

# Cowan Bog 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 518 hectare Cowan Bog Ecological Reserve is located approximately 35 kilometres east of Swan River. Situated on the edge of the Manitoba Lowlands Natural Region in the Interlake Plain sub-region, this site is generally flat and contains deep peat, and typical black spruce bogs that support most if not all species of plants common to such sites.



### Outstanding Features

This site contains seven species of wild orchids, including dragon's mouth, which is a rare plant in Manitoba. Other unique and rare species found here include: yellow sedge and lyre leaved rock-cress, both of which were last recorded in the 1950s in Manitoba. Uncommon fauna such as the barred owl and palm warblers inhabit the area as well.

The dominant tree species in wet bog areas are black spruce, and tamarack, while drier areas are dominated by trembling aspen and white spruce. Additionally, other plants that can be found here include: calla lilies, showy lady's-slippers, purple pitcher plant, yellow lady's-slippers, northern green orchid, cotton grass and deep sphagnum moss. On a quiet day common loons can be heard calling on the nearby lakes.



The Cowan Bog Ecological Reserve will be maintained for the preservation and protection of wild orchids and the typical black spruce bog ecosystem they inhabit. Passive non-consumptive visits on foot will be allowed without a permit. Indigenous peoples are permitted to carry out their treaty and aboriginal rights within the ecological reserve. All other activities 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.