

Wildlife Watch

British Columbia Wildlife Watch is a Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks program designed to promote viewing opportunities within British Columbia. The protection of wildlife and their habitat and a positive, safe experience for the viewer, are the primary objectives of this program. Many other agencies, public conservation groups and local communities are involved in the program. For more information, contact the BC Environment office in Nelson at (604) 354-6333

Access

Broadwater Road, which connects to Highway 3A at Brilliant, provides access along the northeast side of the Columbia River and Lower Arrow Lake. The section between Deer Park and Broadwater requires a 4-wheel drive vehicle. Renata and Robson Ridge on the west shore are accessible by boat or via backcountry roads from the Blueberry/Paulsen section of Highway 3. Several boat launching areas are found along the lakeshore.

Facilities

Tourist facilities are found along Broadwater Road, in Castlegar and in Robson. Pass Creek Regional Park and Syringa Creek Provincial Park provide camping and public access for wildlife viewing. The Ministry of Forests maintains trails up to waterfalls on both Deer Creek and Tulip Creek, and the "Natural Arch" above Renata. Scotties Marina and Syringa Park Marina have boating facilities.

Conservation Ethics

Wildlife viewing demands courtesy and common sense. For the well being of the wildlife and habitats of the Lower Arrow, please follow these guidelines: **Be Considerate of Wildlife**—use binoculars to view wildlife from a distance rather than approaching them too closely. **Be Considerate of Habitat**—plants are important parts of wildlife habitat. Please do not damage or remove them and stay on designated trails or roads. **Be Considerate of Other People**—respect private property and the wildlife viewing activities of others. **Control Pets**—pets can harm wildlife and hinder viewing opportunities. **Do Not Approach Baby Animals**—baby animals are rarely "abandoned" or lost. The mother is usually at a safe distance waiting for you to leave.



YELLOW PINE TRAIL

BC PARKS

Ministry of Environment,
Lands and Parks



Printed in Canada on recycled paper
COVER PHOTO—B. SPROUL
QP 96488

BC
Environment

Wildlife Viewing

on the Lower Arrow Lake

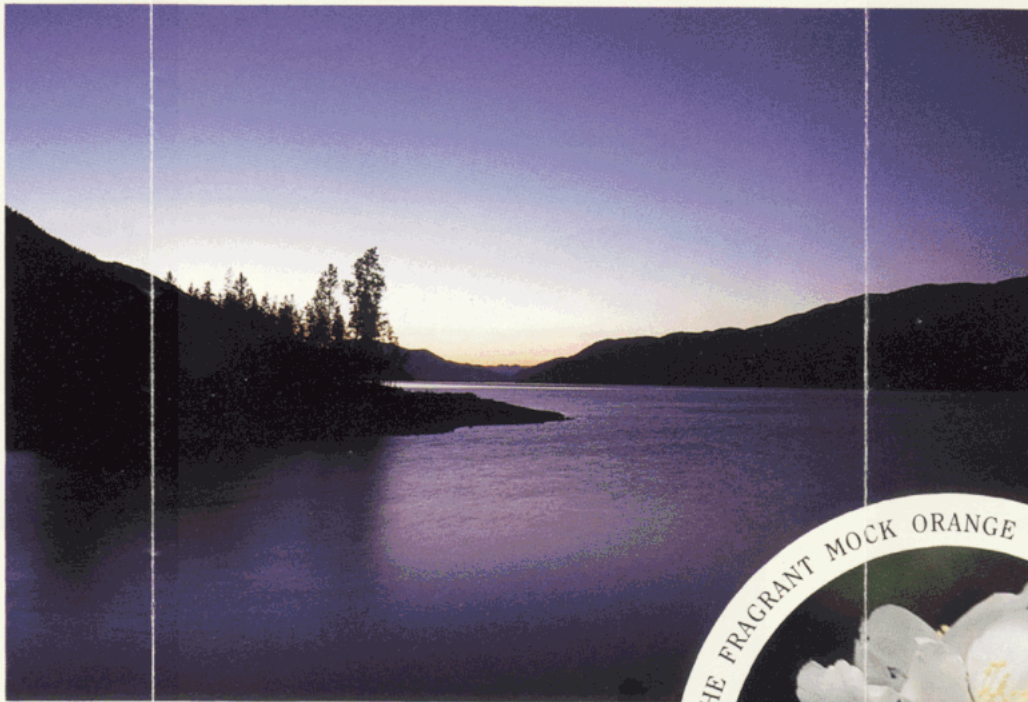


British Columbia
Wildlife Watch



Wildlife Viewing on the Lower Arrow Lake

Breathtaking scenery and abundant wildlife combine to make your visit to the Lower Arrow Wildlife Viewing Area a memorable experience! The viewing area encompasses Lower Arrow Lake, adjacent slopes and surrounding peaks. It extends north from Castlegar to include the historic communities of Broadwater on the east shore and Renata on the west. Relatively dry, steep slopes with numerous rocky outcrops characterize the area. On the Robson/Broadwater side of the lake, ponderosa pine and bunchgrass thrive on the drier southern aspects, providing ideal habitat for bighorn sheep, mule deer, white-tailed deer, and elk. Excellent opportunities exist here to view these mammals in their natural environment. Small herds of bighorn sheep are often seen on the roadside and white-tailed deer are common on the lower slopes in late winter and early spring. Two rare bird species, the canyon wren and white-throated swift inhabit rocky gullies and cliffs. The dry slopes also provide habitat for the western skink and the northern alligator lizard. These reptiles are found only in dry rocky areas and are rare in the rest of the West Kootenay.



LOWER ARROW LAKE

B. SPROUL

Wildlife Highlights

The south slopes above Lower Arrow Lake provide ideal winter habitat for **Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep**. They commonly gather in small herds along the roadside from Hugh Keenleyside Dam to the Cayuse Creek bridge. The huge curled horns on the males give them a regal appearance. Bighorn sheep retain their horns, unlike deer and elk who shed their antlers each year. Hence, the size of the sheep horns are an indication of age. Young sheep often butt heads in practise for the adult rut when social positions and mating hierarchy within the herd are determined. Another identifying feature of the bighorn sheep is a white rump and small black tail. The distinctive feature of the

White-tailed Deer is a flag-like tail that “flashes” white when the deer bounds away. The **Mule Deer** is identified by a white “rump” patch and thin tail with a black tip. In winter, both deer species prefer open dry, south slopes that have little or no snow. In spring, they can be seen in fields or areas that provide natural salt licks. Use binoculars to view agile **Mountain Goats** in winter and spring, on the rocky cliffs of Robson Ridge on the west side of the lake. They are recognized by their shaggy white fur and short black horns that curve back. Mountain goats are well adapted to living on steep, rocky slopes because their hooves are equipped with skid-proof pads. Although not as common as deer, **Rocky Mountain Elk** are often seen in fields at the same time as deer. They have dark brown necks and a noticeable light brown rump patch. Male elk, with their tall and spreading antlers, are magnificent to watch. Identified by its white throat and rust-

coloured tail that sticks up, the **Canyon Wren** is seldom still as it flits about in search of insects. This rare bird is found in the small canyons of Syringa Creek Park where it builds a grassy nest in rock crevices. In British Columbia, the canyon wren is found only in this viewing area and the southern Okanagan Valley. **White-throated Swifts** nest on cliffs and bluffs from Syringa Creek Park to Tulip Creek. They resemble swallows but have distinctive black and white markings and longer wings. Two uncommon reptiles inhabit the dry rocky areas of the Lower Arrow Wildlife Viewing Area. The **Western Skink** is small and lizard-like with a bluish tail. The **Alligator Lizard** is

well named as it resembles a miniature alligator . . . without the teeth! Both reptiles have an unusual way to escape predators—they lose their tails to provide a diversion (don’t worry, their tails regrow). These animals are elusive and shy so it’s a challenge to find them. They require specific habitat and thus need special protection. Please observe but do not disturb. **Kokanee Salmon** can be seen spawning in creeks in the fall. After turning from silver to red they battle each other for spawning sights. Pass Creek

Regional Park provides a platform for easy viewing in Norns Creek. The bridge over Deer Creek is also recommended for viewing kokanee. Easily observed at their colonies in Syringa Creek Park, **Columbian Ground Squirrels** delight everyone. Please refrain from feeding them. They need proper nutrition for general health and winter hibernation.





Useful Wildlife Viewing Tips

A successful viewing experience depends not only on the presence of wildlife, but also on the viewer's ability to seek and observe. The following tips may be helpful.

Choose the right season and time of day. Before visiting an area, make sure it is the right season for viewing certain species. Then visit at the right time of day—many wildlife species are most active in the evening or early morning. **Be patient and quiet.** Wild animals are very sensitive to human presence, and are experts at avoiding detection. Move slowly and quietly and try to stay hidden from view. **Be cautious.** Consider all wild

animals as potentially dangerous if approached too closely. Be especially alert and careful when near bears. They are unpredictable and extremely powerful animals.

Be a "detective" and look for useful clues such as tracks, trails, droppings, sleeping sites or feeding areas. **Field guides and equipment** such as binoculars or spotting scopes are often essential to locate and identify wildlife species. **Make notes.** Keep a record of your observations for future comparisons or to follow up with more information. Pass on rare and unusual observations to the BC Environment office in Nelson.

BC PARKS



COLUMBIAN GROUND SQUIRREL

BC PARKS



ALLIGATOR LIZARD

• TAKE A MOMENT TO WATCH THE WILDLIFE ON THE LOWER ARROW LAKE



MULE DEER

L. TOEWS



SKINK

S. CLOW

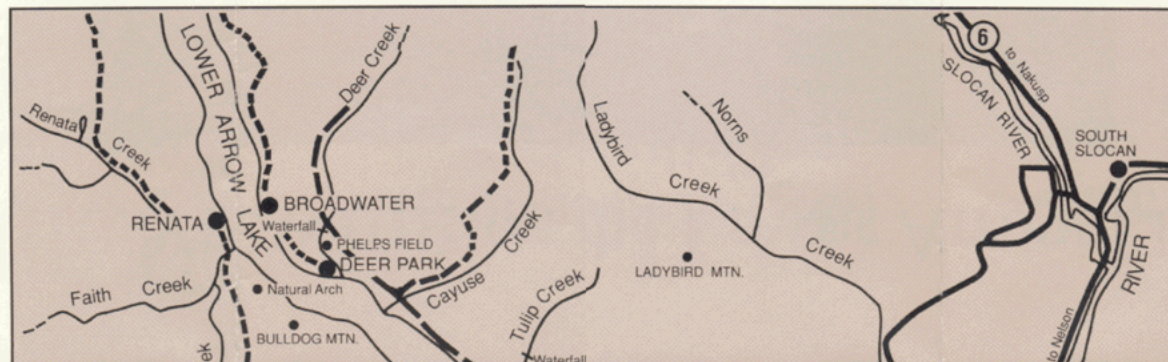


BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE—a year-round resident of Syringa Creek Park

BC PARKS

For Your Safety

Drive carefully along Broadwater Road which is often narrow and used by logging traffic. Watch for deer and other wildlife. Be cautious when boating on the lake as it is a reservoir and subject to sudden water level changes.



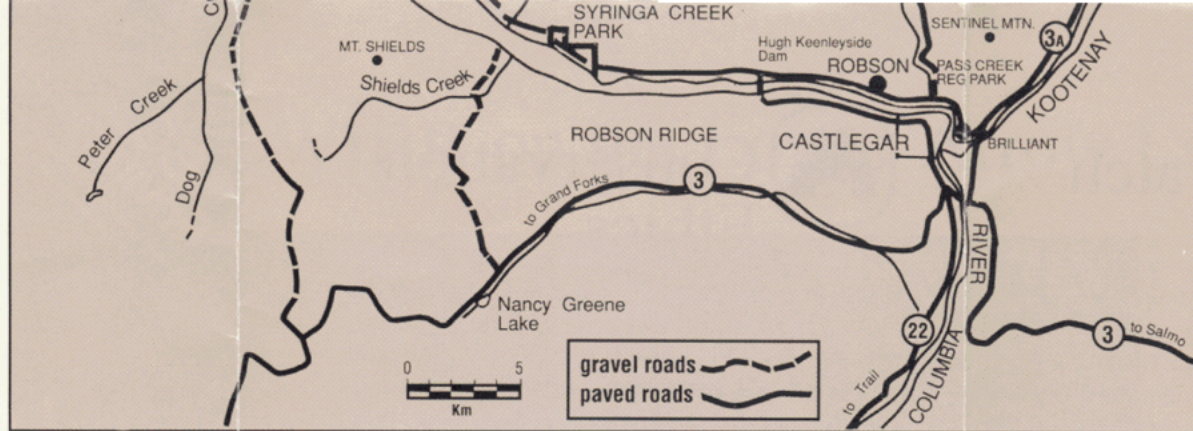
Feathery Friends

The large number of bird species found in the viewing area are due to the variety of different habitats present. **Downy, hairy and pileated woodpeckers** may be seen year-round in the coniferous and deciduous forest near Syringa Creek. Large rectangular excavations of dead wood at the base of a conifer are usually the

BC PARKS



MULE DEER



Viewing Areas on the Lower Arrow Lake

Kokanee salmon spawn in **Norns (Pass) Creek** during late August and September. An observation deck in Pass Creek Regional Park provides excellent viewing. The creek provides habitat for beaver and birds such as the dipper or “water ouzel”. Deer and elk may be seen on the fields and nearby southwest slopes of Sentinel Mountain. The **Columbia River** upstream from Castlegar to the Hugh Keenleyside Dam is a good place to see wintering waterfowl. Barrow’s goldeneye, bufflehead and common merganser are a few of the species present from December through March. Bighorn sheep are a common sight along **Broadwater Road** from Hugh Keenleyside Dam to the Cayuse Creek bridge. A mineral lick at 5.5 km attracts the sheep as well as deer and elk. Mountain goats may be viewed on Robson Ridge from the pull-off area 0.8 km north of the dam (opposite the Borrow Pit Road). Viewers can enjoy scenic vistas, canyons and

creeks along the road but are reminded to drive cautiously and be aware of logging traffic. Bighorn sheep are commonly seen along the road between the day-use area and the campground of **Syringa Creek Provincial Park**.

Colonies of ground squirrels are easily observed near the playground. Nature trails access the ponderosa pine forest inhabited by a variety of songbirds and woodpeckers. The open benchland of **Phelp’s Field** beside the Deer Creek forestry road is an excellent place to view white-tailed deer and elk. These animals are usually seen in April at dawn or dusk, feeding on young grass shoots. At **Broadwater** deer and elk are occasionally seen in the fields in the spring and black bears may be observed in the old orchard area in the spring and fall. Mountain goats may be sighted on the rocky cliffs of **Robson Ridge**. Deer and the occasional moose can be seen on the lakeshore at **Renata** in the winter months.

work of a pileated woodpecker. The rare **lewis’ woodpecker** migrates south after nesting in the dry, open ponderosa forest. Listen for the territorial drumming of the male woodpecker in the late spring. The **western tanager towhee** are two of many colourful songbirds that nest in the forest and shrubby habitats of the viewing area in the summer. The beaches of Syringa Creek Park are a good place to see the **killdeer** and **spotted sandpiper**. **Bald** and **golden eagles** winter in the viewing area where they may be observed flying or perched in tall trees. Food sources include the snowshoe hare and winter-killed deer. Watch for **ospreys** diving for fish in the summer in the Columbia River downstream of Hugh Keenleyside Dam. Look for the **dipper** feeding its noisy young in July and August on the banks of Norns Creek. It may be possible to see a **belted kingfisher** diving for fish there as well. These bird species are a few of the many present in the area at certain times of the year. Contact Stew Clow at 365-8600 for a detailed bird checklist.

S. CLOW



LOWER ARROW LAKE

BC PARKS



LEWIS' WOODPECKER



RENATA FALLS - Lower Arrow Lake

B. SPROUL



ROCKY MOUNTAIN GOAT

L. TOEWS

