

NATIONAL PARK · CANADA · ALBERTA AND NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Wood Buffalo

at a glance

Larger than Switzerland, with the world's largest herd of wood bison, the last natural nesting area of the whooping crane and a sky declared the largest dark sky preserve on Earth.

1922ESTABLISHED
extended 1926**44,741**

AREA

3,900 km²PEACE-ATHABASCA DELTA
80% in the park**929,521 ha**2023 FIRES
about 20% of the park area

BEFORE YOU GO

**Fort Smith is the gateway**

The park straddles the border between Alberta and the Northwest Territories, and its administration is based in Fort Smith.

**After the 2023 fires**

In 2023, 929,521 hectares burned in the park, about a fifth of its area.

**From Yellowknife**

Highway 3 south, then Highway 1 to Enterprise, Highway 2 and finally 264 kilometres (164 mi) on Highway 5 to Fort Smith.

**Camping season**

Pine Lake Campground and the Kettle Point group area are open from the Victoria Day long weekend in May to 30 September.

**Burned forest**

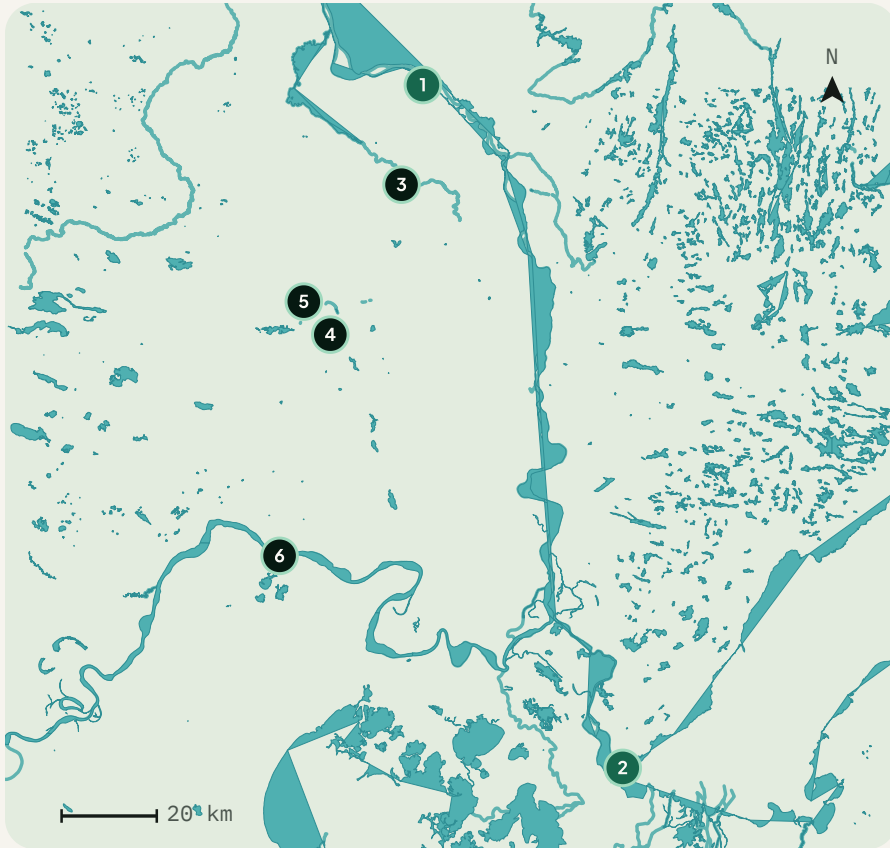
Many trees are still standing after the fire but are weakened or have burned roots and can fall without warning.

**Some trails closed**

As of July 2026, Benchmark Creek, Grosbeak Lake, Lane Lake and Salt Pan Lake were closed, Karstland and Lakeside partly.

**Fees and opening hours, up to date**

Fees and times change. The park page lists them with source and date:
nationalparksatlas.com/en/canada/wood-buffalo

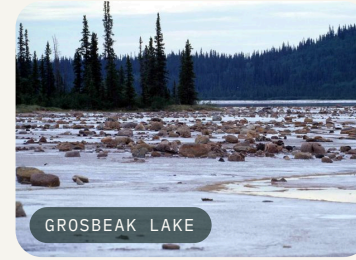


- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Fort Smith | 4 Pine Lake Campground |
| 2 Fort Chipewyan | 5 Pine Lake |
| 3 Salt River Day Use Area | 6 Peace Point |

Green: entrances. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors (ODbL).



THE SALT PLAINS



GROSBEAK LAKE



PINE LAKE

THINGS TO DO

Barefoot across the Salt Plains

A steep path leads 350 metres from the viewpoint down the escarpment to the salt plains.

Swimming and paddling at Pine Lake

A water-filled sinkhole with turquoise water and a sandy beach, 60 kilometres (37 mi) south of Fort Smith.

Garter snakes in spring

At the Salt River Day Use Area, 24 kilometres (15 mi) south of Fort Smith, red-sided garter snakes emerge ...

The whooping crane

The last natural nesting area of the endangered whooping crane lies in the remote north-central part of the ...

[More on the park page](#)

Northern lights in the largest dark sky preserve

Since 28 June 2013 Wood Buffalo has been the largest Dark Sky Preserve in the world.

Wildlife by the road

Bison and bears often walk along the roads or graze in the ditch, bears in May and June often eating ...

Why World Heritage

In 1983 Wood Buffalo became Canada's eighth UNESCO World Heritage Site: for one of the largest free-roaming ...

The delta

At 3,900 square kilometres (1,506 sq mi), the Peace-Athabasca Delta is one of the largest inland freshwater ...

TOURS AND GETTING THERE



PARK AUTHORITY • NO
PARTNER LINK • GETTING
THERE BY AIR •
SCHEDULED FLIGHT

**Scheduled flights to Fort
Smith and Fort Chipewyan
from Edmonton and
Yellowknife**

ON [AIRTINDI.COM](https://airtindi.com) ➤



PARK AUTHORITY • NO
PARTNER LINK • EVENING
• NIGHT SKY AND
NORTHERN LIGHTS

**Dark Sky Festival in Fort
Smith on the edge of the
world's largest dark sky
preserve • outside the
park**

ON [TAWBAS.CA](https://tawbas.ca) ➤



PARK AUTHORITY • NO PARTNER LINK • GUIDED PROGRAMME • PARK AUTHORITY • FROM
SALT PLAINS LOOKOUT

Park authority guided programmes at the Salt Plains, Salt River and Pine Lake

ON [PARKS.CANADA.CA](https://parks.canada.ca) ➤



Checked 19 Sep 2026.