

Visit Our Wildlife

in

Mission

**Gateway to the Bald Eagles of
Harrison Bay and Chehalis Flats**



The Mission Region is home to a wealth of natural areas and parks. Wildlife and fish make their year-round or seasonal homes in these special places. In this brochure you will find information on just 8 areas 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.

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.



This Region stretches from the Stave River in the west to the Harrison River in the east, and from the Fraser River in the south to the forested mountains in the north. It includes many small communities, including Ruskin, Dewdney, Deroche, Lake Errock and Harrison Mills.

Rolley Lake Provincial Park

This small provincial park is rich in human history. The area was homesteaded in 1888, and the lake served as a holding pond for shingle bolts in the early 1900s. Today you can still find evidence of early logging activities, including spring board notches in the remaining stumps, and an old wooden plank road. There is a loop trail around the lake. For more information contact BC Parks, Vancouver District [(604) 924-2200; 1610 Mt. Seymour Parkway, North Vancouver, B.C. V7G 1L3].

Access - From Lougheed Highway (Highway 7) follow the park directional signs north onto 287th Street which comes Wilson Road. At Dewdney Truck Road turn right, and at Bell Street turn left and continue to the park.

Viewing Highlights - Douglas squirrels and yellow pine chipmunks are common. The forests and forest edge areas are good places to look and listen for Barred Owl, woodpeckers, chickadees and many songbirds. A British Columbia Wildlife Watch bird checklist is available for the park (90 species to February 1995).



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

Hayward Lake Reservoir Recreation Area

This recreation area is managed by BC Hydro as part of their program to create safe and attractive areas on their reservoir lands throughout the province. Hayward Lake forms part of the Alouette-Stave-Ruskin generation system that produces power primarily to meet the short term peak electrical demand in the Lower Mainland. The Stave Falls dams and powerhouse were built between 1909 and 1925. A new powerhouse is currently being constructed. For more information contact BC Hydro, Environmental Services [(604) 528-1877; 6911 Southpoint Drive, 9th Floor, Burnaby, B.C. V3N 4X8].

Access - From Lougheed Highway (Highway 7) follow the directional signs north onto 287th Street which becomes Wilson Road. At Dewdney Trunk Road turn right and continue to the site.

Viewing Highlights - While wildlife can be found throughout the area, the pond area is the best place to see a wide range of wildlife, including waterfowl, woodpeckers, swallows, songbirds and beaver activity. A British Columbia Wildlife Watch bird checklist is available for the recreation area (94 species to August 1995). An interpretive brochure for the Pond Trail is available from BC Hydro.

Ruskin Recreation Site

The Ruskin Recreation Site is located on the Stave River just below the Ruskin dam and powerhouse. It is managed by BC Hydro. Construction of the Ruskin facilities began in 1929 and resulted in the creation of the 5.6km long Hayward Lake Reservoir. For more information contact BC Hydro, Environmental Services [(604) 528-1877; 6911 Southpoint Drive, 9th Floor, Burnaby, B.C. V3N 4X8].

Access - From Lougheed Highway (Highway 7) turn north onto Hayward Street and continue straight to the site. Or from the highway turn north onto 287th Street. At the Ruskin dam, cross over and continue to the site.

Viewing Highlights - A salmon spawning channel has been constructed along the Stave River and chum may be observed from early October through late November. The presence of spawning fish attracts many bird species, including many Bald Eagles that are visible along the river during the winter months.



Viewing Tip - 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.

Inch Creek Hatchery

Inch Creek hatchery was built in 1981-1982 for the purpose of enhancing salmon and sea-run trout stocks. It is operated by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The trout rearing program is joint effort with the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks. In 1996 this facility will produce an estimated 4 million chum fry, 750,000 coho yearlings and 20,000 trout. The hatchery compound is open to visitors year-round, and information signs explain the on-site facilities. For more information contact the hatchery [(604) 826-0244; Box 61, Dewdney, B.C. V0M 1H0].

Access - From Lougheed Highway (Highway 7) just east of Mission look for hatchery signs directing you onto Hawkins Pickle Road. Continue, without crossing the railroad tracks, until you reach the hatchery located on Bell Road.

Viewing Highlights - Chum and coho salmon are visible in a small outflow stream within the hatchery compound during November and December. Several white sturgeon, part of a research project, can be observed in a large pond. The largest weighs about 91 kg (200lbs). Fish of various ages are visible in the troughs and tanks throughout the year.

Nicomen Slough

Nicomen Slough flows from the Fraser River around Nicomen Island. Lougheed Highway (Highway 7) crosses this large island between the bridges at Dewdney and Deroche. The slough contains habitat that is important to many species, but especially Bald Eagles, Trumpeter Swans and spawning salmon. For more information contact BC Environment, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks [(604) 582-5200; #301 - 10334 -152A Street, Surrey, B.C. V3R 7P8].

Access - The slough is visible at many locations along Lougheed Highway (Highway 7).

Viewing Highlights -The slough provides important winter habitat for Trumpeter Swans. An estimated 100 to 200 swans frequent Nicomen Slough from late November through January. These same birds move about daily, utilizing habitats Harrison Bay and Chehalis Flats. In addition to swans, the slough, particularly in the Deroche area, is utilized by a wide range of waterfowl, including teal, wigeon, scaup, Canada Geese, golden-eye and merganser. Several of the rivers and streams that enter the slough are utilized by spawning salmon, including the waterways by Inch Creek Hatchery. The presence of these fish attracts hundreds of Bald Eagles. The eagles are usually visible from late November through January sitting in trees or standing in hallow sections of the slough.



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

Chehalis River Hatchery

The Chehalis River Hatchery is responsible for rearing and releasing a range of fish species, including coho, chinook and chum salmon, and steelhead and cutthroat trout. This Department of Fisheries and Oceans hatchery is the largest producer of chum salmon on the Fraser River, and in the spring of 1996 an estimated 11 million chum fry were released. The hatchery compound is open to visitors year-round, and information signs explain the facilities and activities. For more information contact the hatchery [(604) 796-2281; 16250 Morris Valley Road, Agassiz, B.C. V0M 1A0].

Access - From Lougheed Highway (Highway 7) follow the directional signs north onto Morris Valley Road. Continue straight to the site.

Viewing Highlights - No fish actually spawn within the hatchery compound. Fish of various ages are visible in the troughs and tanks throughout the year.



Harrison Chehalis Bald Eagle Festival

The first Harrison Chehalis Bald Eagle Festival was held in December 1996 to celebrate the wintering population of Bald Eagles at Harrison Bay and Chehalis Flats. The second annual event is planned for December 6 and 7, 1997. For more information contact the Mission Regional Chamber of Commerce or British Columbia Wildlife Watch, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks.

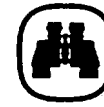
In 1996 this event included activities at five main sites, Inch Creek Hatchery, Chehalis River Hatchery, Weaver Creek Spawning Channel, Kilby Historic Store and Farm, and Harrison Bay at Kilby Provincial Park. The main viewing activities took place on the beach overlooking Harrison Bay where binoculars and scopes were available to view the eagles and swans. Information about the event, about the main wildlife species, and about the event sites was available to participants in a special event newsletter. A passport could be purchased, and participants obtaining 6 of the 9 event stamps were eligible to enter a draw for many terrific prizes, including local accommodation, boat trips, and a pair of binoculars.



Viewing Tip - Let animals eat their natural foods. Sharing your sandwich may harm wild digestive systems and get animals hooked on handouts. These animals may eventually lose their fear of cars, campers or even poachers. Watch and learn what natural foods animals prefer.



Viewing Tip - Resist the temptation to "save" baby animals. Mom is usually watching from a safe distance.



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 safe, positive experience for the viewer are the primary objectives of this program. Many local communities, other agencies and public conservation groups are involved. Viewing information brochures are available for sites across British Columbia. Brochures for the Lower Mainland Region include eighteen bird checklists and three wildlife management area information brochures. When travelling, look for the blue and white binocular logo signs identifying viewing sites. For more information on British Columbia Wildlife Watch contact the Regional BC Environment office in Surrey [(604) 582-5200; #301 - 10334 - 152A Street, Surrey, B.C. V3R 7P8].



Mission Regional Chamber of Commerce is a community leader, enhancing growth, prosperity and the quality of life through service, communication and representation. For more information on tourism and business activities in the Mission Region contact the Chamber office [(604) 26-6914; 34033 Lougheed Highway, Mission, B.C. V2V 5X8].



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



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

Visit Our Wildlife In Mission is a joint publication of British Columbia Wildlife Watch and the Mission Regional Chamber of Commerce. Additional funds for the printing of this brochure were contributed by:

Fraser Valley Outdoor Adventures Ltd.
8944 Hammond Street, Mission, B.C. V2V 6X8
(604)826-3181

Fence Post Lane Bed and Breakfast
8575 Gaglardi Street, Mission, B.C. V4S 1 B2
(604)820-7009

Kilby Historic Store and Farm
P.O. Box 48, Harrison Mills, B.C. V0N 1 L0
(604)796-9576

**Community Futures Development
Corporation of North Fraser** 32386 Fletcher Avenue,
Mission, B.C. V2V 5T1 (604) 826-6252

Weaver Creek Spawning Channel

Weaver Creek Spawning Channel is 2932 meters long, about the same length as the new runway at Vancouver International Airport. It was constructed in 1965 and is operated by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The channel compound is open daily when the fish spawn in October and November. For more information contact this facility [(604) 796-9444; c/o Chehalis River Hatchery, 16250 Morris Valley Road, Agassiz, B.C. V0M 1A0].

Access - From Lougheed Highway (Highway 7) follow the directional signs north onto Morris Valley Road. The channel is past the Chehalis River Hatchery.

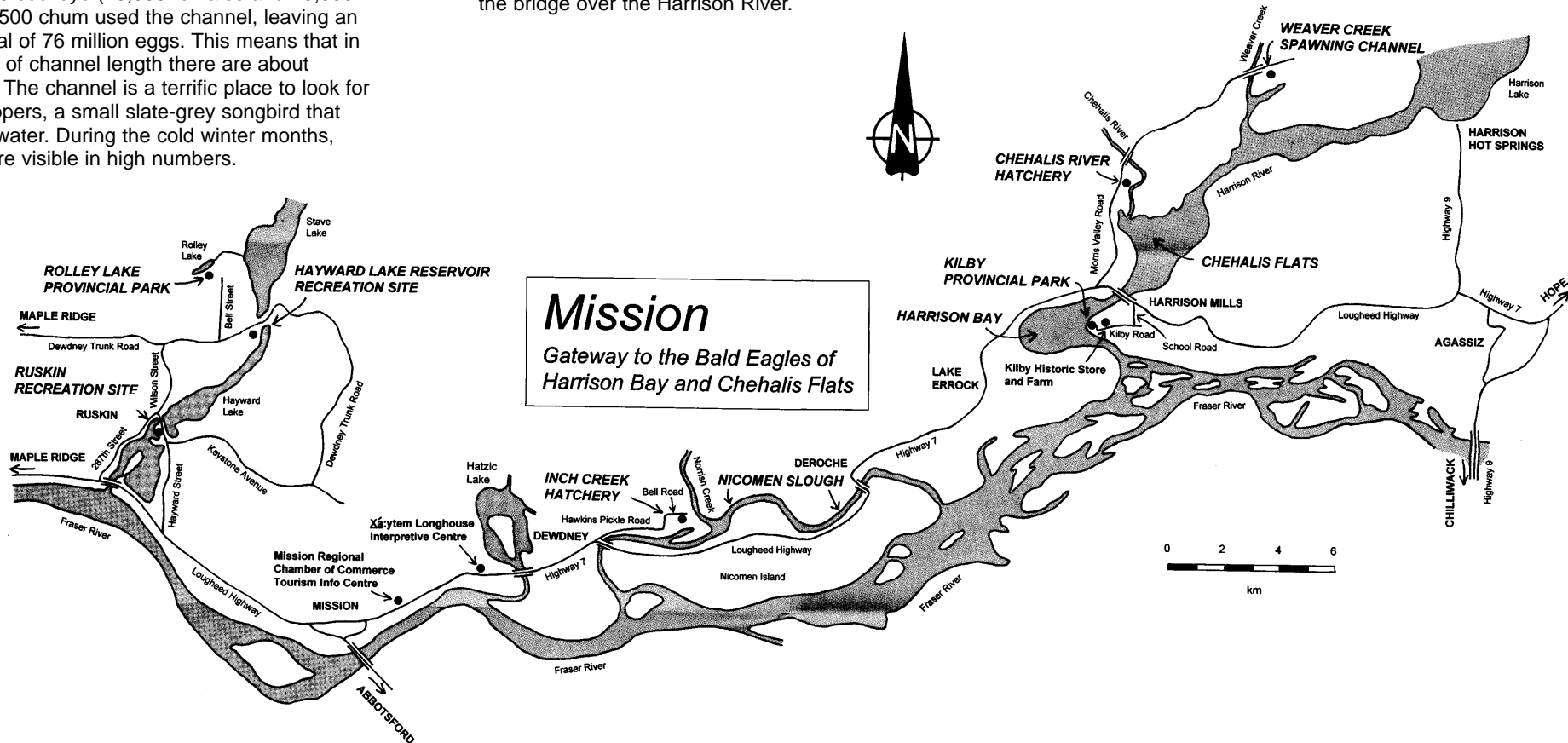
Viewing Highlights - Next to the Adams River east of Kamloops this is one of the best sites to observe the bright red spawning sockeye salmon. There are also some chum salmon that use the channel and adjacent creek to spawn, and in odd numbered years (ie. 1997), a few pink salmon can be seen also. In 1996, a total of 32,000 sockeye (19,000 females and 13,000 males) and 2500 chum used the channel, leaving an estimated total of 76 million eggs. This means that in each 1 meter of channel length there are about 27,285 eggs. The channel is a terrific place to look for American Dippers, a small slate-grey songbird that walks under water. During the cold winter months, these birds are visible in high numbers.

Harrison Bay, Kilby Provincial Park and Chehalis Flats

Kilby Provincial Park is located at Harrison Mills on the Harrison River, opposite Harrison Bay. The Chehalis Flats area is located upstream of the bridge over the Harrison River. Both areas contain important fish and wildlife habitat. For more information on the park contact BC Parks, Fraser Valley District [(604) 824-2300; P.O. Box 3010, Cultus Lake, B.C. V2R 5H6]. For more information on Harrison Bay and Chehalis Flats contact BC Environment, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks [(604) 582-5200; #301 - 10334 -152A Street, Surrey, B.C. V3R 7P8].

Access - From Lougheed Highway (Highway 7) follow the provincial park and binocular logo directional signs south onto School Road. Then turn right onto Kilby Road, pass Kilby Historic Store and Farm and continue to the park. Chehalis Flats is located upstream of the bridge over the Harrison River.

Viewing Highlights - While many bird species are visible in the river, bay and flats, this area is the winter home to a concentration of Bald Eagles numbering between 700 and 1100 individuals. The eagles begin arriving in early November and most have departed by late January. The presence of dead and dying salmon attracts the eagles to this area. The salmon are spawning in a series of rivers and streams that feed into the Harrison River, including the Chehalis River and Weaver Creek systems. The Trumpeter Swans that utilize Nicomen Slough can be found in this area almost daily during the winter.



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