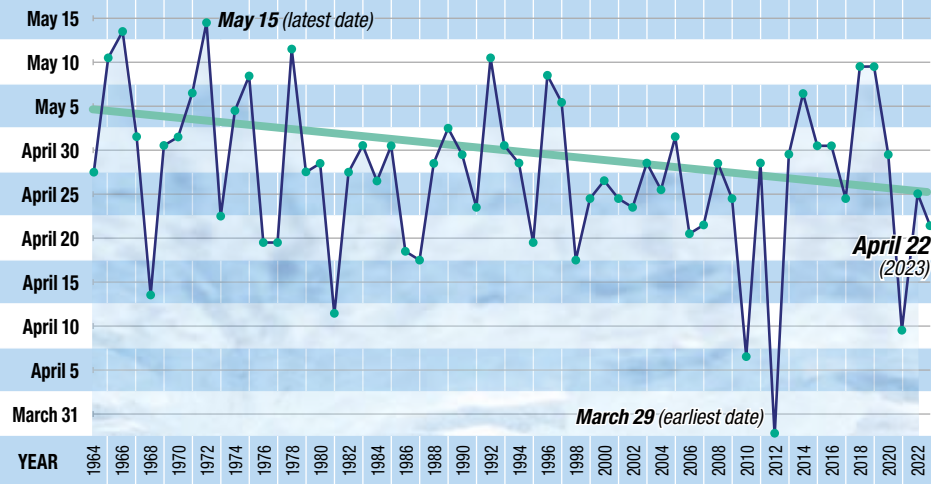


## Lake Opeongo Ice-out Dates Showing Trend



Compiled by Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry: Algonquin Fisheries Assessment Unit

## Fishing Reminders

- No live baitfish are permitted.
- No fishing is permitted within 100 m of a water control dam.
- No fishing within 300 metres downstream of Lake Opeongo's Annie Bay dam.
- Daily catch and possession limit for Lake Trout is 2 per person (1 per person with a Conservation Licence).
- Daily catch and possession limit for trout is 5 per person, no more than two of which can be Lake Trout (2 per person with not more than one Lake Trout, with a Conservation Licence).
- Be aware some lakes have slot limits. Check the Algonquin Information Guide for a list.
- Worms are not native to Algonquin and remaining worms should be taken home or thrown in the trash – not on the ground!

Refer to the Ontario Recreational Fishing Regulations Summary for complete details.



## CLOSED YEAR-ROUND

**The recreational angling season for Opeongo Lake Whitefish is now closed year-round.**

In Lake Opeongo a “Small-bodied” and a “Large-bodied” form of Lake Whitefish have evolved to fill two separate niches. This species-pair was recently assessed as Threatened, and as a result, the recreational fishery has been closed – recreational anglers are no longer allowed to target or harvest Lake Whitefish in Opeongo.

If you catch a Lake Whitefish on Lake Opeongo while targeting other species, you must release it immediately. The Opeongo Lake Whitefish are one example of the amazing aquatic diversity found in the park that will benefit from additional protection.

## CONTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY SCIENCE!

**As of early 2023, the Algonquin Provincial Park iNaturalist project had over 80,775 observations of 4,416 species!**

By submitting your observations and photos to iNaturalist.ca, you can help park staff document biodiversity, protect habitat and even help us eradicate invasive species! In addition to records of beautiful sedges and colourful moths, iNaturalist can be a helpful tool for park managers to collect information on newly established invasive species, including aquatic invasive species.

- 1.** Upload a picture of any wild plant, animal or fungus.
- 2.** iNaturalist's community and image recognition software will help you identify it.
- 3.** Help out other naturalists by identifying their observations.
- 4.** Every observation becomes part of a growing record of Earth's biodiversity.



Available on iOS, Android and at [inaturalist.org](https://www.inaturalist.org)!

iNaturalist Canada is run by the Canadian Wildlife Federation, the Royal Ontario Museum, and iNaturalist.org at the California Academy of Sciences.



## ALGONQUIN VISITOR CENTRE

HOURS OF OPERATION

**Algonquin Visitor Centre**  
April 22 to October 29, 2023  
Open Daily 9 am - 5 pm

October 30 to December 23, 2023  
Weekends 9 - 5 pm, full services  
Weekdays 9 - 4 pm, limited services

Museum • Bookstore  
& Nature Shop



**Algonquin Logging Museum**  
June 10 to October 15, 2023  
Open Daily 9 am - 5 pm

The 1.3-km trail with outdoor exhibits is available year-round.

[OntarioParks.com](https://OntarioParks.com) • [algonquinpark.on.ca](https://algonquinpark.on.ca)

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## Lost, Then Found Again

By Peter Mills

The arrival of the year 2023 marks for us that thirty years have passed since our magnificent Visitor Centre first opened. A viewing deck, heritage exhibits, theatre, and bookstore all work together in this building to tell the story of the Algonquin landscape, and to encourage its exploration. The “new” 1993 facility replaced the former “Algonquin Park Museum”, which had operated on the shores of Found Lake since

the 1950s. Although the new centre is a major improvement on the facilities that had been offered at Found Lake, an old and loyal guard of park visitors from “those days” still like to share nostalgic memories of stopping in at the old Park Museum. With thirty years now between us and our departure from the facility at Found Lake, those stories from days-gone-by feel all the more precious. And so, the realization that

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The former “Algonquin Park Museum” (1961). (Algonquin Provincial Park Archives and Collections, APM 899)



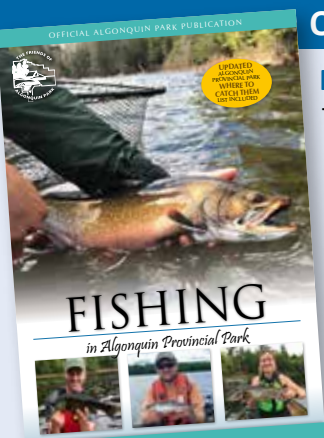
## Official Park Publication

ONLY \$6.95

### Fishing in Algonquin Provincial Park

This revised edition provides interesting facts about Algonquin's clear, cold lakes; threats to lake ecology; and fisheries research and management. It has lists of all fish species in Algonquin, plus gamefish present in 233 lakes. Park visitors often have limited knowledge of how or where to fish, or the kinds of fish to expect. This book is intended to provide you with the information needed to plan your next angling adventure in Algonquin Park.

Available at the Algonquin Visitor Centre Bookstore & Nature Shop, East Gate and West Gate, or online at [algonquinpark.on.ca](https://algonquinpark.on.ca)





*Continued from Page One...*

three decades have passed gives us pause to ask the question: what is important to remember about that old museum, and the way things were?

One noteworthy answer to this question is that the Found Lake area was explored by scores of bright and curious seasonal naturalist staff who lived and worked on-site at the old museum. Staff housing was provided directly adjacent to the museum, meaning not only that the commute to work could be accomplished in seconds, and on foot, but also that naturalist staff remained in the area after-hours and even on days off. The indirect consequence of this housing arrangement was that for decades, fleets of nature-minded people set their attention and curiosity on the landscape around Found Lake. And that arrangement is what led to many amazing discoveries in this little area over those years.

That was at least part of the reason why a 93-hectare area just north of Found Lake was identified as ecologically significant by the International Biological Programme (IBP) in 1972. The IBP was a global initiative that ran from 1964 to 1974 and it aimed to coordinate large-scale environmental studies and identify unique ecological areas. In the case of the Found Lake area, the IBP felt this parcel of land within Algonquin Park was worth noting as significant because staff had discovered it contained several unique plants, including a stand of Red Spruce (*Picea rubens*). In Ontario, this tree has a limited distribution that includes Algonquin Park and some of the surrounding area. When the first Algonquin Park management plan was released in 1974, it mapped and described 63 “Natural Zones” which were areas of the Park where especially stringent protection measures were to be offered to the landscape in order to protect unique park values. Indeed, this area north of Found Lake was listed in that plan as one such zone and one of its core values was the stand of Red Spruce. Despite a slight change in terminology, the current management plan (1998) continues to identify this important site as the “Found Lake Nature Reserve”.



A stand of Red Spruce in winter. (Peter Mills)

Although the Red Spruce stand appears to have first been noted by forestry staff, it was naturalist staff working at the old Park Museum that made other important discoveries in what would become the reserve. For example, a tiny, strange fern called Narrow Triangle Moonwort (*Botrychium angustisegmentum*) was known to grow in the reserve. This little plant apparently grew along the edges of the Nominigan Road, which was a wagon trail (now long-abandoned) used for transporting guests and supplies between the Highland Inn on Cache Lake and Nominigan Lodge on Smoke Lake, both structures that were dismantled long ago. The old road cut through part of the reserve and even in the 1970s it was disappearing back into the forest, but at that time the route was walkable and the disturbed ground in the former wagon ruts provided the exact type of growing conditions favoured by the moonworts. Another unique plant found in the Found Lake Nature Reserve is White Trillium (*Trillium grandiflorum*). This conspicuous plant—Ontario’s official flower—is very rare in Algonquin Park despite the fact it can be abundant in nearby places such as around the town of Huntsville. But, for reasons not fully understood, a large and isolated population of



A bird's-eye view of the Found Lake Nature Reserve's Red Spruce stand. (Peter Mills)

this charismatic plant was found to exist in the reserve by naturalist staff back in the 1970s.

This fascinating history raises some important questions. First, are these unique plants—the Red Spruce, the Narrow Triangle Moonwort, and the White Trillium—still present in the Found Lake Nature Reserve, decades after they were first noted there? And if not, in what other ways has this nature reserve—a small protected area within the larger protected area of Algonquin Park itself—changed since first formally recognized by the IBP in 1972? We thought we would take the time to sort all this out.

On the topic of the reserve’s stand of Red Spruce, our first task was to relocate it. Documents that were drafted concerning the reserve in the 1970s and 1990s didn’t actually record its exact location, or size, and so our first visits included walking transects to try and find where exactly these trees were. Once we did, at a location not too far from Highway 60, we set out to find out exactly how many trees constituted the stand. First, we had to identify where the edges of the stand were, which over the course of several visits we accomplished by walking from what we perceived was the outermost tree to the next outermost tree, and by tracking our route using a GPS all the while. This is easier said than done since the terrain was often rough, the understory thick, and the difficulties in distinguishing Red Spruce from the similar and more common White and Black Spruce. When we finished this task, we had a map that demonstrated the stand was exactly

2 hectares in size (or about 2% of the total reserve). Next, we set out to find out how many Red Spruce grew inside the 2-hectare polygon we had mapped with our GPS. Several days and lots of counting later, we determined the stand contained about 640 Red Spruce! However, we must point out that most of these were relatively small and shrubby trees located in the understory of the forest. Our census noted only fifty mature Red Spruce. Happily for us, this distribution of ages and sizes—immense numbers of young trees in the understory, large numbers in the midstory, and a collection of sizable adults in the canopy—suggests the population is healthy and young individuals are poised to take the place of older trees as they die out from natural causes.

But what about the Narrow Triangle Moonwort? And White Trillium? Was there any indication either of these unique plants still persist in the Found Lake Nature Reserve? We knew each species would require a unique effort to relocate, if they were there to be re-found at all. Catching up with the moonwort would mean trying to retrace the route of the old Nominigan Road, whose rutted, disturbed soil was what provided a growing substrate for this strange and specialized plant when first discovered there in the 1970s. And, based on what little information we had from the past, the stand of White Trilliums should be found somewhere “on an east-facing slope”. We set out to work.

But try as we might, we found ourselves unable to retrace the route the old Nominigan

Road took across the reserve. We had been told in an anecdotal sense that this route was quite grown-in even in the 1970s, and despite at times feeling like we might be onto something, our explorations failed to find any furrow or cut through the forest that could have been the remnants of the old road. Accordingly, we failed to relocate any moonwort. This plant appears to have disappeared along with the disturbed ground it so prefers, underscoring an interesting pair of messages: the reserve has recovered from some disturbance made in the past (a positive), but with it also lost some unique values that benefitted from that disturbance. Although we are sad to see the moonwort go, we don’t take the loss too personally since the aim of Algonquin Park’s nature reserve system is to permanently protect important features by keeping them free from even light disturbance.

And the White Trilliums? This, by contrast, we can report as a total success. We counted almost 500 blooms in a large and sprawling patch essentially exactly where they were noted fifty years earlier. But despite



White Trilliums are very rare in Algonquin Park but grow in the Found Lake Nature Reserve. (Peter Mills)



Narrow Triangle Moonwort grows in disturbed soils. (Erik Danielsen)

rediscovering this patch of flowers, a mystery remains: why does this patch exist? and how has it persisted here for at least 50 years, when our overall understanding of this species’ rarity in Algonquin Park is because it is too cold for them to survive here? The answers to these questions remain unknown. Maybe there are cryptic environmental factors at work here to make this tiny area suitable for them. Or is it chance events that brought them here and have allowed them to persist? Or is this patch composed of a genetic strain particularly resistant to cold?

Despite a growing list of follow-up questions, two things emerge as obvious after our “re-inventory”: first, Algonquin’s nature reserves appear capable of doing what they were meant to do, which is harbour unique and precious park values long into the future and provide a baseline for study about environmental change. And second, when curiosity, exploration, and nature are combined, the results are delightful, valuable, and fascinating.

*\*Note: there are no trails in the Found Lake Nature Reserve. The “old” museum building is now used as a gallery called the Algonquin Art Centre.*