for several species of waterfowl including the: white-winged scoter, American white pelican, Caspian tern, common tern, double-crested cormorant, great blue heron, ring-billed gull, herring gull, western grebe, and American avocet.

American avocets are at the northeast fringe of their range here. Of particular interest is Hump Island, the nesting site for the white winged scoter, a species for which there has been international concern due to the risk of the species being extirpated in southern Manitoba due to hunting, and being caught in commercial fishing nets (prior to the sites designation). Nesting habitat is particularly important to protect as birds are highly susceptible to disturbance during the nesting season.



The province of Manitoba has the largest concentration of breeding American white pelicans in North America. Most years the largest nesting colony can be found in Kaweenakumik Islands Ecological Reserve. In the recent past both American white pelicans and double crested cormorants were considered to be endangered in Manitoba. Neither is listed as such any longer however, both species have breeding characteristics that make them vulnerable.

Lake Winnipegosis and the Kaweenakumik Islands Ecological Reserve are fall staging areas for other migratory birds including ring-necks, redheads, canvasbacks, mallards, lesser scaup, American wigeon, northern shoveller, goldeye, buffleheads, Canada geese, snow geese, and tundra swans.

The Kaweenakumik Islands Ecological Reserve will be maintained for the preservation and protection of colonial nesting bird habitat. All access to and activities within this ecological reserve will require prior ministerial approval.

This area is categorized by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as a protected area under the management category Ia – a protected area managed for strict nature protection available primarily for scientific research and/or environmental monitoring. These protected lands are free from logging, mining, hydroelectric development, oil and gas development, and any other activities that could harm habitat.