

# Visit Our Wildlife

in

## Chilliwack

*Including Cultus Lake, Agassiz and  
Harrison Hot Springs*

*East Central Fraser Valley*



The community of Chilliwack is located on the south side of the Fraser River in the fertile soils of the Fraser Valley and about a 2-hour drive from Vancouver. The general area is known for both farming and dairy activities. Situated along Highway 1 (Traps Canada Highway), Chilliwack is within a short drive of Cultus Lake, and within 30-45 minutes of Agassiz and Harrison Hot Springs that are located on the north side of the Fraser River.

This brochure contains information for 12 sites where you may visit our wildlife. These areas are recognized by British Columbia Wildlife Watch the provincial wildlife viewing program, as sites offering, good viewing and educational opportunities. Some of these sites are situated next to private lands. Please keep to the roads and respect private property.

The area covered in this brochure includes habitats from valley wetlands and streams to low mountain forests and rivers. Besides bird watching, there are many fish viewing opportunities.

### Cultus Lake Provincial Park

This provincial park is a major recreation destination for residents of the Greater Vancouver area. Located along the east side of Cultus Lake, the park offers many facilities, including several walking and hiking trails, some with access into the International Ridge Provincial Recreation Area. For more information contact BC Parks, Lower Mainland District [(604) 924-2200; 1610 Mount Seymour Drive, North Vancouver, B.C. V7G 2R9].

**Access** - From Highway 1 take the No. 3 Road exit (Exit #104) located west of Chilliwack or the Vedder Road exit (Exit #119) in Chilliwack and follow the park directional signs.

**Viewing Highlights** - The summer months are best to watch for Osprey. The lush forests are home to many birds including Steller's Jay, Black-capped Chickadees and Winter Wrens. During the summer months, as the sun sets, watch for bats feeding in forest openings and along forest edges.



#### Did you know?

During the winter, you can see swan family groups as the young stay close to their parents. Families with four surviving young have been observed, but one or two is most common. The young are easily identified as their plumage is brownish-grey.

### Sweltzer River

Located at the north end of Cultus Lake, Sweltzer River drains northward from the lake into the Chilliwack River. A local park and short trail provide access to the river. For more information contact BC Environment, Lower Mainland Region [(604) 582-5200; 10470 - 152nd Street, Surrey, B.C. V3R 0Y3].

**Access** - From Highway 1 take the No. 3 Road exit (Exit #104) located west of Chilliwack or the Vedder Road exit (Exit #119) in Chilliwack and follow the directional signs to the community of Cultus Lake. As you drop in elevation into Cultus Lake the road crosses a bridge over the Sweltzer River. The park is immediately on the right.

**Viewing Highlights** - Look for Chum Salmon from mid October to mid December. There may also be a few Sockeye Salmon each year and a few Pink Salmon in odd-numbered years (ie. 2001, 2003, ...). Some Coho Salmon are present from late October to late November. During the summer months Belted Kingfisher may be observed along the river.

### Chilliwack River Hatchery

The Chilliwack River Hatchery is situated just upstream of the junction of Slesse Creek and the Chilliwack River. It is open daily from 8 am to 3.30 pm. This facility was completed in 1981 and is involved in the rearing of Chinook, Coho and Chum Salmon as well as Steelhead Trout. In addition to the hatchery building, there is a walking tour of the many outdoor troughs, tanks and rearing channels. Group tours should be booked in advance. For more information contact the Chilliwack River Hatchery [(604) 858-7227; 55205 Chilliwack Lake Road, Chilliwack, B.C. V4Z 1A7].

**Access** - From Highway 1 take the Sardis exit (Exit #119) south and onto Vedder Road. Continue through Sardis. Immediately before the bridge over the Chilliwack River turn left onto Chilliwack Lake Road. The hatchery is located 19.9 km from this junction.

**Viewing Highlights** - Chinook Salmon (summer run) adults arrive at the hatchery in August and September. Coho Salmon are visible in October and December. The period from mid October through November is best for Chum Salmon and Chinook Salmon (fall run). Steelhead Trout adults are present in March and April. In addition to fish, listen for the rattling call of the Belted Kingfisher, a common visitor to the hatchery. Bald Eagles are often seen overhead in the winter months.



#### Did you know?

The average female Chum Salmon lays between 1,000 and 5,000 eggs.

### Chilliwack Lake Provincial Park

This park is located at the northern end of Chilliwack Lake. A loop trails provides access to the mouth of the Chilliwack River. There are a number of hiking trails near the park, with distances up to 14 km return and from 0 to 1,000 m elevation gain. For more information contact BC Parks, Lower Mainland District [(604) 924-2200; 1610 Mount Seymour Drive, North Vancouver, B.C. V7G 2R9].

**Access** - From Highway 1 take the Sardis exit (Exit #119) south and onto Vedder Road. Continue through Sardis. Immediately before the bridge over the Chilliwack River turn left onto Chilliwack Lake Road. The park is located 38.9 km from this junction and 19.0 km past the Chilliwack River Hatchery.

**Viewing Highlights** - During the Month of April look for Steelhead Trout spawning in the river. October to mid November is best for Pink (odd years only), Sockeye Salmon and Coho Salmon.

## Hope and Camp Sloughs

Hope Slough and Camp Slough are meandering waterways that drain the area between Chilliwack and Rosedale. The sloughs run primarily through private property but where the road crosses or parallels them, look for wildlife. For more information contact BC Environment, Lower Mainland Region [(604) 582-5200; 10470 -152nd Street, Surrey, B.C. V3R 0Y3].

**Access** - From Highway 1 take the Vedder Road exit (Exit #119) heading northward. The road becomes Yale Road. At Young Road turn left and continue to a bridge crossing the Hope Slough. Immediately after crossing the slough turn right onto Hope River Road which eventually becomes Camp River Road.

**Viewing Highlights** - The sloughs are visited by waterfowl through the- year. Watch for American Wigeon, Wood Duck, scaup, Bufflehead, mergansers and Mallard. From spring to fall, Great Blue Herons are a common sight.

## Cheam Lake Wetlands Regional Park

Located in Popkum, about 15 km east of Chilliwack, Cheam Lake Wetlands Regional Park is about 93 hectares (250 acres), with almost half being lake and marsh. Cheam Lake is an example of habitat restoration. The original lake was drained in the 1950's during the process of mining marl from the bottom sediments. A water control structure with a fish ladder was installed in 1992 to allow the lake to relood. Changes to both habitats and wildlife species present are occurring. A British Columbia Wildlife Watch bird checklist is available for the park. For more information contact the Fraser Valley Regional District [(604) 795-0061; 8430 Cessna Drive, Chilliwack, B.C. V2P 7K4].

**Access** - Access is from Highway 9 (Agassiz-Harrison Highway). Take Exit #135 from Highway 1 (Trans Canada Highway) and watch for the park and binocular logo signs. From Highway 9 turn east onto Yale Road. Follow the signs for almost 2.5 km, then turn left onto Egley Road. The park entrance is at the end of Egley Road.

**Viewing Highlights** - A wide range of birds are easily observed at the park, including many species of waterfowl, songbirds and woodpeckers. Beaver and Muskrat activities are visible throughout the park, especially along the shoreline. During spring and early summer, there are frog choruses. From late March through August, look for a variety of butterflies. The waters are rich with aquatic bug life. In summer and early fall scan the floating boardwalk for hundreds of dried dragonfly nymphs casings.

## Agassiz Farmlands

The farmlands in and around the community of Agassiz are frequented during the winter months by Trumpeter Swans and Tundra Swans. Occasionally large flocks of ducks may be seen on flooded fields. For more information contact BC Environment, Lower Mainland Region [(604) 582-5200; 10470 - 152nd Street, Surrey, B.C. V3R 0Y3].

**Access** - There is road access throughout the farmland areas. Please remember to stay on the roads and to keep off private property. When stopping or parking on local roads, pull well off the road and do not block driveways.

**Viewing Highlights** - Both swan species may be sighted in the Agassiz area. Theta movements are, sporadic. The best time to watch for them is from November through February. In very cold winters, when local water ways, ditched and sloughs freeze over with ice, the swans move to other areas.



### Did you know?

A female Belted Kingfisher is easily identified. In addition to a slate blue breast band (like the male), she has a rust belly band.

## Maria Slough

Maria Slough is located just east of Agassiz and flows through privately owned lands. In several places the road parallels or crosses the slough. These are places to look for fish and wildlife. Remember - the lands surrounding the slough are private. For more information contact BC Environment, Lower Mainland Region [(604) 582-5200; 10470 - 152nd Street, Surrey, B.C. V3R 0Y3].

**Access** - From Agassiz take Lougheed Highway (Highway 7) eastward. Just past the junction of Highways 7 and 9 you cross a bridge over the slough. Turn left onto Seabird Island Road. Continue to Chaplin Road and turn left. When stopping or parking on local roads, pull well off the road and do not block driveways.

**Viewing Highlights** - From mid October through mid November watch for Chum, Coho and Chinook Salmon spawning in the shallows off Chaplin Road. Fall and winter are the best for birds. Trumpeter Swans, and a few Tundra Swans, head for parts of the slough to feed and roost. Small numbers of waterfowl feed and rest, including Hooded Merganser, Bufflehead, scaup, goldeneye, American Wigeon and Green-winged Teal. Throughout the year watch for Belted Kingfisher. In summer, Turkey Vultures may be observed soaring overhead.



**British Columbia Wildlife Watch** is the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks' program designed to promote viewing opportunities within British Columbia. For more information contact the Environment and Lands regional office in Surrey [(604) 582-500; 10470 -152nd Street, Surrey, B.C. V3R 0Y3].

Wildlife viewing information, including festivals, special events, and site specific information is available at the British Columbia Wildlife Watch web site [www3.telus.net/driftwood/bcwwhome.htm](http://www3.telus.net/driftwood/bcwwhome.htm).

For tourism information on the east central portion of the Fraser Valley contact the **Chilliwack Visitor Information Centre** [(604) 858-8121 or (800) 567-9535; 44150 Luckakuck Way, Chilliwack, B.C. V2R 4A9; [info@tourismchilliwack.com](mailto:info@tourismchilliwack.com)] or visit their web site at [www.tourismchilliwack.com](http://www.tourismchilliwack.com). The Visitor Centre is open year-round.

For tourism information on the-Agassiz and Harrison Hot Springs area contact the **Harrison, Agassiz Chamber of Commerce** ((604) 796-3425; Box 255, Harrison Hot Springs., B.C. V0N 1K0; [infoserv@harrison.ca](mailto:infoserv@harrison.ca)) or visit their web site at [www.harrison.ca](http://www.harrison.ca).

## British Columbia Watershed Restoration Program

Numerous enhancement projects in the Chilliwack River watershed have been completed. They restore the water supply to off-channel areas making them once again accessible and hospitable to salmonids. Twenty two separate projects involve dredging ponds, pools and channels, providing gravel for spawning, and placing logs and other natural shelter for rearing young. When visiting the Chilliwack River valley watch for WRP information signs along the road. Interesting sites to visit include Anderson Creek, located 14.0 km from the Vedder Bridge turnoff. Six projects are along Slesse Creek, with access and information opposite the Chilliwack River Hatchery. The Angelwing Pond Complex is located 6.2 km past the hatchery.

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For more information on **WBT Wild Bird Trust of British Columbia** write #124 -1489 Marine Drive, West Vancouver, B.C. V7T 1138, phone/fax (604) 924-2581 or e-mail [minerva@direct.ca](mailto:minerva@direct.ca).

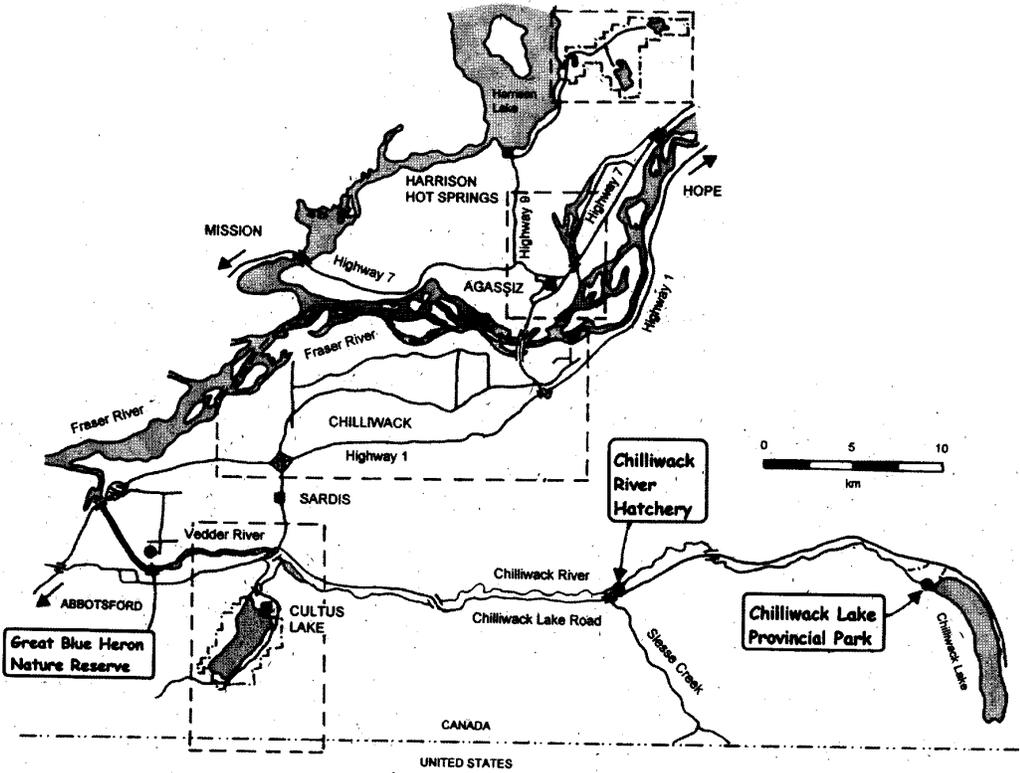
# Visit Our Wildlife

## Great blue Heron Nature Reserve

This site contains a Great Blue Heron colony. It is located in the Wet Bridge training area of the old Chilliwack Armed Forces Base. The colony nests are visible to the west from the parking area and from along the dyke off Sinclair Road. For more information contact the Parks and Recreation Department, District of Chilliwack [(604) 793-9311; 8550 Young Road, Chilliwack B.C. V2P 8A4].

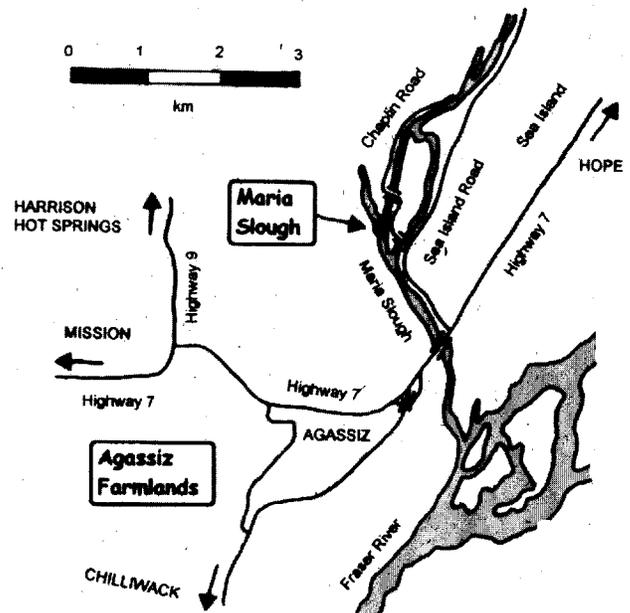
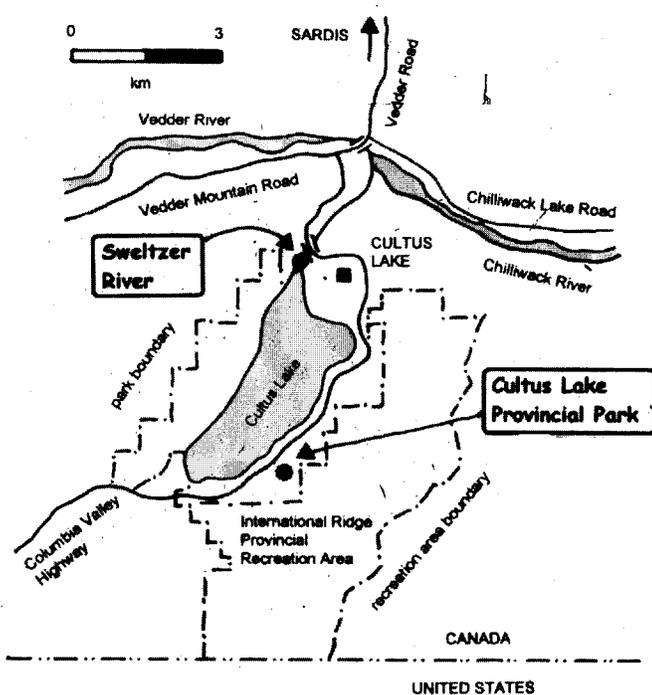
**Access** - From Highway 1 (Traps Canada Highway) take tee. Yale Road Exit. Follow Yake Road West to Sumas Prairie Road and turn right. Continue to the end at Sinclair Road and up onto the dyke. Theca is a small parking lot on the other side.

**Viewing Highlights** - Heron activity begins in March when the adults begin claiming nests. They are most visible before the leaves are on the trees. Once the young are born adult herons can be observed all day long entering and leaving the colony. Viewing will continue to late July.



## Feeding Wildlife

Feed yourself not the animals! cheese puffs, candy bars and white bread are not what nature intended as a healthy diet for wildlife. If you think feeding wildlife is harmless, think again. When wild animals become dependent on handouts they may lose their-natural fear of people and/or vehicles. This may put them, and you, into potentially dangerous situations. Instead, spend some time to watch and team what natural foods they prefer.

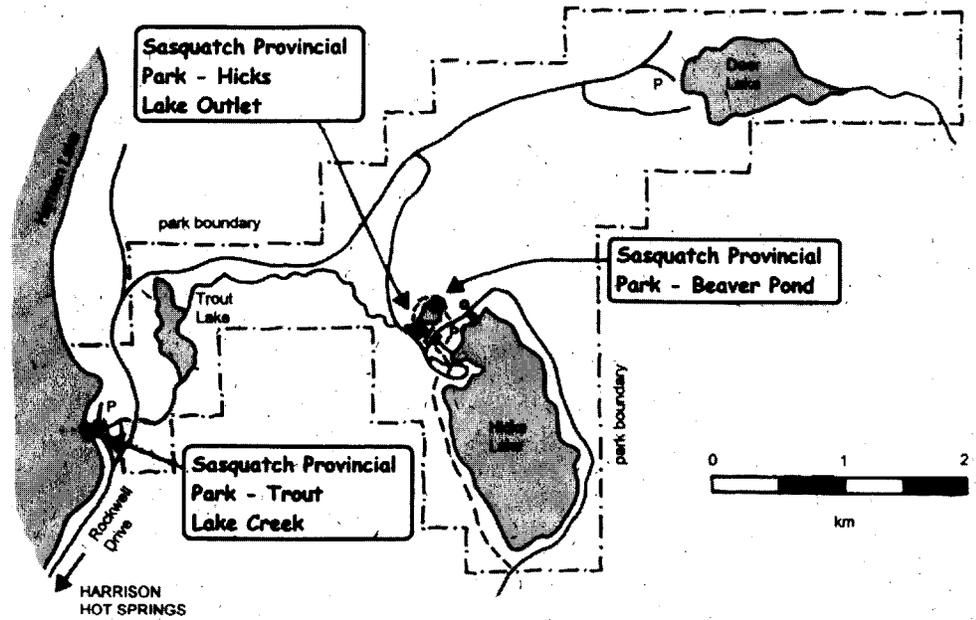


## Sasquatch Provincial - Park Beaver Pond

The Beaver Pond is a very active place. Look for the evidence of beaver. A trail leads around the pond and from spring through early fall listen for the call of many birds. For more information contact BC Parks, Lower Mainland District [(604) 924-2200; 1610 Mount Seymour Drive, North Vancouver, B.C. V7G 2R9].

**Access** - From Highway 7 in Agassiz follow the signs to Harrison Hot Springs via Highway 9. Follow the park directional signs onto Rockwell Drive. Continue into the park and watch signs leading to Hicks, Lake Day Use area.

**Viewing Highlights** - The pond is the year round home to at least one family of beaver. The best times to observe them are at dawn or just before sunset. Bird life abounds, including Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, Red-breasted Sapsucker, chickadees, Steller's Jay, warblers, vireos, and True, Northern Rough-winged and Sam Swallows, in late July and early August walk the trail carefully! Thousands of young Western Toad will be sharing the trail with you.



## Sasquatch Provincial Park - Trout Lake Creek

The Green Point Day Use area is located on Harrison Lake. Just before entering the parking area you cross Trout Lake Creek. For more information contact BC Parks, Lower Mainland District [(604) 924-2200 1610 Mount Seymour Drive, North Vancouver, B.C.V7G 2R9].

**Access** - From Highway 7 in Agassiz follow the signs to Harrison Hot Springs via Highway 9. Follow the park directional signs onto Rockwell Drive and to the Green Point Day Use Area on Harrison Lake.

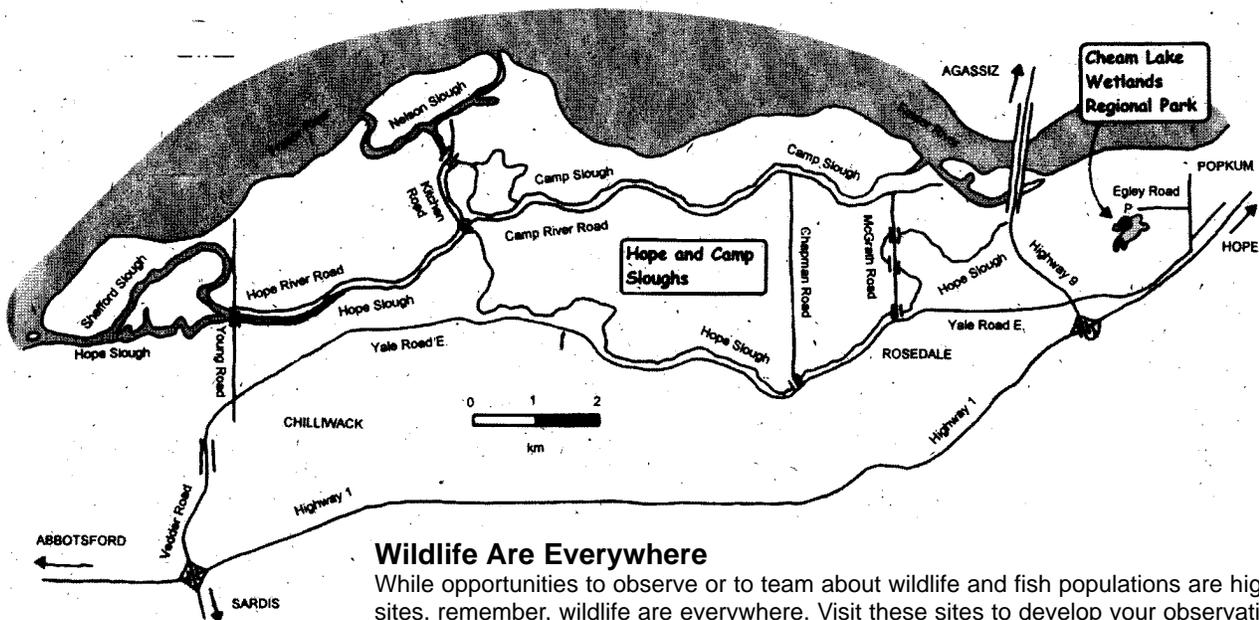
**Viewing Highlights** - In the lower reaches of the creek (creek mouth or the culvert) look for spawning Chum Salmon in October and November.

## Sasquatch Provincial Park - Hicks Lake Outlet

The outlet of Hicks Lake is a small dam and fish ladder. A trail leads along the creek and across the dam. For more information contact BC Parks, Lower Mainland District [(604) 924-2200; 1610 Mount Seymour Drive, North Vancouver, B.C. V7G 2R9].

**Access** - From Highway 7 in Agassiz follow the signs to Harrison Hot Springs via Highway 9. Follow the park directional signs onto Rockwell Drive and to the park. Continue into the park and follow the signs leading to the Hicks Lake Day Use Area.

**Viewing Highlights** - During the months of March and April look for spawning Cutthroat Trout. They are best seen early in the morning or at sunset.



## Wildlife Are Everywhere

While opportunities to observe or to team about wildlife and fish populations are highlighted at 12 sites, remember, wildlife are everywhere. Visit these sites to develop your observation skills. Once you do, you will see, hear and find evidence of creatures everywhere you go. When visiting these areas please remember that you are visiting wild creatures in their home. Leave their homes clean, and keep your pets under control on a leash at all times. Some animals are only present for short periods of time, so it is best to plan your visit when they are at home.