



## Viewing Ethics for Conservation

Wildlife viewing demands courtesy and common sense. For the well-being of the wildlife and habitats of Northeastern B.C., please comply with the following:

### Keep all Vehicles on Designated Roads

Vehicles that wander away from designated roads will destroy vegetation and cause soil erosion.

### Be Considerate of Wildlife

Use binoculars to view wildlife from a distance. Confrontation will upset wildlife, particularly when nesting or with young. Control pets at all times to avoid wildlife harassment. Baby animals are seldom abandoned or orphaned and it is against the law to take them home.

### Be Considerate of Habitat

Do not disturb vegetation, rocks, fossils, artifacts, birds or wild animals. Leave the environment untouched and let the next wildlife viewer enjoy the site as you have.

### Be Considerate of Other People

Noise, fecal deposits from pets and trash will rapidly destroy the wilderness setting of wildlife viewing. Leave the landscape as you found it.

### Report Environmental Abuse

Environmental rules are enforced more effectively when everyone participates. Report environmental or wildlife abuse to any BC Environment Conservation Officer, Provincial Park Ranger or other authority. Please record the location, date, time, vehicle description and license plate number of the offender. **Thank you!**

Many commercial enterprises provide access to the backcountry recreationist who wishes to view wildlife. For further information on wildlife viewing opportunities contact:

Alaska Highway  
Rendezvous '92 B.C.  
14-9223-100 St.  
Fort St. John, B.C.  
Ph # 604-787-1992

North Peace Naturalist Club  
Box 6724 Fort St. John, B.C.  
V1J 4K5

BC Environment  
Room #200-10003-110 Ave.  
Fort St. John, B.C. V1J 6M7  
Ph # 604-787-3295

BC Parks  
Room #250  
10003-110 Ave.  
Fort St. John, B.C. V1J 6M7  
Ph # 604-787-3407

River Rats  
S.S. 2, C6, Site 13  
Fort St. John, B.C. V1J 4M7

Ministry of Forests  
8808-72 Street  
Fort St. John, B.C. V1J 6M2  
Ph # 604-787-5600

Northern B.C. Guide-Outfitters  
Association  
Box 6370, Fort St. John, B.C.  
V1J 4K5

Peace/Liard Wildlife  
Federation of Northern B.C.  
Box 574  
Charlie Lake B.C., V0C 1H0  
Ph # 604-827-3552



## Tips for Wildlife Viewers

This guide will help you identify the best season and time of day to view wildlife species adjacent to the Alaska Highway.

### Check the Species of Wildlife

The chart indicates good locations to observe various species of wildlife.

### Check to Find the Best Season to View Wildlife Species.

The chart indicates which seasons particular species are most frequently observed. Large mammals are generally more active at dawn and at dusk.

### Use Viewing Guides

Viewing guides will help you identify the wildlife species and their habitats.

### Learn Wildlife Signs

Tracks, droppings, dens, beds and nests can tell you how an animal lives and where you might wait to observe it.

### Keep Silent. Reduce Visibility

Wildlife will usually sense your presence long before you have sensed theirs - most animals have a keen sense of hearing and smell; most birds, and some large mammals such as Stone sheep and elk, have keen sight. On the Alaska Highway, you can usually approach wildlife more closely if you remain in your vehicle.

### Be Patient

Wildlife may be difficult to observe even though you have heard the species or detected the signs.

### Use Binoculars or a Spotting Scope

Visual aids can let you scan wide areas and will increase your chances to observe wildlife without causing a disturbance.

Cover photo - Mule Deer

For more information about British Columbia Wildlife Watch, please write to:

### BC Environment, Wildlife Branch

780 Blanshard Street, Victoria, B.C.,  
Canada V8V 1X5  
Attn: Wildlife Viewing Coordinator  
Ph: (604) 387-9767  
Fax: (604) 356-9145



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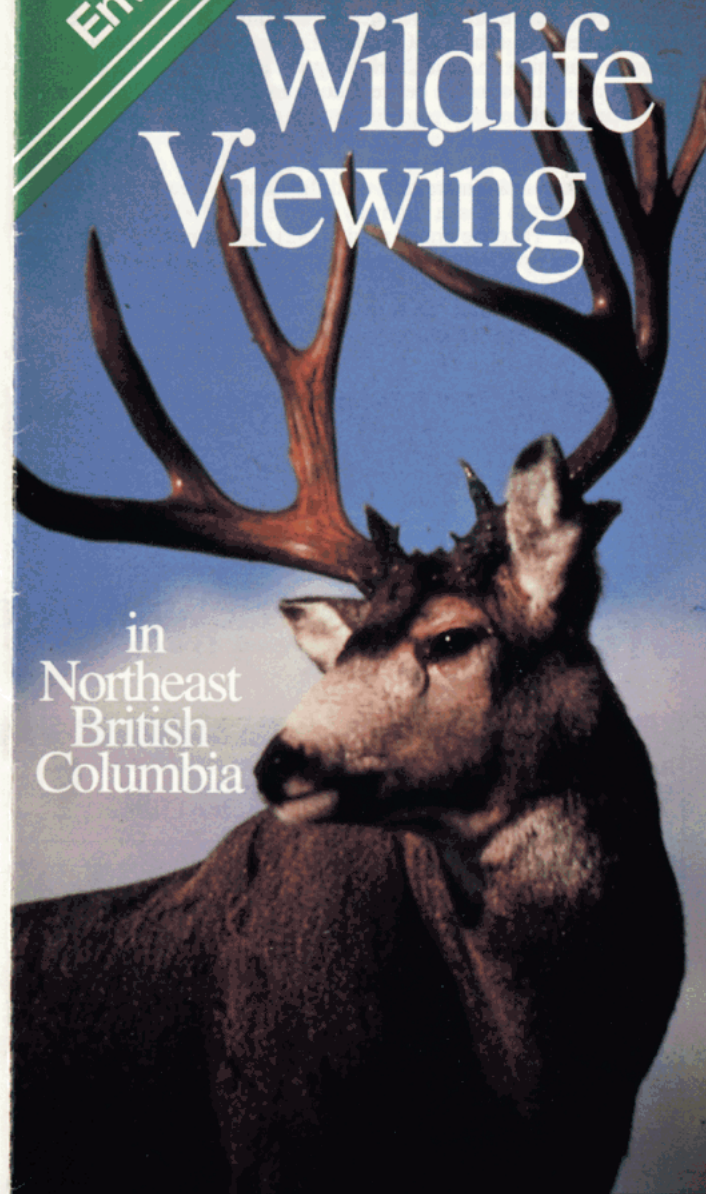
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BC  
Environment

# Wildlife Viewing

in  
Northeast  
British  
Columbia



British Columbia  
Wildlife Watch



## The Land and the History

NORTHEASTERN BRITISH COLUMBIA is home to one of the greatest varieties of large mammals and carnivores in North America and the Alaska Highway serves as a regional corridor. The highway (originally known as the Alcan Highway) was completed in 1942 by the United States Army who used it to supply Alaskan defense positions. It begins at Mile 0 in Dawson Creek and extends almost 2400 km to Fairbanks, Alaska. An engineering marvel in the 1940s, it still remains a major traffic route for much of northeastern British Columbia. Tourist travel has increased steadily in the area with improvements to the Alaska Highway - a two-lane gravel surface was completed in 1946 and asphalt pavement was laid in the 1980s.

The Peace River and the Liard River are the major outflows for northeastern B.C. The Peace River is the only river that runs east through the Rocky Mountains. The Liard River begins in the Yukon.

Alexander Mackenzie was the first European to explore the Peace River, in 1793, after which it quickly became a major fur trade route. Fort St. John, the first non-native settlement in British Columbia, originated as a fur trading post in 1806. In the 1860s, a strike in the upper Finlay River sparked gold fever and brought many adventurers to northeastern B.C., establishing the town of Pouce Coupe, 5 km east of Dawson Creek. The Yukon gold rush of 1898 lured more people north who passed through the Peace River area en route to Dawson City.

By the 1920s, settlers were farming and ranching in the rich, fertile soil of the Peace country which offered a 90-day growing season. Oil and gas discoveries in the 1930s started an economic boom in the region that is still underway. Further settlement came with the development of hydroelectric power on the Peace River - the construction of the W.A.C. Bennett dam in the 1960s and the Site 1 dam in the 1970s. The timber industry gained importance in the Peace and Liard Regions in the 1970s and the pulpwood industry started up in the 1980s.



## Viewing from the Alaska Highway

There is ample opportunity to view wildlife from your car window while driving the Alaska Highway, but please take care on your journey. Respect speed limits to enable safe brake usage in case wildlife appear on the highway. Also, refrain from discarding any type of refuse along the highway as it attracts wildlife; many animals lose their lives each year to oncoming cars. Please follow the "Viewing Ethics for Conservation" (listed in this brochure) at all times.



Moose

### A - Mile 0 to Mile 147 - The Alberta Plateau

In the winter and spring, deer can best be seen at dawn and at dusk on agricultural land - especially alfalfa fields - between the Alberta border and Mile 56 (90 km). In the winter, moose frequently browse rights-of-way adjacent to the highway between Mile 62 (99 km) and Mile 73 (117 km), and between Mile 130 (208 km) and Pink Mountain at Mile 147 (235 km). Owls are commonly observed at dusk when they search for rodents. Great grey owls are often sighted in mature spruce stands.

### B - Mile 148 to 200

Moose and caribou are frequently seen in the open meadows along this stretch of the highway.

### C - Mile 180 to 200 - The Trutch Plateau

Look for large mammals in the Trutch Plateau area between the Buckinghorse River at Mile 178 (285 km) and the Prophet River at Mile 200 (320 km). The majestic Klingzut Mountains, visible to the west of the plateau, contain some of the highest densities of woodland caribou in northeastern B.C..

### D - Mile 200 to 280 - Prophet River / Fort Nelson

Wildlife is frequently observed along this stretch but viewing is limited by a continuous stand of black and white spruce on both sides of the highway between the Prophet River store at Mile 200 (320 km) and Fort Nelson at Mile 280 (448 km).

### E - Mile 280 to 360 - Fort Nelson / Steamboat Mountain

Viewing opportunities are limited between Mile 280 (448 km) and Mile 345 (552 km) due to trees and lack of all-weather side roads. Look out for wildlife as the highway traverses Steamboat Mountain between Mile 345 and 360 (552-576 km).

### F - Mile 360 to 380

Watch for wildlife in the Tetsa River drainage running parallel to, and south of, the highway.

### G - Mile 380 to 428

The Alaska Highway ascends into the Muskwa Range of the Northern Rocky Mountains at Mile 380 (608 km). Stone Mountain Provincial Park contains a natural mineral lick which attracts caribou and Stone sheep. Caribou frequently move through this corridor and are commonly viewed, as are Stone sheep, at the Rocky Crest picnic site at Mile 393 (629 km).

### H - Mile 428 to Mile 480

On the other side of the park, near Mile 480 (768 km), and adjacent to the highway, are natural and man-made mineral licks that attract Stone sheep. Use caution while driving this stretch - Stone sheep and caribou are attracted to the salt used to melt ice on the Alaska Highway.

### I - Mile 480 to 600

Wild fires that occurred in the 1970s and the 1980s have had a profound effect on the forests between Muncho Lake Provincial Park and the Yukon border at Mile 620 (992 km). The new growth of grasses and shrubs has attracted new wildlife species to the area. In 1982, what was the second largest fire in B.C. destroyed 220,000 hectares of conifer forest between Coal Creek and Iron Creek.



## Tourist Facilities

### Southern Section

In the Alberta Plateau, tourist facilities are available in Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Mile 73, Wonowon and Pink Mountain (Mile 147/235 km). Motels and restaurants are located along the Alaska Highway at Pink Mountain, Beatton River and Sikanni Chief.

### Northern Section

Tourist facilities are available in Fort Nelson, at Summit Lake (Mile 393/629 Km), Toad River (Mile 420/672 km), Muncho Lake (Miles 458 and 465/733 and 744 km), Liard River (Mile 496/794 km) and at Watson Lake in the Yukon.



## Staying Safe

Animals in their natural habitats are wild and move freely, unlike animals in zoos. All wild mammals are potentially dangerous if approached too closely, especially bears and cow moose with calves. Be careful and keep your distance.

Brochures about safety in bear country are available in provincial and national parks and at BC Environment offices.

# WILDLIFE GALLERY OF NORTHEASTERN BRITISH COLUMBIA



## Side Trips - Wildlife Viewing

**NOTE: USE ONLY WELL-GRAVELLED ROADS OR PAVED ROADS FOR SIDE TRIPS IF YOUR VEHICLE IS TWO-WHEEL DRIVE.** The clay content of soils and the likelihood of rain or snow between spring and fall can make access impossible.

### WATERFOWL AND SHORE BIRDS

#### 1 - Swan Lake Provincial Park

The park is located 30 km east of Dawson Creek on the Alberta/ British Columbia border, less than 2 km north of the Alaska Highway. Vehicles can access the park by pavement and gravel from spring to fall.

#### 2 - McQueen's Slough

McQueen's Slough is off the Alaska Highway, 3 km east and 3 km north of Dawson Creek. There is suitable gravel road access to the east side of the lake but this backwood area is otherwise untouched and has no facilities.

#### 3 - Charlie Lake Provincial Park / Beatton Provincial Park

These parks are located on the north side of the Alaska Highway, 8 km north of Fort St. John. Year-round access to both Charlie Lake and Beatton Provincial Parks from the Alaska Highway is as simple as following the blue and white Provincial Park access signs.

#### 4 - Inga Lake

Inga Lake is located 4 km west of the Alaska Highway at Mile 95 (152 km). Follow the gravel road that leads to a Ministry of Forests Recreation site.

### LARGE MAMMALS AND RAPTORS

#### 5 - Highway 29

Take an interesting and picturesque side trip down Highway 29 to Hudson's Hope, Chetwynd and Prince George. View wildlife from the numerous pullouts along the Peace River Valley. One of the best areas to view bald and golden eagles in northeastern British Columbia is at the pullout on the west side of the W.A.C. Bennett dam, 19 km west of Hudson's Hope. This is one of North America's largest hydro dams. The spectacular gorge downstream provides a prime feeding and nesting site for eagles.

#### 6 - Dinosaur Lake

Step back in time and visualize the area as it was 100 million years ago when duck-billed dinosaurs roamed the area. More than 1700 dinosaur tracks were found in shale between the W.A.C. Bennett dam and the Site 1 dam on the Peace River. Some of the first clues about the behaviour and group size of duck-billed dinosaurs come from tracks of mothers and their

#### 9 - Sikanni Chief River

To gain access to Sikanni Falls, turn west at Mile 171, follow the road for about 16 km and turn left at the Sikanni Falls junction sign. A 300 metre walk south from the end of the seismic road will take you to a steep natural canyon carved by the action of the Sikanni Chief River.

**NOTE:** When wet, the gravel road is only passable by four-wheel drive vehicles and ATV's. There are no protective structures in the area overlooking the canyon - use extreme caution when walking here.

For more adventure, head due west at the Sikanni Falls junction. Two-wheel drive trucks can drive only as far as Chicken Creek, 4 km west of this junction. Thereafter, the seismic road is passable only by four-wheel drive vehicles and ATV's. ATV's can access the spectacular mountain setting of Redfern Lake by an old seismic road on the north side of the Sikanni River.

**BEWARE:** Always give way to plains bison. They are large (up to 1400 kg), have an unpredictable temperament and can run at speeds of up to 64 kph for short distances.

#### 10 - Nevis Creek

To access Nevis Creek, take the gravel road on the west side of the highway at Mile 178 (285 km), 6 km north of the Buckingham River bridge. This road proceeds 13 km west to a well site then turns south, crossing the Buckingham River after 4 km. A seismic road, located about 0.6 km north of the Buckingham River and 3.5 km south of the well site, gives access to the Nevis Creek drainage.

**NOTE:** This gravel road is not suitable for cars or campers at any time and requires four-wheel drive vehicles or ATV's when wet. The old seismic road can be travelled by foot, horse or ATV.

Travelers can access this open mountain country by snowmobile in winter and by horse in summer. A commercial guide-outfitter operation, at the junction of the Alaska Highway and Buckingham River, offers horse pack trips to the

