

TRAIL 10

→ Bindloss/Buffalo

This uncommonly visited grassland stretches from the north boundary of CFB Suffield north to the Red Deer River. Gas well trails and section roads give quite good public access, particularly in the Remount and Buffalo-Atlee Community Pastures.

Follow the signs to Bindloss by driving west on Hwy 555, from its junction with Hwy 41 or east from the junction with Hwy 884 (Jenner). Several sites warrant investigation within this area including the Red Deer River north of Jenner **(A)**, the primitive campsites on the Red Deer River north of Buffalo **(B)** and north of Bindloss **(C)**, and Princess Springs **(D)** south of Bindloss. Any of the range roads leading south of Hwy 555 could be investigated, particularly for prairie species such as Baird's Sparrow and Sprague's Pipit. Be observant as you travel along Hwy 555 as Alberta's densest concentration of Loggerhead Shrike can be found along this route.

Hwy 886 north of Hwy 555 from Buffalo crosses the Red Deer River. At this crossing **(B)** an unserviced campsite often produces a variety of birds. It is particularly good in late August or early September during the southern migration of passerines. A variety of warblers, flycatchers and thrushes can be seen during this period. The rare, in Alberta, Gray-cheeked Thrush can be found here and Black-billed Cuckoo has also been noted. In the fall this site is often used as a base campground for hunters so it could be busy. Pit toilets only, are in vogue here.

The unserviced campsite **(C)** near Bindloss can be accessed by travelling north of Hwy 555 on RGE RD 30 to a T intersection taking the road to the left and proceeding to the bridge crossing. The campground is found on the south side of the river. Similar species to those found at the Buffalo campsite can be found here.

To reach Princess Springs **(D)**, travel south from Hwy 555 on RGE RD 30 (a track paralleling a power line) for 8.5 km at which point there is an unreadable sign with two posts within old tires. Turn west at this sign following the trail for 3.3 km to a cattle guard. After crossing the cattle guard turn north and follow this track north and then northwestward to some corrals. From here one must proceed on foot. (Do not drive on untracked prairie as this can result in extreme prairie fires.) You can investigate the springs, the wetlands and the sloughs, which in the fall, may contain large flocks of resting waterfowl as they proceed southward. The access road is a good locale to find McCown's Longspur. On the hills south of the springs one can find teepee rings and other artifacts. If one turns south at the cattle guard rather than north you are led into the Middle Sand Hills, which has good populations of Sharp-tailed Grouse and Loggerhead Shrike among other species.

Trail 10 has good herds of Pronghorn as well as White-tailed and Mule Deer. Rattlesnakes are quite common throughout the area.

This entire area is a prime hunting zone in the fall and caution must be exercised when birding this trail. Also be mindful of private property. Be sure to get permission if you want to wander on private land. All the sites described above are on public lands.

Some traveller's amenities are available at Jenner and at Empress. A visit to Trail 10 could be combined with a visit to Trail 9 (Sandy Point/Empress).



Loggerhead Shrike

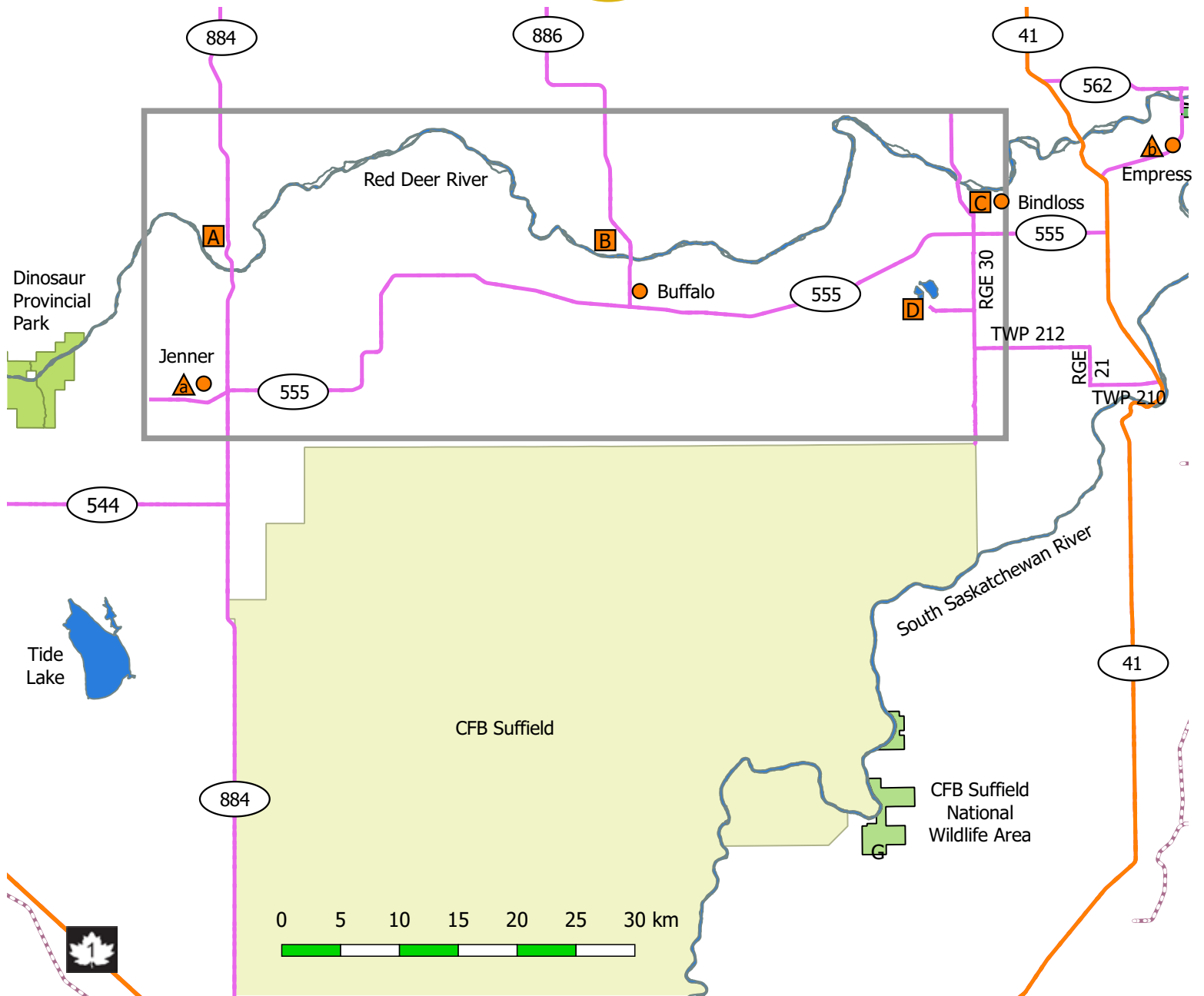
Bob Frew



Princess Springs

Rob Gardner

Trail 10



Trail 10: Bindloss / Buffalo

■ Observation Points

▲ Amenities

▲ A Red Deer River near Jenner

▲ a Jenner: fuel and lodgings

▲ B Buffalo Campground

▲ b Empress: fuel, meals, lodgings, camping and restrooms

▲ C Bindloss Campground

▲ D Princess Springs

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