

# Lake Winnipegosis Salt Flats Ecological Reserve

## Background

### 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

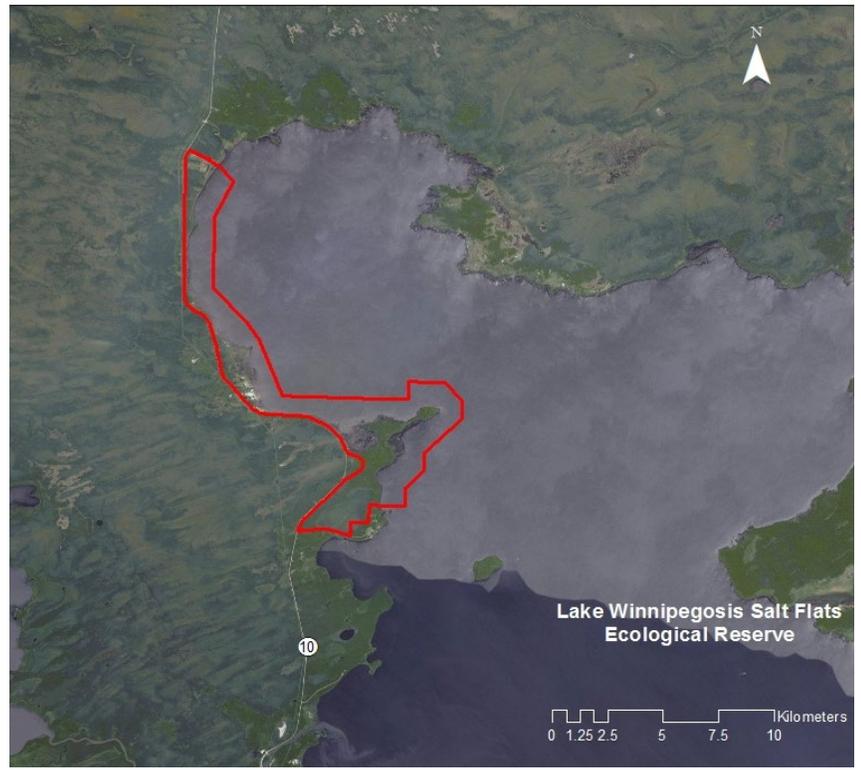
The 560 hectare Lake Winnipegosis Salt Flats Ecological Reserve is located on the western shore of Lake Winnipegosis, 90 kilometres north of Bowsman or 90 kilometres south of The Pas. This site consists of saline flats with halophytic plant species, and boreal plant species, typical of more inland sections of the boreal forest.



### Outstanding Features

The Lake Winnipegosis Salt Flats Ecological Reserve consists of poorly drained, recently exposed lake flats of saline till. This salt flat complex is a unique habitat that likely represents the only example of extensive inland saline shorelines in boreal North America. The vegetation here is an interesting mixture of boreal forest, meadow and inland saline plants. The elements of the floristic salt gradient and northern oceanic species make this area floristically unique. Raised coastal sites with low salinity are typified by meadow vegetation, low gravel ridges by spruce forest, and salt flats by halophytic plants.

Another unique feature of this site is that most plant species found here are normally restricted to northern oceanic coastlines. Species of salt tolerant (halophytic) plants that are present include: red swampfire, Nuttall's alkali grass, cosmopolitan bulrush and seaside plantain. Seaside plantain is likely at or near the southern extremity of its range. Its only other known location in the province is adjacent to Hudson Bay. Other salt-tolerant species considered rare in Manitoba that occur here include: saltmarsh sand spurry, marsh alkali aster, mistassini primrose, and shooting star. Perennial ragweed is also found here, 200 kilometres further north than its known natural range.



Various wildlife species observed at the site include: American white pelicans, marsh hawks/northern harriers, various dabbling duck species, sandhill cranes, killdeer, sandpipers, black bears, and white-tailed deer.

The Lake Winnipegosis Salt Flats Ecological Reserve will be maintained for the preservation and protection of lake salt flats and associated halophytic vegetation. Passive non-consumptive recreation on foot is permitted. Indigenous people are permitted to carry out their treaty and Indigenous 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.