



### Wildlife Viewing in the Cariboo Region

Three of B.C.'s most distinctive landscapes meet in the Cariboo Region. In the west lush temperate rainforests in the deep valleys and fiords of the coastal mountains give rise to alpine peaks and tundra. In the east are ranges of more rounded mountains clothed with dense coniferous forests and separated by large, deep lakes. The plateau between these two mountain areas is in the rainshadow of the western mountains. Dry lodgepole pine and Douglas-fir forests occur, with extensive grasslands hugging the Fraser and Chilcotin river valleys. These bunchgrass grasslands are at their northern limit in B.C.

The diversity of landscapes in the Cariboo Region provides a wide variety of habitats and a rich association of wildlife species. Important populations of large ungulates include woodland caribou, California bighorn sheep, mule deer and moose. The many water bodies, from grasslands to high mountains, are home to abundant numbers and variety of waterfowl, from loons and grebes to dabbling ducks and shorebirds. Bats, butterflies, reptiles and amphibians occur in their special habitats throughout the region.

Many of the large rivers have populations of fish, including salmon, kokanee and steelhead. The Fraser, Chilcotin, Cariboo, Horsefly and Bella Coola Rivers all support large salmon runs that may be viewed from July to September. The run on the Horsefly River has as many returning fish as the famous Adams River that flows into Shuswap Lake. Many lakes are stocked with rainbow trout, but others, especially the larger lakes to the east, have a more varied fish population.

Viewing of migrating bird species associated with lakes, ponds and wetlands is particularly rewarding during spring and fall. Migrants appear as soon as openings develop in the ice — as early as March in the south but April in the north, west and east. Southward migration of shorebirds may begin as early as July, while loons can still be seen in October.

### Look for these Wildlife Signs

- Tracks in soft ground or snow, nibbled branches
- Woodpecker holes, claw or teeth marks on aspen bark
- Ant nests often surrounded by tiny ant trails
- Spider webs and their occupants, dead or alive
- Distinctive scats and bird nests in all shapes and sizes
- Smells giving away the presence of a fox, or a skunk!
- Moths, common nighthawks, owls and bats at dusk

### More Information

*British Columbia Road and Recreational Atlas 5th Edition, 2001.* Informap.

*The BC Roadside Naturalists.* 2002. Richard Cannings and Sydney Cannings. Greystone Books.

*British Columbia Wildlife Viewing Guide.* 1991. Lone Pine Publishing.

*Trails of the Southern Cariboo.* 1998. Colin Campbell. Rocky Mountain Books.

*Checklist of Cariboo Birds.* 1992. Anna Roberts and Martin Gebauer. Williams Lake Field Naturalists.

*Bird Checklist for 100 Mile House and Area.* 2004. Tom Godin. District of 100 Mile House.

#### For more information contact:

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#### or visit the Wildlife Viewing Web site at:

[wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/fw/wild/wildlife\\_viewing.htm](http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/fw/wild/wildlife_viewing.htm)

#### or visit the BC Parks web site at:

[wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/](http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/)



Federation of  
B.C. Naturalists

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Ministry of Water, Land  
and Air Protection



### Successful Viewing

**Learn before looking** – Local brochures, books and field guides list species to expect at each site, their habitat preferences and viewing season. Visit 100 Mile House Visitor Centre, Scout Island Nature Centre in Williams Lake, and the Nature Education and Resource Centre in Quesnel for information.

**Have patience** – Wildlife are ever alert, be as cautious, quiet and unobtrusive as possible. Take your time, use cover to hide your presence, or stay in your vehicle.

**Explore different habitats** – Many species use different places in the landscape for nesting, resting and feeding. Learn their habits to improve your viewing chances. Edge habitats are special places where water and upland or forest and grassland meet to provide food, cover and nesting sites in one place.

### Viewing Ethics

To make your experience more enjoyable and to protect our wildlife viewing opportunities:

- Stay on designated roads and trails especially in grasslands
- Keep a safe distance from wildlife, especially predators
- Do not feed or unduly disturb wildlife
- Keep pets under control at all times
- Fences abound in the Cariboo Region; cross with care and leave gates as you find them
- Respect private property and fences
- Take all of your garbage home

### Safety

**Keep your distance** – Enjoy wildlife during their daily routine. Use binoculars or scope to get a closer view.

**Be alert while observing** – Know what wildlife to expect at each site and act accordingly; bears are attracted to salmon spawning sites.

**Do not disturb young wildlife** – Leave young where you find them; it is illegal to move them. A parent may be waiting and could become aggressive.



### Interesting Cariboo Region Viewing Routes

There are many opportunities for wildlife viewing in the Cariboo Region along paved and gravel roads. Several of the sites listed below the map can be linked to create viewing routes using major roads. The following are some other routes with productive viewing throughout their length. At all times when viewing, please park safely—well off the highway—and be aware of other vehicles.

- 1 **Highway 97** from 70 Mile House to 150 Mile House has numerous ponds, lakes and wetlands with abundant waterfowl in sight of the highway.
- 2 **Soda Creek Road** connects to **West Fraser Road** at Rudy Johnson bridge. This alternate route between Williams Lake and Quesnel provides many viewing opportunities. Grassland patches have wildlife species at their northern limit. Migratory waterfowl, sandhill cranes, long-billed curlews, mountain bluebirds, mourning dove and clay-coloured sparrows can be seen. Mule deer are plentiful year-round and white-tailed deer occur. On the west side, hike up Narcosli Creek to the falls for American dippers and nesting black swifts.
- 3 **The Nazko Road Circuit** from Quesnel west to Nazko, north to Echiniko River and back to Quesnel along the Blackwater River. Many different habitats from dry pine forests to wetlands and meadows support a diversity of birds, mule deer, moose, black bear and butterflies. Chinook salmon spawn in the Blackwater in August.
- 4 **From Riske Creek to Farwell Canyon** – this spectacular area of the Chilcotin grasslands has many opportunities to view grassland flowering plants and associated wildlife, including a unique subspecies of square-spotted blue butterfly, found nowhere else in the world. Watch for raptors and other grassland birds, coyotes and California bighorn sheep.
- 5 **Anahim Lake to Bella Coola** – grassland, wetland and dry forest habitats of the plateau give way to steep mountain habitats as you drop into the rainforest, rivers and seashore of the spectacular Bella Coola Valley. There are many opportunities to observe a wide variety of wildlife species as habitats change.

### Remote Wildlife Viewing Sites

Some sites in the Cariboo Region offering wildlife viewing in remote settings take planning and effort to reach. The map shows only a few remote sites:

- A Churn Creek Protected Area** – 100 km S of Williams Lake and 80 km W of 100 Mile House. Cross the Fraser River over the Gang Ranch bridge. An extensive grassland park with many grassland birds including Swainson's hawk, peregrine falcon, Lewis' woodpecker, sage thrasher, Brewer's sparrow, and bobolink. Mule deer, California bighorn sheep, sharp-tailed grouse, gopher snakes and racers are but a few of the many other species that may be seen. Best viewing is from April to October.
- B Bowron Lakes Provincial Park (Canoe Circuit)** – 147 km east of Quesnel along Hwy 26 — open May to September. Waterfowl, woodpeckers and songbirds are plentiful while osprey and bald eagle nest. Beaver, river otter and muskrat are common. Black bears are seen occasionally and moose year-round. Rainbow trout, lake trout, bull trout, Rocky Mountain whitefish and kokanee are found in area lakes. Trumpeter swans winter on open waters of Bowron Marsh and Cariboo River.
- C Upper Cariboo River** – from Likely travel on gravel roads to Barkerville along Cariboo Lake, over to Ghost Lake and the Matthew River. Cross the Cariboo River and head to Antler Creek. Look for waterfowl, moose and ospreys. Chinook salmon spawn at Antler Creek bridge in August.
- D Ts'yl-os Provincial Park** – about 160 km west of Williams Lake on Hwy 20 with access through Nemaiah or from Tatla Lake. 4x4, high clearance vehicles are required. Dry forests to alpine areas provide a range of habits and wildlife. See black bear, mule deer, moose, mountain goat, California bighorn sheep, fisher, wolverine, beaver, bald eagle and amphibian species.
- E Itcha Ilgachuz Provincial Park** – access is by foot or horseback from Anahim Lake on Hwy 20, or from logging roads west of Nazko. The largest woodland caribou herd in southern B.C. moves through the area in search of lichens. Wolves, cougars, black bear, grizzly bear, mule deer, moose, mountain goat and California bighorn sheep may also be seen.
- F Tweedsmuir Provincial Park – Rainbow Range:** trailhead access on Hwy 20, 35 km west of Anahim Lake. Grizzly bear, black bear, mountain goat, woodland caribou, wolf, moose and mule deer can be viewed in this area of special coloured volcanic rocks.

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**[ 100 Mile House Area: April to September ]**

**1 Green Lake/Watch Lake** – 35 km S of 100 Mile House. Good viewing at many lakes and ponds. Rainbow trout spawn in Watch Creek May to mid-June and kokanee late August to September. Red-throated loon and American white pelican in migration at W end of Green Lake. American dippers and belted kingfishers at Rayfield Creek and canyon.

**2 Horse Lake** – 10 km SE of 100 Mile House. Waterfowl, great blue heron, osprey, bald eagle, American bittern, sora, black terns, rufous hummingbird, belted kingfisher and warblers. **West end:** nesting osprey and black swifts. Long-billed curlew and long-billed dowitcher in spring migration.

**10 Knife Creek UBC Alex Fraser Research Forest** – 21 km S of Williams Lake on Hwy. 97, drive E to the end of Rodeo Dr. 1 km interpretive forest trail describes the importance of mule deer winter habitat. Mule deer also seen in spring.

**11 Scout Island Nature Centre** – W end of Williams Lake, open all year. Many trails and Nature House with roof-top viewing area. Important stopover for large variety of birds in migration, includes common loon, red-necked grebe, wood duck, osprey, yellow warbler, yellow-headed blackbird. Resident river otter, muskrat, beaver, and mink. Insects include butterflies, dragonflies, damselflies and thatching ants.

**19 Highway 26 (Barkerville Hwy)** – leaves Hwy 97, 8 km N of Quesnel, towards Cottonwood and Stanley. Watch grizzly bears seasonally and moose, mule deer and black bears year-round. August chinook salmon runs at various places.



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**East end, Doman Road** – Belted kingfisher, warblers and nesting rough-winged swallows. Moose, mule deer, black bear and badger may be seen.

**3 100 Mile Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary** – behind Visitor's Centre with trail and interpretation signs. Trumpeter swans in spring/fall. Nesting waterfowl and shorebirds include spotted sandpiper, sora and Virginia rail. Shrubby riparian areas: common yellowthroat and yellow-headed blackbirds.

**4 Exeter Lake Wetland** – road-side viewing 2.5 km W of 100 Mile House. Waterfowl including trumpeter swans in spring/fall. Snow geese, red-necked phalarope and large numbers of hawks join spring migration. Sora, sandhill crane, black tern, marsh wren and yellow-headed blackbird seen and heard.

**5 Moose Valley Provincial Park** – 40 km W of 100 Mile House. Wilderness lakes chain, use high clearance 4x4 vehicles. Variety of waterfowl, nesting sandhill cranes, Bonaparte gulls and songbirds along the way. Beaver, muskrat, river otter, black bear, mule deer and moose also found. Winter moose habitat.

**6 Canim Lake** – 35 km NE of 100 Mile House at public access adjacent to Canim Lake Resort. Waterfowl, American bittern, swallows, marsh wren, warblers and bobolink may be seen and bald eagles resident year-round.

**7 101-108 Mile Ranch** – starting 2 km N of 100 Mile House watch for waterfowl in grassland ponds along Hwy 97. Look for raptors, sora, Virginia rail, black tern, killdeer, mountain bluebird, blackbirds, mule deer, river otter, muskrat and yellow-bellied marmot. **101 Mile Lake:** 60 bird species including sora and Virginia rail. **Walker Valley:** small eared grebe colony, nesting sandhill cranes and trumpeter swans in migration. **Sucker & Soda Lakes Trails:** Virginia rail, sora, sandhill cranes, spotted sandpiper, and Lincoln's sparrow. Black bear, mule deer, coyote and red fox.

**8 Dog Creek Bluffs** – 100 km SW of Williams Lake and W of 100 Mile House on Dog Creek Rd. Many raptor species, white-throated swifts, rock wren, warblers and lazuli bunting seen and heard along the spectacular cliffs. Occasionally California bighorn sheep.

### **Williams Lake Area: April to October**

**9 Reidemann Wildlife Sanctuary (Alkali Lake)** – about 40 km S of Williams Lake on Dog Creek Rd. American white pelicans feeding and in migration May to August. Trumpeter and tundra swans may be seen in spring/fall migration, with large numbers of tundras in spring before northern lakes are open. Look for waterfowl on the lake and bald eagle, golden eagle and long-billed curlew nearby. Beaver are active. 12 species of bats in summer.

**12 Williams Lake River Valley** – access: Mackenzie Ave at Comer St. or Frizzi Rd., with parking and 12 km of trails. Over 200 species of birds recorded include great blue heron, northern goshawk, pygmy owl, belted kingfisher, American dipper. Also black bear, bobcat, red fox, coyote and river otter. Rainbow trout in the river, and annual fall pink salmon run in the lower river often includes sockeye, coho and chinook salmon.

**13 Bull Mountain Ski Trails** – about 20 km N of Williams Lake and 1 km W along a gravel road. 30 km of ski trails through mature forest. Interpretive signs on two trails describe forest management for wintering mule deer. Northern goshawk and red-tailed hawk nest in the area while moose and mule deer can be seen year-round.

**14 Horsefly River Spawning Channel** – in Horsefly along the Horsefly River with 3 km Salmon Habitat Trail. 2.1 million sockeye salmon spawn in September on a four-year cycle. Kokanee spawn yearly from September through mid-October.

**15 Horsefly Bay/Quesnel Lake** – about 10 km N and E of Horsefly between Horsefly and Quesnel Lakes. Variety of migrating and resident waterfowl in Horsefly Bay, including grebe, teal, shoveler, and scoter. Bald eagle, northern harrier, shorebirds and belted kingfisher also seen. Resident black bear, mule deer, beaver and mink. Moose may be viewed from November to March.

### **Quesnel Area: May to September**

**16 Quesnel Hydraulic Road** – 10 km S of Quesnel on Hwy 97, turn east. Elk and long-billed curlews in spring in fields. **Dragon Lake** has sandhill cranes in spring/fall migration and rainbow trout fishing. Look for waterfowl, sandpipers, long-billed curlew, great blue herons, belted kingfisher, marsh wren, woodpeckers, warblers and yellow-headed blackbird. Resident muskrat and beaver. Many butterfly species, dragonflies and damselflies. Early spring **Hallis Lake Ski Trails:** warblers active and long-toed salamanders crossing trails. Hallis Lake has nesting loons and waterfowl, tadpoles of all local amphibians, butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies.

**17 Quesnel Downtown (a) Riverfront Trail:** at the Fraser River footbridge. In spring ring-billed gulls nest on a Quesnel River island — only site in central BC. **(b) Nature Education & Resource Centre** (West Fraser Timber Park): 3 km of trails through uplands/wetlands, with many birding opportunities. Sylvan hairstreak butterfly (very rare in the central interior) active in June at the wetlands.

**18 Ten Mile Lake Provincial Park** – 11 km N of Quesnel on Hwy 97. 2 km trail to a large beaver pond, through forest and on an abandoned rail grade. Waterfowl nesting boxes and platforms, beaver lodges and dams are easily seen.

### **Riske Creek - Bella Coola: May to early September**

**20 Junction Sheep Range Provincial Park** – 15 km S of Hwy 20 at Riske Creek, from the Fraser-Chilcotin Rivers junction to Farwell Canyon. Rough 4x4 roads into the park. Day use area only. The grasslands are sensitive, all vehicles must remain on designated roads. California bighorn sheep breeding, lambing and winter range. Look for bald eagle, golden eagle, prairie falcon, blue grouse, sharp-tailed grouse, long-billed curlew, upland sandpiper, Lewis' woodpecker, and great horned owl. Rubber boa, cougar, black bear, mule deer and coyote are resident.

**21 Bull Canyon Provincial Park** – 8 km W of Alexis Creek on Hwy 20 beside Chilcotin River. Hiking and interpretive trails along the river. Many raptor species. View bats using caves in canyon walls. Western extension of grassland butterflies such as acorn blues and blue coppers.

**22 Puntzi Marshes** – 3 km NE of Chilanko Forks on Hwy 97 between Puntzi Lake and Chilanko Creek. Waterfowl, bald eagle, northern harrier, American kestrel, swallows, eastern kingbird and yellow-headed blackbird.

**23 Chilanko Marsh Wildlife Management Area** – 30 km W of Alexis Creek on Hwy 20, turn N to Puntzi Lake airstrip. Marsh is south of road past airstrip. Trails and interpretive signs. Variety of waterfowl nesting in ponds and marshes. Beaver and muskrat are active; in edge areas look for sharp-tailed grouse, common snipe, marsh wren and yellow-headed blackbird. Moose can be seen in winter.

**24 Tatla Lake and Pollywog Marshes** – about 18 km E of Tatla Lake community on Hwy 20; two viewing sites on the N and one on the S side. View waterfowl, common snipe, raptors, eastern kingbird and blackbirds. Look for tadpoles at Pollywog Marshes and beaver at Tatla Lake sites. Northern goshawk nests near Tatla Lake.

**25 Anahim Lake** – about 4 km NW of Anahim Lake. Eagle's Nest Marsh Trail: American white pelican feeding in spring/summer; many waterfowl species nest and osprey, bald eagle, northern goshawk, ring-billed gull, black tern, muskrat and river otter may be seen. Resident spruce grouse, great horned and great grey owls; moose in winter.

**26 Snootli Creek Hatchery** – 4 km W of Hagensborg and 14.5 km from Bella Coola on Hwy 20. Open all year for guided tours only. Juvenile releases of chum, coho, chinook, March to November. Eggtakes of sockeye and pink salmon, August to September.

**27 Bella Coola Estuary** – where the Bella Coola River enters Bentinck Arm. Estuary used by migrating waterfowl and for wintering. Trumpeter swan, Canada goose and numerous waterfowl species. Seal rookery and river otters at Clayton Falls Recreation site W of the estuary.