

Wildlife viewing in Mayo

WILDLIFE VIEWING TIPS



Bring binoculars or a spotting scope to get a better look at wildlife without disturbing them.



Learn about where they live, what they eat, and when they are most active.

- Upon arrival at a location, spend time quietly observing. Hiding animals may reveal themselves once they sense no danger.
- Keep your dog on a leash and under control at all times. To a wild animal, dogs look just like wolves and will scare them away.
- Never bait, lure, or feed wildlife. Not only is it illegal, it can harm animals and be dangerous for people.

Report wildlife harassment to the Yukon Turn in Poachers and Polluters (TIPP) line at:



For more information



First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun

867-996-2265

www.nndfn.com



Village of Mayo

867-996-2317

www.villageofmayo.com



Wildlife Viewing Program

867-667-8291

Toll free in the Yukon:

1-800-661-0408, ext. 8291

wildlife.viewing@yukon.ca

Yukon.ca/wildlife

Yukon





Area highlighted is the traditional territory of the Na-Cho Nyäk Dun

Welcome

The First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun represents the most northerly community of the Northern Tutchone language group. The Stewart River that runs by the town of Mayo is called Na Cho Nyäk – meaning “Big River”.

The Traditional Territory covers 162,456 km², bigger than the entire state of Georgia, of which more than 80 per cent is in the Yukon and 20 per cent in NWT. The First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun has lived in the Mayo area for thousands of years travelling throughout their Traditional Territory for hunting, fishing and gathering.

The community of Mayo serves as a gateway to the vast riches of central Yukon, offering opportunities for profound wilderness adventures, mineral exploration, and an understanding of the land and the people who call it home.

This guide highlights some of the key wildlife viewing areas you can visit during your stay in Mayo. You're welcome to explore the trails, mountains, and rivers, but remember to be respectful of the land and the plants and animals that live there.

Take only pictures, leave the landscape for all to enjoy.

Highlights of Mayo and region

Ice age refugia

During the last ice age 25,000 to 12,000 years ago, most of Canada was covered by glacial ice. However, portions of the Yukon remained ice-free because the climate was too dry. This lack of moisture caused the boreal forests to disappear, turning the land into a vast plain full of nutritious grasses, herbs and flowering plants. The ice extended about 20 km below Mayo in the Stewart Valley. Peaks such as Keno Hill and Mount Haldane were nunataks, which are isolated peaks of rock projecting above the surface of the ice sheet.

Known as Beringia, this ice-free region extended from central and northern Yukon, across Alaska, all the way to Asia, and was a vast wilderness across which herds of now extinct grazing mammals and their predators roamed. Horses, camels, lions, and mammoths survived in this refugium. Some of these animals survived to present day, including the Eversmann's Parnassian butterfly, Arctic Ground Squirrels, and caribou.



Wetland hot spot

Peat wetlands (fens and bogs) are widespread in the Mayo area. Peat is formed in waterlogged conditions where plants are not able to decompose completely. Partially decomposed plant remains accumulate and become compacted, forming peat. Fens and bogs are different because of where they get their water. Fens are fed by ground and surface water, and are dominated by sedges and grasses. Bogs are fed by precipitation, and are abundant in mosses such as Sphagnum and Feather Moss.



STAYING SAFE

Everywhere in the Yukon is bear country, and it's important to be careful, but not afraid. The trails and roads of the Mayo region provide you with access to a vast wilderness with little infrastructure.

Follow these tips to stay safe while exploring:

- Always tell someone where you're going, and when to expect you back.
- Carry an emergency communication device so you can call for help. Cell phones don't work outside of communities.
- Ensure you are prepared to be outdoors in changing conditions. Bring extra clothing, food, water, maps and good footwear to keep your feet safe.
- Carry bear spray on your belt, the outside of a pack, or on a strap. It needs to be easily accessible and not buried in a bag or tote.
- Keep your eyes and ears open. Look for signs – such as scat, digging, or prints – that a bear is in the area.
- Pick up the booklet How you can stay safe in bear country to learn more.



How you can
STAY SAFE
in bear country



Yukon

Places to see and learn about wildlife



1

Prince of Wales Trail

The trail starts at the Binet House Interpretive Centre and takes you along the Stewart River and down the Mayo River dike road. The road parallels the Mayo River so is a good place to see and hear riparian birds (birds that live on the edges of wetlands). Warbling Vireos sing in the tall Balsam Poplars. Watch for Yellow Warblers, Northern Waterthrushes, and Blackpoll Warblers in the willows along the river and Townsend's and Yellow-rumped warblers in the riparian spruce. Belted Kingfishers, ducks, and shorebirds can be found beside the river. Moose and Black Bears are frequently seen along the dike and there is a lot of beaver activity in the river.

2

Crocus Hill

Access to this 2.3 km loop trail is from the gravel pull-out right across the highway from the west end of the airstrip. The open slopes along Crocus Hill are a great place to see ground-nesting Townsend's Solitaires, Dark-eyed Juncos, and Savannah Sparrows. Watch for Mountain Bluebirds during their spring migration. Black Bears (particularly in spring) and Mule Deer are also seen along the open grassy slopes.

3

Salmon Trail

The trail forms a 2.5 km long loop with views of the Mayo River and Yukon Energy's salmon-rearing channel. The artificial stream provides Chinook Salmon with good spawning and rearing habitat. The river stays open below the powerhouses all winter long, providing the only open water mid-winter. You can see American Dippers diving into the river and feeding all winter long and Common Mergansers have been seen hanging out until late December.

4

Five Mile Lake Campground and Recreation Area

Five Mile Lake and the marsh along the trail around the lake is a great spot to see water birds such as ducks, loons, grebes, shorebirds, and gulls. During spring migration, rarities such as Hudsonian Godwits and Black Scotters can occasionally be seen. Soras nest in the marsh next to the trail and are easier heard than seen. Listen for a descending whinny that lasts for 2 to 3 seconds. Wood Frogs are abundant in the lake and marsh. Lily Pad Lake, the lake east of the highway, is a good place to see moose, muskrats, and beavers.

5

Janet Lake Trail

The access point is across the highway from the Wareham Dam road. Park your vehicle in the gravel area beside the road. This 6 km trail leads through the boreal forest, rich with White Spruce, Black Spruce, and Trembling Aspen. There are a few side-trails, one of which leads to Big Island. Big Island is bounded by the Stewart River and a small side channel and is an important moose calving area. This area is also significant for birds, especially waterfowl and shorebirds. The wetland provides important nesting habitat for ducks.

WARNING: There is limited signage in this area. Be sure to bring a GPS to ensure you don't get lost on the numerous trails to be explored.

6

Frog Ponds

Wetlands are extremely important as they provide habitat for a variety of wildlife species. The Frog Ponds behind the Mayo airport have especially diverse vegetation, including bulrushes and cattails, which are uncommon in the Yukon. This is an excellent spot to hear Wood Frogs in late May through June as they gather to breed in clear, shallow ponds. Listen for their choruses of duck-like quacks, an early indication of spring. To access the wetlands, turn right at km 53 off the Silver Trail Highway onto Janet Lake Road – there is no sign! The wetlands will be on the right side of the road for 1 km.

WARNING: Watch for large trucks and heavy equipment that use this road to access the Land Treatment Facility.