

By Phil Cram, May 2011

Nature Calgary Bird Study Group

# BIRDING OFF THE BEATEN TRACK – SOUTHWEST FROM CALGARY

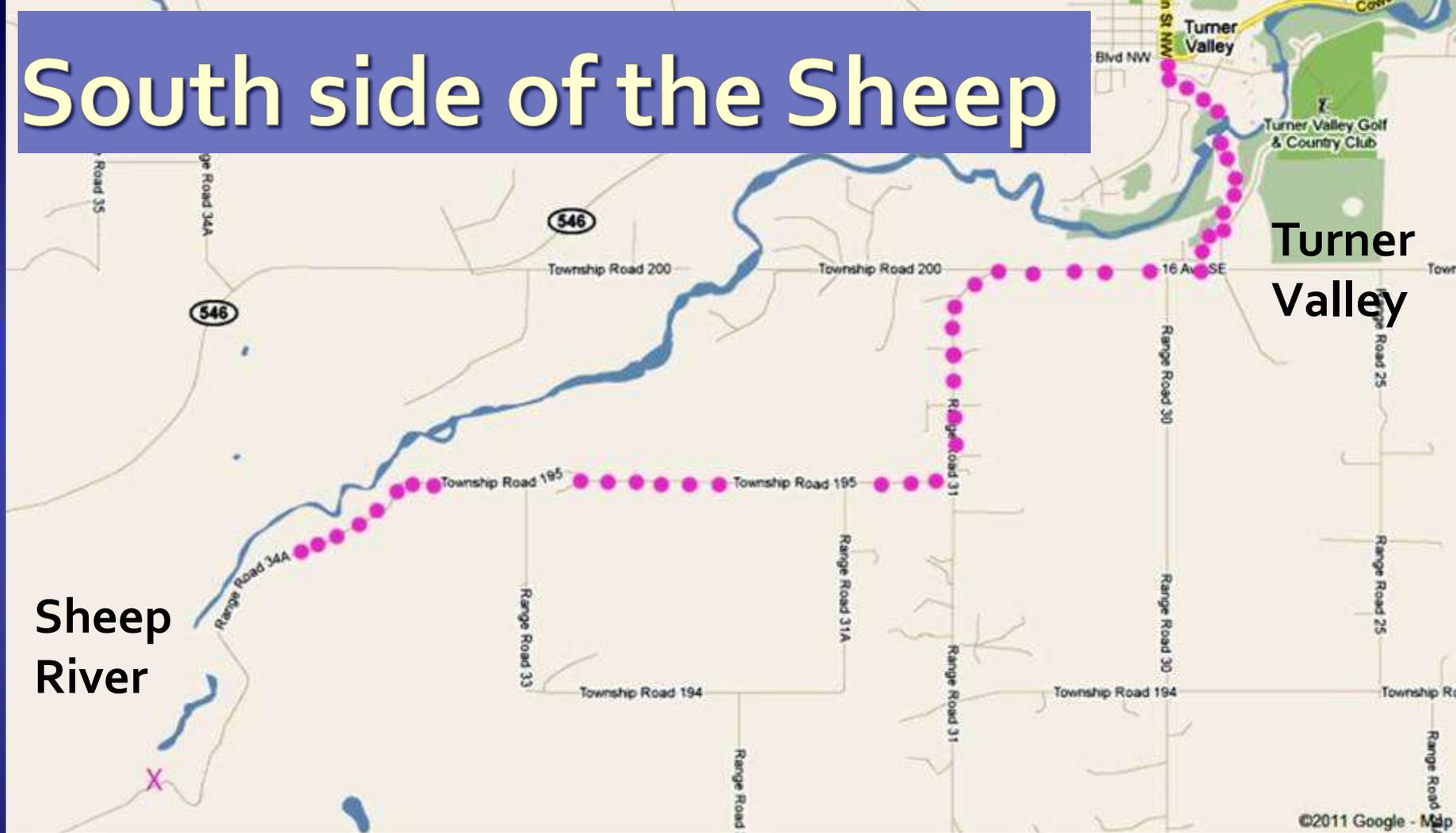
Photos by Brian Elder, Phil Cram, Rob Worona, Frank Hennessey, Bernie Diebolt, Terry Poulton

# Southwest

- ◆ South side of the Sheep River
- ◆ Gorge Creek Trail
- ◆ Sibbald side roads



# South side of the Sheep



- ◆ Access from Turner Valley – south on Main St., left on Decalta Dr., cross river and left on Twp Rd 200
- ◆ Road has good mix of habitats – farmland in the east, mixed forest with some good coniferous stands, wetlands in the west

# South side of the Sheep

- ◆ **Cape May Warblers** just beyond the “junk yard” (where road heads west after a south heading stretch)
- ◆ This area also good for **Brown Creeper** and **Pacific Wren**
- ◆ Can be good road for owls

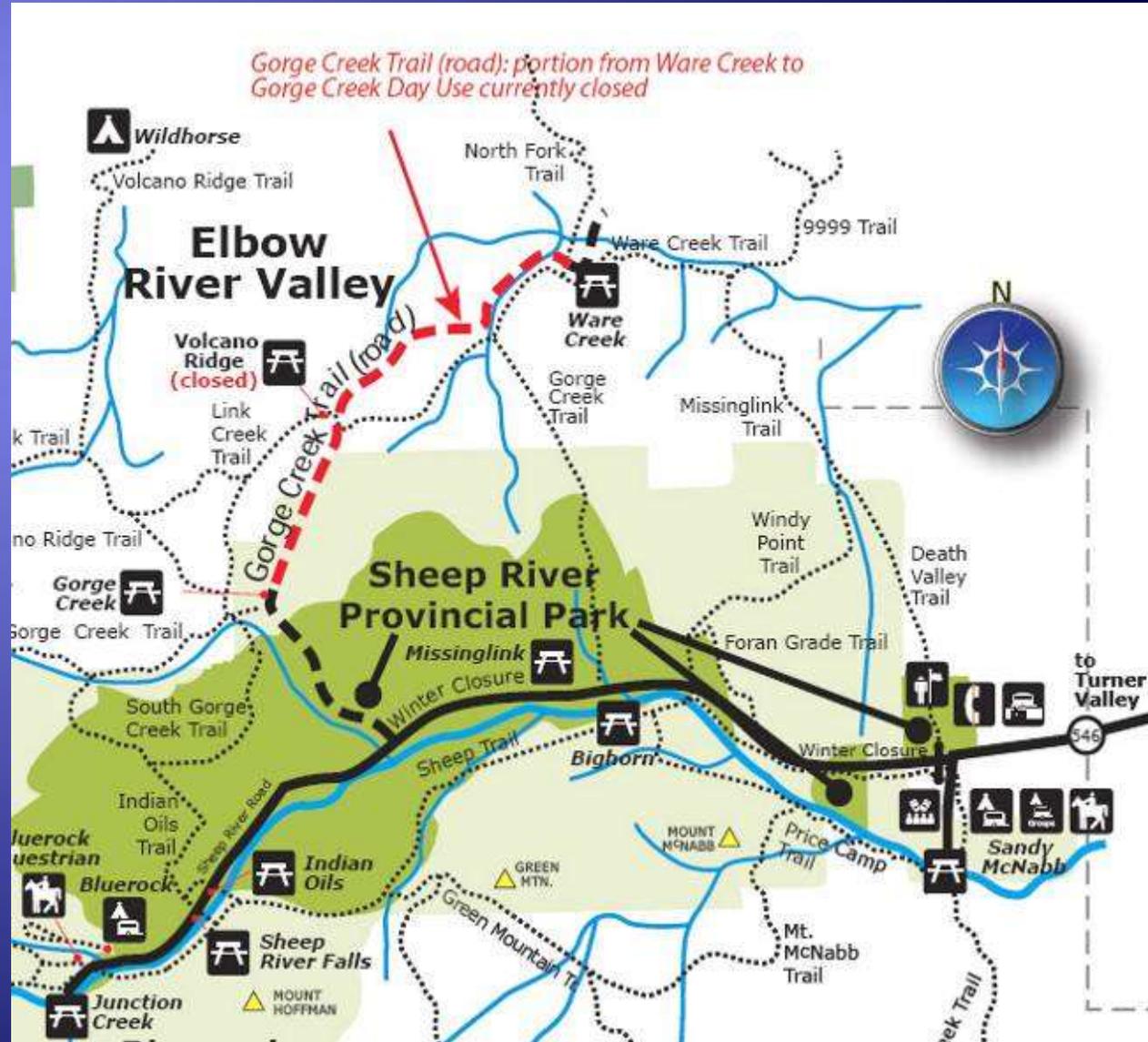


# Gorge Creek Trail

North access west from Hwy 549 where road forks (north fork is Mclean Creek Trail)

South access from Hwy 546 in Sheep River Provincial Park

No longer a through road for vehicles



# Gorge Creek Trail – best areas



- Walk in!
- Watch out for bears!
- Expect a good variety of empids, warblers, vireos and sparrows

- West of the (north end) closure at Ware Creek picnic area
- Good mixed forest and little people disruption
- A similar habitat exists just north of the south-end closure



# Gorge Creek Trail – drivable areas

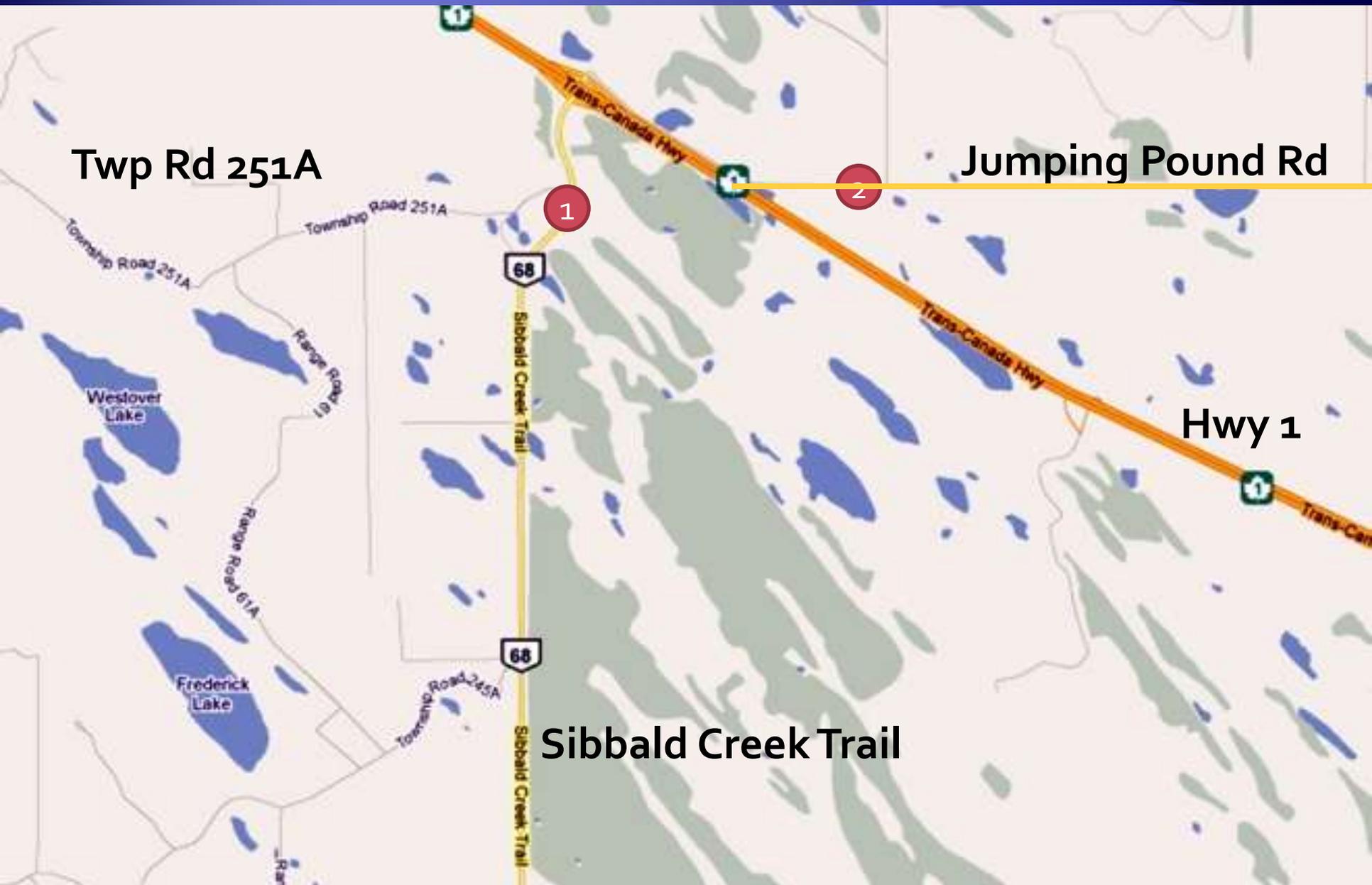
- ◆ The initial flats after the north-end bridge -pretty reliable for **Townsend's Warbler, Evening Grosbeak, Ovenbird**, all thrushes
- ◆ Just north of where the road steeply descends into the Ware Creek valley - **Townsend's Solitaire, MacGillivray's Warbler, Red Crossbill**
- ◆ the flats just north of the Ware Creek closure – **Townsend's Warbler, Western Flycatcher, Pileated Woodpecker, Pacific Wren**



# Sibbald Trail Route



# Sibbald side roads



Twp Rd 251A

Jumping Pound Rd

Hwy 1

Sibbald Creek Trail

# Sibbald side roads

- Sloughs good for ducks such as **Hooded Merganser**
- Grassy wet areas can have a variety of sparrows such as **Swamp Sparrow**, **Le Conte's Sparrow** and **Nelson's Sparrow**
- **Virginia Rail** has been seen along **Jumping Pound Road**

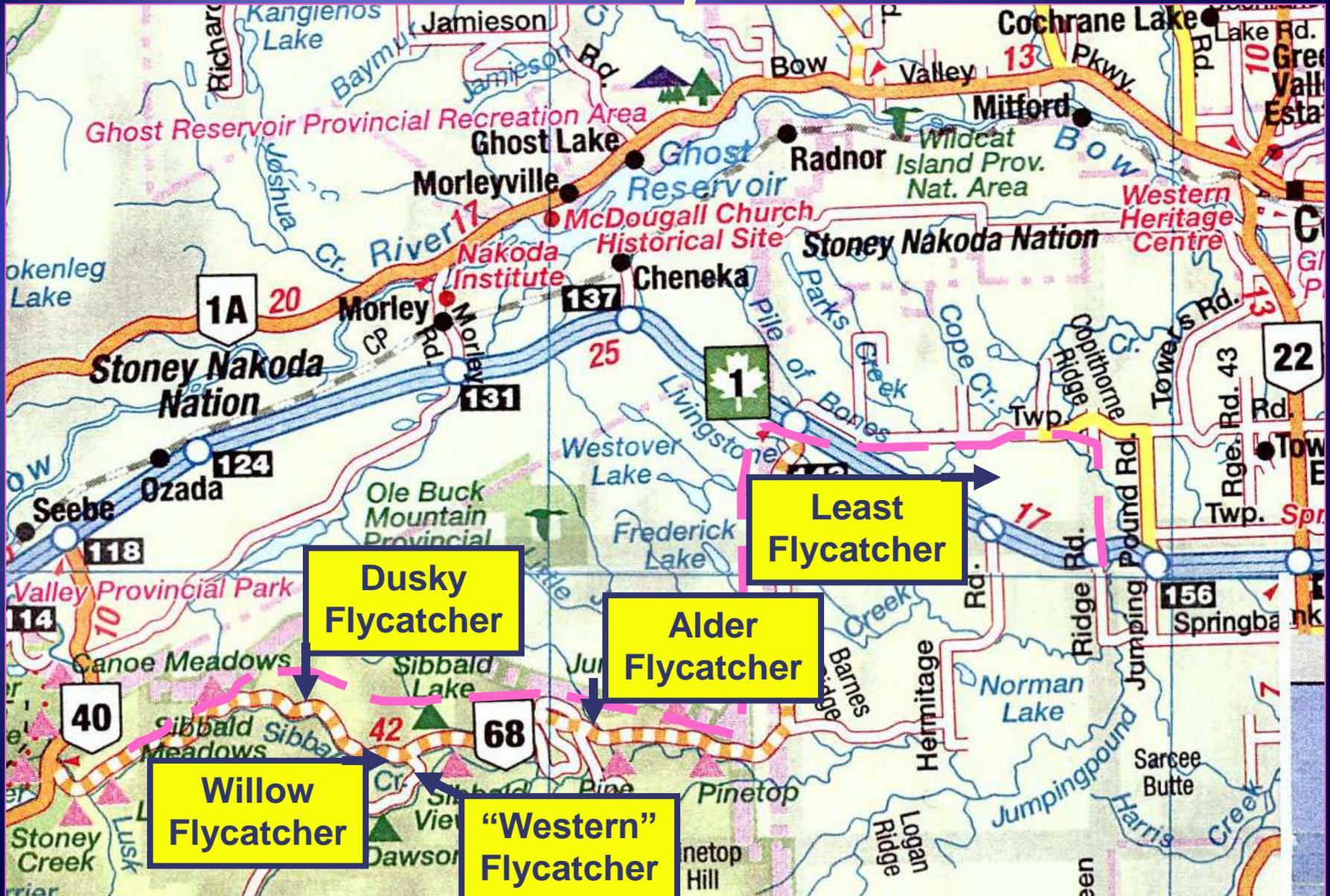


# Sibbald Trail Route-*Empids*

- ◆ **Least Flycatcher**
- ◆ **Alder Flycatcher** [entrance to Forest Demo Loop]
- ◆ **Willow Flycatcher** [Sibbald Flats]
- ◆ **Dusky Flycatcher** [Crane Meadow]
- ◆ **“Western” Flycatcher** [Powderface Trail]

**Other Flycatchers: Olive-sided Flycatcher, Western Wood-Pewee, Eastern Phoebe, Western Kingbird, Eastern Kingbird**

# Sibbald Trail Empids



# Sibbald Trail - Rarities

- ◆ **Field Sparrow (June 2000)**
- ◆ **Northern Mockingbird (c. 2003)**
- ◆ **Indigo Bunting (June 2003)**
- ◆ **Lewis's Woodpecker (May 2009)**