



## Viewing Ethics for Conservation

Wildlife viewing demands courtesy and common sense. For the well-being of the wildlife and habitats of the Thompson Region please comply with the following:

### Keep all Vehicles on Designated Roads

Vehicles that wander away from designated roads will destroy vegetation and cause soil erosion.

### Be Considerate of Wildlife

Use binoculars to view wildlife from a distance. Confrontation will upset wildlife, particularly when nesting or with young. Control pets at all times to avoid wildlife harassment. Baby animals are seldom abandoned or orphaned and it is against the law to take them.

### Be Wary of Wildlife

Some wildlife become accustomed to human presence and human food. Please do not feed wildlife. Also, some wildlife can be very unpredictable and dangerous, so maintain a safe distance.

### Be Considerate of Habitat

Do not disturb vegetation, rocks, fossils, artifacts, birds or wild animals. Leave the environment untouched and let the next wildlife viewer enjoy the site as you have.

### Report Environmental Abuse

Environmental rules are enforced more effectively when everyone participates. Report environmental or wildlife abuse to any Conservation Officer, Provincial Park Ranger or other authority. Please record the location, date, time, vehicle description and licence plate number of the offender and report using the Observe, Record and Report phone number: **1-800-663-9453**.

*Thank you!*

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



## 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 wait to observe it.

### Keep Silent, Reduce Visibility

Wildlife will usually sense your presence long before you have sensed theirs—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

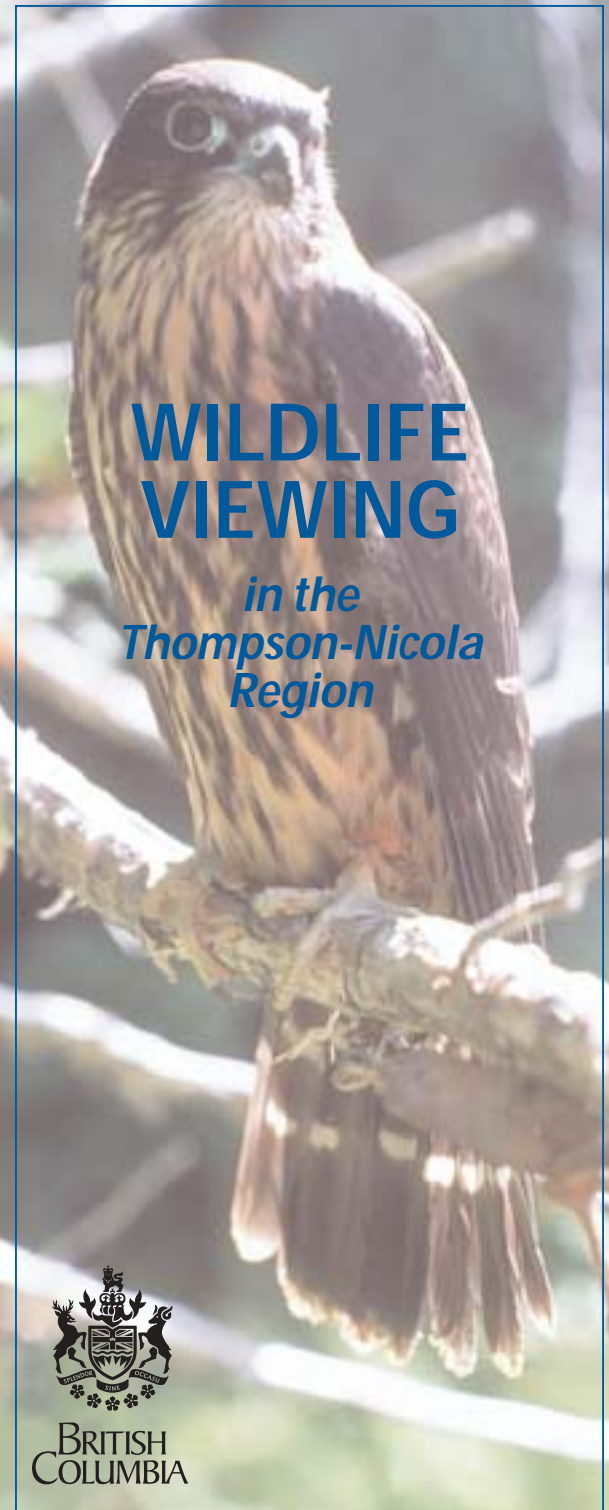
Wildlife may be difficult to observe even though you have heard the species or detected the signs.

### 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 at:  
[wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/fw/wild/wildlife\\_viewing.html](http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/fw/wild/wildlife_viewing.html)





## The Land and the History



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: bunchgrass, ponderosa pine, and freshwater wetlands. The region's deeply-carved river valleys, rolling highlands, plateaux and mountain ranges create a climate ranging from the near desert conditions in the Thompson Basin to extremely wet conditions in the North 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, Quilchena and the Gang Ranches—and you'll see their fences and cattle along many of the driving routes outlined in this brochure.



## Wildlife Viewing Driving Routes

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 Recreational 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 Tour** (4 hrs, start from Kamloops)

Hwy 5A, from Knutsford to Merritt has magnificent views of the Thompson Plateau and Nicola Valley Grasslands—most of the drive 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.

**Option:** Take the Douglas Lake turnoff from Hwy 5A to Hamilton Commonage (excellent views of the Thompson Plateau from the top of Hamilton Mtn.) and Monte Lake.



#### **Fraser & Yalakom Rivers Circle Tour**

(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 Moha. Turn left and travel along the Bridge and Yalakom River Roads (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.

## Corridor Routes



#### **Clearwater River Corridor Tour** (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 entrance is the Green Mountain Viewpoint Turnoff (look for moose); the historic Ray Farm (Barn Swallows, bears, deer, and small passerines); Bailey's Chute and the Horseshoe featuring migrating chinook salmon in the fall.

**Note:** during the fall, take Hwy 5 east to Raft River where there is a viewing platform on the Thompson River to watch migrating chinook salmon. From here, a side road on the north side of the highway connects to the Clearwater Valley Road.

## Backcountry Hikes

#### **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 forest wildlife including Marten, Pine 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 B.C., 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.**




### MAP LEGEND


**Wildlife Viewing Site**  
 Wildlife Viewing Site


**Circle Tour/Corridor Routes**


-  Fraser & Yalakom Rivers Circle Tours
-  Thompson Plateau Nicola Valley Circle Tour
-  Clearwater River Corridor Tour


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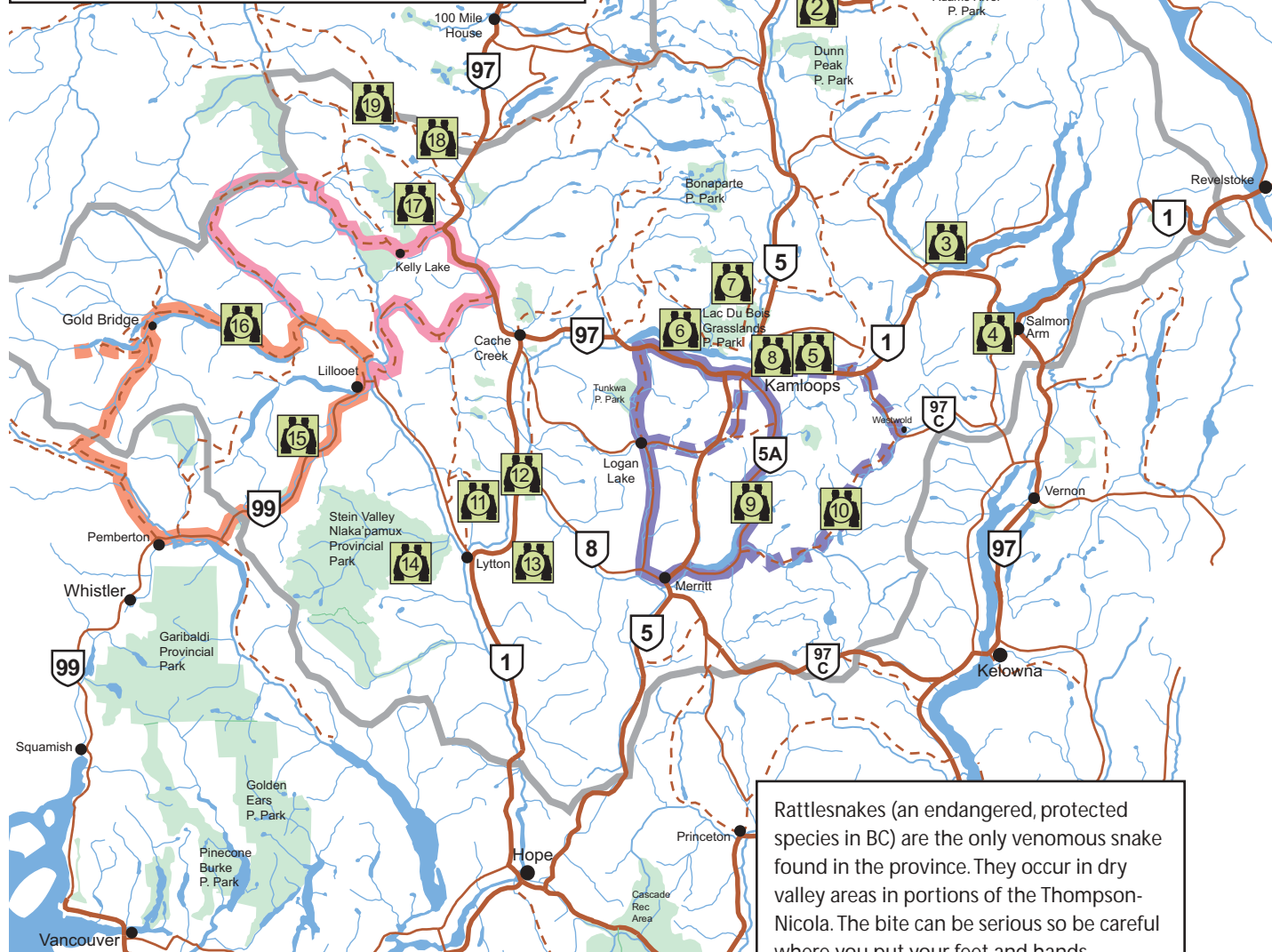
**Provincial Park**  
 Provincial Park

**Major Highway**  
 Major Highway

**Secondary Paved Road/Hwy**  
 Secondary Paved Road/Hwy

**Gravel/4X4 Road**  
 Gravel/4X4 Road

**Highway Number**  
 Highway Number



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 RATTLESNAKE GO TO THE NEAREST HOSPITAL IMMEDIATELY FOR TREATMENT.**

Grasslands are particularly sensitive to disturbance. Please keep all vehicles on designated roads only. Ground nesting birds are common in grasslands and can be startled from their nests at critical times for young. Please look carefully before you step and maintain at least 100m from any known or potential nesting areas.

### Selected Wildlife Viewing Areas

Wildlife Viewing Sites (Rec Atlas Site Numbers)	Site Name	Highlights	Viewing Season												Access								
			J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Paved	Gravel	4X4 Road	Some/Most/All Private	Walk	Hike			
<b>Wells Gray/Clearwater Area</b>																							
1 (212)	Wells Gray P.P. (corridor, multiple sites)	Mountain and Riparian Species (see table below for details)	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲						
2	Raft River	★ Spawning Sockeye and Chinook, ● Bald Eagles, ★ Turkey Vultures	●	●																			
<b>Shuswap Lake Area</b>																							
3 (2)	Roderick Haig-Brown P.P.	■ Riparian Birds (year round); ● Gulls & Diving Ducks, Spawning: ★ Sockeye, ★ Chinook, ★ Coho, ★ Pink Salmon; ◆ American Dippers, ◆ Bald Eagles,	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
4 (165)	Salmon Arm Bay	■ Osprey, ■ Bald Eagle; ★ Nesting Western Grebes, ● Migrating Shorebirds, ★ Migrating and Nesting Waterfowl, ▲ Blackbirds, ▲ Sora, ▲ Muskrat, ▲ Painted Turtle																					S
<b>Kamloops Area</b>																							
5 (186)	South Thompson River (East Shuswap road, Kamloops to Chase)	■ California Bighorn Sheep, Bald Eagle, Western Bluebird, Common Loon, Painted Turtles, Great Blue Heron Colony; ★ Tundra/Trumpeter Swans, ◆ Waterfowl Staging Area, ● Lewis' Woodpecker, ★ Nesting Osprey	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★
6 (207)	Tranquille/Dewdrop-Rosseau W.M.A.s	■ Coyote, Chukar, Poorwill; ★ Migrating Waterfowl and small Songbirds (warblers, vireos, etc); ★ Mule Deer, ★ California Bighorn Sheep, ▲ Mountain Bluebirds	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★
7 (94)	Lac du Bois P.P.	★ Waterfowl, ★ Nesting Flammulated Owls, ◆ Grassland Birds, ◆ Mountain Bluebirds, ● Sharp-tailed Grouse, ■ Long-billed Curlew, ▲ Mule Deer																					
8	Kenna Cartwright Park	■ Dry Forest Birds, Coyotes, Mule Deer, Blue Grouse																					
<b>Merritt &amp; Nicola Valley Area</b>																							
9 (91,133)	Hwy 5A - Nicola Valley Corridor (Knutsford to Merritt)	Grassland and Riparian Species (see table below for details)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	S
10 (30)	Douglas Lake - Monte Creek Corridor	■ Badger, Sharptailed Grouse, Mule Deer, Moose, Coyote; ★ White Pelicans, ★ Swainson's Hawk, ★ Waterfowl, ★ Long-billed Curlew, ★ Sandhill Cranes,																					S
<b>Thompson River Canyon &amp; Area</b>																							
11	Botanie Creek Valley	■ Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep																					
12 (189)	Spences Bridge	■ Chukar, Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep; ★ Migrating: Sockeye, Chinook, Steelhead and Pink Salmon																					
13	Skihist to Lytton	■ Mountain Goats, Elk; ★ Pink Salmon Tagging; ★ Mule Deer, ★ Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep (across river)																					
<b>Fraser River &amp; Tributaries</b>																							
14	Stein Valley Nlaka'pamux Heritage P.P.	■ Grizzly, Spruce Grouse, Blue Grouse, White-tailed Ptarmigan, Mountain Goat, Mule Deer; ★ Pika; ★ Hoary Marmot																					
15	Downton Creek Hike	■ Mountain Goats; ★ Hoary Marmot, Common Pika, Grizzly																					
16	Carpenter Lake at Marshall Creek	★ Mule Deer; ■ Spawning Kokanee, ■ Spawning Rainbow Trout; ● Nesting Canada Geese, ● Nesting Ospreys	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★
<b>Clinton/Cariboo Area</b>																							
17 (186)	Marble Range/Porcupine Creek Hike (between Kelly L. and Jesmond)	■ Blue Grouse, White-tailed Ptarmigan; ★ Mule Deer, Moose; ★ California Bighorn Sheep,																					
18 (207)	Beaverdam and Little White Lakes	■ Moose, ★ Raptors, ★ Waterfowl, ★ Mountain Bluebirds																					
19	Meadow Lake	★ Eared Grebe Colony, ★ Black-bellied Plovers, Dowitchers, Peeps sp.																					

**Wells Gray Provincial Park Corridor**

- **Year-round:** Mountain Caribou (unusual), White-tailed Ptarmigan, Spruce Grouse
- ★ **Mar-Oct:** Marmot, Grizzly Bear, Black Bear, Pika, Bats
- ★ **May-Sept:** Nesting Barn Swallows, Red Fox, Red-tailed Hawk, Columbian Ground Squirrel
- ◆ **June-Sept:** Sparrows
- ▲ **Nov-March:** Moose
- **Sept:** Chinook Salmon jumping, Bald Eagles & Common Ravens feeding on salmon carcasses

**3 (212)**

**Hwy 5A - Knutsford to Merritt**

- **Year-round:** Sharp-tailed Grouse, Red-tailed Hawk, Short-eared Owl, Great Blue Heron Colony, Coyote, Badger, Mule Deer, Bald Eagles
- **April-Oct:** Waterfowl, Coots, Common Loons, American Kestrel, Yellow-bellied Marmot
- ▲ **April-Aug:** Yellow-headed Blackbirds
- ★ **May-Aug:** Canada Geese, Ospreys, Swainson's Hawk, Black Terns
- ★ **Nov-May:** Rough-legged Hawk, Snow Buntings, Tundra/Trumpeter Swans
- **April, Sept-Oct:** Sandhill Cranes
- ◆ **May-June:** Sucker Run

**30 (91, 133)**