

## WHEN TO VISIT

Duck Lake is primarily a summertime destination. Use caution and check road and lake ice-out conditions ahead of visits during the late autumn, winter, and springtime.

**Spring** Snow and ice persist into springtime, followed by “Mud Season” often making access limited until summertime. Bureau’s online Ice Out listing: [www.maine.gov/dacf/iceout](http://www.maine.gov/dacf/iceout)

**Summer** Anglers fish for bass, pickerel, and perch in Gassabias, Fourth Machias, and the Unknown Lakes; for landlocked salmon and brook trout in Duck Lake; and for bass, perch, and brown trout in Nicatous Lake. Paddlers are afforded several lakes and the adjacent Machias River Corridor. ATV riders share the multi-use roads as signed along with bicycle riders.

**Autumn** Wear blaze orange during hunting season; as there is some hunting for moose, deer and ruffed grouse. MaineFoliage.com lists peak foliage color updates throughout Maine.

**Winter** Roads are not plowed on a regular basis. Most visitors arrive via snowmobile on the Maine Interstate Trail System - on ITS 84. Riding on plowed roads is prohibited. For trail conditions and maps contact the area’s local clubs and the Maine Snowmobile Association, [www.mesnow.com](http://www.mesnow.com) Anglers ice fish in season following State regulations. FMI: [www.maine.gov/ifw](http://www.maine.gov/ifw)



## TIMBER MANAGEMENT ON MAINE’S PUBLIC LANDS

Sustainable forest management is one of the many principal land management activities that take place on Maine’s Public Reserved Lands. Scientifically-based timber harvests are planned in coordination with recreation, wildlife, forest health, and scenic considerations. Revenues from timber sales support the management and maintenance of trails, campsites, roads and other infrastructure, and wildlife management projects.



## SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

### Know applicable laws.

- The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife Warden Service does search-and-rescue operations and enforces state fish and game laws, boating laws (on inland waters), and ATV and snowmobile laws. To learn more about applicable laws and to purchase appropriate licenses, visit [www.maine.gov/ifw](http://www.maine.gov/ifw).

### Help stop the spread of invasive species.

- Eurasian Milfoil is an aquatic invasive.
- Clean all watercraft before they are launched and after retrieval. FMI: [www.maine.gov/dep/water/invasives/](http://www.maine.gov/dep/water/invasives/)
- Buy only local firewood, do not transport out of state firewood. FMI: [www.maine.gov/firewood](http://www.maine.gov/firewood)

### Cell phones should not be counted on in an emergency.

### Moose, bear and other large animals are abundant.

- Observe from a safe distance; do not flush wildlife.
- Drive slowly on area roads, particularly at times of low light.
- Food must be securely stowed when camping.
- Tents must be kept free of food and food odors.

### Logging trucks frequent area roads. Watch out for them and:

- Pull over and stop for trucks regardless of which direction they’re headed as they have the right of way.
- Avoid roads that are too narrow for two vehicles.
- Do not block side roads or stop in a spot with poor visibility.
- Be prepared for rugged gravel roads (dusty, washouts): travel slowly and carry a spare tire.

### Trailerable and hand-carry boat launches are highly variable.

- Online sortable listing: [www.maine.gov/dacf/boatlaunches](http://www.maine.gov/dacf/boatlaunches)

### Be a responsible visitor and Leave No Trace

- Learn more at [www.lnt.org](http://www.lnt.org)

### Pet owners should exercise caution

- Trappers are permitted to use Maine public lands so be careful with your pets.
- Wear blaze orange during hunting season.

## DOWNEAST & ACADIA REGION

### DIRECTIONS

Access is gained over rough private roads.

**From the west:**

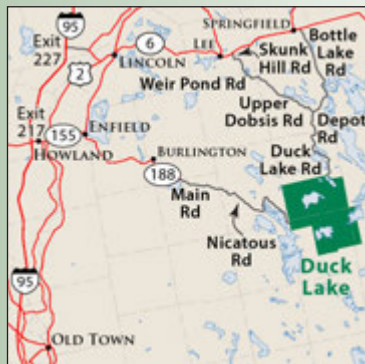
off an extension of Route 188 out of Burlington called Main Rd. eastward to the Nicatous Rd.

**From the north:**

the approach from Springfield and Grand Lake Stream is often not passable by car until mid-summer.

**From the south to Fifth Machias Lake:**

off the Stud Mill Rd. in T35 to Machias Lake Road or from the east on the Stud Mill Rd. from Big Lake TWP.



Lat 45.11439/ Lon -68.148235

### CONTACTS

Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands  
Eastern Public Lands Office  
106 Hogan Road, Suite 5  
Bangor, ME 04401  
207-941-4412  
[www.maine.gov/ducklake](http://www.maine.gov/ducklake)

### SERVICES & FACILITIES

To preserve the natural character of these lands, the bureau has developed only primitive recreational facilities. Recreation in these areas requires self-reliance on the part of the visitor. Camping, paddling, and fishing are among the most popular activities.

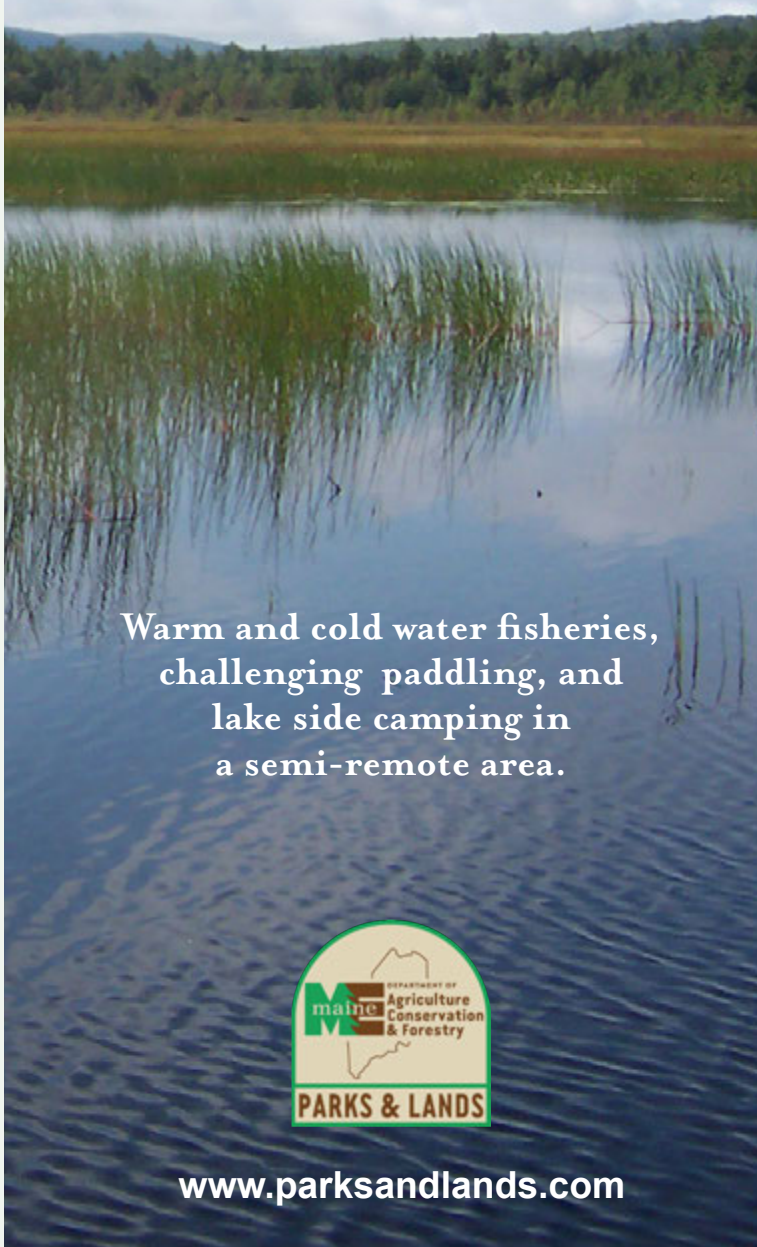
- Campsites are lake-side; including groups sites and a lean-to.
- Boat launches: 1 trailerable; 3 hand-carry. For a listing of statewide trailerable and hand-carry boat launches use the Online Sortable Boat Launch Listing: [www.maine.gov/dacf/boatlaunches](http://www.maine.gov/dacf/boatlaunches)
- Multi-use roads are signed for use that includes ATVs and bicycles during the summer and snowmobiles in the winter on unplowed roads. No off-road bike trails are available.



2025

# DUCK LAKE PUBLIC LAND

## GUIDE & MAP



Warm and cold water fisheries,  
challenging paddling, and  
lake side camping in  
a semi-remote area.



[www.parksandlands.com](http://www.parksandlands.com)



Duck Lake.

## OVERVIEW

Located in northern Hancock County about 70 miles northeast of Bangor, Duck Lake Public Land comprises more than 30,000 acres of forested land with gently rolling terrain and many lakes, streams, and wetlands which attract visitors who enjoy fishing and camping in a semi- remote area.

The lakes offer both warm and cold water fisheries. Gassabias, Fourth Machias, and the Unknown Lakes provide angling opportunities for bass, pickerel, and perch. Families with children especially enjoy hiking the half-mile trail to Upper Unknown Lake, picnicking on a sandy beach, and fishing for pickerel. Unusual in this part of Maine, Duck Lake supports landlocked salmon and brook trout, while Nicatous Lake is known for its bass, perch, and brown trout fishery.

While fishing is the primary attraction, there is some hunting for moose and ruffed grouse. Fishing and hunting are allowed, subject to state law. Please note rules restricting firearms on and around campsites, trails, and boat launch sites.

Most of the 200 species of wildlife indigenous to Maine can be found here. The **Duck Lake Ecological Reserve**, encompassing more than 6,500 acres, provides opportunities for both scientific study of the exemplary ecological features and low impact recreation. Loon and Atlantic salmon habitat is important here, as well as three zoned deer wintering areas and numerous small wetlands.

Duck Lake, Fourth Machias Lake, and Fifth Machias Lake have been selected by The Nature Conservancy as portfolio lakes, meaning they are high value waters that best represent the ecosystems, natural communities, and species characteristic of the region. Criteria used in evaluating lakes and ponds include water quality, dam impacts, presence of rare or noteworthy species, rarity, and remoteness.

## PROPERTY HISTORY

This land is the homeland of the Wabanaki. During the late 1700s and early 1800s, following the Doctrine of Discovery, blocks of land (now known as townships) were delineated and sold by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Certain parcels were retained from these blocks for future settlements, known as the Minister, Ministry, and School lots, several of which comprise the current landbase. Additional lands were added when the former Maine Military Commission transferred its lands in 1961 to the State Forest Commission who held the state’s public lands at that time. Land trades and acquisitions with private industrial landowners conducted in 1978, 1985, 1999, and the Conservation Fund in 2005 provided additional acreage to Duck Lake Public Land.



Gassabias Lake from hand-carry boat launch.

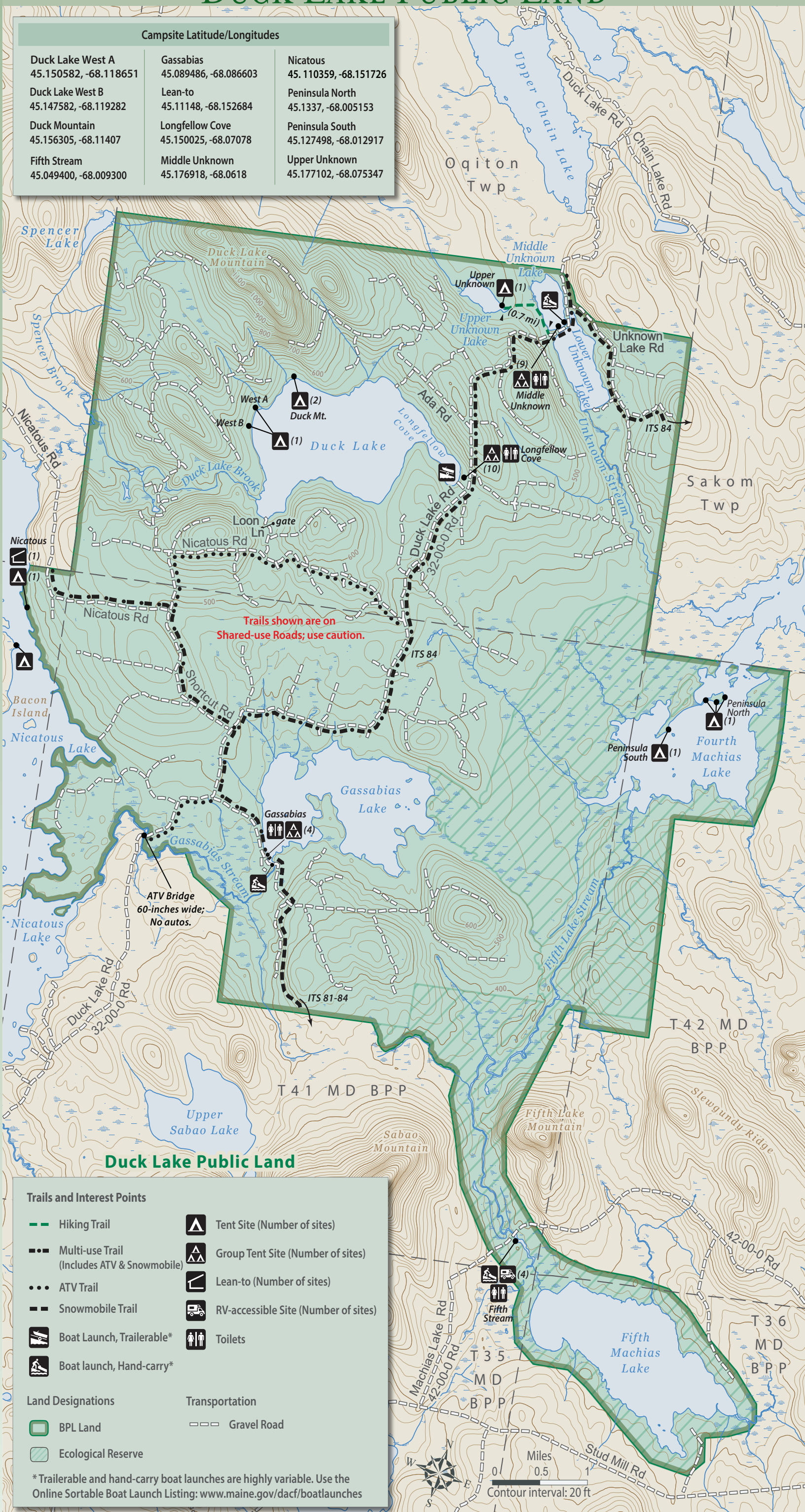
## PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

- The Conservation Fund supported land acquisition in 2005.
- Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP) provides natural resource inventories and on-going technical expertise.
- Private landowners.
- You can help by making a donation to the Maine Public Lands at [www.parksandlands.com](http://www.parksandlands.com) and getting involved as a volunteer on trail maintenance projects. FMI: (207) 941-4412

# DUCK LAKE PUBLIC LAND

## Campsite Latitude/Longitudes

Duck Lake West A 45.150582, -68.118651	Gassabias 45.089486, -68.086603	Nicatous 45.110359, -68.151726
Duck Lake West B 45.147582, -68.119282	Lean-to 45.11148, -68.152684	Peninsula North 45.1337, -68.005153
Duck Mountain 45.156305, -68.11407	Longfellow Cove 45.150025, -68.07078	Peninsula South 45.127498, -68.012917
Fifth Stream 45.049400, -68.009300	Middle Unknown 45.176918, -68.0618	Upper Unknown 45.177102, -68.075347



## Duck Lake Public Land

### Trails and Interest Points

Hiking Trail	Tent Site (Number of sites)
Multi-use Trail (Includes ATV & Snowmobile)	Group Tent Site (Number of sites)
ATV Trail	Lean-to (Number of sites)
Snowmobile Trail	RV-accessible Site (Number of sites)
Boat Launch, Trailerable*	Toilets
Boat launch, Hand-carry*	

### Land Designations

BPL Land
Ecological Reserve

### Transportation

Gravel Road
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\*Trailerable and hand-carry boat launches are highly variable. Use the Online Sortable Boat Launch Listing: [www.maine.gov/dacf/boatlaunches](http://www.maine.gov/dacf/boatlaunches)

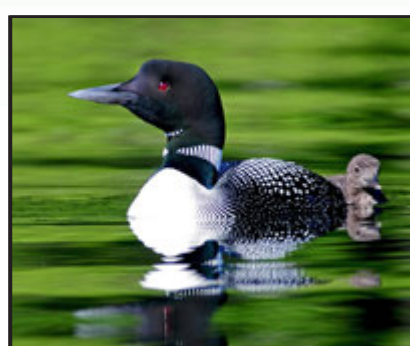
## VISITOR RULES

- Fires** Kindle fires only in authorized campsites with fire rings. Do not cut live vegetation. [www.maine.gov/forestpests](http://www.maine.gov/forestpests)
- Pets** Pets in campsites must be leashed and attended; outside of campsites, pets must be under control.
- Trash** Carry out all trash.
- Fishing** All those fishing must have a valid license and review the State's open water fishing regulations. Anglers are asked to use lead-free sinkers and jigs to prevent metal poisoning of loons, eagles and other wildlife. [www.maine.gov/ifw/](http://www.maine.gov/ifw/)
- Hunting** Although hunting is permitted, loaded fire-arms are not permitted on hiking trails. Do not discharge weapons within 300 feet of any picnic or parking area, posted trail or other developed area. Hunting license and season information is available at [www.maine.gov/ifw/](http://www.maine.gov/ifw/)
- Limit of Stay** Campers may not exceed a 14-day stay in a 45-day period
- Power Equipment** Use no chainsaws, generators or other power equipment around campsites.
- Abandoned Property** BPL staff may take custody of any personal property left unattended for more than 3 days (unless advance written permission is given).

## WATCHABLE WILDLIFE

In addition to loons and ducks on all the lakes, near Duck Mountain, visitors may see some of Maine's biggest hawks--broadwings, goshawks, and redtails. Look for ospreys and bald eagles around the lakes.

An ecological reserve of nearly 6,000 acres between Gassabias and Fourth Machias Lakes has been set aside to help protect Maine's biological diversity. This area includes unique ecological communities, where natural processes will continue with minimal human interference or manipulation.



Loon and chick by Ken Lamb.

## BOATING / PADDLING

- Small trailered boats can be launched at gravel boat launch sites on Duck and Nicatous Lakes. Boaters should watch out for big boulders near the launch site on Duck Lake, especially at low water.
- Hand-carried craft are put in at Middle and Lower Unknown Lakes and Gassabias Lake.
- Hardy canoeists pass through the unit on the Eastern Maine Canoe Trip and Machias River Trip.
- Online Sortable Boat Launch Listing: [www.maine.gov/dacf/boatlaunches](http://www.maine.gov/dacf/boatlaunches)



Middle Unknown Lake with lake-side camping.

## CAMPING

- Drive-to sites are located at Longfellow Cove on Duck Lake, on the spit of land between Middle and Lower Unknown Lakes, and on the south shore of Gassabias Lake. Many of these sites are suitable for small self-contained recreational vehicles.
- Hike in to more remote sites on Upper Unknown Lake.
- Boat-in sites are on Duck, Nicatous, and Fourth Machias Lakes.
- All sites are available on a first-come, first-served basis with no fees or permits required, and have a table, fire ring, and nearby pit toilet.
- The map shows all authorized camping sites. While visitors may camp elsewhere on these Lands, they may not build fires. Please help protect this area by obeying rules regarding fires and practicing low-impact camping techniques: [www.lnt.org](http://www.lnt.org)