



Wildlife Viewing *in the* Kootenay Region



BRITISH COLUMBIA
Ministry of Water, Land,
and Air Protection



Wildlife Viewing in the Kootenay Region

The osprey hangs briefly in mid-air on swirling wings. It then plunges from the sky toward the lake far below, landing feet-first in a splash of water and feathers. Seconds later, powerful wings lift the bird from the waves, an unwitting fish firmly in its talons. The osprey shakes the water from its feathers in flight before landing in a nearby pine tree to eat its prey.

This is just one of the wildlife sightings common to British Columbia's Kootenay Region. The area offers some of the best wildlife viewing opportunities anywhere in the world. A wide range of habitats includes verdant mountain forests, world-class wetlands and sweeping grasslands. There simply is no better location for witnessing wildlife first hand in their own home.

Deer and elk are common throughout the region. Grizzly and black bear roam the mountains—keep your eyes open for these and mountain goats, bighorn sheep and countless birds!

Some surprises await you, such as a pika tucked away among rocky talus slopes busily storing grass for the long alpine winter or the remarkable diversity of dragonflies (over 70 species), including some that migrate south for the winter!

Please remember that wildlife are on no schedule. This brochure gives basic information on where and when you might find wildlife in the Kootenays. It also offers tips to increase your chances and reminders of how we humans should behave around wildlife.

Explore, learn and discover. A keen eye and curious mind will bring the natural world alive for you.

More Information

There are many organizations and guide books available which provide more information about wildlife and outdoor recreation in the Kootenays. These include:

The B.C. Roadside Naturalist *Greystone Books*

B.C. Recreational Atlas *Informap*

British Columbia Wildlife Viewing Guide
Lone Pine Publishing

Federation of B.C. Naturalists

#307 1367 W. Broadway Ave., Vancouver, BC V6H 4A9
(604) 737 3057 • www.naturalists.bc.ca

Guide-Outfitter Association of BC

Box 94675, Richmond, BC V6V 4A4
(604) 429-3985 • www.goabc.org

Websites *BC Wildlife Viewing:*
wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/fw/wild/wildlife_viewing.htm

BC Wildlife Watch: www3.telus.net/driftwood/bcwwhome.htm

BC Species at Risk: wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/wld/serisk.htm

Commercial Recreation Services

Many local companies offer guiding services that include wildlife viewing. Familiarity with the country greatly increases your likelihood of a successful, quality experience. Check at BC Tourism kiosks or contact local Chambers of Commerce for information on commercial recreation services. Commercial guiding services for wildlife viewing requires a tenured permit in British Columbia—make sure your guide is licensed!



Federation of
B.C. Naturalists





Tips for Successful Viewing

- **Know your wildlife.** Background knowledge of habitat associations and behaviour can greatly increase your chances of seeing wildlife. Nesting areas, feeding spots and migration corridors are good areas to check out. Check local field guides and natural history books for more information
- **What's in season?** Many species are only present or more visible at certain times of year. Inquire locally or read up on wildlife prior to visiting.
- **The right time.** Dawn and dusk are peak activity times for most wildlife, other than spawning fish. Mid-day is usually quiet.
- **Be quiet.** Unfamiliar noises will scare off wildlife—car doors, loud voices, noisy walking. Keep these to a minimum. Quiet clothing will help too—wear clothes that don't rustle.
- **Patience...**staying still for long periods allows wildlife to adapt to your presence. Sit quietly in one spot and watch the magic unfold. Be prepared for a long wait—dress warmly and protect yourself from bugs.
- **Use "The Edge Effect".** Biologists know that the edge between habitat types has a high diversity of species, for example: marsh edges, field edges, fence-rows, etc. These are good places to find wildlife.
- **Stay downwind.** Many mammals rely on a keen sense of smell. If you are downwind, they are much less likely to know you are nearby.



- **Blend in.** Wear drab clothing that blends in with your surroundings. It need not be army camouflage, but avoid bright colours (except during hunting season!).
- **There are no guarantees.** Remember, wildlife behaviour is highly variable. There are no guarantees that wildlife will be seen. If it's quiet, look around for other highlights such as wildflowers, butterflies or unique geological features.
- **Don't push it!** Successful viewing includes the safety of you and the wildlife. Check out the sections on safety and ethics in this brochure. Getting too close to wildlife endangers both yourself and the animal. Use binoculars, scopes, or telephoto camera lenses to "get closer".

Bear Safety

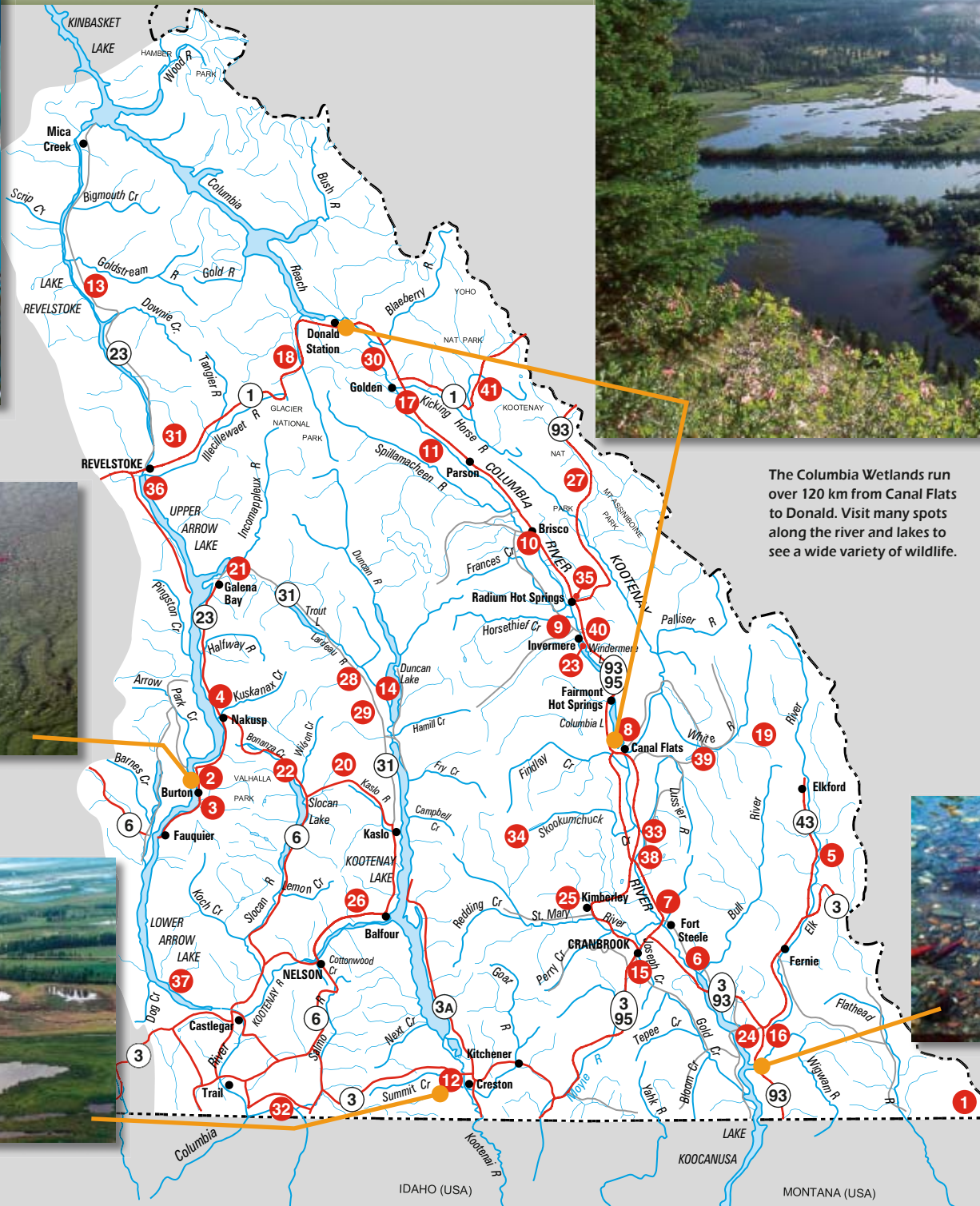
Remember, you're in Bear Country! Grizzly and black bears are common throughout the Kootenays. Be sure you are familiar with bear safety techniques before any hike or backcountry activity. The B.C. Ministry of Water, Land & Air Protection provides information on staying safe in Bear Country.



Viewing Ethics

- Viewing wildlife in their natural habitat is a rewarding experience. However, being too close or disturbing animals can be very stressful to the wildlife. Please respect animals and other viewers.
- Habitat can suffer from stress too. Please stay on marked trails and avoid trampling plants or picking flowers.
- Keep pets leashed and under control at all times.
- Stay a safe distance from all wildlife. Signs that you are too close include alert animals that are watching you closely. Use binoculars, spotting scopes or telephoto camera lenses to bring wildlife "closer".
- Be especially cautious around animals with young. Parents are highly susceptible to stress at this time and may abandon their young. If you do find "abandoned" young, leave it alone and retreat, the parents are probably close by. You are at greater risk too! Defensive parents can pose a threat to encroaching humans.
- Allow wildlife to eat their natural food. Feeding wildlife is dangerous to you and to the animal. Wildlife that become habituated to humans and our food can become dangerous and often must be killed. Learn about a species' diet by observing wildlife from a distance!
- Be considerate of other people. Respect private property, fence lines and allow others the same viewing opportunity you have enjoyed. Move along from crowded sites.





The Columbia Wetlands run over 120 km from Canal Flats to Donald. Visit many spots along the river and lakes to see a wide variety of wildlife.



Watch for thousands of gulls feeding on dead kokanee salmon near Burton in September.



Brilliant red kokanee salmon spawn in Kikomun Creek each September and October.



The Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area offers world class wildlife viewing and excellent interpretation.

Photo Credits: Jared Hobbs, Bill Swan, Larry Halverson, Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area

#	Name	Access ¹	Highlights	Season	Deer	Elk	Moose	Bighorn Sheep	Mountain Goat	Predators ²	Bears	Raptors	Waterfowl	Shorebirds	Songbirds	Turtles	Amphibians	Fish	Other ⁴
1	Akamina–Kishinena Rec Area	d	grizzly bears	spr–fall	●	●	●	●	●	●	●								m,w
2	Arrow Lakes: Nakusp–Fauquier	e	osprey nests	May–Aug								●							
3	Arrow Lakes: Burton	e	gulls feeding on dead kokanee	Sep									●					●	
4	Arrow Lakes: Kuskanax Bridge, Nakusp	e	spawning kokanee	Sep														●	
5	Big Ranch	e	ungulate winter range	year round	●	●													
6	Bull River	e	bighorn sheep	winter	●	●		●											
7	Bummer’s Flats	e	waterfowl	spring	●	●							●	●					t
8	Canal Flats & east side of Columbia Lake	e–d	ungulate winter range	winter	●	●		●					●	●					
9	Columbia Wetlands: Wilmer	m	waterfowl, raptors	spr–fall	●	●						●	●	●	●	●	●		b
10	Columbia Wetlands: Brisco	e	waterfowl, raptors	spr–fall	●	●						●	●	●	●		●		b
11	Columbia Wetlands: Parson	e	waterfowl, raptors	spr–fall	●	●						●	●	●	●		●		b
12	Creston Valley	e	nature interpretive centre	spr–fall	●							●	●	●	●	●	●		
13	Downie Creek and Hwy 23	e–d	mountain caribou	Nov–Dec			●			●	●								c
14	Duncan–Lardeau Flats	m	songbirds	spr–sum															
15	Elizabeth Lake	e	waterfowl	spr–fall									●	●	●	●			
16	Elko	m	ungulate winter range	winter	●	●		●											
17	Golden: Reflection Lake	e	heron rookery	spring									●	●					
18	Glacier National Park	e–d	backcountry	year round			●		●	●	●				●				m,w
19	Height of the Rockies & Elk Lakes Provincial Parks	d	backcountry	summer	●	●	●	●	● ³	●	●	●							m
20	Hwy 31A: Kaslo–New Denver	e	beaver ponds	spr–fall									●		●				b
21	Hill Creek	e	spawning kokanee	Sep														●	
22	Hills	e	marshlands	spring									●	●	●				
23	James Chabot Provincial Park	e	>40 species of dragonfly	summer										●					i
24	Kikomun Creek	e–m	spawning kokanee	Sep–Oct							●				●	●		●	w
25	Kimberley Nature Park	e–m	woodland trails	year round	●		●			●	●	●			●				
26	Kokanee Creek	e	spawning kokanee	Sep														●	
27	Kootenay National Park	e–d	backcountry	year round	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●				m,w
28	Lardeau River	e	large spawning rainbow	mid-May					●	●	●							●	
29	Meadow Creek	e	kokanee, dolly varden	Aug–Sep			●				●							●	
30	Moberly Marsh	e–m	waterfowl	spr–fall	●	●							●	●	●		●		b
31	Mt. Revelstoke National Park	e–m	high elevation forest, wildflowers	summer							●	●			●				c,w
32	Pend d’Oreille	e	deer, marmots	year round	●						●	●			●				t,m
33	Premier Lake	e	spawning rainbow	June														●	
34	Purcell Wilderness Conservancy Park	d	backcountry wilderness	sum–fall	●	●	●		●	●	●	●			●				w
35	Radium Hot Springs: Village	e	bighorn sheep	fall–spr				●											
35	Radium Hot Springs: Slough	e	waterfowl	spr–fall								●	●	●					
36	Revelstoke: Airport Bay	e–m	waterfowl, songbirds	spr–fall	●								●	●	●				b
36	Revelstoke: Montana Slough	e–m	waterfowl, songbirds	spr–fall	●								●	●	●				b
37	Syringa Creek	e	bighorn sheep	winter	●	●		●		●					●				
38	Wasa Sloughs	e–m	waterfowl	spr–fall								●	●	●	●				
39	Whiteswan Lake: Inlet Creek	e	spawning rainbow trout	May–Jun			●				●							●	
40	Windermere Creek	e	spawning kokanee	Sep–Oct								●						●	
41	Yoho National Park	e–d	backcountry	year round			●		●	●	●	●			●				f,m,w

¹ Access: e: easy: view near vehicle or little walking; m: moderate: some walking required; d: difficult: well off main highways and/or extensive hiking required.

³ Winter guests to Height of the Rockies: Watch for mountain goats on the slopes above Forsyth Creek!

² Predators include: cougar, wolf, coyote, badger lynx & wolverine. Note these are rarely seen!

⁴ Other: b—beaver; c—mountain caribou; f—Burgess Shale fossils; i—insects: dragonflies and butterflies; m—marmots; t—wild turkey; w—wildflowers