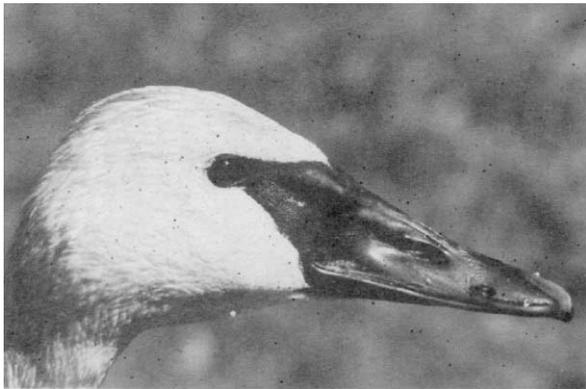


# Face to Face with Wildlife

## Viewing Sites in the Lower Mainland Region



## Region

Despite being the most populated portion of British Columbia, the Lower Mainland Region has hundreds of terrific sites to observe wildlife. From tide water to alpine meadow, there is something spectacular to see in every season.

The Lower Mainland Region stretches from Vancouver eastward through the Fraser Valley to E.C. Manning Provincial Park, and includes the Sunshine Coast from Gibsons to Powell River, and the corridor from Squamish through Whistler to Pemberton.

Information for just 66 Lower Mainland sites is summarized in this brochure. As you travel, look for the blue and white binocular signs that identify these sites. Enjoy!

## Fish

Fish live in large, medium and most of the small and tiny streams throughout the Lower Mainland Region. There are many opportunities to view fish, especially during the spawning period. You may observe six species of salmon; including sockeye that turn bright red when spawning, and kokanee that spend their entire life in freshwater. Several species of trout are visible, including steelhead trout that may be seen jumping rough sections of water during upstream migration, and a unique population of Coastal cutthroat trout found only on the Sunshine Coast.

The hatchery sites offer opportunities to see fish and to learn about man's activities in maintaining and in enhancing natural fish populations.

## Wildlife

Wildlife are waiting for you to visit. Large wintering Bald Eagle concentrations can be found in the Harrison Bay, Chehalis Flats and Nicomen Slough areas of the Fraser Valley, and in Squamish. Migrating shorebirds and waterfowl numbering in the tens of thousands use the lower Fraser River estuary.

Mountain goats are often seen on certain rocky bluff areas. Many small mammal species populate the region, including Columbian ground squirrel colonies in E.C. Manning Provincial Park. Sea lions and seals congregate near shore to feed on fish. Frogs, snakes and butterflies inhabit special habitat areas, and are easily found.

Several special viewing festivals celebrate specific wildlife populations or sites in the Lower Mainland Region.



## Habitat

Habitats provide homes for animals, and provide key elements like food, cover and shelter. Some habitats will be home for an entire lifetime, while, for some species, a habitat may be used for only a short period. For bird species migrating twice a year between Arctic breeding grounds

and South American wintering areas as far away as Argentina, the Fraser River delta plays an important survival role.

The range of Lower Mainland Region viewing opportunities is directly related to the diversity of habitat types present. A mixture of habitat types in close proximity will be home to a greater range of animals. Habitats in limited quantity, such as old-field areas and mud flats, create more locally distinct wildlife viewing.

## More Information

There are many sources for additional information on the wildlife viewing opportunities of the Lower Mainland Region.

**Visit Our Wildlife Brochures** - A series of site information brochures is being prepared, some of which are now available. They contain more site specific viewing information than is provided in this brochure.

**Site Brochures** - A site specific information brochure is available for many sites, usually from the agency responsible for managing the site. For most large sites, the brochure contains a detailed site map.

**Bird Checklists** - A series of bird checklists is available. These will help you to identify what species may be observed and when. Many also contain information on the mammal, amphibian, reptile, fish, insect and wildflower viewing opportunities.

**Fish Viewing** - In the *Fish Viewing in Urban Streams - Lower Mainland Region* brochure available from the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks [10470 - 152nd Street, Surrey, B.C. V3R 0R5], thirty-two sites to view salmon and trout during the spawning portion of their life cycle are listed. Some of these sites do not appear in this regional site brochure. In the *Where and When to See Salmon* brochure available from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans [#400 - 555 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6B 5G3], fifty-four hatchery project sites throughout British Columbia are listed. Most of the Lower Mainland sites are listed in this regional site brochure.

**Other Publications** - Many other publications contain province-wide wildlife viewing information. British Columbia Wildlife Watch has provided site identification and summary information for two publications, the *British Columbia Recreational Atlas (4th edition)* and the *Beautiful British Columbia Travel Guide*. Both are available at local bookstores.

## Wildlife are Watching!

We've all had it happen. You look up from the trail just in time to see an animal dive out of sight a swoop of wing, a flash of antler, a slap of beaver's tail.

The truth is, most animals see, hear and smell us long before we catch their drift. They size us up, and, depending on how far away we are and how we act, they decide whether to stay, defend themselves or flee. Even fleeing from us robs them of precious energy.

Fortunately, there are many simple ways that you can help blend into an animal's surroundings. Here are but a few. If you follow these practical tips you'll be treated to a wildlife show that makes your heart pound and your senses hum!



Fade into the woodwork by wearing natural colours and unscented lotions. Clothes that don't rustle are best.



Keep your distance and use binoculars. This allows you to observe animals without causing them stress.



Let animals eat their natural foods. Sharing your sandwich may harm wild digestive systems and animals get hooked on handouts putting them, and you, into potentially dangerous situations. They may eventually lose their fear of people and vehicles. Watch and learn what natural foods animals prefer.



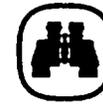
Be easy to be with by moving like molasses: slow, smooth and steady. If you must advance, take a roundabout route, never move directly toward an animal. Avert your gaze as animals may interpret a direct stare as a threat.



Think like an animal. As a rule, the border between two habitats is a good place to see residents from both places.



Figure out the best time of day for viewing by imagining an animal's daily schedule. When does it feed? Nap? Bathe? Drink? Dusk and dawn are usually good bets.



**British Columbia Wildlife Watch** is the 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 local communities, other agencies and public conservation groups are involved. For more information on these or other wildlife viewing sites, contact the Ministry office in Surrey [(604) 582-5200; 10470 - 152nd Street, Surrey, B.C. V3R 0R3]



The **Habitat Conservation Trust Fund** is a financial sponsor of **British Columbia Wildlife Watch**. For information on this fund write PO. Box 9354 Stn. Prov. Govt., Victoria, B.C. V8V 9M1.

The **Federation of British Columbia Naturalists Foundation** supports the goals, objectives and activities of **British Columbia Wildlife Watch**. For information on this foundation write #321-1367 West Broadway, Vancouver, B.C. V6H 4A9.



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