Discover The Omineca Region

Omineca – meaning slow moving water – is a region of rich wetlands, meandering streams and powerful rivers. It is a spectacular land in any season.

In spring, listen to the siren’s song of thawing creeks that lured gold miners to this country. Spend time by a quiet marsh, and you might see moose come to feed on the lush new vegetation. Follow a river and you may travel with the ghosts of Alexander Mackenzie and Simon Fraser, the first explorers to this new land.

As the air grows warm and still, watch as the wetlands come alive with breeding ducks and geese. While waterfowl build their nests and raise their young, watch for majestic white pelicans filling their pouches with fish they have trapped in the shallow, quiet waters of local lakes.

When autumn days draw in, birds fly south along the region’s waterways. Travel a river yourself, and you may witness the journey of spawning salmon. Stop by a pond while beavers repair their dam, and you might stand where European fur traders and the Carrier First Nation had their trap lines.

As the air chills and the wetlands and waterways grow silent, turn your attention to the surrounding mountains and forests. Scan a rock face and you may find mountain goats climbing nimbly over broken and treacherous terrain. Follow the region’s highways and you will travel through seemingly endless woodlands – the home of caribou, deer and bears, and the source of a thriving forest industry.

Come once to the Omineca, in any season, and you will be sure to return.

More Information

British Columbia Wildlife Watch is a multi-partner program designed to promote educational, recreational and commercial opportunities to view fish and wildlife in their natural habitats. Partners include government, communities and industry who treasure our wildlife heritage and want to protect it for future generations.

Internet Sites

- Wildlife Viewing in BC: wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/fw/wild/wildlife_viewing.htm
- BC Parks: wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/
- Species at Risk: wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/wld/serisk.htm

Associations

- Federation of British Columbia Naturalists, #307-1367 West Broadway, Vancouver BC V6H 4A9 Tel: 604-737-3057 www.naturalists.bc.ca/
- Guide Outfitters Association of BC, Box 94675, Richmond, BC V6Y 4A4 Tel: 604-278-2688 www.goabc.org
- Spruce City Wildlife Association, 1384 River Road, Prince George, BC V2L 5S8 Tel: 250-563-5437 www.scwa.bc.ca/Home/

Publications

- British Columbia Road and Recreational Atlas, 5th edition, Informap
- The B.C. Roadside Naturalist, Greystone Books
Viewing Highlights

- Over 500 Trumpeter Swans winter in the Central Interior/Omineca Plateau.
- Close to 200 American White Pelicans use various lakes in the region each year.
- The highest density of moose in North America is found in the Prince George area.
- The 10 metre high Rearguard Falls mark the end of a phenomenal 1,200 kilometre journey up the Fraser River by spawning Chinook salmon. This is an excellent site to see salmon attempt to jump the cascading falls each autumn. A few salmon are successful and spawn a couple of kilometres upstream.
- Kennedy Siding provides a rare, car-accessible, opportunity to view caribou in their natural winter habitat.
- Highway 97 – Pine Pass. This highway corridor from Pine Pass south to Old Friend Creek presents viewing opportunities throughout the year. Moose can be seen year round, bears are often visible from mid-April to September, and the best time to see caribou is between November and April.
- Highway 16 – Prince George to Valemount. This scenic drive follows the southern Rocky Mountain Trench and presents an excellent opportunity to view bears and ungulates feeding on roadside vegetation in the spring.

Wildlife Viewing Tips

- The goal of wildlife viewing is to safely observe wildlife undertaking natural behaviour in their natural habitat.
- Use field guides to identify wildlife and signs, such as tracks, droppings, and nests.
- Early mornings and dusk are often best, but experiment with different viewing times. Deer are active in the late afternoon and early evening.
- Try different viewing strategies. Scan peaks with binoculars. Look for moose and bears in old burned or cleared areas where there is abundant shrub growth. Check for wildlife near lakes and wet areas, their sources of food and cover.

Responsible Viewing

Respect the Needs of Wildlife

- Use responsible viewing practices. Avoid harassing wildlife, causing disturbances at feeding areas, damaging critical habitats or causing disturbances at breeding sites, which can leave eggs and young animals vulnerable to predation.
- While viewing or photographing wildlife, use viewing blinds, natural features or your car to minimize wildlife disturbance. View from a distance and use telephoto lenses, binoculars or spotting scopes. Watch animal behaviour for signs of disturbance or alarm. If this occurs, alter your behaviour.
- Never feed wildlife. It is unsafe, illegal and often leads to disaster for animals if they continue to seek human food sources.
- Avoid sensitive habitats (nests, dens, feeding areas) and times when wildlife are particularly vulnerable (denning, feeding, mating, raising young).
- Keep pets leashed and under control or leave them at home.

Protect the Environment

- Stay on designated roads, trails and viewing platforms to avoid trampling vegetation, and so wildlife can become accustomed to human movement.
- Practice “no trace” viewing. Do not take plants, rocks, flowers or fossils as souvenirs. Please take your garbage with you or use appropriate facilities if they are provided.

Stay Safe

- Do not approach, chase or touch wild animals. They are unpredictable and potentially dangerous.
- Bears can be seen throughout the region. Learn how to be safe in bear country. Information is available at wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/wild/pub/bearwild.htm
- Find out about hunting seasons in the areas you visit at wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/fw/wild/synopsis.htm
- Wildlife may unexpectedly cross roads. Obey traffic speed limits to help avoid collisions.
- If using industrial roads, enquire about safe travel times and yield to heavy equipment.

Respect Others

- Be respectful of the rights of private property owners. Ask permission to cross private property and be sure to leave gates as you find them.
- Share the view with others trying to watch wildlife.
- You will likely encounter others undertaking industrial, commercial or other recreational activities. Please be aware and considerate of their activities.

Report all Poachers and Polluters

- There are laws to protect wildlife from harassment and disturbance. If you see something inappropriate, document the details and report it to the nearest conservation officer, local authority, or call: 1-877-952-7277.
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**KEY — ACCESS**
- B – Boat
- F – Fly
- G – Gravel 2 wheel drive road
- H – Horse
- P – Highway/paved
- W – Walk/hike

**SEASONS**
- Sp – Spring (late March - late June)
- S – Summer (late June - late Sept)
- F – Fall (late Sept - late Dec)
- W – Winter (late Dec - late March)
- Yr – Year round (Note viewing seasons are affected by weather patterns which vary annually)

**FACILITIES**
- C – Camping
- D – Day use
- L – Lodge
- R – Highway rest stop
- T – Trails
- V – Viewing blinds/platforms/info
- O – Other

**NOTE** Carnivores include wolf, coyote, fox