



YUKON'S WILDLIFE

A STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPING AND PROMOTING
VIEWING OPPORTUNITIES

Prepared by the Wildlife Viewing Technical Committee on behalf of the
Department of Environment and the Department of Tourism and Culture

2013



Introduction

The abundance of opportunities to view northern wildlife in a natural setting is a source of great pride for residents as well as an ongoing and growing attraction for Yukon visitors. This strategy sets out the Yukon government's vision for developing wildlife viewing activities and provides guidance for government programs, businesses, and community groups to effectively collaborate. The strategy guides and coordinates the efforts of multiple stakeholders as they provide and develop new wildlife viewing opportunities across the territory.

Viewing wildlife is a popular activity for Canadians and reflects the value we place on our natural environment. Viewing wildlife contributes to regional economies and is an important part of many tourism experiences and products. This interest ensures that Yukon's wildlife and ecosystems are recognised and valued, and, in doing so, supports efforts that maintain Yukon's biodiversity. Furthermore, Chapter 16 of the Umbrella Final Agreement requires Yukoners to consider the non-consumptive uses of our wildlife when making management decisions regarding our resources.

The Yukon government (YG) established the Wildlife Viewing Technical Committee in 2007, with members from the Department of Environment and the Department of Tourism and Culture, to update the 1990 *Strategic Plan for Wildlife Viewing in the Yukon*. The current plan builds on earlier efforts and reflects the short-term and long-term interests of both departments, as well as the potential for new partnerships between governments, organisations, and communities. Information used to develop this strategy has been consolidated into a Technical Report (see Appendix B, available upon request).

This strategy recognises how valuable it is for residents and visitors to see, understand, and appreciate Yukon's wildlife. It also recognises the value of involving other partners in implementing the Strategy. The 1990 *Strategic Plan for Wildlife Viewing* in the Yukon described the need for a coordinated approach by government to develop and promote wildlife viewing opportunities.

This YG strategy outlines a vision for promoting and developing viewing opportunities in Yukon, and invites interested departments, communities, and organisations to participate. Objectives are grouped under three goals that reflect the value of wildlife to Yukon residents and visitors. The strategic actions identify ways/opportunities for governments, communities, organisations, and businesses with shared interests to work together to responsibly develop and promote wildlife viewing opportunities.

A wide-angle photograph of a snowy landscape. In the foreground, two people are seen from behind, wearing winter jackets and hats, looking towards a herd of caribou in the distance. The caribou are scattered across a flat, snow-covered field with some low-lying vegetation. The background shows a vast, open plain under a clear sky.

*Viewing the
Porcupine Caribou Herd on
the Dempster Highway.*



Vision

Viewing wildlife inspires Yukoners and visitors to appreciate and become proud stewards of the natural environment, and supports the health and sustainable economy of Yukon.

Mission

To promote wildlife viewing opportunities and appreciation of Yukon's biodiversity, fostering stewardship of our natural heritage and environment.



The school of life: wildlife viewing provides experiential learning opportunities for schools, families, and community programs.



Principles

- 1 Responsibly promote Yukon's wildlife viewing opportunities.
- 2 Minimize impacts to wildlife, habitats and wilderness from wildlife viewing activities.
- 3 Promote the stewardship of Yukon's wildlife, habitat and wilderness.
- 4 Encourage respect for traditional, subsistence, and harvest values.
- 5 Collaborate with others in developing projects.

Goals

- 1 Promote opportunities for Yukoners to view and appreciate wildlife.
- 2 Inspire visitors to come to Yukon to view and experience wildlife.
- 3 Identify, value, interpret, and promote Yukon's special places for viewing wildlife.



Goal 1

Promote opportunities for Yukoners to view and appreciate wildlife

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIC ACTIONS
1.1 Increase awareness of opportunities to view wildlife.	1.1.1 Identify gaps and opportunities for viewing and appreciating wildlife. 1.1.2 Undertake in-Yukon promotion. 1.1.3 Develop programs that reflect Yukon's biodiversity.
1.2 Expand opportunities for public engagement in viewing and appreciating wildlife.	1.2.1 Work with education providers on curriculum-based projects. 1.2.2 Develop viewing and appreciating wildlife experiences that inspire Yukoners to be stewards of wildlife and their habitats. 1.2.3 Provide resources and direction to other organisations providing viewing and appreciating wildlife activities. 1.2.4 Provide support and opportunities for the public to engage in stewardship activities and learning experiences.
1.3 Encourage and support wildlife viewing programs and projects of other governments, NGOs, and the private sector.	1.3.1 Develop and offer training in support of viewing and appreciating wildlife activities. 1.3.2 Create networking and partnership opportunities. 1.3.3 Build a Yukon-wide interpretive plan that includes other stakeholders. 1.3.4 Communicate with and recognise governments and other partners.



Carcross Dunes plant walk: Viewing wildlife can provide opportunities for economic diversification in communities.

Goal 2

Inspire visitors to come to Yukon to view and experience wildlife

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIC ACTIONS
2.1 Increase awareness and communication regarding wildlife viewing opportunities and products for visitors.	2.1.1 Enhance wildlife information available on YG websites. 2.1.2 Identify opportunities to improve visitor awareness of wildlife viewing opportunities in Yukon's tourism marketing and promotional materials (i.e. vacation planner, websites, etc). 2.1.3 Engage Visitor Information Centre staff in training and local wildlife viewing opportunities. 2.1.4 Take a coordinated approach to efficiently direct visitors to viewing and wildlife appreciation activities.
2.2 Expand visitor engagement before, during, and after their Yukon wildlife viewing experience.	2.2.1 Adapt to visitor needs and demands through analysis of visitor tracking and program feedback. 2.2.2 Increase awareness of and accessibility to wildlife viewing and appreciation sites. 2.2.3 Facilitate communication with visitors using a variety of media.
2.3 Support regional economic development.	2.3.1 Promote the economic value and outcomes of wildlife viewing activities by partnering with governments, community groups, and businesses. 2.3.2 Identify opportunities to coordinate/work with initiative partners (industry, communities, governments and NGOs) to promote viewing and appreciation opportunities and products.



Little Brown Bats delight viewers during a public event at Chadburn Lake.



Goal 3

Identify, value, interpret, and promote Yukon's special places for viewing wildlife.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIC ACTIONS
3.1 Promote the intrinsic value of our natural environment.	3.1.1 Promote non-consumptive values of wildlife. 3.1.2 Continue to expand the understanding that a wide variety of wildlife is key to maintaining biodiversity. 3.1.3 Assess social behaviours achieved by viewing and appreciating wildlife projects. 3.1.4 Review materials and programs for accuracy in terms of science, values, and principles.
3.2 Use core projects to highlight special places for viewing wildlife.	3.2.1 Continuously monitor and evaluate the goals and outcomes of existing major sites and centres. 3.2.2 Maintain and enhance existing sites and centres.
3.3 Ensure land use planning, wildlife management, and YESAA processes recognise wildlife viewing opportunities and sites.	3.3.1 Maintain an inventory of wildlife viewing opportunities and sites. 3.3.2 Improve access to information on wildlife viewing areas and requirements. 3.3.3 Ensure wildlife viewing values are considered in land use applications and reviews.
3.4 Support interpretive planning efforts to develop new viewing and appreciating wildlife opportunities within specially managed areas.	3.4.1 Assist with resource materials for the development of these areas in terms of information (i.e. trails, signs, brochures). 3.4.2 Support interpretive training efforts for parks staff. 3.4.3 Facilitate communication and networking between biologists, researchers, RRCs, land managers, parks staff, and other interested groups.
3.5 Minimize the negative impacts of wildlife viewing activities.	3.5.1 Include consistent Leave No Trace messaging in publications, websites, and programs. 3.5.2 Assist with educational components of environmental compliance programs (i.e. in wildlife, parks, tourism, and general environmental legislation) 3.5.3 Offer and support "Leave No Trace" and minimal impact training for educators, interpreters, and guides.

Evaluation



This strategy will be reviewed by the Wildlife Viewing Technical Committee in 1, 3 and 5 years from its inception. The Technical Committee will monitor the progress of wildlife viewing and appreciation projects and review the effectiveness and direction of the strategy.

Review at Year 1: Test actions

Evaluate progress in implementing goals and objectives. Priorities include:

- The effective release, promotion, and engagement of this strategy to other governments, community groups, non-profit and private sector organisations.
- Support of and involvement in implementing the strategy into branch, section, unit, and individual workplans.
- Preliminary analysis of gaps to address in future projects.
- Presentation and discussion of plans to move forward.

Information and data to present this report can be obtained through program monitoring and formal data collection. Not achieving every goal and objective does not mean the strategy is a failure. Strategies for viewing and appreciating wildlife should shift and adjust to meet the needs and demands of our dynamic social and ecological environment.

Review at Year 3: Halfway point

Conduct an analysis of the implementation of goals and objectives including:

- Governmental and non-governmental work that support the goals and objectives of the strategy.
- Research and data analysis to help measure success and ensure the strategy reflects changing needs and interests of Yukoners.
- Use of existing survey data such as Visitor Exit Surveys, Economic Value of Parks and Protected Areas, and Value of Nature to Canadians.
- Implementation of new evaluation tools as required.
- Assess potential to achieve the goals and objectives set out in the strategy within the next 2–3 years.
- Identify and prioritize remaining gaps.
- Identify changes that may fundamentally affect the strategy, such as dramatic shifts in economy, government, and environment.

Review at Year 5: Lessons learned

The final review process will assist with updates of the strategy and will address the following:

- What are the major accomplishments within the government and non-governmental sectors that support the vision of the strategy?
- What initiatives have not been successful or require reconsideration.
- Where does Yukon's viewing and appreciating wildlife sector stand now?
- Where will new projects, partnerships, and developments take viewing and appreciating wildlife in the future?
- Where and how do we move forward in the coming years?

Conclusion

This strategy enables Environment Yukon, Tourism Yukon, and other departments, governments, public bodies, and key stakeholders the opportunity to identify how their proposed activities may support or be supported by the goals and strategic actions outlined above. Through periodic monitoring and evaluation, the success of this strategy can be evaluated and redefined as necessary. The strategy was developed to be flexible and adaptive rather than being overly prescriptive. Viewing and appreciating wildlife is a major growth area for Canadian recreation and tourism and is reflected in national surveys such as the “Importance of Nature to Canadians”. By engaging Yukoners and visitors in positive and enlightening wildlife experiences we provide opportunities for education and stewardship. Through this strategy for developing and promoting wildlife viewing opportunities, Yukoners and visitors can appreciate wildlife values and become proud stewards of the natural environment.



Wildlife viewing infrastructure can include trails, publications, panels, viewing sites, and interpretive centres.



Guided walks open opportunities for visitors and residents to learn from experts in the field.



Photos by Yukon government

Front cover: Looking for rare plants and butterflies in Kusawa Territorial Park.

Back cover: A young viewer looks for pikas, marmots and butterflies on Keno Hill during a Wild Discoveries public event.

Yukon

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