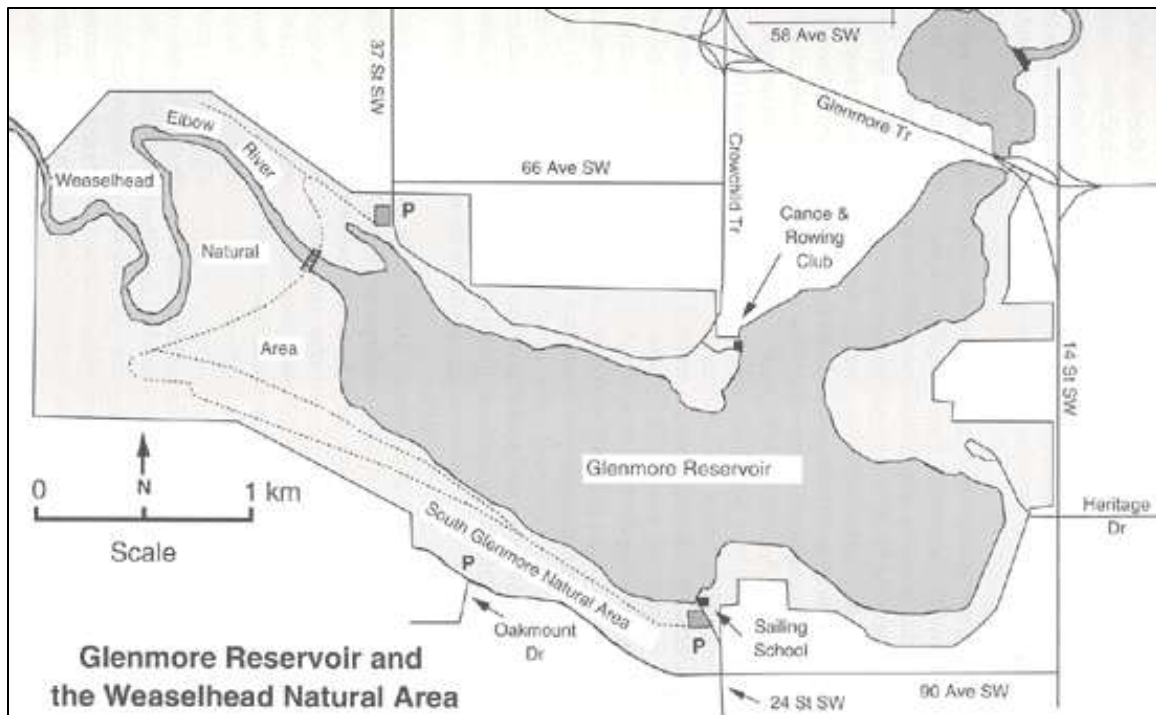


## **Glenmore Reservoir and the Weaselhead Natural Area**

*by Dave Elphinstone & Andrew Slater – revised Sep/2012*

Glenmore Reservoir, the city of Calgary's major water supply, was created in 1933 with completion of the dam across the Elbow River valley. Today, this shallow body of water covers 429 hectares and at certain times of the year it can provide some of the city's finest birding. Large tracts of the valley surrounding the Reservoir have been preserved as a public park; here the main areas of interest to birders are the Weaselhead Natural Area at the western end, and the South Glenmore Natural Area.

Access to Glenmore Park from the north is either from the southern end of Crowchild Trail, or from 37 St. SW and 66 Ave. The southern shore is reached from 90 Ave. SW and 24 St., or from 90 Ave. and Oakmount Drive.



The best months for birding the Reservoir are April and the first two weeks of May, and October-November. A telescope is a must at these times, as the rafts of waterfowl tend to stay well out from the shore. More than 15 km of trails may be walked around the Reservoir but usually the most productive viewing is from near the Canoe and Rowing Club on the north side, and the Sailing School on the south, near 90 Ave. and 24 St. car park.

Glare and wind conditions can make birding difficult at Glenmore. Light conditions on the north shore are best early in the morning; viewing from the canoe club is best after the sun has been up a few hours; the west end is best in the morning; and on the south side, light conditions are best during late morning and the afternoon.

In spring, the first area to become ice-free is at the western end where the Elbow River enters the Reservoir; check here for early arrivals. In fall, freeze-up can be quite late, allowing the build-up of large concentrations of waterfowl; at the western end the numbers of swans, geese and gulls can provide quite a spectacle at times.

Just prior to freeze-up it can also be worth checking the smaller body of water north of Glenmore Trail (park at the Lakeview Golf Club, 19 St. and 58 Ave. SW). This occasionally holds the last loons, grebes and diving ducks.

The Weaselhead Natural Area encompasses the valley and final major meander of the Elbow River before it enters the Reservoir, and the delta environment that the river continues to build. The vegetation ranges from emergent aquatic plants through willows, Aspen and Balsam Poplar to mature White Spruce forest. May and June are the most rewarding months for birding here.

The access to the Weaselhead on the northern side of the Reservoir begins at the 37 St. parking lot. The trail along the north side of the river, west from the 37 St. parking area eventually leads to the top of a high cliff above the river. Just past this point the trail turns south and reaches a small beaver pond inside the major loop of the Elbow River. The trail is subject to horse traffic and can become very cut-up and muddy.

On the southern side, in the Glenmore Natural Area, a strip of shrubbery extending along the embankment for one km west of the car park at 90 Ave. and 24 St. can be very good for migrant warblers in spring and fall.

[Park maps](#) may be found on The City of Calgary website.