

## NATURE RESERVES

# Quarry Bay Nature Reserve

The Quarry Bay Nature Reserve protects 967 acres of significant alvar habitat on the southwestern shore of Manitoulin Island. The acquisition of Quarry Bay in 1999 was part of the largest conservation land purchase in Ontario, in which a total of 18 km of windswept coast and 6,000 hectares of backcountry were protected by Ontario Nature, the Nature Conservancy of Canada and Ontario Parks.

Quarry Bay Nature Reserve is made up primarily of treed alvar, interspersed with swamps and small lakes. There are also, large expanses of open alvar – limestone barrens with little or no soil – extending along the shores of Lake Huron.

These outstanding alvar communities have been described as some of the best remaining alvar sites in the world. The area from Quarry Bay to Christina Bay forms the "alvar coast" – an area of exposed bedrock sloping into Lake Huron with coastal meadow marshes at the heads of bays and inlets. The alvars along this coast are home to a unique assemblage of plants, lichens and mosses, many of which are vulnerable, threatened or of limited distribution. Most notable is the bright yellow lakeside daisy (*Hymenoxys herbacea*), found only at about a dozen stations around the Great Lakes. The alvar coast likely contains the majority of the range of this wildflower.