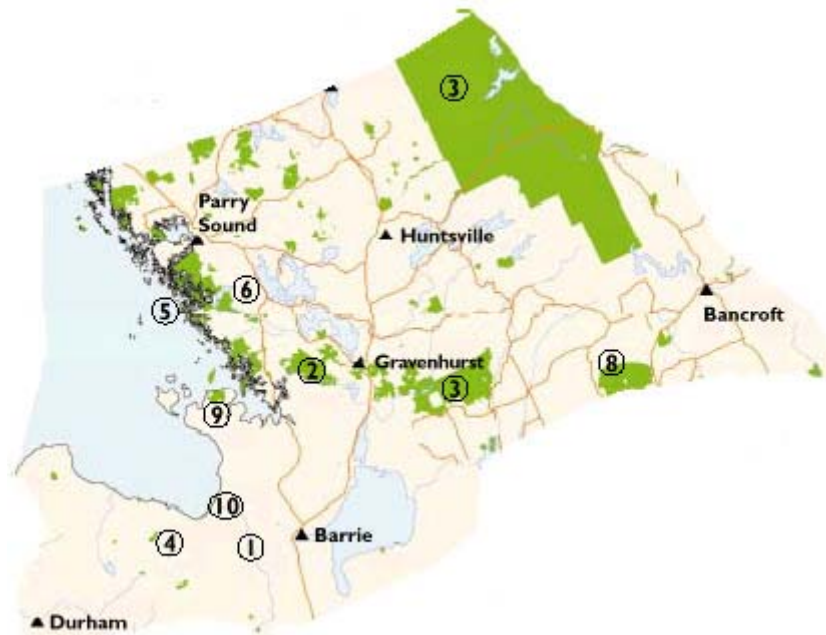


Huronian

Special Places and Species

There are many exciting and accessible natural places to explore within the Huronia region



1. The beach terraces of three ancient glacial lakes cup what is now Minesing Swamp, a 5,000-hectare wooded wetland just west of Barrie. A good part of the swamp is made up of lush stands of silver maple and black ash, but along the levees that line the Nottawasaga River and on the rich river floodplain grow warmth-loving species like hackberry and bladdernut. You can explore the river or open marsh sections by canoe or walk the Ganaraska Trail through the more wooded sections of the swamp. For details on exploring the swamp, contact the [Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority](#).
2. [Torrance Barrens](#) is not quite the desolate expanse the name suggests. Rather this park features large expanses of open bedrock ringed by red oak, white pine and white ash. The park's open view of the heavens and distance from urban light sources have led to its designation as a "Night Park," a stargazing retreat from city lights. During daylight hours, you might come across a five-lined skink, Ontario's only lizard. From Torrance on Hwy. 169 head about 3 km. south on District Road 13. Park in the lot on rock pavement near Highland Pond.

3. The west side of Algonquin is the park's busier side, particularly in the Hwy. 60 corridor. But areas like the panhandle and the park interior can be less traveled and are fine places to see moose and deer as you paddle quietly through Algonquin's famous lakes. Another option is to explore the upland hardwood forests that are characteristic of this side of the park on the Western Uplands hiking trail.
4. The soft limestone of the Niagara Escarpment is cut with narrow crevasses on the rim of the Pretty River Valley near Singhampton. These gaps are known as the Singhampton Caves and you can clamber through the narrow fissures, following ladders and stepping over boulders. The Bruce Trail and the sidetrail that leads to the caves also swing past the Nottawasaga Lookout, which is a great spot to admire the fall colours in the valley below. Follow Hwy. 24 north to Singhampton. Where 24 turns east in Singhampton, continue north on the concession road straight ahead. At the end of the road, park and then follow the white and blue blazes into the woods.
5. The shoreline of Georgian Bay is a spectacular playground for boaters. From the archipelago of Georgian Bay Islands National Park to the remote offshore islands and waters of Massasauga Provincial Park, up to the well-traveled and historically important French River trading routes, this is a good place to come equipped with a canoe, a kayak or a small boat. The rocky shoreline offers breathtaking scenery and the crystal waters are supremely inviting on hot summer days, but care should be taken as the weather can change quickly.
6. H.N Crossley Reserve - Federation nature reserve.
7. Dalton Digby Wildlands Provincial Park.
8. Kawartha Highlands Provincial Park.
9. Awenda Provincial Park.
10. Wasaga Beach Provincial Park.

For more areas to visit, see A Nature Guide to Ontario, available from Ontario Nature.