

## **Feature Hike**

### **Witty's Lagoon Regional Park Beach Trail**

Trail Rating: Easy to Moderate

Approximate Hiking Time: 1.5 hours return

#### **Highlights**

A 1.5-kilometre trail takes you through a diversity of habitats -- from coastal Douglas-fir forest, freshwater creek and waterfall, lagoon and saltmarsh, to sandy beach and rocky shore. One of the best birdwatching locations in Victoria, the lagoon provides an important resting and feeding area for migrating birds. Enjoy spectacular views of the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Victoria.

#### **The Hike**

Begin your hike at the Nature Information Centre (open noon – 4 p.m. Saturdays, Sundays and holiday Mondays) to pick up park maps and brochures, and check out the interpretive displays.

Follow the main trail down to the large wooden bridge that crosses Bilston Creek. Cross over the bridge to the viewing platform, and watch the water as it tumbles over the rocks into the lagoon below, creating Sitting Lady Falls. Continue along the trail, which skirts the lagoon and takes you to the saltmarsh and estuary. Stop to look out into the estuary to see what you can find. Is that a great blue heron fishing on the far shore? You may see duck and shorebirds feeding in the nutrient-rich waters, and on the muddy bottom of the estuary.

The trail ends at a sandy beach. During a low tide, explore in the tidepools to find hermit crabs, shore crabs, and a variety of fish and other creatures. With a good low tide (2.0 ft./0.6 m or lower), the expansive beach extends for 500 metres. On these low tide days, you can make the crossing between the main beach and another portion of the park – Tower Point. This part of the park, with its rocky islets, provides habitat for a diversity of marine life -- from sea stars to sea slugs.

After enjoying the views at the beach, you can return the same way to the Nature Information Centre. Please remember, when exploring our sensitive marine environment, to handle all sea creatures (including shells and rocks) with care and leave them where you find them.