Tips for Wildlife Viewers

This guide will help you identify the best season and time of day to view wildlife species in the Thompson Region.

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 want to observe it.

Keep Silent, Reduce Visibility

Wildlife will usually sense your presence long before you have seen them—most animals have a keen sense of hearing and smell. Most birds and some large mammals such as sheep and deer, have keen eyesight. Along roads and highways, you can usually view wildlife without disturbing them 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 wildlife areas and will increase your chances to observe wildlife without causing a disturbance.

For more information about British Columbia Wildlife Watch, please visit our website.

For further information on wildlife viewing opportunities contact:
Kamloops Naturalists Club
Thompson/Okanagan Tourist Association
Thompson/Okanagan Guide-Outfitters Association
Wildlife Federation of the Thompson Region
Federation of BC Naturalists

walpwww.gov.bc.ca/fw/wild/wildlife_viewing.html
Keep all Vehicles on Designated Roads

Region please comply with the following:

- Be Wary of Wildlife
- Foraging
- or orphaned and it is against the law to take them.
- Confrontation will upset wildlife, particularly when nesting
- Use binoculars to view wildlife from a distance.
- Some wildlife become accustomed to human presence and
- Do not disturb vegetation, rocks, fossils, artifacts, birds or
- Offender and report using the Observe, Record and Report
- Environmental rules are enforced more effectively when
- wildlife viewer enjoy the site as you have.

For further information on wildlife viewing

Tips for Wildlife Viewers

The following are some suggested routes, circle tours and side trips, ranging from a half day to overnight excursions. Using a proper map or guidebook like the BC Road and Recreation Atlas is strongly recommended in order to enjoy the following wildlife viewing routes. So pack lots of film and water, don’t forget your “binos”, field guides and your picnic basket!

Suggested Circle Tours

**Thompson Plateau/Nicola Valley Circle**

- Hwy 5A from Knutsford to Merritt has magnificent views of the Thompson Plateau and Nicola Valley Grasslands—most of the area is through ranchland. In the spring and fall look for the stately Sandhill Cranes and rafts of migrating waterfowl on the ponds and lakes. Swainson’s, Rough-legged and Red-tailed hawks, along with American Kestrels are common sites soaring in the sky or resting on the fence-posts along the way. As you leave Merritt, follow Hwy 8 west to the Logan Lake turnoff (Hwy 97C) and back up into the Thompson Plateau. Stop at Tunkwa Provincial Park for a walk in the high grasslands.
- Tip: The Thompson Plateau/Nicola Valley Circle is excellent for birds and mammals.

**Fraser & Yakalom Rivers Circle**

- (backroad/4WD; full day/overnight)
- From the moment you leave Lillooet, you are driving through some of the most magnificent and dramatic scenery in BC—including some of the best opportunities to view some of our larger mammals... and some lesser-known smaller ones like the Common Pika. Leaving Lillooet follow the road along the west side of the Fraser River to Moza. Turn left and travel along the Bridge and Yakalom Rivers Road (Mule Deer, Mountain Goats, California Bighorn Sheep), to the Big Bar Ferry. Once across the ferry, turn right following the Fraser River south to Edge Hills Provincial Park, Kelly Lake and Clinton. Take Hwy 97 south along the Bonaparte River to Hwy 99 back to Lillooet. In the fall, pink, chinook, sockeye salmon and steelhead trout migrate up the Fraser River to its tributaries.

**Clearwater River Corridor**

- (3.5 hrs one way)
- This route of waterfalls, mountains, rivers and wildlife begins in Clearwater. Drive north on the Clearwater Valley Road through Spahats Creek Provincial Park continuing into Wells Gray Provincial Park. Just past Spahats Creek, the adventure begins with the Trophy Meadows turnoff—a day hike that takes you up to spectacular alpine meadows and the opportunity to see Hoary Marmots, White-tailed Ptarmigan, Common Pika, and occasionally Mountain Caribou. Just inside the park turnoff to the Clearwater Valley Road.

**Trophy Meadows turnoff**

- A day hike that takes you up to spectacular alpine meadows and the opportunity to see Hoary Marmots, White-tailed Ptarmigan, Common Pika, and occasionally Mountain Caribou. Just inside the park turnoff to the Clearwater Valley Road.

**Backcountry Hikes**

- Stein Valley Nlaka’pamux Heritage Park, hikers can enjoy the following wildlife viewing routes. So pack lots of film and water, don’t forget your “binos”, field guides and your picnic basket!

**Hamilton Commonage**

- (excellent views of the Thompson Plateau from the top of Hamilton Mtn.)
- and Monte Lake.

**Vancouver Island**

- The Thompson Region contains a remarkable variety of natural landscapes called biogeoclimatic zones and ecoprovinces. Eleven of fourteen biogeoclimatic zones and four of BC’s ten ecoprovinces are found within the region, including some of the province’s most sensitive ecosystems: bogs, prairies, ponderosa pine, and freshwater wetlands. The region’s deep and narrow valleys, rolling hills, plateaux and mountain ranges create a climate ranging from the near desert conditions in the Thompson Basin to extremely wet conditions in the Columbia Mountains. These dramatic differences in landscape and climate result in an amazing diversity of wildlife species. Of the almost 500 bird species observed in BC, over 300 have been recorded in the Thompson-Nicola Region.

The area is also rich in cultural history. First Nations have inhabited the Thompson for thousands of years. In Stein Valley Nlaka’pamux Heritage Park, hikers can see pictographs from the Lytton First Nation’s ancestors on the canyon walls. In Kamloops, visit the Secwepemc First Nation museum.

Throughout the region are signs of winter and summer houses and food caches. Look for deep, round depressions in the ground along rivers and lakes.

European settlement began in the 1800s as a result of the fur trade, the gold rushes in the Fraser, Cariboo and Yukon, and construction of the national railway. Early settlers were fur trappers, traders and ranchers. Over the years, new industries like forestry and mining took advantage of the rail and road systems that converge on Kamloops. Today, many of the historical ranches are still in operation—such as Douglas Lake, Qulichena and the Gang Ranches—and you’ll see their fences and cattle along many of the driving routes outlined in this brochure.

**Corridor Routes**

- Stein Valley Nlaka’pamux Heritage P.P. (3 hrs to multi-day)

This park is one of the best examples in the province of the ecological diversity of old growth forests and alpine tundra. Alpine and subalpine areas support populations of Grizzly and Black Bear. Mountain Goat, Common Pika, Hoary Marmot and White-tailed Ptarmigan. Lower elevations have a wide variety of wildlife including Marten, Pine Martin, Siskin, Blue Grouse and Steller’s Jay. The park is a remote wilderness area jointly managed by BC Parks and the Lytton First Nation.

**much of BC**, including the Thompson Region, is bear and cougar country. Bears are generally shy of humans, but, when startled or feeling threatened, they may become aggressive. Like all good parents, female bears (sows) are very protective of their cubs. Cougars are also occasionally aggressive towards people. Please practice good wilderness safety skills and etiquette while travelling in the Region.
Rattlesnakes (an endangered, protected species in BC) are the only venomous snake found in the province. They occur in dry valley areas in portions of the Thompson-Nicola. The bite can be serious so be careful where you put your feet and hands. Rattlesnakes are only aggressive when they feel threatened so do not approach them. **IF YOU ARE BITTEN BY A RATTLE SNAKE GO TO THE NEAREST HOSPITAL IMMEDIATELY FOR TREATMENT.**

Grasslands are particularly sensitive to disturbance. Please keep all vehicles on designated roads only.