

# Loony Loop Hikes in Canada

## 1. Upper Canada Bird Sanctuary

**Maps:** The Waterfront Trail has a series of maps of the entire route. The area around the Bird Sanctuary is at [waterfronttrail.org/maps/wt-zone7.pdf](http://waterfronttrail.org/maps/wt-zone7.pdf) Look for Map 7.4, Long Sault

It is possible that local signage and advice from the visitor centre may suggest short trails in the Bird Sanctuary. Information can be found at [www.stlawrenceparks.com/bird-sanctuary/](http://www.stlawrenceparks.com/bird-sanctuary/)

**Description:** Enjoyable and varied walking is available in this wildlife sanctuary located off Ontario Highway 2 between Morrisburg to the west and Ingleside to the east. The entrance is well-marked. The Waterfront Trail, a long-distance bike path from Windsor to the Quebec border passes beside the Bird Sanctuary's visitor parking lot. Following it westward leads in 5 km to Upper Canada Village, a living history museum dedicated to the United Empire Loyalists who settled the area in the 19th century, and in another 1 km to the Battle of Crysler's Farm National Historic Site which commemorates a War of 1812 battle site. Following the Waterfront Trail eastward leads in 6 km to the Ingleside end of the Long Sault Parkway, which suggests more possibilities for exploration. Both of these tours pass over causeways with good river views. Distance as you choose, difficulty Level 2-3.

## 2. Rock Dunder

**Map:** [www.frontenacarchbiosphere.ca/explore/hiking/rock-dunder](http://www.frontenacarchbiosphere.ca/explore/hiking/rock-dunder)

**Description:** The trail is near the settlement of Morton, on Ontario Highway 15 between Kingston and Smiths Falls. About one mile south of Morton, that is going from Morton toward Kingston, there is a small gravel side road on the right signposted as Stanley Lash Lane. The trailhead parking lot is at the top of Stanley Lash Lane. The trail is owned by the Rideau Waterway Land Trust, which charges a trail use fee to raise funds for erosion control and trail maintenance.

The trail consists of a loop with some optional trails. It features an excellent viewpoint over the Rideau Waterway; a couple of historic cabins; and good swimming spots. 5 mile loop hike depending on options. Small hills totaling about 400 feet of elevation gain. Level 2.

About fifteen minutes by car north of the trail is the Jones Falls lockstation of the Rideau Canal, which is well worth checking out and making a short walk if time allows.

## 3. Marble Rock

**Map:** [www.frontenacarchbiosphere.ca/explore/hiking/marble-rock-conservation-area](http://www.frontenacarchbiosphere.ca/explore/hiking/marble-rock-conservation-area)

**Description:** From Gananoque, Ontario, follow Ontario Route 2 eastward. Highway 2 soon passes under the Thousand Islands Parkway and then over Ontario 401. In 1 km, turn left on County Road 34. In 4 km, turn left on Marble Rock Road. It is about 1 km to the trailhead parking lot.

This is a figure eight-shaped trail system with two large loops. Round trip distance for the first loop is about 7 km. For the second loop it is about 11 km. Both are rugged hiking with many small ups and downs, although the trail never attains much elevation. Level 3. There are several good viewpoints with a few hundred feet of prominence above the surrounding terrain. These trails are enjoyable as hikes when there is no snow, or as snowshoeing trips when there is snow.

## 4. Parc Guindon

**Map:** The Park web site is at [www.cornwall.ca/en/play-here/guindon-park.aspx](http://www.cornwall.ca/en/play-here/guindon-park.aspx) From there you can click to a map of the trails or you can go directly to [www.cornwall.ca/en/play-here/resources/Outdoor-](http://www.cornwall.ca/en/play-here/resources/Outdoor-)

## [Facilities/GuindonPark\\_SkiTrails.pdf](#)

**Description:** Parc Guindon, or Guindon Park (Cornwall is a bilingual city) is a large municipal park in Cornwall, Ontario. It has a network of about 12 km of trails that are best known for cross country skiing in the snow season. There is trail grooming and usually conditions are very good. Outside the snow season the trails can be used for hiking. There are small hills in places. Level 2.

Heading south on Brookdale Ave from the 401, turn right onto 14th Street West . It passes between an Esso gas station and a Burger King restaurant. From 14th Street West, in about 100 metres turn right onto Vincent Massey Drive. From this corner follow Vincent Massey for 3.3 km. Heading north on Brookdale Ave from the St. Lawrence, turn left onto Vincent Massey Drive, where Brookdale meets 13th Street West. From this corner follow Vincent Massey for 3.5 km.

There is one major intersection to drive straight through, at Power Dam Road. About 200 metres past Power Dam Road is an entrance to Parc Guindon on the left. The trailhead parking lot is just a short distance in and corresponds to the parking lot at the lower right corner of the trail map.

### 5. Mac Johnson Wildlife Area

**Map and information:** [www.frontenacarchbiosphere.ca/explore/hiking/mac-johnsonwildlife-area](http://www.frontenacarchbiosphere.ca/explore/hiking/mac-johnsonwildlife-area)

**Description:** This area, with a shallow lake, low-lying wetlands, and about 11 km of trails, is near Brockville, ON. From the 401 in Brockville, take County Route 29 north toward Smiths Falls. In 4.7 km there are traffic lights and the Tincap Restaurant on the corner; turn right onto Debruge Road. In 2.1 km, the entrance is on the right. The area is managed by the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority.

About three hours is enough to get a broad sampling of the area. There are many options to lengthen or shorten the route. The trails are well maintained, and generally well signposted. Terrain is Level 1.

There are a number of factors that make this a good area to practice on-trail route finding. These include extra unmarked paths; occasionally missing signposts; alternate routes not far apart; and in one case a trail segment that was flooded and impassable (but there was a workaround).

### 6. Cooper Marsh Conservation Area

**Maps:** The Cooper Marsh trail map and information including what kinds of birds to expect is at [www.rca.on.ca/page.php](http://www.rca.on.ca/page.php)

A brochure and larger-format trail map are at [www.rca.on.ca/uploads/files/Cooper-Marsh-Brochure-English-Web.pdf](http://www.rca.on.ca/uploads/files/Cooper-Marsh-Brochure-English-Web.pdf)

**Description:** This small conservation area managed by the Raisin River Conservation Authority is on Ontario Highway 2, 18 km east of Cornwall. It is clearly signposted on the south side of Highway 2 (right side going east) and has a large parking lot for visitors.

The network is good for two or three hours of easy hiking and nature observation. There are almost no changes of elevation. Level 1 to 2. It is particularly good in the change-of-season period, such as December, when a short walk may be desirable anyway and when a good walking surface is desirable. A bit more than half the trails in Cooper Marsh are smooth-surfaced earth, stone dust, and gravel, while almost half are well-constructed boardwalks over the wetlands.

### 7. Frontenac Provincial Park (many variations)

**Maps and information:** [www.ontarioparks.com/park/frontenac](http://www.ontarioparks.com/park/frontenac)

Frontenac is a medium-sized park near Sydenham, Ontario (a short distance north of Kingston). It has an extensive network of challenging trails that provide endless options for medium-length to very long

day hikes. All trails are well-signposted and well-maintained. They are also very rugged, with a lot of constant climbing and descending, sometimes steeply. Level 3-4. Frontenac is renowned for canoe camping and backpacking, and is an ideal location to gain experience in those activities. There is no car camping in Frontenac, and if you're planning on backcountry camping it is necessary to make reservations in advance. Park fees apply both for day use and for overnight trips.

If you haven't been to Frontenac before it is strongly advised to start at the main entrance and visitor centre where you can obtain advice and detailed trail maps. From Ontario 401 slightly west of Kingston, take Country Road 9 north toward Sydenham. Where the 9 ends at a Tjunction, turn left into the village. In a few hundred metres, at a large school parking lot, turn right on Wheatley Street. Bear right onto George Street which becomes Bedford Road (Country Road 19). In 11 km you will reach the entrance road to Frontenac Park, just past Frontenac Outfitters on the right.

## 8. Rideau Trail

**Maps and information:** [www.rideautrail.org/](http://www.rideautrail.org/)

**Description:** The Rideau Trail is Eastern Ontario's long-distance trail, linking Kingston with Ottawa and more or less following the Rideau Canal. It is 300 km in length and very varied, featuring woods, lakes, rivers, high vantage points, historic villages, Rideau Canal locks, farmland, and the cities at both ends. Large stretches of the trail are on private land, and it is expected that hikers will be respectful of the privilege of using the trail.

Hiking options available are limited only by your imagination. One of the best ways to hike the Trail, if you have two cars available, is to set up a car shuttle and hike a segment end to end. In a few places it is possible to use other trails in the vicinity to construct loop hikes that are partly on the Rideau Trail. The terrain is mostly Level 3.

Through-hiking the Rideau Trail takes more than ten days and is very challenging logistically. This is because camping is allowed in only a few places, and while inns and B and B's are sometimes available they are not always conveniently-situated.

## 9. Gould Lake Conservation Area

**Maps and descriptions:** Gould Lake is part of the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve. Their description is most informative about the trails; see here:

[www.frontenacarchbiosphere.ca/explore/hiking/gould-lake-conservation-area](http://www.frontenacarchbiosphere.ca/explore/hiking/gould-lake-conservation-area)

The Conservation Area's own description gives a different slant on the facts of the area and better driving instructions to the trailhead, here: [crca.ca/conservationlands/conservation-areas/gould-lake-conservation-area/](http://crca.ca/conservationlands/conservation-areas/gould-lake-conservation-area/).

This conservation area, managed by the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority, is located near Sydenham, Ontario and is adjacent to Frontenac Provincial Park (above). Hiking in here is quite rugged, up and down rocky ridges. Level 4. There are good views of a couple of lakes.

## 10. Charleston Lake

**Map:** [www.ontarioparks.com/pdf/maps/charlestonlake/trails\\_interior.pdf](http://www.ontarioparks.com/pdf/maps/charlestonlake/trails_interior.pdf)

**Description:** From Ontario 401, close to the Thousand Islands Bridge, take County Road 3 (Reynolds Road) north toward Lansdowne. You will soon pass an intersection with Ontario Route 2; take note of the Rapid Valley Restaurant at this location. Continue on straight ahead through the village of Lansdowne. In 11 km there are signs leading to Charleston Lake Provincial Park.

The Park has a 10 km loop trail (Tallow Rock Bay trail) that makes a comfortably short day hike. There

are also four short trails ranging from 1.5 to 4.5 km which can be combined to appeal to a wide range of fitness levels and time available. All are moderate trails without long hills; Level 2-3. There are attractive forests, wetlands, and lake views.

Afterward the Rapid Valley is recommended, if it is open, for excellent home-made pies.

## **11. Landon Bay Centre**

**Map and information:** [www.frontenacarchbiosphere.ca/explore/hiking/landon-baycentre](http://www.frontenacarchbiosphere.ca/explore/hiking/landon-baycentre)

**Description:** Landon Bay is a small but diverse and interesting hiking area located along the Thousand Islands Parkway between Gananoque and the 1000 Islands Bridge. A unit of the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve, it was supported by the Barbara Heck Foundation previously, and has now been incorporated in Thousand Islands National Park of Canada.

A half day's hiking will cover most of the area. There are many scenic high spots including a high overlook of the St. Lawrence River and the Thousand Islands; a historic arched stone bridge constructed with great craftsmanship; a river-level bridge along the side of a rock face that will remind Adirondack hikers of the Hitch Up Matildas of Avalanche Lake; distinctively-shaped trees; glacial erratics; and varied forest. Level 2.

Just outside the entrance of Landon Bay there is a scenic pull-out and picnic area beside the St. Lawrence River. It is easy to incorporate a swim off the rocks at that location after a hike. A bike path runs parallel to the whole length of the Thousand Islands Parkway, and paddling is available offshore.