

Whitemouth River Ecological Reserve

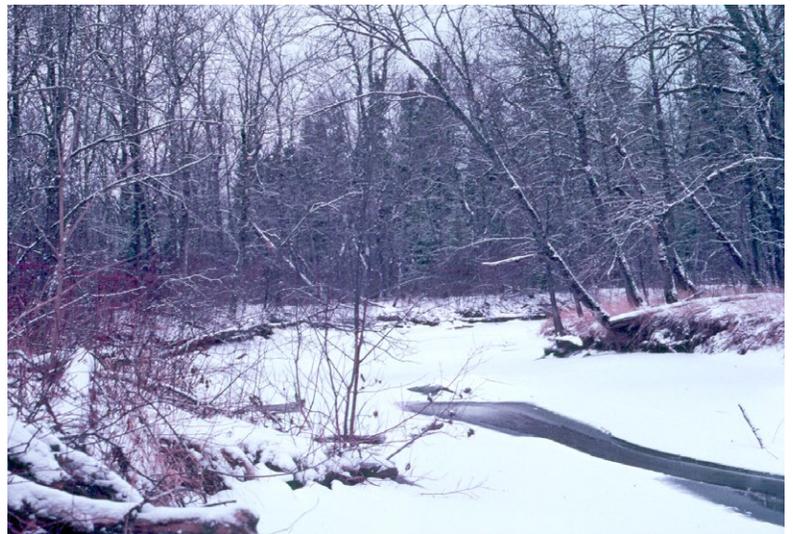
Backgrounder

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 130 hectare Whitemouth River Ecological Reserve, within the Sandilands Provincial Forest, is approximately 18 kilometres west of Pinawa. Situated in the Lake of the Woods subregion of the Manitoba Lowlands Natural Region, this is a narrow river with a narrow flood plain, dominated by bogs and mixedwood forest.



Outstanding Features

The Whitemouth River Ecological Reserve is a unique and diverse wetland that includes a buffered section of the Whitemouth River. The ecological reserve features a variety of tree communities made up of large balsam poplar and white spruce. The nearly undisturbed section of the Whitemouth River also has a good breeding population of river otter.

This ecological reserve protects essential habitat for species at risk as assessed by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) including the threatened carmine shiner and a species of special concern, the northern brook lamprey. The carmine shiner has not been reported elsewhere in Canada. Other species of conservation concern include: the river jewelwing, hornyhead chub, olive sided flycatcher, southern bog lemming, and migratory birds including the, sandhill crane, and the rusty blackbird. The area provides nesting and critical habitat for great grey owl, Manitoba's provincial bird. Historically the region has supported populations of threatened woodland caribou and wolverine.



The Whitemouth River Ecological Reserve will be maintained for the preservation and protection of its typical mature mixedwood forest with particular attention paid to river bank communities and the otter population. Passive non-consumptive recreation on foot is permitted. Indigenous people 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.