

Somenos Lake loop

The trip follows the Trans Canada Highway north from Beverly Street, passing beside the Somenos Marsh Conservation Area, a prime area for birding. It leaves the highway at the Forest Discovery Centre. The remainder of the trip is through rural countryside on quiet and safe roads except for a short stretch on Herd Road. The return to Duncan is shared with the [Quamichan Lake loop](#) and the routes to Crofton and Chemainus. Distances are only given for a one-way trip, because if you go the other way you will miss the Somenos Conservation Area.

- 0 km Start at Beverly Street and the Trans Canada Highway. Ride north on the right (east) side of the highway.
- 0.5 km Open Air Classroom, including an interpretive sign and a boardwalk to bird viewing areas. The Somenos Conservation Area (an Important Bird Area), boardwalks, and viewing platforms are cared for by the Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society, a member of Nature Cowichan. Your [donation](#) will support protection of the area and improvements to the visitor facilities.
- 1.3 km Rest area. Another excellent nature-viewing location. Surprisingly, the rest area does not include a rest room.
- 1.5 km Pond with more birding opportunities.
- 2.1 km Turn right onto Drinkwater / Bell-McKinnon Roads. On the right is the Forest Discovery Centre with a steam train, old logging equipment, interpretive displays about the forest, a bird-viewing blind, and a walk through the forest. One of the Farmers' Markets is held here from 10 to 2 on Saturday. The other market is at the same time in downtown Duncan.
- 2.1 km. **Spur.** Go straight on Drinkwater Road for 0.4 km for lake access and a dock with a viewing platform for a panorama of Somenos Lake.
- 2.1 km. Go left on Bell-McKinnon Road.
- 2.6 km Right on Norcross Road, a quiet country road with pleasant views.
- 4.9 km Right on Herd Road. Herd Road can have moderate to heavy car and truck traffic and this 0.9 km section has no paved bicycle lane. Use Caution.
- 5.8 km Right on Mays Road. This quiet country road avoids a dangerous hill on Herd Road and takes you beside Richards Creek for a picnic or wildlife viewing.
- 6.5 km Richards Creek.
- 6.9 km Right on Herd Road. There is still no paved shoulder and lots of traffic, so ride with care
- 7.3 km Bike lane begins. Whew!
- 7.8 km **Junction.** Right on Lakes Road. Straight ahead for Crofton, Chemainus, or Maple Bay.
- 11.3 km Right on Townend Road, a firm dirt road.
- 11.9 km Left on a small short path, then right on York Road.
- 12.3 km Somenos Garry Oak Protected Area. This is the same endangered Garry Oak ecosystem which is protected by the Cowichan Garry Oak Preserve (see [Quamichan Lake loop](#)), but you are allowed to enter this one. A walk through the Area will be rewarded by views of native wildflowers and birds. Two members of Nature Cowichan help to protect this area: The Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society cares for the adjoining wetlands and the Cowichan Community Land Trust supports volunteers who patrol and care for the Area. Your [donation](#) can help protect this natural area.
- 12.3 km Backtrack on York Road to Trillium Terrace.
- 12.5 km Right on Trillium Terrace.
- 13.3 km Right on Lakes Road. There is no bike lane and lots of traffic here, so ride on the sidewalk or use extreme caution.
- 13.8 km **Junction.** Right on Beverly Street at Roundabout. It is 0.9 km back to the start of this loop, see the [Duncan Access](#) map. Straight ahead for the [Quamichan Lake loop](#) and Cowichan Bay ride.