

WILDLIFE



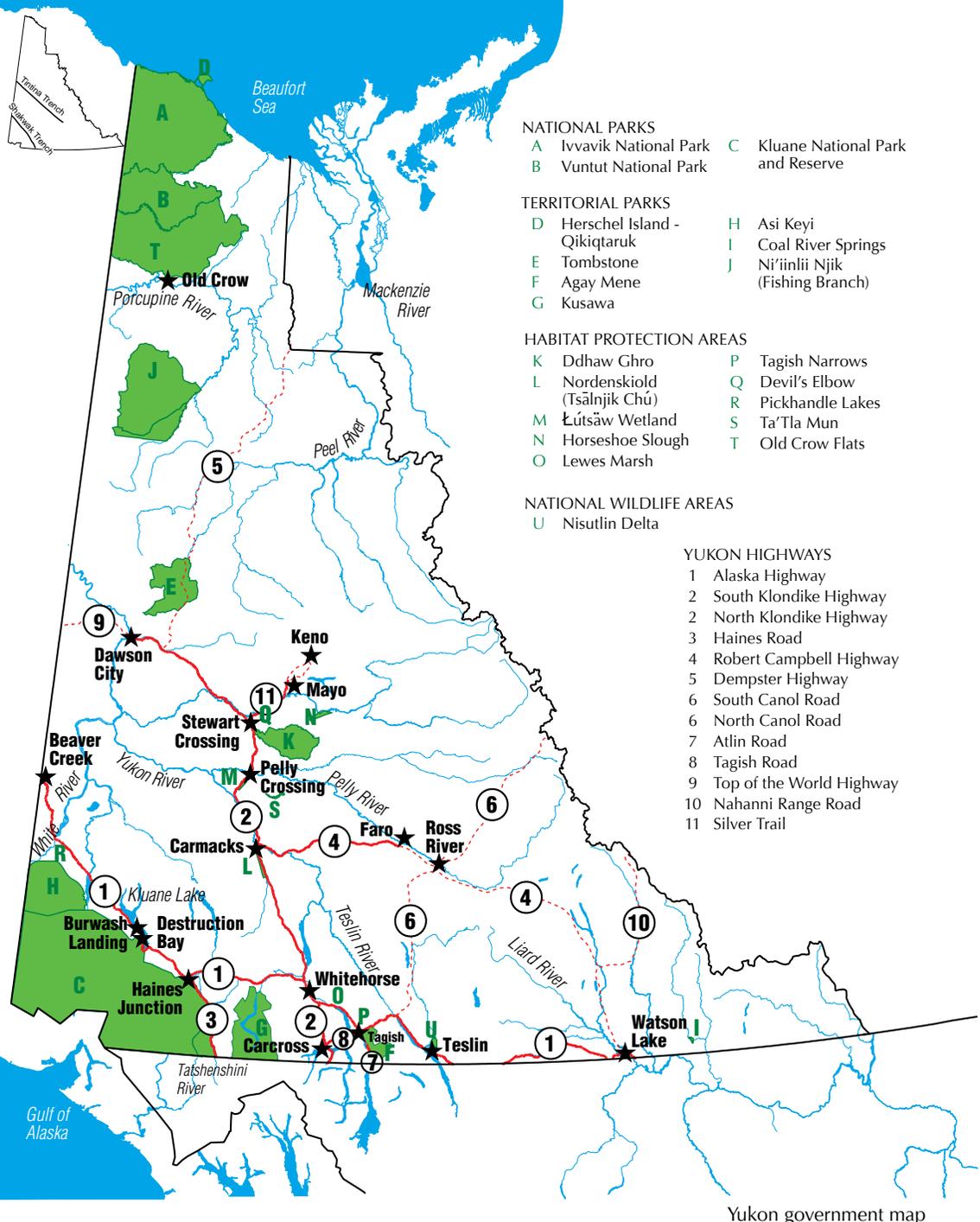
VIEWING

# YUKON WILDLIFE VIEWING GUIDE

ALONG MAJOR HIGHWAYS



*Knowing where and how to look*



Yukon government map

### Legend to all maps

viewing site	point of interest	parks and protected areas	highway number
interpreted site	water	map this page	main highway
campground	this page	maps on inside pages	secondary road
picnic site	inside pages		unpaved road
rest areas			<b>F</b> ferry

# YUKON

## WILDLIFE VIEWING GUIDE

### ALONG MAJOR HIGHWAYS

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**CAPITAL LETTERS AND COMMON NAMES:** In this guide, the common names of animals begin with capital letters to allow the reader to distinguish between species. For example, a Black Bear is a species of bear, not necessarily a bear that is black.

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Cover photo: Alaska Highway with Kluane Lake and Tacha'Öl Dha/I in the background (*Peter Long*)

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*Aussi disponible en français comme «Guide d'observation de la faune et de la flore du Yukon».*  
*Diese Broschüre ist als auch auf Deutsch erhältlich.*

When the words “Yukon wildlife” are mentioned, many people envision vast herds of caribou, a majestic moose, or a Grizzly Bear fishing in a pristine mountain stream. However, there is far more to wildlife than large, showy mammals. Most people enjoy wildlife viewing during summer, yet wildlife abounds year round. The key to successful wildlife viewing is to know where and how to look.

### Yukon wildlife

0	reptiles
4	amphibians
38	fishes
40	dragonflies
68	mammals
91	butterflies
227	birds
286	large moths
327	spiders
400+	mosses
1,219	vascular plants
6,000+	insects



Woodland Caribou, Stephen J. Krasemann

## How to use this guide

This guide is organized to help you find the animal you are looking for and highlight key areas for wildlife viewing. Start with the alphabetical list of animals commonly found or sought after in Yukon (p.5). After this list, the guide describes seven key habitats found around the territory. You increase your chances of seeing your animal when you know which habitat to look for.

The remainder of the guide is organized by highway, then by numbered viewing sites along each highway with the kilometre (and mileage) posting for each site. Each site includes a description of its trails or routes, the level of difficulty, length and completion time, whether self-guided information is available, and the dominant habitat types found at the site. Because some animals can be found in many locations, you might not always find a reference to all the animals that could be present in a given viewing area.

Whether you're looking for wildlife, planning a short hike or canoe, or simply looking for more information about Yukon's environment, you will find this guide a helpful source of information.

Free brochures can be downloaded from Environment Yukon ([www.wildlifeviewing.gov.yk.ca](http://www.wildlifeviewing.gov.yk.ca)), picked up at many government offices, or sent by mail (contact the Wildlife Viewing office).

### Symbols



Developed interpretive sites



Family friendly sites recommended for children



Some people may need assistance at this site



Unofficial or local place names



Boreal forest



South-facing slopes



Mountain



Arctic tundra



Still water



Flowing water



Marine and coastal

## Tips to wildlife viewing: How to look

Appreciating wildlife and maintaining biological diversity are the goals of wildlife viewing. By visiting parks and protected areas, you will improve your chances of seeing wildlife. Leaving the busy highway corridor is often the best way to see wildlife and to appreciate it in its proper habitat. There are three general tips that you can use to improve your chances of seeing wildlife.

- Take your time and be quiet. Plan on making many stops when you are travelling. Slowly scan the landscape for movement. Animals that went into hiding may come out again when all is quiet.
- Animals tend to be more active in early morning and evening. Take a short walk before breakfast or after dinner. You may be pleasantly surprised at what you find. Remember, in summer, the arctic evening lasts all night.
- Use binoculars, spotting scopes and telephoto lenses to zoom in on the animals without scaring them away or endangering yourself.



Beaver watching on the Dempster Highway, Yukon government

## Etiquette

WILDLIFE + DISTANCE = SAFETY FOR WILDLIFE AND YOU

- Pets should never be allowed to run at large. It is illegal to let pets chase or molest wildlife.
- Carry your food in sealed containers and pack out your garbage. Bears are attracted to unusual smells. Once accustomed to humans as a source of food, bears may become dangerous and may have to be destroyed. Remember, *a fed bear is a dead bear*.
- Arctic flora is delicate and sensitive. Use established trails and boardwalks to minimize disturbance.
- You may find what appears to be an “orphaned” bird or mammal. Do not pick it up. The parents are most certainly nearby, waiting for you to move away before coming back to retrieve their offspring.
- A bird that displays any “odd” behaviour or that calls and flies over your head is likely a parent requesting that you move on, carefully. Many birds nest on the ground and are vulnerable to trampling. Wandering visitors can flush birds from their nests, leaving eggs or young vulnerable to predators.
- Don't let anyone harass wildlife. Report illegal hunting, trapping, fishing or polluting to the Turn in Poachers/Polluters (TIP Line) hotline at 1-800-661-0525.

## Precautions

- Safety comes first. If you are the driver, realize that your first responsibility is safety. If there is traffic behind you, keep your eyes on the road and don't stop. Recognize that your passengers will get a quick look, but that you may not. If there is no traffic, slow down and pull over where it is safe to do so.
- Co-existing with bears. Before you go, learn about bears and their habits. This will improve your chances of seeing them while respecting their space and ensuring your safety and theirs. For useful resources, see page 62.
- Feeding wild animals is never a good idea. Wild animals need natural foods to remain healthy. Wild animals that are accustomed to human food often become nuisance animals and may be killed. Yukoners try hard not to spoil wildlife. Please do your part and do not feed any wildlife species, for your safety and theirs.
- Fire is an important natural part of the boreal forest; however, fire frequency is increasing due to careless campfires. Please be careful. Make sure that your campfires are completely out before leaving your site.
- Overhanging vegetation on riverbanks, large standing dead trees, or trees with nests or nestholes are all important to wildlife. It is illegal to disturb a nest. Please respect the land and the creatures on it.
- Whether you are canoeing, kayaking, hiking or camping, a few precautions will ensure your comfort and safety. Bring some warm clothes, as the weather in Yukon can be unpredictable. Wear appropriate footwear for the area in which you plan to walk. If you are travelling unmarked trails or routes, carry a compass and map of the area. Pack all the food you will need. While it is enjoyable to add wild blueberries to breakfast cereals, do not plan to "live off the land."
- To best prepare yourself for travelling safely in Yukon's backcountry, pick up a free copy of *Into the Yukon Wilderness* (available at visitor information centres and from [www.environmentyukon.gov.yk.ca](http://www.environmentyukon.gov.yk.ca)).



Swan viewing on the Haines Road, *Yukon government*

# WILDLIFE: WHAT TO LOOK FOR

**Arctic Ground Squirrel:** Locally known as Gophers, Arctic Ground Squirrels are frequently seen standing watch along roadsides and other meadow-like habitats. They are found in grasslands and meadows throughout all but southeastern Yukon. Around Marsh Lake, there is a small population of black Arctic Ground Squirrels (*photo page 57*), the only place where such a colour variety occurs. Interestingly, adult males begin hibernation as early as July.

**Bears:** Yukon is home to all three North American bears: Black, Grizzly and Polar. With an estimated 10,000 Black Bears and between 6,000 and 7,000 Grizzly Bears here, you are much more likely to see a Black Bear (*photo page 56*) than a Grizzly Bear (*photo page 41*). Black Bears live in forested areas, whereas Grizzly Bears range from southern forested areas and across the tundra to the Arctic Ocean. Polar Bears are only seen on the North Slope and Herschel Island.

**Beaver:** Beavers build dams and lodges in lakes, ponds and slow-moving streams or rivers throughout the forested areas of Yukon. To find these giant rodents, look for freshly chewed trees or their domed lodges. Snafu Lake and Tarfu Lake in Agay Mene Territorial Park provide outstanding beaver viewing opportunities.

**Caribou:** Both Woodland and Barren-ground caribou can be seen in Yukon. Many Barren-ground Caribou are members of the Porcupine Caribou herd (*photo page 49*), found around the Dempster Highway in late fall and winter. Boreal Caribou, a subpopulation of Woodland Caribou (*photo page 2*), are found in the Peel River Valley. Northern Mountain populations of Woodland Caribou are scattered around the territory in 17 different herds, the largest of which can be found between Watson Lake and Ross River. During summer, caribou are most commonly seen in the alpine and on arctic tundra.

**Collared Pikea:** Collared Pikas (*photo page 60*) inhabit talus slopes, above treeline in the mountains of southern and central Yukon. Their signature “meep” call announces their presence but they are difficult to see due to their excellent camouflage with surrounding rocks. Keno Hill, Kluane National Park and Tombstone Territorial Park are good places to look for pikas.

**Cougar:** Cougars (Mountain Lions) are ghosts of the forest. Cougar have been reported in Yukon since the 1940s but there have been few sightings and even fewer photos taken. The first confirmed Cougar in Yukon was in 2000.

**Coyote:** Coyotes thrive in diverse habitats where there is an increased density of prey. Much smaller than wolves, Coyotes feed on small prey such as mice, hare, ground squirrel and



Arctic Ground Squirrel, *Stefan Gottermann*

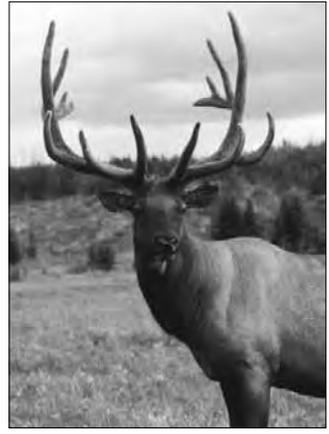


Beaver, *John Meikle*

birds. You have the best chance of seeing a Coyote in the evenings near a community because they are able to avoid wolves and are attracted to easy food sources in urban and cleared areas. Their numbers likely fluctuate with the rise and fall of Snowshoe Hare and vole populations.

**Crossbills:** White-winged and Red crossbills occur in forested regions of Yukon, frequently in White Spruce forests. They are specialists at feeding on conifer cones, which they pry open with their uniquely shaped bills in search of seeds. The number of crossbills erupts following the cone crops — in years when cones are abundant so are the crossbills.

**Deer:** You are much more likely to see a Mule Deer than a White-tailed Deer in Yukon. Mule Deer, along with Coyotes and Cougars, are relatively recent immigrants to Yukon, having colonized Yukon in only the last 110 or so years. They prefer open grassy areas and often feed at dusk and dawn on the side of a road or in fields. Though found as far to the north as Dawson, most sightings are along the highways of southern Yukon.



Elk, Yukon government

**Eagles:** Bald and Golden eagles can be seen at almost any time of year, though there are few in mid-winter. Bald Eagles (*photo page 18*) can usually be found in lowland areas along rivers and lakes where they feed on fish and nest in tall trees, though they also frequent landfills. Golden Eagles are more commonly seen in alpine and arctic tundra areas where they feed on ground squirrels and nest almost exclusively on cliff faces.

**Elk:** Elk were introduced to Yukon in the 1950s to reduce hunting pressure on other big game. At the northern limit of their range, these Elk have generally remained in the triangular area between Whitehorse, Carmacks and Haines Junction, and are commonly seen on the Alaska and Klondike highways, north and west of Whitehorse. As well, a small number of Elk have moved north from British Columbia into southeast Yukon. In the fall, you can hear Elk bulls “bugling.” They make a high-pitched call that is one of the most unique sounds in nature.

**Falcons:** Upon arrival in April, Peregrine Falcons (*photo page 58*) return to nesting cliffs directly above a body of water and are commonly seen along large river systems including the Yukon, Peel and Old Crow rivers in central and northern Yukon. Gyrfalcons (*photo page 50*) are year-round residents inhabiting cliffs in arctic and alpine tundra areas, often following populations of ptarmigan. The smaller Merlin and American Kestrel can also be found throughout Yukon.



Coyote, Yukon government



White-winged Crossbill, Ted Murphy-Kelly



Rough-legged Hawk, *Cameron Eckert*



Hoary Marmot, *Yukon government*

Kestrels are often seen perched on posts or powerlines and Merlins nest mainly in northern Yukon but are seen frequently during migration.

**Hawks:** The most common hawks in Yukon are Red-tailed Hawks (*photo page 41*). They are difficult to identify because they have many colour variations but most common is the “Harlan’s” Red-tailed Hawk with a distinctly two-toned, underwing pattern. Rough-legged Hawks are commonly seen during migration but are rare in the summer except in marine and coastal areas. Swainson’s Hawks are also a rare sighting in southern Yukon in summer. To view hawks, find a scenic lookout with a great view and scan the open skies. Check out popular hawk hangouts such as windswept ridges and mountaintops, the tips of peninsulas and cliff tops next to water. (*See also Northern Goshawk.*)

**Hoary Marmot:** Hoary Marmots prefer south-facing mountainsides with large boulders and lush green tundra vegetation. They are not very common in Yukon, but if you are travelling on mountain highways, stop and listen for their loud, long and steady whistle to help direct you where to look. Keno Hill, Kluane National Park and Tombstone Territorial Park have healthy marmot populations.

**Jaegers:** Jaegers gather on the North Slope near the Beaufort Sea during the summer breeding season. Long-tailed Jaegers are commonly seen along the Dempster Highway in summer.

**Loons:** There are four species of loon in Yukon. During summer in southern Yukon, you can find the Common and Pacific loons on many different lakes. Red-throated (*photo page 14*) and Yellow-billed loons are only found north of the tree line in mid-summer, but commonly seen during migration in southern Yukon.



Long-tailed Jaeger, *Yukon government*



Mule Deer, *Cameron Eckert*

**Lynx:** As the only wild cat whose range extends north of the Arctic Circle, the Canada Lynx (*photo page 57*) is found all over Yukon. Lynx are active year-round, feeding almost exclusively on Snowshoe Hare. Those wanting to view Lynx should look for good Snowshoe Hare habitat with dense tree cover. During years of high Snowshoe Hare abundance, Lynx can often be seen along highways.

**Moose:** There are over 70,000 Moose (*photos pages 11, 31*) in Yukon, more than twice the number of people. The best viewing opportunities during spring and summer are along riverbanks and lakeshores throughout the entire territory. In the fall, Moose can be seen above treeline in the subalpine, sometimes in large groups.

**Mountain Goat:** Mountain Goats (*photo page 56*) are uncommon in Yukon because they are at the northern limit of their range. More than half of all Mountain Goats in the territory are found in Kluane National Park. Goats are also found at White Mountain\* in Agay Mene Territorial Park and along the Klondike Highway south of Carcross.

**Northern Goshawk:** Northern Goshawks are year-round residents of Yukon. They live in open pine forests using forest edges and wetlands for hunting. They are often seen in southern Yukon, mostly around Whitehorse and Haines Junction. Their bodies are shaped like a football with broad wings and a long tail.

**Northern Shrike:** During nesting season from June to August, the Northern Shrike (*photo page 31*) can most frequently be seen in the shrubs of subalpine and subarctic habitats. The South Klondike Highway offers some good viewing opportunities. They may also be seen along the Alaska Highway, particularly in April and May.

**Northern Wheatear:** This summer visitor from Eurasia is most commonly found along the Dempster Highway. It breeds in remote alpine regions of northern Yukon and in Kluane National Park.

**Owls:** You are much more likely to hear an owl than see one. In Yukon, the drastic seasonal differences in daylight mean owls are not strictly nocturnal and can often be heard calling during the day. Look for its silhouette, or white droppings and owl pellets at the base of tall trees. Boreal and Great Horned owls are most common in boreal forests while Great Gray Owls frequent aspen parkland. Great Horned Owls are most common in old poplar stands along rivers, where they often build their nests in large trees. Look for Northern Hawk Owls (*photo page 31*) in old burns, and Short-eared Owls in open tundra, particularly along the Dempster Highway. You will have to travel to the North Slope or Herschel Island to see Snowy Owls.



Northern Wheatear,  
*iStockphoto.com, Andrew Howe*



Northern Goshawk,  
*iStockphoto.com, Bob Balestri*



Pine Marten, Yukon government



Red Squirrel

**Pine Marten:** Furtive and secretive, Pine Marten leave little trace of their presence. They are most common in the forests of southeastern Yukon but are rare in the southwest. They live in mature conifer or old-aged aspen forests, feeding predominately on Red-backed Voles and other small mammals, and on berries.

**Ptarmigan:** Three species of ptarmigan make Yukon their home year-round; they are found in different habitats depending on the season. In the winter, their feathers molt to white as camouflage with the snow. In southern Yukon, you will have to view them in alpine areas such as White Pass or the Haines Summit. North of Dawson, they may be found at all elevations. Willow Ptarmigan (*photo page 48*) are common in shrubby tundra, Rock Ptarmigan occupy higher elevations than Willow Ptarmigan, and White-tailed Ptarmigan are localized on the highest, most severe mountain tundra.

**Raven:** Common Ravens (*photo page 43*), Yukon's territorial bird, are found throughout the territory from open tundra, to dense boreal forest, to the streets of every Yukon town. The much smaller American Crow is very rare in Yukon, though a recent resident to Whitehorse, so if you see a large black bird it is most likely a raven.

**Red Squirrel:** Perhaps the most observable mammal in Yukon, Red Squirrels frequent mature evergreen forests where dense branches offer them a highway through the sky. Listen for squirrels as they call out and chatter at you as you enter their territory. You may also come across a midden: a pile of cones stashed for winter by a busy Red Squirrel.

**Sheep:** Three types of thin-horned sheep make up Yukon's estimated 22,000 wild sheep. Dall Sheep (*photo page 29*) evolved in the unglaciated regions of Beringia and are unique to Canada's northwest and Alaska. They are the most common of Yukon sheep and will appear as small white dots on the mountainside, like patches of snow. You will need good binoculars to see them from the road. Fannin Sheep (*photo page 45*) are a unique colour variation of Dall Sheep that are only found in Yukon and the Northwest Territories. Faro is one of the best locations to view them (*see page 44*). Stone Sheep are grey, brown or black with white muzzles, bellies and rump patches, and are found in pockets of southern Yukon. All species spend their summers grazing on open mountain slopes or alpine meadows.

**Snowshoe Hare:** Snowshoe Hare are the most important prey species for medium-sized carnivores such as Lynx and Coyote, as well as for our most powerful birds of prey — the Golden Eagle and Great Horned Owl. Snowshoe Hare populations rise and fall on a 10-year cycle, and their predators numbers follow suit. They prefer recently disturbed areas such as old burns that contain thick stands of nourishing shrubs. Snowshoe Hares are supremely adapted to the changing northern seasons; turning white in winter and brown-grey in summer.

**Swallows:** Six species of swallows are found in Yukon, some even reaching as far north as the North Slope. Bank Swallows make their homes in silty sand banks, usually along rivers or road cuts. Cliff Swallows (*photo page 22*) and Barn Swallows are common in communities where they nest on buildings or under bridges. Violet-green, Tree (*photo page 26*) and Rough-winged swallows nest in cavities both natural and human-made. Look for appropriate habitat to see swallows from May to August.

**Swans:** Swans (*photo page 22*) migrate through southern Yukon in March and April using the few open water staging areas. Trumpeter Swans nest in wetlands of southern and central Yukon, while Tundra Swans nest in wetlands on open tundra of the far north.

**Wolf, Gray:** Your best chance of seeing a wolf is in Yukon's alpine areas. Wolves are very shy and very skilled at avoiding human contact. The forested areas of Yukon are excellent at hiding them. The alpine areas of Yukon's forested mountains or the open tundra of the Dempster Highway provide the best viewing opportunities. In April, May and June, the wolves den, often near beaver ponds and wetlands. They may answer back if you howl to them.

**Wolverine:** Though the Wolverine may be found in all habitats, they are elusive and most often seen in the mountains. A Wolverine has a huge home range. They are noted as scavengers, cleaning up carcasses of moose, caribou and other species killed by wolves or bears, or from accidents such as avalanches. Although not known for their speed, they also prey on smaller species, such as Arctic Ground Squirrel and Snowshoe Hare.

**Wood Bison:** Wood Bison (*photo page 28*) is the largest land mammal in North America, with large bulls weighing well over 2,000 pounds. At the beginning of the 20th century, they were almost extinct. As part of a national recovery program, they were transplanted to Yukon in the 1980s. Wood Bison are typically seen in two areas: the Liard River valley southeast of Watson Lake and along the Aishihik Road (*see page 28*). In 2009, there were an estimated 1,150 bison in the Aishihik herd, the second largest herd of Wood Bison in the world.



Bank Swallows nest in holes along rivers



Gray Wolf, John Meikle, Yukon government



Wolverine, Damian Power

# HABITAT: WHERE TO LOOK

Habitat — where an animal lives — is your key to successful wildlife viewing. This guide provides you with the basic information you will need to recognize wildlife's living areas. By recognizing Yukon's habitats and the animals that use them, you will be rewarded with satisfying wildlife experiences. Each species uses its environment to provide it with the essentials of life: water, food, space and shelter from the elements and predators. Be a wildlife detective; look for clues left behind, tracks, droppings, scratch marks on trees, or cast-off antlers.

The type of habitat selected by an animal may change with each season and with the food that is available. Some species prefer the edges between two types of habitats.

Yukon's many habitats are described here under seven categories: boreal forest, south-facing slopes, mountains, arctic tundra, still water, flowing water, and marine and coastal habitats. The habitats are assigned symbols, which are used as appropriate for each highway site.

## Boreal forest



Canada's boreal forest is part of a great northern circumpolar band of mostly coniferous forests extending across the subarctic regions of Russia, Scandinavia and North America. Yukon, with the exception of the tundra lands, is covered by boreal forest. Different habitats exist within the boreal forest. White Spruce, the most common tree species, grows in a wide range of moisture and soil conditions, and is largest along rivers. Lodgepole Pine grow in drier areas with well-drained soil. These areas often support large tracts of lichens, an important winter food for Woodland Caribou. Trembling Aspen grow well on open slopes and in areas regenerating after fire. Black Spruce grow in areas with poorly drained, wet soil, often over permafrost. Deep-rooted Balsam Poplar grow along river



Moose in boreal forest, *Stephen J. Krasemann*

corridors and in moist draws, where their roots are kept wet year-round.

Dead trees and fallen logs provide shelter for many small animals which are themselves the food for other mammals and birds. Boreal forest habitats are also heavily influenced by fire. Different stages of regrowth after a fire will create a variety of habitats for different species. These animals will live there and move on as the forest changes and grows.

Some common boreal forest animals include Red Squirrel, Pine Marten, Black Bear, Red-backed Vole, Beaver, Lynx, Snowshoe Hare, Red Fox, Moose, Gray Wolf, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Slate-coloured Junco, Swainson's and Varied thrush, Spruce Grouse, Boreal Owl, Great Horned Owl, Gray Jay, Boreal Chickadee, Northern Goshawk, Three-toed Woodpecker and crossbills.



Aspen and White Spruce, Top of the World Highway

### South-facing slopes



The south sides of hills and mountains are exposed to more direct sunlight than other areas and so provide a different habitat than the surrounding area. These warm slopes are often grassland dominated and are typified by shallow snow conditions, early green up, and summer drought. They are often free of trees or have small stunted aspens. At low elevation, Pasture Sage and Purple Reedgrass dominate them. These slopes are important wildlife areas. In winter, look for Mule Deer and Elk that seek the shallow snow-covered slopes for food and escape cover. In spring, bears that feed on the early greens commonly use these areas. Least Chipmunk and Arctic Ground Squirrel often make their home on the slopes. Some of the best examples of these slopes occur between Carmacks and Ross River, Marsh Lake and Carcross, and in the Kluane area. These slopes may be a remnant of prehistoric grasslands of Beringia; they are rich with unique plants and insects, some found nowhere else on earth. Imagine Steppe Bison and Woolly Mammoths feeding here.



South-facing slope, Hidden Lakes, Whitehorse

### Mountain habitats: alpine and subalpine



There is a cool-climate habitat above the treeline. In northern Yukon, it is difficult to determine where alpine tundra becomes arctic tundra. Grasses and sedges, and in drier situations Mountains Avens and Alpine Bearberry, are the dominant vegetation in higher altitudes. Subalpine Fir (Yukon's official tree), Shrub Birch and willow grow in the subalpine habitat below. Dall Sheep and Mountain Goats feed on grassy slopes near cliffs where they can escape from predators. Many species move into the alpine during the summer months, such as Wood Bison which can be seen in the alpine of the Aishihik area.



Groundhog Mountain\*, South Canol Road

Some animals make their homes uniquely on the steep cliffs of talus slopes of mountainsides. Some alpine specialists include Collared Pika, Hoary Marmot, Woodland Caribou, Wolverine, Golden Eagle, American Golden Plover, Snow Bunting, ptarmigan, redpoll, Horned Lark, American Pipit, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Northern Wheatear, Gyrfalcon and Dusky Grouse.

### Arctic tundra



Arctic tundra is usually defined as the land beyond the northern limit of tree growth. However, in Yukon, arctic tundra may contain stands of boreal forest almost to the Arctic coast. This is an environment of permafrost features like pingos (upheavals with an ice core) and patterned ground, wetlands and low vegetation. The many ponds of the tundra attract a wide variety of birds to nest.

Many birds that migrate through southern Yukon nest on the tundra in northern Yukon. Some key species that are found here are Tundra Swans, Red-throated Loons, Long-tailed Ducks, Red-necked Phalaropes, Short-eared Owls, ptarmigan and Long-tailed Jaegers. The open tundra also makes it easier to spot Barren-ground Caribou and any predators that feast on them.



Dempster Highway crossing the tundra, Richardson Mountains

## Still water: lakes and wetlands



We use the term “still water” to refer to lakes, ponds and wetlands that have little or no current.

Wetlands are shallow bodies of water with heavy growth of aquatic and shoreline vegetation. Shores lined with lush vegetation attracts animals that feed and build their homes near the water. The size of the lake will also influence the types of birds and animals that may be found there. Some species, like Common Loons, prefer large open lakes, while others, like Pacific Loons, are attracted to smaller ponds. Wetlands provide habitat for waterfowl, but the specific species to be found also depends on the lake’s location: some nest it the??? north on the arctic tundra, while others make their home on Yukon’s southern lakes. Wetlands and marshes often have standing dead trees that provide nesting cavities for Common and Barrow’s goldeneye and Bufflehead. Many species of songbird, such as Yellow Warbler, Common Yellowthroat and Northern Waterthrush, nest in the surrounding forest and feast on the insects that emerge from the water during June and July.

Some still water habitat denizens include waterfowl, shorebirds, Beaver, Moose, Muskrat, bats, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Northern Pike and Wood Frog.



*Red-throated Loon, Stephen J. Krasemann*



*Old Crow Flats (Van Tat)*

## Flowing water



Flowing water provides a unique habitat for many Yukon species.

The landscape is dotted with countless rivers and streams where you might find different species of fish, bird or mammals than you would find around still lakes. Rivers are corridors through the boreal forest and paddling these routes can provide the best wildlife viewing opportunities possible. Watch for tracks and other signs of bears, wolves and moose. The size and location of the river will influence the types of wildlife to be seen. Some animals, such as Harlequin Duck, prefer fast flowing streams, whereas River Otter prefer large rivers with many fish. As rivers and streams twist and wind through the wilderness they cut deep banks and leave shallow sandbars creating unique nesting and feeding areas for different animals. Certain fish species prefer moving water and spawn only in rivers, therefore attracting many omnivores and carnivores to river banks.

Some flowing water habitat denizens include Peregrine Falcon, Spotted Sandpiper, Bald Eagle, Bank Swallow, Belted Kingfisher, Common and Red-breasted mergansers, Harlequin Ducks, American Dipper, Arctic Grayling and Chinook Salmon.



*River Otter, Stephen J. Krasemann*

## Marine and coastal habitats



Only a small portion of Yukon reaches the sea. This area is known as the North Slope and, along with Herschel Island, is the only place where you might find a Polar Bear in Yukon. Coastal areas include a wide range of habitats from beaches to spits, cliffs, sea ice, lagoons and coastal plains. This unique area is home to a diverse array of birds, plants and mammals, some reliably not seen elsewhere in the territory. The Beaufort Sea is a seasonal home for Beluga and Bowhead whales, as well as Ringed and Bearded seals. Some of the highlights of this region include Muskox, Snowy Owl, Arctic Fox, Caribou, Tundra Swans, Yellow-billed Loon, King and Common eiders, Pomarine and Parasitic jaegers and Bluethroat.



*Lone caribou grazes near Stokes Point*



*Arctic coast near Shingle Point*

## Outdoor recreation

Campgrounds, recreation sites, rest areas, picnic sites, hiking trails, lakes and rivers all offer excellent wildlife viewing opportunities.

### Camping

For information on commercial campgrounds, consult Yukon's Vacation Planner or Visitor Guide, or Tourism Yukon's website at [www.travel yukon.com](http://www.travel yukon.com).

To camp in a Yukon government campground, you need to purchase a permit, available from many highway lodges, gas stations, retail stores, liquor stores outside Whitehorse, and at Environment Yukon offices. Each campground also has a registration station. For more information, pick up a copy of the *Guide to Yukon Government Campgrounds*.



Camping in Vuntut National Park

### Hikes and walks

The possibilities for trailside adventures in Yukon are just about endless. Whether you prefer short, easy walks or more difficult hikes that require many days to complete, you will find trails that suit your purpose. Most of the trails described in this guide are marked and easy to follow. For adventurers, many trails exist that are not marked but are still accessible. Local guides offer hiking information for specific areas, providing wildlife watchers with an opportunity to gain access to a variety of settings. Several organizations offer free guided hikes and events. See [www.wildlifeviewing.gov.yk.ca](http://www.wildlifeviewing.gov.yk.ca) for more information or see sources of information page 61.



Hikers at Printer's Pass\*, near Kluane Lake, Yukon government



On the Yukon River, at Lewes Marsh

### Water travel

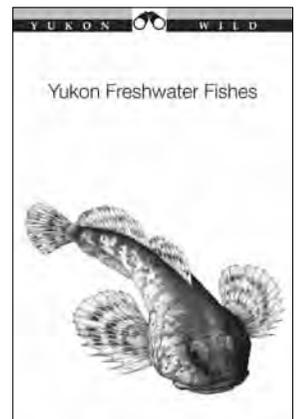
A trip down one of Yukon's many beautiful rivers or on a quiet lake may be the best way of seeing a variety of wildlife. A few companies rent canoes or you can organize a trip through a company specializing in canoe and rafting trips. Consult Yukon's *Vacation Planner*, available through Tourism Yukon, [www.travelyukon.com](http://www.travelyukon.com), for a list of companies.

Before travelling down Yukon rivers on your own, you would be wise to research your trip. The descriptions of rivers in this guide are not complete so do not rely entirely on this source. Other books, however, can provide you with detailed information about the dangers and difficulties encountered on specific Yukon rivers. Please ensure that you have the proper first aid and river rescue equipment, as well as ample clothing and food to complete your trip safely.

### Fishing

If fishing is your passion, many streams and rivers offer excellent opportunities. Whether you choose to keep the fish or not, you must have a valid Yukon Angling Licence to fish in Yukon waters. Licences are available at community Environment Yukon offices, the Fisheries and Oceans Canada office, most highway lodges, sporting goods stores, hardware and general stores and gas stations.

If you plan on fishing for salmon in Yukon, you must purchase a *Salmon Conservation Catch Card* in addition to a Yukon Angling Licence. Fishing in national parks requires a National Park Fishing Licence. These are available at the Kluane National Park & Reserve Visitor Information Centre or the Parks Canada office in Whitehorse.



On the Alaska Highway, the distance in kilometres (miles) refers to the distance from Dawson Creek, B.C.

### 1. Liard Canyon - Lucky Lake Recreation Site

km 971 (mi. 603)   

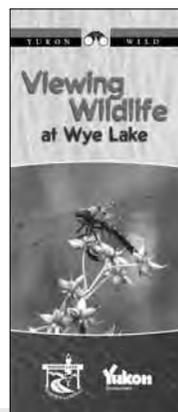
A 2.2 km (1.4 mi.) nature trail takes you past Lucky Lake through a mature pine and spruce forest, to a viewing deck overlooking the Liard River. Panels along the way and at the deck interpret the natural and cultural history of the area. Allow about one hour and 15 minutes to complete the trail.

### 2. Wye Lake Trail

km 980 (mi. 608)    

A 3-km (2 mi.) trail winds around Wye Lake, in the heart of Watson Lake. Numerous species of waterfowl and songbirds stop here during spring migration or live here throughout the summer. Red-necked Grebes nest in the open water of the lake. Tree and Violet-green swallows fly swiftly overhead. Pileated Woodpeckers, Clay-coloured, White-throated and Swamp sparrows make Wye Lake one of their most northwestern homes. Interpretive panels along the trail present information on Yukon wildflowers.

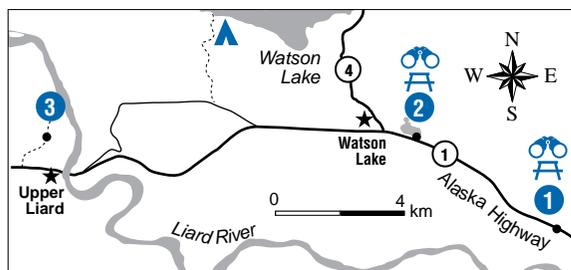
**JUNCTION** with Robert Campbell Highway, Highway #4, km 980 (mi. 609), see page 42



### 3. Albert Creek Bird Observatory

km 993 (mi. 617)   

Since 2000, this volunteer-operated seasonal bird-banding and migration monitoring station has become a must experience for birders visiting the north. Ask at the Watson Lake Visitor Information Centre for hours of operation. Travel 1.5 km (.9 mi.) west of the Liard River Bridge, then turn north on a side road and keep right for 1 km (.6 mi.) to get to the observatory. The last 400 m follows an unmaintained road not suitable for long RVs. The observatory is located in a large wetland complex of oxbow lakes and rich, old-growth forest. This is one of the best locations to view bird species that can only be found in southeast Yukon, such as Blue-head Vireo and White-throated Sparrow.



Bald Eagle, Yukon government

**Little Rancheria Caribou Herd**

km 992-1063 (mi. 616-660)

This is the winter range of the Little Rancheria Caribou Herd that moves between Yukon and northern British Columbia. From October to late winter, caribou are often seen along the highway. Please slow down when you find animals in the area and do not chase or harass them. Vehicle collisions with caribou are infrequent but they do happen.



American Dipper, Adam Skrutkowski

**4. Rancheria Falls Recreation Site**

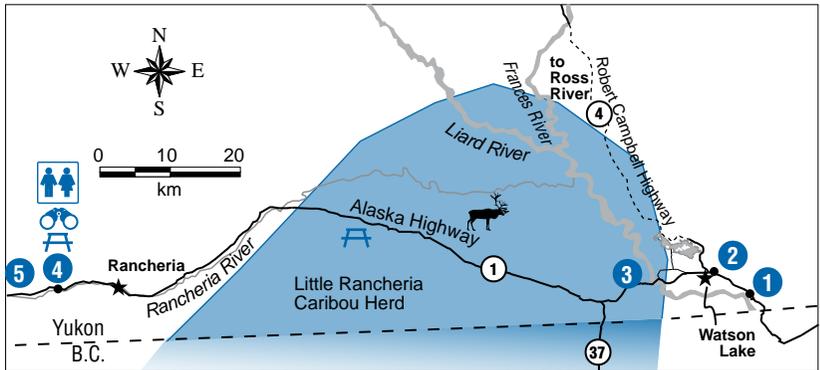
km 1112 (mi. 691)

An easy, 10-minute boardwalk leads you through boreal forest to a picturesque waterfall on the Rancheria River, only 0.5 km (0.3 mi.) away. Least Chipmunks sometimes gather food along the trail and American Dippers might be braving the rapids to feed. Panels along the trail interpret features of the boreal forest, the benefits of fire and the life of the American Dipper.

**5. Continental Divide**

km 1120 (mi. 695.9)

Interpretive panels here describe the distinct ecosystems that have formed in the watersheds to each side of the continental divide, the height of land on which the pullout is located.



Rancheria Falls,  
R. Agar

## Backcountry wildlife viewing: Wolf River



You will need to fly into Wolf Lake with your canoe. Allow five to six days to complete the trip. Salmon spawn in the river in mid-August and attract Grizzly Bears, Bald Eagles and Wolves. The water is clear and shallow, making fish viewing easy. Moose are often seen feeding on shoreline vegetation. Canoe and kayak enthusiasts, comfortable in Class II+ whitewater, will enjoy the 120 km (74 mi.) stretch of river from Wolf Lake south to the Natasin River (Nisutlin River) and onto the Alaska Highway at Teslin.



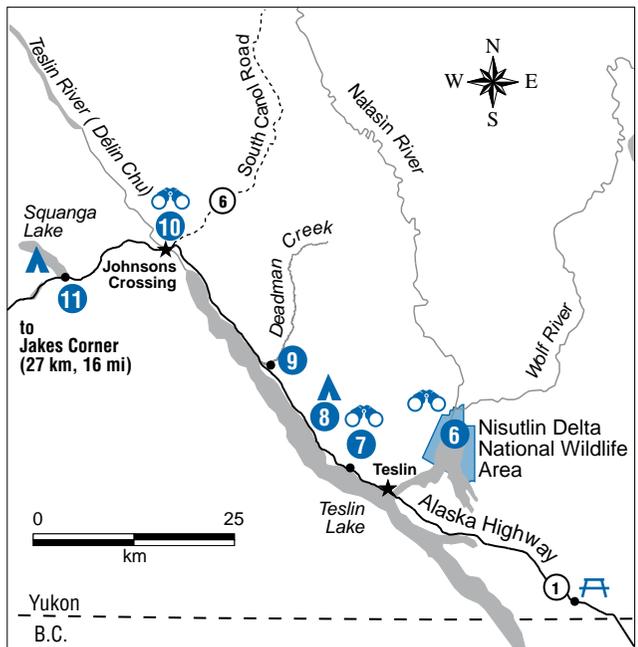
Natasin (Nisutlin) Delta

## 6. Nisutlin Delta National Wildlife Area

km 1243 (mi. 772)

Yukon's only national wildlife area is the most important waterfowl fall migration stopover in southern Yukon. There are two ways of exploring Nisutlin Bay (Natasin Ghèyi Tá). You can paddle down Natasin River (Nisutlin River) or travel across Teslin Lake to the bay. The put-in for Natasin River is at an unmaintained campsite at km 68 (mi. 42) on the South Canal Road (page 54). Plan to take four to six days to complete the trip. If you only have one or two days, explore Teslin Lake and Nisutlin Bay by canoe. Put in at the Teslin boat launch and paddle northeast towards Nisutlin Bay up to the delta of the Natasin River. Be aware of weather as winds may make travel on the open water of the bay dangerous. The extensive delta of shifting sand in Nisutlin Bay provides a feast of aquatic plants for migrating waterfowl in the fall, particularly swans and geese. The congregating waterbirds and shorebirds also attract birds of prey and other predators.

Learn about the fish species found in Teslin Lake from the interpretive panels at the Teslin marina, on the west side of the bridge.



## 7. Teslin Lake Interpretive Site

km 1247 (mi. 775) 🚲 ▲ 🐦

North of Teslin, look for a large pullout on the west side of the road. A deck with interpretive panels overlooks Teslin Lake. The panels interpret Teslin Tlingit First Nation history and bird life. In spring and fall, watch for waterfowl staging in the area.

## 8. Teslin Lake Bird Observatory and Campground

km 1258 (mi. 786) ▲ 🐦

A 200-m (.1 mi.) marked trail starts near the campground cook shelter and leads to the lakeshore where migrating birds are banded using mist-nets, or simply counted as they pass by. This volunteer-operated seasonal bird-banding and migration monitoring station is occupied daily from 6 a.m. until noon, August 1 to October 1 (weather permitting). During the fall, large numbers of songbirds move south along the lakeshore and waterbirds migrate over the lake. Sparrows, fly-catchers and warblers are the most common birds found here. Visitors are encouraged to participate in the ongoing studies.

## 9. Deadman Creek

km 1273 (mi. 791) 🚲 🏠

Watch for a small group of thinhorn sheep on the east side of the highway near Deadman Creek. Sheep near Deadman Creek are lightly coloured – biologists have yet to do the DNA tests needed to decide who these sheep are related to.

**JUNCTION** with the South Canol Road, Highway #6, km 1295 ( mi. 805), see page 54

## 10. Johnsons Crossing – Teslin River

km 1296 (mi. 805) 🚲 🐦 🌊

The bridge at Johnsons Crossing is home to a huge Cliff Swallow colony. Trumpeter and Tundra swans and many other species of waterfowl stage in the river during spring migration. Boating enthusiasts will find a wildlife-rich experience travelling down the Teslin River (Déliin Chu). At the boat launch, an interpretive panel describes the fish of Teslin Lake. You can launch at Johnsons Crossing and travel to Carmacks, about seven days by canoe, or a 370-km (230 mi.) trip, and then a further 402 km (250 mi.) down the Yukon River to Dawson.

## 11. Squanga Lake

km 1316 (mi. 818) ▲ 🐦

First Nation families in the Tagish area call this lake Desgwáage Méné or “Whitefish Lake.” The hill northeast of the lake, visible from the Alaska Highway, is called Dasqwaanga Tóoli or “Whitefish Hill,” by the Teslin Tlingit. This is the origin of the name Squanga and is one of few lakes in Yukon where you can find Squanga Pygmy Whitefish. A pair of Osprey nest on top of the tower at the nearby Squanga airstrip (km 1305, mi. 821) and feed on the bounty of fish.

Osprey nest throughout Yukon north to the Old Crow Flats, but are most common in southern Yukon. They add to their nests each year forming massive structures. Osprey are unique among raptors forming their own family of birds.

*Jukka Jantunen*



## 12. Jakes Corner

km 1342 (mi. 834)

This is the junction for side trips either to Atlin, B.C., or to Carcross via the Tagish Road. Cliff Swallows nest in the specially designed bird houses near the service station. If you are lucky, you may see the black form of the Arctic Ground Squirrel, only found in the Marsh Lake area. The Carcross Caribou Herd, one of the Southern Lakes Caribou herds, is often seen along the highway during the winter, especially north near Judas Creek. Please slow down when travelling this section in winter.



Cliff Swallow nests, Yukon government

**JUNCTION** with Tagish Road, Highway #8, km 1342 (mi. 834), see page 57

## 13. Swan Haven, M'Clintock Bay\*

km 1381 (mi. 858) 🚲 🦢

The north end of Marsh Lake, where the M'Clintock River joins the lake, is called M'Clintock Bay. You can access M'Clintock River and the bay from a boat launch at the M'Clintock River Bridge\* on the Alaska Highway. M'Clintock Bay is a critical habitat for migrating waterfowl in spring now part of the Lewes Marsh Habitat Protection Area. Thousands of Tundra and Trumpeter swans, along with ducks and geese, stop here in April and May to rest and feed on their journey north to their nesting grounds. Predators are attracted by the high number of birds. Gray Wolves and Coyotes sometimes hunt along the ice; Bald Eagles fish for Northern Pike or hunt ducks in the bay. Swan Haven, a staffed interpretation centre, overlooks the bay and is open during April. An annual bird festival, *Celebration of Swans*, heralds the return of both the swans and spring. The centre is closed during the summer but a deck, complete with interpretive panels, still offers a good view of the bay. For an easy, one-day, 12-km (8-mi.) canoe adventure, put in at the boat launch at the M'Clintock River bridge (km 1393, mi. 871) and paddle across M'Clintock Bay\* northwest to Lewes River Marsh. Look for beaver lodges tucked away in sloughs. Sometimes, Mule Deer and bears are seen feeding on the south-facing slopes. In the winter, Caribou are frequently seen here.

## 14. Yukon River Bridge

km 1393 (mi. 866) 🚲 👤 🗺️ 🦢 🌊

A large viewing deck overlooks the beginning of the Yukon River, locally known as Lewes Marsh. Panels here interpret the history and nature in the area. View the marsh using the binoculars provided. Up river of the bridge is the Lewes Marsh Habitat Protection Area

**JUNCTION** with the South Klondike Highway, Highway #2 (Carcross Road), km 1404 (mi. 873), see page 32



Swans, M'Clintock Bay, Marsh Lake, Yukon government

**WHITEHORSE**

To learn more about the wildlife viewing opportunities in the Whitehorse area, you can get a free copy of *Wildlife in Whitehorse: A Guide to Our Natural Areas*.

**15. Wolf Creek Campground**

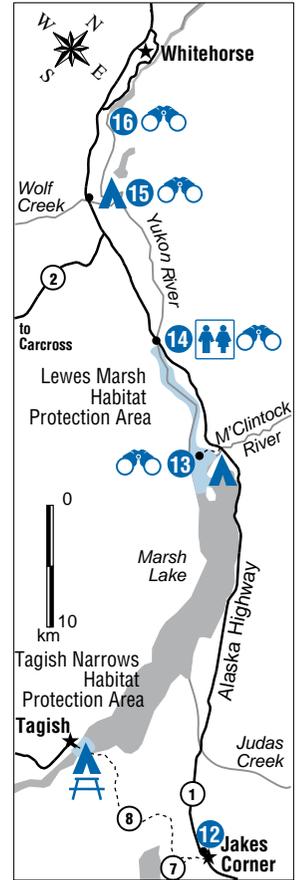
km 1408 (mi. 875)    

The 2-km (1.2-mi.) Wolf Creek trail winds through boreal forest to an overlook of the Yukon River and returns following Wolf Creek. The forest along Wolf Creek has survived forest fires and the woodcutting that has occurred throughout most of the Whitehorse area, making it an excellent site for viewing forest birds. An interpretive trail map is available at the trailhead. Chinook Salmon spawn in the creek in the autumn. Interpretive panels at the campground entrance describe their amazing migration. A fish ladder assists fish movement under the Alaska Highway.

**16. Miles Canyon**

km 1416 (mi. 880)     

800 m (0.5 mi.) down the Miles Canyon Road, turn right and continue to the parking lot. From here, a short trail takes you to a footbridge crossing the Yukon River. Violet-green, Cliff and Bank swallows nest here along with Belted Kingfishers. South-facing slopes also abound with unusual plants including the Creeping Juniper. Small pockets of remnant prairie remain from a time, thousands of years ago, when the climate was much warmer than it is today. Across the river are the Chadburn Lake Recreation Area trails. You can also access this system of trails from the Chadburn Lake Road. Follow directions given in site 19.



HIGHWAY #1

Chum Salmon, Mark Connor

Miles Canyon, Yukon government



## 17. Millennium Trail and Bert Law Park

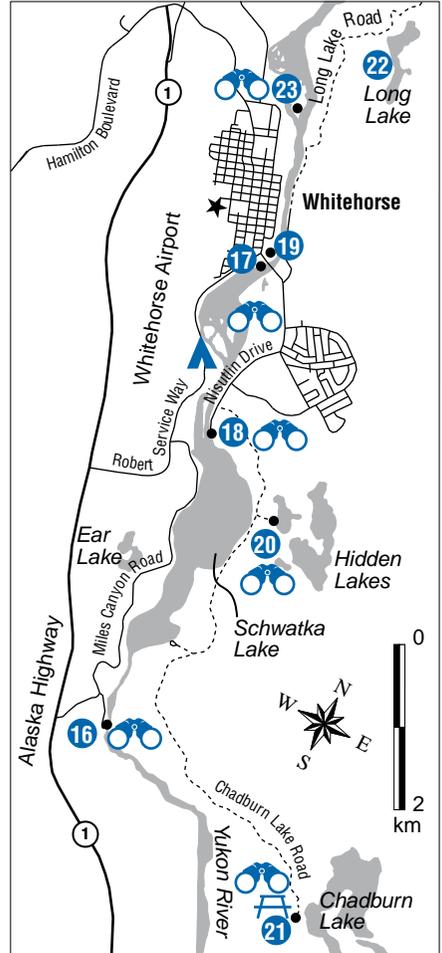


This 5-km paved interpreted loop trail follows both sides of the Yukon River, between the Robert Campbell Bridge and the Rotary Centennial Bridge. On the east side of the river, the trail leads through forests of spruce, pine and aspen. On the west side, the trail takes you past the S.S. Klondike to Robert Service Campground and Bert Law Park. Bert Law park is known for its unusual diversity of berries. Even this close to the town centre, you may be lucky enough to see Coyote, Beaver, Mule Deer or watch salmon in the shallows during August.

## 18. Whitehorse Rapids and Fish Ladder



The Southern Tutchone name for Whitehorse Rapids is Kwanlin. Traditional fish camps were set up in this area before the settlement of the City of Whitehorse. From downtown Whitehorse, walk the Millennium Trail or follow Second Avenue across the Robert Campbell Bridge over the Yukon River. The road becomes Lewes Boulevard. Continue on this road until the road forks at Nisutlin Drive. Turn right and follow Nisutlin Drive to the end. The fish ladder operates from June to early September during the salmon-spawning season. Yukon Energy Corporation and Yukon Fish and Game Association maintain a free interpretive centre at the world's longest wooden fish ladder. From here, you can climb the trail in front of the fish ladder for a panoramic view of Schwatka Lake and the surrounding mountains. Interpretive panels describe the flora and fauna that thrive on these grassy, south-facing slopes.



## 19. Backcountry wildlife viewing: Yukon River

The Yukon River is a well travelled canoe route. You can access the river from Rotary Peace Park in Whitehorse. Paddling from Whitehorse to Dawson, a distance of about 750 km (467 mi.), can take from 14 to 21 days. Shorter trips can also be planned. The Yukon River offers a great wildlife appreciation and viewing paddle for any canoe enthusiast. Moose often come to the river to feed. Watch for Black Bears feeding on grasses and berries on south-facing slopes or Bald Eagles nesting on top of trees along the banks. Look at the cliffs north of Minto Landing, where Peregrine Falcons nest.



Fish ladder in Whitehorse, Yukon government

## 20. Hidden Lakes



Follow the directions to the Whitehorse Rapids and Fish Ladder. Just before the fish ladder, turn left onto the Chadburn Lake Road. Drive 1.7 km (1 mi.) along the Chadburn Lake Road and turn left onto a gravel road. This series of small lakes offers excellent opportunities to see Beaver and waterbirds. In the evening, watch carefully for Little Brown Bats over the lake.

## 21. Chadburn Lake Recreation Area



The Chadburn Lake Road is an 8-km (5-mi.) gravel road leading to several small lakes, with trails, picnic sites and boat launches before ending at Chadburn Lake. A recreation map of the area is available locally. Several marked and easy to follow trails wind through the boreal forest. On summer evenings, look for Little Brown Bats.



Little Brown Bat, *Thomas Jung*

## 22. Long Lake



This popular day-use and swimming area is located about 3.5 km along Wickstrom Road (off Hospital Road). A picturesque kettle lake surrounded by old growth boreal forest, Long Lake is a great location for a quiet picnic, a short paddle, or a hike along the 2.5 km trail encircling the lake. Camping and fires are not permitted.

## 23. Quartz Road Wetland Interpretive Trail



From downtown Whitehorse, a paved trail follows the river downstream. It is dotted with benches, viewing decks and interpretive panels about birds, habitat, history and traditional use of the area. Watch and listen for a variety of songbirds which thrive in the willows and alders along the riverbank. In the spring and fall, swans and other waterfowl can be seen flying over or resting in the shallows near the creek. This is also a great place to watch the swirling displays of Mew and Herring gulls and spot their nests on the islands.



Mew Gull, *Jukka Jantunen*



Herring Gull, *Jukka Jantunen*

## 24. Yukon College Boreal Worlds Trail



Hidden behind Yukon College is the Boreal Worlds Trail. You can journey through an aspen grove to the shores of a beaver pond and follow a walk through pine forest with dense lichen patches. This area, with its variety of habitats, is home to many animals including Beaver, Muskrat, Rusty Blackbird and Common Yellowthroat.

## 25. Mount McIntyre Ski Trails



This is a haven for small boreal forest critters and an important travel corridor for larger mammals. Maps are available outside the ski chalet and at the south end of the Canada Games Centre parking lot. There are viewpoints, benches, interpretive signs and seasonally heated cabins along the signed trails.

## 26. McIntyre Marsh

km 1428 (mi. 887)

Take the Alaska Highway to the Fish Lake Road turnoff on the left side. The road will pass a large wetland area and a small lake, both on the south side. After 3.4 km (2 mi.), you will arrive at this rich shallow wetland. Typical of wetlands created by damming, McIntyre Marsh is filled with standing dead trees. The dead trees provide nest sites for cavity nesting birds such as Tree Swallows, Boreal Chickadees and Barrow's Goldeneye. Water loving plants like sedge and willow provide cover for the many birds and mammals that live in the wetland. Otters, Beavers and Muskrats can often be seen here. This is one of the very few wetlands in Yukon that does not freeze over in the winter, making it an important spring stopover for birds. The interpretive gazebo is also a trailhead for the TransCanada Trail and a short signed loop trail skirting another wetland hidden in the boreal forest.



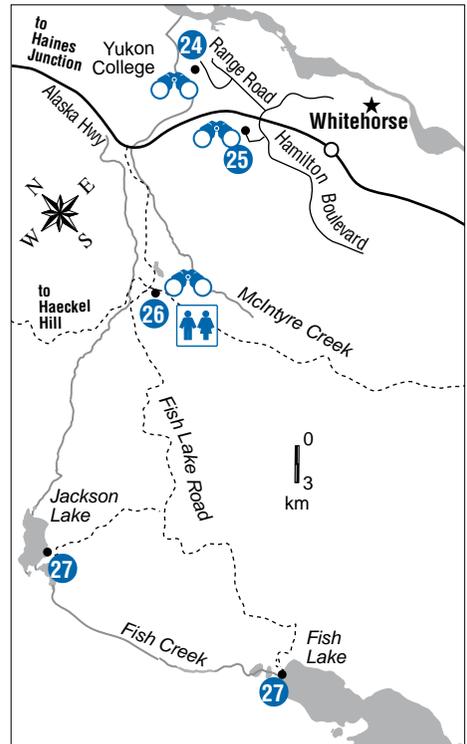
Tree Swallow

## 27. Fish and Jackson lakes

km 1428 (mi. 887)

Continue along the Fish Lake Road as it climbs through a sub-alpine area where ptarmigan are sometimes seen. The area has many biking and hiking trails and is an easy way to explore alpine areas. American Golden Plover, Lesser Yellowlegs, Golden Eagle, Gyrfalcon and other alpine species can sometimes be found in this area. At km 15 you will reach Fish Lake. This is a popular fishing destination, but beware of strong winds.

**JUNCTION** with the North Klondike Highway, Highway #2 (Mayo Road), km 1437 (mi. 898), see page 34



## 28. Takhini Salt Flats

km 1467.5 (mi. 912) 🚶

Located 1 km (0.6 mi.) east of the Takhini River Bridge, rare plants are the focus of this undeveloped, unusual site. Underground springs bring salts to the surface; permafrost stops these salts from being washed deeper into the soil. As the salts accumulate, salt-loving plants thrive. One of these is the red-coloured Sea Asparagus which may be unique to Yukon. It grows in dense patches which can easily be seen from the Alaska Highway in summer.



Sea Asparagus  
(*Salicornia borealis*)

## 29. Elk viewing

km 1468-1503 (mi. 912-934) 🏞️

The area between the Takhini River Bridge and the Mendenhall River is great for viewing Elk. Slow down and scan the south-facing slopes and open aspen woodlands. Usually their cream-coloured rumps are seen first. Elk from Elk Island National Park were first introduced in 1951 and moved into this area following the 1958 burn. Fossil records suggest that Elk lived in this area thousands of years ago.

## 30. Takhini Burn

km 1487 (mi. 924) 🚲 🏞️ 🏠

Since the fire in 1958, the area has regenerated to open aspen parkland. You will find a viewing platform at a large pullout on the south side of the highway. Interpretive panels describe the wildlife found in this old burn area. Elk, Mule Deer, Northern Hawk Owls can be seen. The Upland Sandpiper is an unusual Yukon resident that breeds in the open grasslands in this area.

## Kusawa Lake Road

km 1489 (mi. 925) 🏞️ 🏠 🐦

A gravel road on the south side of the highway takes you to the Takhini River, 15 km (9 mi.) down the road, and eventually to the Kusawa Lake campgrounds. A wetland about 1 km (0.6 mi.) from the highway intersection is an excellent site to see waterfowl and hear many different species of songbirds.

## Kusawa Territorial Park

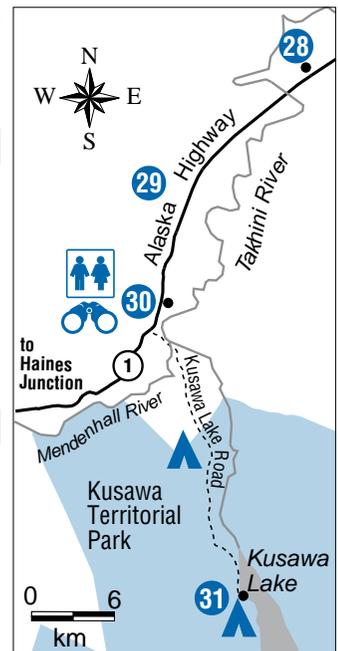


Kusawa Territorial Park covers 3113 km<sup>2</sup>. It is bounded in the south by the Yukon/British Columbia border. Kusawa Lake, the 8th largest and one of the deepest lakes in Yukon, dominates the centre of the park. Boating and hiking are popular activities in the park. Along the Kusawa Lake Road, the Takhini River Campground is at km 15 (mi.9).

## 31. Kusawa Lake Campground

km 22.5 (mi. 14) along the Kusawa Lake Road 🏠 🏞️ 🏠

Look for Dall Sheep on the mountain across Kusawa Lake Road. To see them well, you need a spotting scope. An unmarked trail starts near the boat launch in the Kusawa Lake Park, before the bridge, and leads to the alpine. Grizzly Bears like to roam the alpine area in search of grasses, berries and Arctic Ground Squirrels. The Takhini River, a popular canoe trip, starts here.



### 32. The Last Pine

km 1526 (mi. 948)

Lodgepole Pine is common in southeast and central Yukon but absent in the north and west. With the exception of some planted trees, these are the last pines you will see on the Alaska Highway.

**JUNCTION** with Aishihik Road, km 1546 (mi. 960)

Turn north at the Otter Falls Cutoff. This 134 km (84 mi.) rough gravel road winds past majestic mountain views and quiet wetlands. Two highlights are Otter Falls and Aishihik Lake.

### 33. Otter Falls

km 30 (mi. 18) along the Aishihik Road  

On the left side of the Aishihik Road look for a small pullout with a history panel. Once pictured on Canada's five-dollar bill, the waterfall is easy to access by a short trail. Please note that there are periods of reduced water flow over the falls. Just 0.5 km (0.3 mi.) past the pullout for the falls, you will find Otter Falls Recreation Area. Located on the southern end of Canyon Lake (also called Otter Lake by local residents), this is a perfect place for a picnic. American Dippers can be seen feeding in the falls.

### 34. Aishihik Lake Campground

km 42 (mi. 26) along the Aishihik Road    

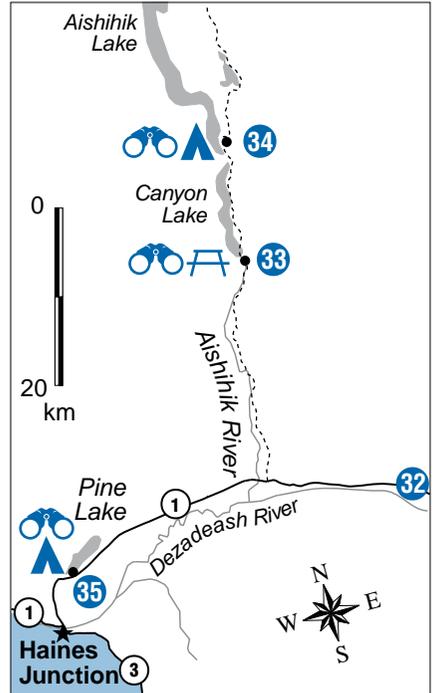
Wood Bison often come to the road north of the campground during the fall and move to the high country in the summer. These massive animals were re-introduced in 1986. An interpretive sign describes their habitats. Watch carefully for bison herds inhabiting meadows along the road. Many small ponds dot the landscape, making it a perfect habitat for waterfowl, moose and wolves. Trumpeter Swans use the open water during spring migration.

**The road past the campground provides adventurous travellers with a one to two-day wilderness experience but is not recommended for large vehicles.**

### 35. Pine Lake Campground

km 1572 (mi. 977)    

The short Lakeside Interpretive Trail winds through boreal forest from the beach to the campground. Panels along the trail interpret the lake's aquatic habitats, marl formation and forest dwellers. As with other campgrounds, Black Bears sometimes visit. A boat launch provides easy access to other viewing opportunities.

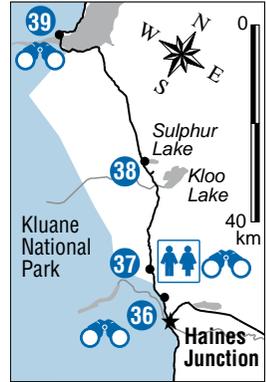


Wood Bison, Yukon government

### 36. Klauene National Park & Reserve Visitor Centre

km 1578 (mi. 981)  

The centre's staff can provide information to help you enjoy your stay in this area. You must register with Park Services here or at the Tach̄al Dh̄al Visitor Information Centre before going into some parts of the park. For your safety, the use of bear-resistant food canisters is recommended throughout the park and mandatory in some areas. These canisters can be obtained from the visitor centres. An excellent brochure on trails and routes in the park is also available at the centre. These trails and routes offer some of Yukon's best opportunities to see Dall Sheep, Grizzly and Black bears and Moose. The centre features a model of Klauene National Park and surrounding areas.



**JUNCTION** with the Haines Highway, Highway #3 (Haines Road), km 1579 (mi. 981), see page 40

### Backcountry wildlife viewing: Alsek River

There are good opportunities to see Dall Sheep, Mountain Goat and Grizzly Bear along the Alsek River. Local companies offer guided, multiple-day rafting trips. (Consult Yukon's Vacation Planner, available through Tourism Yukon, for operators' names.)

### 37. Spruce Beetle Interpretive Trail

km 1597 (mi. 992)   

An easy 1.7-km (1-mi.) loop interpretive trail examines the life of the Spruce Beetle and its effects on the forests of the area. Allow 35 to 45 minutes to complete the walk.

### 38. Sulphur Lake

km 1614 (mi. 1003)  

A large pullout on the north side of the road lets you access this lake. Good canoeing opportunities are available. Thousands of waterbirds use the lake, mostly in late summer. Two Bald Eagle nests grace its shores and Trumpeter Swans are often seen. Try howling for the local wolf pack and see if they respond.

### 39. Tach̄al Dh̄al (Sheep Mountain) Visitor Information Centre

km 1649 (mi. 1025)   

Stop here to learn about Klauene National Park's flora and fauna. Excellent interpretive programs are available. Open mid-May to early September.

Viewing telescopes are set up to look for Dall Sheep on Tach̄al Dh̄al (Sheep Mountain), which is a buttress of the larger Mount Wallace. This is sheep winter range so the best time to see them is late August to May. The face of the mountain has been designated as a special preservation zone. Check with the centre for designated hiking areas. Many unique plant species evolved in this area, including the globally rare Yukon Aster that dominate the flats surrounding the centre. This area once surrounded by ice and now by boreal forest isolates these grassland plants from their Great Plains affiliates.



Dall Sheep, Alejandro Frid

## 40. Congdon Creek Campground (Khàr Shān Nji)

km 1666 (mi. 1035)   

An easy 500 m (0.3 mi.) trail follows the shoreline of Kluane Lake to an open meadow with a viewing deck. Panels interpret the natural features of the area. This is an important Grizzly Bear foraging area so tenting is not recommended.

## 41. Backcountry wildlife viewing: Kluane River

Begin at Burwash Landing and paddle about 10 km (6 mi.) on Kluane Lake to the mouth of Kluane River. Be aware of winds that can make the open water very dangerous during storms. For a full one-day trip, travel as far as Kluane Wilderness Village, about 40 km (25 mi.) from the starting point. This river has a class II+ rapid. Do not miss the take-out as it is a LONG paddle to Dawson. Trumpeter Swans stage here in April and May, along with hundreds of ducks, geese and raptors. Chum Salmon spawn in Kluane River from late August to early November. Visit the Kluane Museum of Natural History in Burwash Landing for an introduction to local geology, wildlife and culture.

## 42. Duke Meadows

km 1710 (mi. 1063)  

This unique natural meadow was formed on the flood plain of the Duke River (Shār Ndū Chū). It contains unusual plant species and meadow nesting birds such as the Upland Sandpiper and Sharp-tailed Grouse. In April and May, huge flocks of waterfowl, including hundreds of Trumpeter Swans, stage at the outflow of Kluane Lake, Yukon's largest lake.

## 43. Kluane River overlook

km 1726 (mi. 1072)  

Locally known as Joe Jacquot's Lookout, this rest area has information panels and an observation platform overlooking the Kluane River. Interpretive panels describe the life cycle of the Chum Salmon that come to spawn in this river in August and September. Bald Eagles and Grizzly Bears come there to feast.

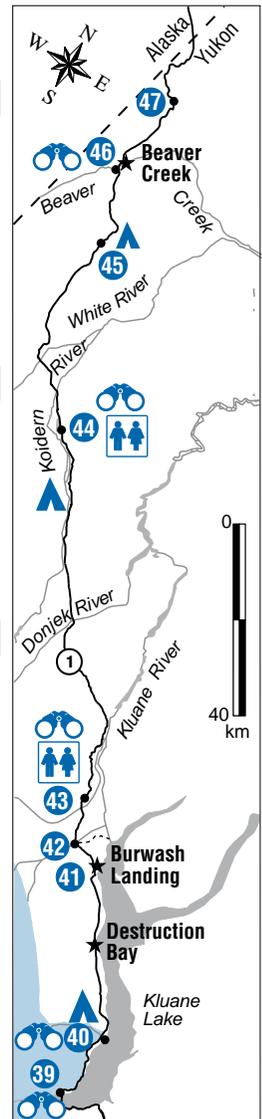
## 44. Pickhandle Lake

km 1802 (mi. 1120)  

A short gravel road takes you down to the shores of Pickhandle Lake. This attractive wetland complex is extensive. On their migration, many bird species follow the Shakwak Trench (a Chilkat name meaning "between the mountains") to reach these important wetlands. A variety of waterfowl nest and moult here in summer. A deck with interpretive panels invites you to discover pond life, muskrats, waterbirds and traditional use of this scenic lake.



Sharp-tailed Grouse, Tony Grabowski



### 45. Snag Junction Campground

km 1850 (mi. 1150) ▲ 🐻

The area surrounding this campground is typical of the Klondike Plateau Ecoregion. Open stands of stunted Black Spruce are intermixed with Paper Birch. The land is underlain by permafrost and many of the hills are frozen core mounds. The numerous lakes in the area are “thermokarst,” a phenomenon where circular lakes are created, surrounded by “drunken trees,” as the permafrost melts and the ground caves in. This area was unglaciated and so has few deep valleys. The numerous shallow lakes are home to waterfowl and interesting pond life. Look in the open areas for Northern Hawk Owls perched on the tops of trees.



Moose among drunken trees at Pickhandle Lake, Yukon government

### 46. Beaver Creek

km 1871 (mi. 1164) 🚲

The nature trail here includes panels that interpret the natural features of the region, its history, plants and animals. For those interested in the flora of the territory, the visitor information centre has a book of dried Yukon wildflowers.

### 47. Swan Lake

km 1886 (mi. 1212) 🦢

This lake, on the east side of the Alaska Highway, is home to a pair of nesting Trumpeter Swans. Large numbers of shorebirds and migratory waterfowl use this unusually rich lake as a stopover. Peregrine Falcons can sometimes be seen hunting shorebirds in the spring, while fox hunt muskrat along the shore. Look for owls perched on treetops in the open country of this area.

**YUKON/ALASKAN BORDER** and rest area, km 1903 (mi. 1182)



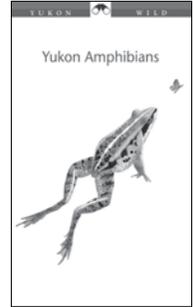
Northern Shrike, Cameron Eckert



Northern Hawk Owl, Yukon government

The Klondike Highway is divided into the South Klondike (Skagway to Alaska Highway) and North Klondike (Alaska Highway north of Whitehorse to Dawson). Distances are measured from Skagway, Alaska.

The Chilkoot Pass area is home to several amphibian species. Pick up a free *Yukon Amphibians* guide.



## 1. B.C./Yukon border

km 80 (mi. 50)  

There is a pullout at the B.C./Yukon border, on the east side of the highway. Search the slopes of Montana Mountain to the northwest and Mount Racine to the southwest for signs of Mountain Goats and Dall Sheep that frequent these areas in the summer.

## 2. Bennett and Nares lakes

km 106 (mi. 66)  

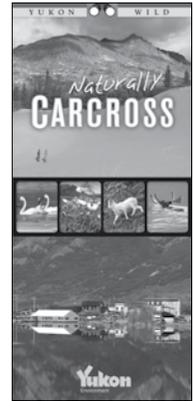
Nares Lake is on the east side of the Klondike Highway and Bennett Lake is on the west side. Waterfowl stage on Nares Lake in the spring and fall. Being one of the few areas of open water in winter, it attracts many species.

**JUNCTION** with the Tagish Road, Highway #8, km 107 (mi. 66.5), see page 56

## 3. Carcross Desert viewpoint

km 108 (mi. 67)  

Affectionately known as the world's smallest desert, the Carcross Desert is a haven for amateur botanists. There is a viewing deck complete with panels. The wind blows sand from Bennett Lake forming sand dunes and making them advance across the landscape, sometimes burying trees along the way. The active dunes are home to the Yukon Lupine (*Lupinus kuschei*), distinguishable by its silvery appearance caused by hairs on the upper surface of the leaves. The grass-like Baikal Sedge (*Carex sabulosa*) also grows in the loose sand. This Asian sedge is found in North America at only a few places in southwest Yukon and one location in Alaska. It is probably a remnant from a time when North America and Asia were joined through the Bering Land Bridge. Showy Jacob's-ladder, Pasture Sage, Common Juniper and Kinnikinnick grow in the more stabilized or sheltered areas of the dunes.



Baikal Sedge (*Carex sabulosa*), Yukon government.  
Inset photo Peter Long

Yukon Lupine (*Lupinus kuschei*)



Carcross Desert

#### 4. Emerald Lake\*

km 118 (mi. 74)  

This pullout provides an excellent view of Emerald Lake's famous turquoise waters. Interpretive panels describe the effect of climate on wildlife and explain the lake's mysterious colour, a result of light reflecting off layers of marl, or  $\text{CaCO}_3$  (powdered limestone).

#### 5. Annie Lake Road

km 140 (mi. 88)    

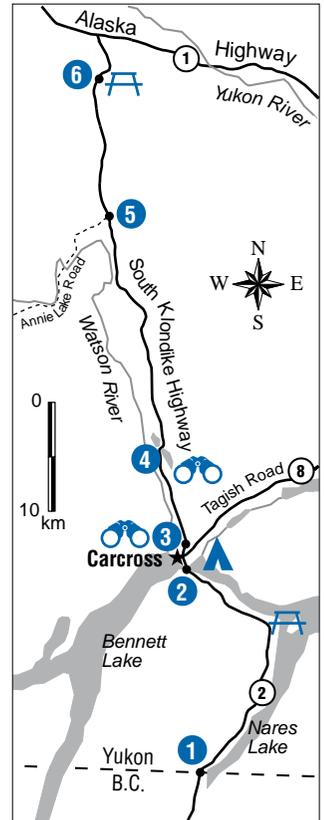
The Annie Lake Road begins 18 km (11.3 mi.) south of the intersection of the Klondike and Alaska highways. After crossing the Wheaton River (at the second bridge, km 24 (mi. 15)), look on the cliff-faces for Dall Sheep. There are many hiking routes along old mining roads into the coastal mountains. Gyrfalcons, Golden Eagles and Willow, Rock and White-tailed ptarmigan, along with many other alpine birds, can be seen. When crossing the Watson and Wheaton rivers, watch for Harlequin Ducks that nest on the edge of these fast-flowing streams.

#### 6. Kookatsoon Lake Recreation Site

km 154 (mi. 96)   

This shallow lake, a pleasant family swimming spot in summer equipped with a playground and picnic sites, is home to nesting Bonaparte's Gulls. The shallow waters freeze to the bottom in the winter and so the lake cannot support fish.

**JUNCTION** with the Alaska Highway, Highway #1,  
km 157 (mi. 99), see page 22



Distances are measured from Skagway, Alaska.

## 1. Gunnar Nilsson Mickey Lammers Research Forest

km 197 (122 mi)   

Over 12 km of signed and interpreted trails will lead you through open pine forest spotted with wetlands and south-facing slopes. Here, the traditional territories of the Kwanlin Dün and Ta'an Kwäch'än First Nations overlap. Interpretive panels tell us of the traditional uses of local plants. Scientists use this forest to study the growth and survival of northern trees. There is also an agricultural test site and fire weather station. If you are interested in these experiments, you will enjoy exploring the Forest Science trails.

## 2. Yukon Wildlife Preserve

km 8 (mi. 5) along the Takhini Hot Spring Road  

The Yukon Wildlife Preserve is a unique wildlife viewing property featuring northern Canadian mammals. Visitors can view Caribou, Lynx, Elk, Mountain Goats, Moose, Mule Deer, Muskoxen, Bison, and Dall and Stone sheep. Varied landscapes, stretching over 300 hectares, include low-lying flat lands, rolling hills, wetlands and steep rock cliffs. Both guided bus tours and self-guided walking tours are offered. See [www.yukonwildlife.ca](http://www.yukonwildlife.ca) for the current season's hours.

## 3. Shallow Bay, Lake Laberge

km 209 (mi. 130)  

Land access to Shallow Bay is somewhat difficult. You will find a trail just north of the Shallow Bay road, on the east side of the Klondike Highway. In late April and May, this is one of the best sites for waterfowl viewing. Tundra and Trumpeter swans stage here in spring and fall. It is also a hot spot for migrating shorebirds and songbirds. Watch for birds of prey like Short-eared Owls and Northern Harriers that hunt in the open fields surrounding the bay.

## 4. Lake Laberge Campground

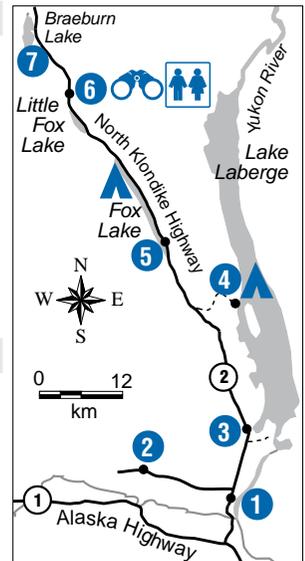
km 225 (mi. 139)  

The campground is located on a signed side road 2.9 km (1.7 mi.) east of the highway on the shores of Lake Laberge. Made famous by the Robert Service poem, "The Cremation of Sam McGee," this is the only place in Yukon where Double-crested Cormorants can be reliably seen. Other open-water birds are also found here. This is one of the first places in the Whitehorse area to see the Prairie Crocus bloom in spring (mid-April). The campground is a launch site for Yukon River boaters. Wind can be a hazard on Lake Laberge.

## 5. Fox Lake

km 239 (mi. 148) 

Waterfowl stop here on their spring migration. You can put a canoe in at the south end of the lake for a day of adventuring in the sheltered bay. Muskrats feed on the abundant aquatic vegetation and many muskrat push-ups can be seen dotting the frozen surface of the lake in winter and spring. You may be scolded by a Lesser Yellowlegs if you venture too close to its nest or its offspring.



### 6. Fox Lake Burn

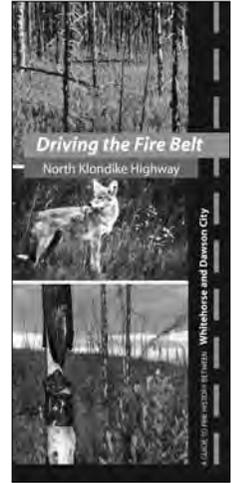
km 272 (mi. 169)    

Follow the 200-m (650-ft.) interpreted trail to the overlook and experience the importance of fire to the boreal forest ecosystem. Pick up your free guide to fires of the North Klondike Highway and look for the burn-year signs along the highway.

### 7. Elk and bear viewing

km 273-340 (mi. 171-212) 

The best time to see Elk is in winter and spring, when there are no leaves on the trees. Listen for Elk bugling in late summer and autumn. Drive slowly and look on the exposed south-facing slopes for their distinctive cream-coloured rumps. Grizzly Bears are also commonly seen here in spring and summer, feeding on the roadside vegetation and, sometimes, on the Elk.



### 8. Tsáwnjik Chu (Nordenskiöld) Habitat Protection Area

km 320 (mi. 199)  

The picturesque wetlands seen from here to Carmacks on the west side of the highway are part of Nordenskiöld River (Tsáwnjik Chú). Waterfowl stage here during spring and fall migrations and nest in the more isolated areas of the river. Watch for breeding Trumpeter Swans and Ruddy Ducks. Beaver, Muskrat and Moose feast on the lush vegetation while mink and Red Fox hunt along the edges of the wetland. Listen for Soras and Red-winged Blackbirds singing in the sedges. These species are locally common in Yukon and indicate very productive wetlands.

### 9. Tagé-Cho-Hudän Interpretive Centre, Carmacks

km 358 (mi. 223)

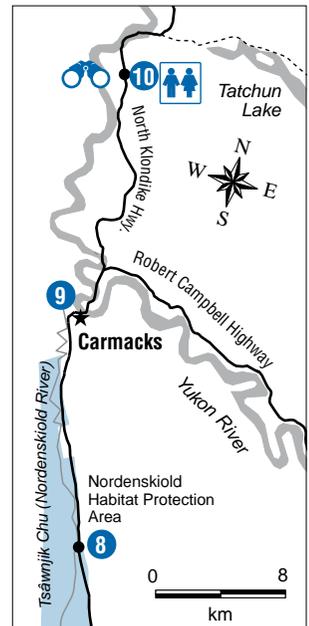
This cultural centre showcases the traditional lifestyles of the Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation. Visit a moose skin house or a brush house; walk through a mammoth snare and imagine how life might have been.

**JUNCTION** with the Robert Campbell Highway, Highway #4, km 358 (mi. 222.5), see page 42

### 10. Five Finger Rapid Recreation Site

km 380 (mi. 237)     

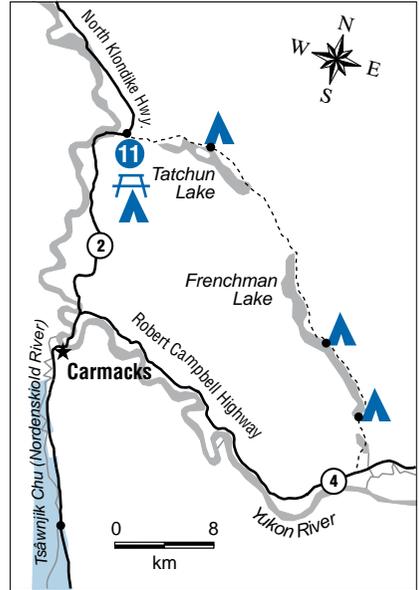
A large pullout on the west side of the highway leads you to Yukon's longest staircase. A 45-minute (return) walk down the 850-m (0.5-mi.) trail ends at a large viewing platform overlooking the rapids. The south-facing slope is a perfect habitat for Prairie Crocus, Kinnikinnick, Common Juniper and sage, and is home to White-crowned and American Tree sparrows. This was the edge of Beringia (the area that remained ice free when the North American continent was joined to Asia) and so open slopes like these contain many unique species of insects and plants including the Siberian Wormwood (*Artemisia laciniata*). Interpretive panels discuss historic and natural themes.



### 11. Tatchun/Frenchman Road

km 383 (mi. 240) ▲ 🏕️ 🦉

A gravel road leads you to campgrounds at Tatchun Lake at km 8.4 (mi. 5.2), Nunatuk at km 33.3 (mi. 20.7) and Frenchman Lake (Łúthī Mān) at km 41.7 (mi. 25.9). All three campgrounds are on beautiful, clear lakes that offer great opportunities for pleasant canoe outings. The road is 46.2 km (28 mi.) long and offers some of the best chances to view Mule Deer. The road joins the Robert Campbell Highway about 41 km (25 mi.) from the Klondike Highway intersection. Tatchun Creek\* Campground (at km 382) offers great fishing.



### 12. Łútsāw Wetland Habitat Protection Area

km 442 (mi. 276) 🦉

Formerly known as Von Wilczek Lakes, this is an important wetland complex for duck staging, nesting and moulting. It was designated a Habitat Protection Area under the Selkirk First Nation Final Agreement.

### 13. Tthe Ndu Lake

km 449 (mi. 281) 🦉

Formerly known as Rock Island Lake, this lake is just beyond the northern limits of the 1995 Minto forest fire. Water lilies and other seldom-seen aquatic wildflowers bloom in the shallow areas of the lake. American Coots, rarely seen in Yukon, along with geese and ducks, nest here. Sandhill Cranes are often seen flying overhead in spring and fall.



Horned Grebe, *Jukka Jantunen*

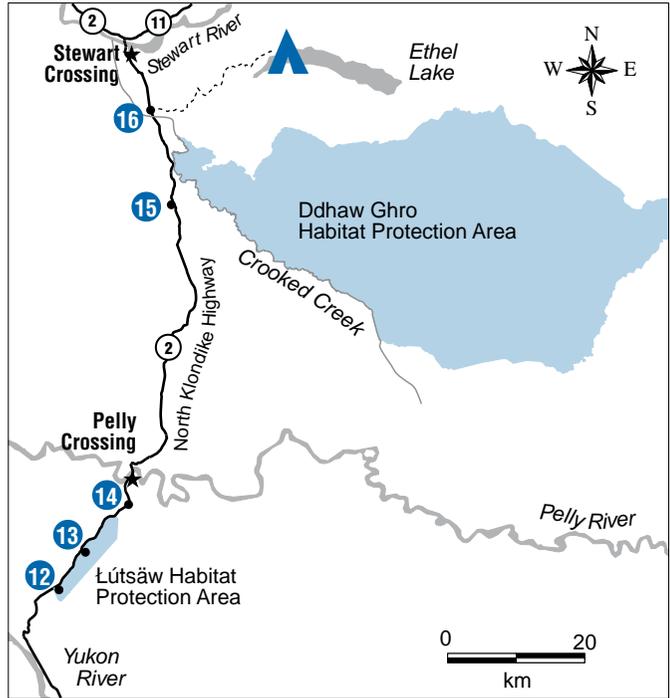


American Coot, *Cameron Eckert*

### 14. Meadow Lake\*

km 458 (mi. 286) 🐼

This shallow lake is one of the “athalassic,” or salty lakes of inland origin found in the area. Notice the white, crusty layer on the old stumps sticking out of the mud along the lakeshore. Salts accumulate over time after naturally weathering out of the rocks. Much saltier lakes may be found nearby. Such lakes are home to salt-loving plants known as “halophytes.” Look for chicken-like American Coots. This is their most northerly known nesting site. Large numbers of Horned Grebes make Meadow Lake their home in summer.



### 15. Drunken forest

km 510 (mi. 317) ▲

This straight section of highway is surrounded by Black Spruce and Paper Birch that grow on poorly drained soil. Permafrost develops in these soils. As the permafrost melts, the trees lean in different directions appearing “drunken.” This same permafrost causes frost heaves in the highway.

### Backcountry wildlife viewing: Ddhaw Ghro Habitat Protection Area

Ddhaw Ghro is the Northern Tutchone name for the area formerly known as McArthur Wildlife Sanctuary. Grey Hunter Peak and surrounding hillsides support many species of wildlife, including Fannin Sheep. The area is inaccessible by road. Please contact the Selkirk First Nation and Nacho Nyak Dun for more information.



Yukon Podistera (*Podistera yukonensis*): Endemic to the upper Yukon River region between Carmacks, Yukon and Circle, Alaska, it is only known from 10 populations worldwide, six of which are in Yukon.

### 16. Ethel Lake Campground

km 524 (mi. 327)

Ethel Lake Campground is 24 km (14.5 mi.) down this winding, narrow road. The lake provides fishing opportunities for Lake Trout and Northern Pike. The road passes through some high elevations where Subalpine Fir can be seen. This is a rich area for moose.

**JUNCTION** with the Silver Trail Highway, Highway #11, km 531 (mi. 331), see page 59

**17. Moose Creek Campground**

km 560 (mi. 350)      

A 2.5-km (1.5-mi.) interpreted nature trail to the Stewart River takes you into the boreal forest along Moose Creek. Allow one hour to complete this loop trail. Note the change of habitat from dry White Spruce forest to floodplain willow. Listen for such floodplain residents as the Northern Waterthrush, Wilson's Warbler and Common Yellowthroat. They feast on mosquitoes that hatch from the areas' many small ponds. The return trail takes you along a dry ridge. Fishing opportunities are found along Moose Creek and at Stewart River.

**18. Gravel Lake**

km 622 (mi. 389)   

Interpretive signs highlight the importance of this wetland on the Tintina Trench, a major travel corridor for migratory birds in spring and fall. Waterfowl nest here in early summer, joined by rafts of ducks in late summer. Because of its location on the trench, unusual birds are sometimes seen here, including Ruddy Duck and Black Scoter. Yellow Water Lily blooms carpet the lake surface in July. Sharp-tailed Grouse are commonly seen in the open aspen woodlands. This is near the northern limit of Lodgepole Pine.

**19. Tintina Trench viewpoint**

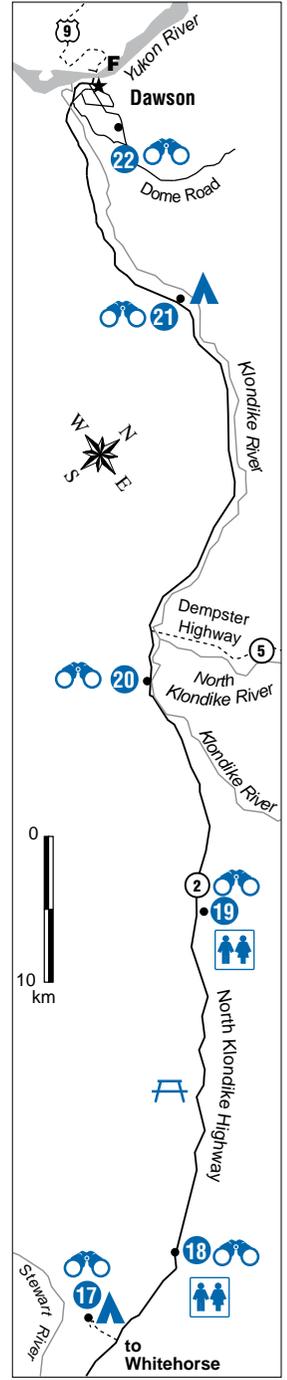
km 655 (mi. 409) 

A large rest area on the north side of the road has a commanding view of the Tintina Trench and the Klondike River. The Tintina Trench is the largest geological fault in North America, and is one of two major travel corridors for migratory birds in Yukon, such as huge flocks of Sandhill Cranes. (The other is the Shaskwak Trench.) (See page 30 and map on the inside cover.)



Every year over 250,000 Sandhill Cranes migrate through the Tintina Trench, *Jukka Jantunen*

HIGHWAY #2N





Klondike River Campground trail, Yukon government

## 20. Klondike River

km 668 (mi. 418)

A large pullout on the east side has an interpretive sign about the history of salmon in the Klondike River and their importance to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation.

**JUNCTION** with the Dempster Highway, Highway #5, km 675 (mi. 422), see page 47

## 21. Klondike River Campground

km 697 (mi. 436)

A 1.7-km (1-mi.) interpreted nature trail loop takes you to the Klondike River. It offers a close look at an unspoiled section of the forest and river. In this stand of giant White Spruce and riverside willows you get a glimpse of a typical forest in this area prior to the 1898 gold rush. A wide variety of plants grow along the trail. Watch for Labrador Tea, Highbush Cranberry, Prickly Rose, Arctic Bearberry and horsetails.

## 22. Crocus Bluff Trail

km 713 (mi. 446)

A 500-m (0.3-mi.) trail leads you to a view of the confluence of the Klondike and the Yukon rivers. Prairie Crocuses and Northern Bluebells are only a few of the plant species that thrive on the rich black earth under the White Spruce/Paper Birch forest of the Klondike Valley. Interpretive panels discuss nature and history themes. The trailhead is found near the cemetery on the Dome Road, off the end of King Street in Dawson.

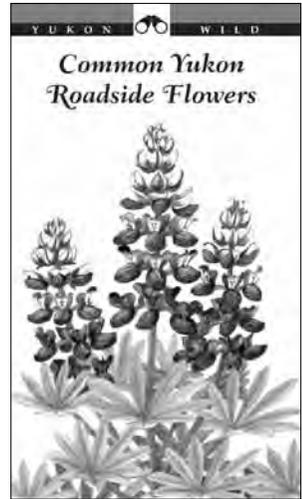
**DAWSON**, km 715 (mi. 447)

**JUNCTION** via ferry to the Top of the World Highway, Highway #9, see page 58



Prairie Crocus (*Anemone patens*),  
Yukon's first spring flower

Distances are measured from Haines, Alaska. While travelling the Haines Road, watch for Grizzly and Black bears as this is prime bear habitat. Approaching the Haines summit, watch for Willow Ptarmigan and you may even spot their main predator, the Gyrfalcon.



## 1. Tatshenshini River viewpoint

km 162 (mi. 101)  

A pullout on the west side of the road overlooks the beautiful Alsek mountain range and the Tatshenshini River, which was designated a Canadian Heritage River in 2005. Panels explain early exploration of the area. Local companies offer guided one-day to multiple-day rafting trips. (Consult *Yukon's Vacation Planner*, available through Tourism Yukon, for operators' names.)

## 2. Dalton Post

km 169 (mi. 105)   

Locally known as Shāwshe, this is a well-known site for salmon fishing in the summer and fall. The Klukshu River flows into the Tatshenshini River down river from the historic site of the Shāwshe village. This river system hosts seasonal runs of Chinook, Sockeye and Coho salmon. Chinook are most visible in July, Sockeye from August to October, and Coho in late September and October. In fall, Grizzly Bears come to feast on this bounty from the sea, so be alert to their presence.

## 3. Klukshu Wetland overlook

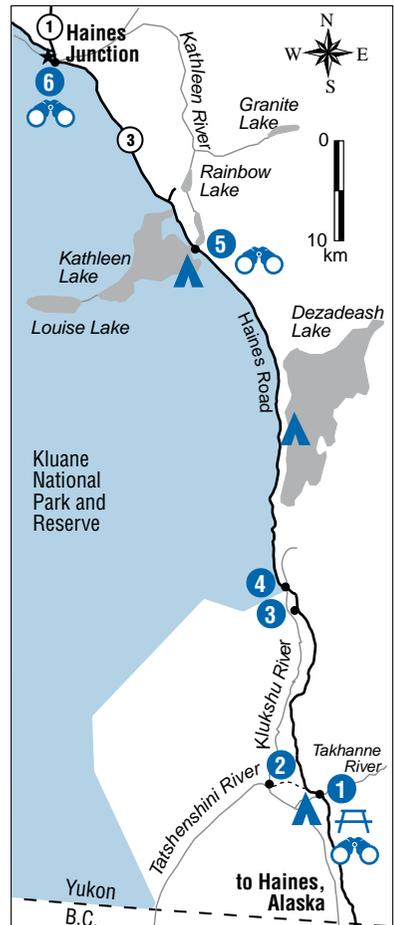
km 173 (mi. 107) 

A large pullout on the west side of the road overlooks two small wetlands. A dozen or so Trumpeter Swans regularly spend the summer here. Most of these are thought to be birds that have not mated or whose attempt to nest failed. A few kilometres further north along the highway you will pass a beautiful marsh on the west side of the road. A pair of Trumpeter Swans often nest and raise a family here.

## 4. Klukshu River

km 182 (mi. 111) 

This area is frequented by Grizzly Bears. A stop here and a careful scan of the area may reveal one of these bruins or their sign.





Grizzly Bear,  
Yukon government

## 5. Kathleen River bridge

km 221 (mi. 136)

A pullout on the east side of the road provides access to Kathleen River. There are panels here explaining fish use. From here, you can canoe into Lower Kathleen and Rainbow lakes. This is an easy paddle that requires a half-day to complete. Canoeing below Rainbow Lake requires whitewater experience. You can also paddle to the southwest side of Rainbow Lake. To come out, look for a cabin to the west of Rainbow Lake. You will find an old dock to the south of the cabin. A rough dirt road off the Haines Road about 6 km (4 mi.) north of the bridge goes down towards the lake. You will need to portage your canoe nearly 1 km (0.6 mi.) as the road becomes impassable to vehicles as it approaches the lake.

## 6. Dezadeash River Trail

km 245 (mi. 151)

A 5.5-km (3-mi.) trail leads you into the forest. From ducks to moose, you may encounter a variety of animals on this easy walk. You will need about two hours to complete it. This is a good location for winter wildlife viewing as the open water attracts a variety of wildlife. The parking lot and trailhead are on the Haines Highway #3, about 500 m (0.3 mi.) south of the intersection with the Alaska Highway, on the west side of the road. Be sure to visit the swallow condominiums and interpretive signs visible from the parking lot.

**JUNCTION** with the Alaska Highway,  
Highway #1, at Haines Junction,  
km 246 (mi. 153), see page 29



During summer, Red-tailed Hawks are the most common hawks seen along Yukon highways, *Jukka Jantunen*

Distances are measured from Watson Lake. The highway is mainly gravel and is less travelled than other Yukon highways. There are few amenities but the road has some of the richest wildlife areas in the territory. Watch out for Arctic Ground Squirrels and Grizzly Bears feeding on purple-flowered Sweet-Vetch. The highest concentration of moose and wolves in Yukon are found in this area. *There are no services between Watson Lake and Ross River (373 km or 232 mi.).*

## 1. Watson Lake

km 10 (mi. 6) ▲ 🦉

Turn north on the Robert Campbell Highway from the Alaska Highway. Common Loons, Ospreys and Bald Eagles nest on the shores of the lake. The wetlands in this region are particularly rich. There is excellent waterbird viewing via the airport access.

## 2. Tom Creek Wetland

km 31 (mi. 19.2) 🦉

A 25-m long (80-ft.) gravel road on the east side of the highway ends at a scenic wetland where songbirds are common.

## 3. Target Lake\*

km 41 (mi. 25.5) 🦉

Park at a large pullout and walk the 30-m (100-ft.) road on the east side of the highway, down to the water's edge. There is not enough room to turn your vehicle around at the end of the road. The large lake is alive with the sounds of songbirds. Red-necked Grebe and many species of ducks nest in this wetland. Yellow Water Lilies cover the surface of the water in July. In the early hours of the morning, this is the perfect place to sit and gaze across the lake at passing moose.

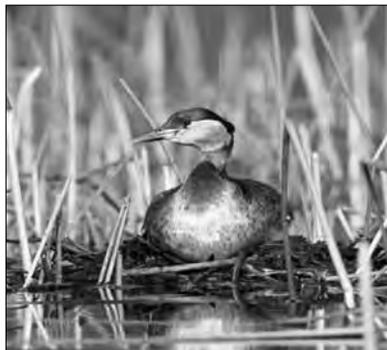
## 4. Simpson Lake (north end)

km 93 (mi. 58) 🦉

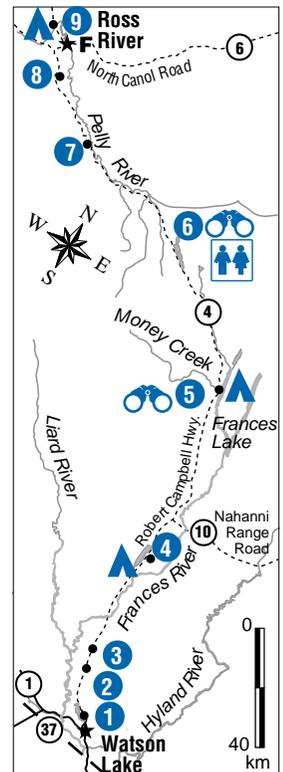
From this pullout, a small road leads to an excellent, late-season waterbird staging area, moose habitat and nesting loons. There's lots to see!

**JUNCTION** with the Nahanni Range Road, Highway #10, km 108 (mi. 67).

This 196-km road is an access road to the Cantung Mine in the Northwest Territories. It is maintained to km 134 by the Yukon government. There are no services on the Nahanni Range Road.



Red-necked Grebe,  
Jukka Jantunen



## 5. Frances Lake Campground

km 172 (mi. 107)   

The Kaska First Nation name for the lake is Tu Chu\* meaning “big water.” Look for rafts of scoters, scaups and mergansers on this large scenic lake. Panels here discuss the importance of wetlands to this area.

## 6. Finlayson Lake

km 233 (mi. 145) 

There is a large pullout on the north side of the road with information panels that interpret the Finlayson Caribou Herd and the caribou recovery program.



Common Raven, Yukon government

## 7. Bruce Lake

km 331 (mi. 206) 

Good waterbird viewing and wetland area, with views right from the highway.

## 8. Coffee Lake\*

km 338 (mi. 210) 

Great spot to view waterbirds from both sides of the road.

**JUNCTION** with the South Canol Road, Highway #6, km 355 (mi. 221), see page 54

**JUNCTION** with the Ross River Road, km 363 (mi. 226)

## 9. Lapie River Campground

km 364 (mi. 234)   

A trail runs along the canyon with views of the river as it is forced through this deep cleft. Watch the canyon walls for cliff nesting birds, particularly Common Ravens. This is one of the few places the Yukon Goldenweed (*Nestotus macleanii*) can be found. It blooms in May.



Red-breasted Merganser take off, Jukka Jantunen

b \_ \_ \_ l f \_ \_ e \_ \_  
 More than half of Yukon is covered in this type of vegetation,  
 most of the trees being conifers.

**Town of Faro, Mitchell Road intersection**

km 414 (mi. 257)

This 10-km (6-mi.) road takes you into the Town of Faro. Several hiking trails lead you to Mount Mye (Ddhäl Jāt), northeast of town. The unpaved Blind Creek Road takes you to several viewing sites surrounding Sheep Mountain and Blind Creek. From mid-September to June, Fannin Sheep come down from the mountain to gnaw on the mineral lick. Chinook Salmon spawn in Blind Creek in August.



**Faro Viewing Sites**

**10. Johnson Lake Campground**

4 km (2 mi.) up Mitchell Road ▲ 🐾

A variety of water birds can be found around this marshy lake. Pick up *A Birder's Checklist of the Faro & Ross River Region* for more information.

**11. Campbell Region Interpretive Centre**

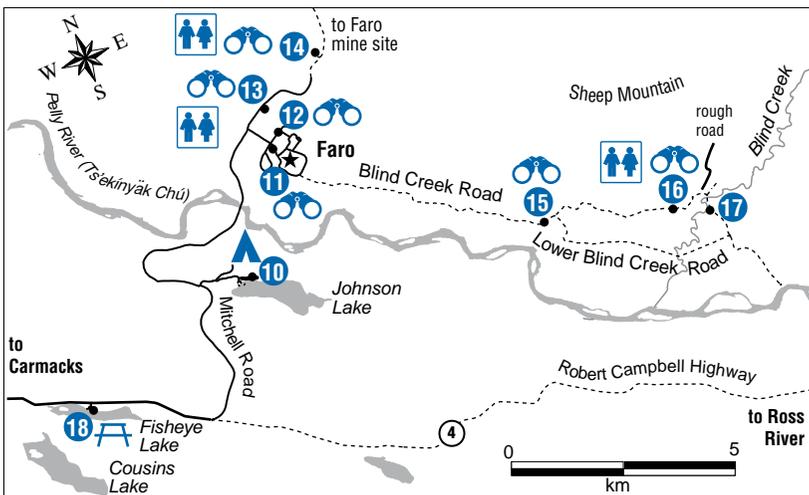


Open May to September, this is the place to stop downtown if you are looking for information about the region's history and its highlights. The interpretive staff can help you plan your visit. Take a walk back through time to the days of the mammoths. Explore how the Tintina Trench has influenced the movements of humans and wildlife. Pick up a free copy of the guide to *Viewing Wildlife in Faro*.

**12. Van Gorder Falls Trail, downtown Faro**



This trail is a wonderful way to spend about two hours on an easy 1.5-km (1-mi.) trail that winds its way through the forest, right at the edge of town. Starting at the John Connolly RV Park, the trail crosses Van Gorder Creek, and then climbs up, ending at a viewing deck overlooking the falls. Sheep may be seen at this important sheep resting spot. Pick up the trail pamphlet from the interpretive centre to learn more about the trailside flora and fauna.

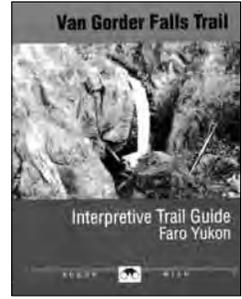


HIGHWAY #4

### 13. Faro Arboretum

11 km (5 mi.) up Mitchell Road    

Less than a kilometre north of the turnoff to the Town of Faro, this site showcases native plants of the region. Interpretive panels and viewing decks feature local flora and fauna. Follow the 1.2 km (0.7 mi.) loop trail from the kiosk to the viewing deck, and down to the west arm of Van Gorder Creek.



### 14. Fingers Site

13 km (8 mi.) up Mitchell Road   

A creek cuts a deep trench along the west side of the road 2.5 km (1.5 mi.) north of town. A short walk takes you to a viewing platform and interpretive site for a look at the sheep that inhabit the cliffs along the creek. Here you may also see a Common Raven's nest and listen to bird calls on sound posts. In early May and at the end of August, flocks of Sandhill Cranes pass overhead during their migration along the Tintina Trench.

### 15. Sheep Mountain Viewing Platform

6 km (4 mi.) along the Blind Creek Road



Park at the pull-off for a look at Sheep Mountain. In the fall and winter, Fannin rams are often seen on the flanks of Sheep Mountain, northwest of the ewes and lambs. A short path leads to the viewing platform from the road.

**Warning: The path to the ram viewing platform is located on a steep S-curve on the road. Watch for oncoming traffic!**



Fannin Ram, Frank Nice

### 16. Mount Mye Sheep Centre

8 km (5 mi.) along the Blind Creek Road   

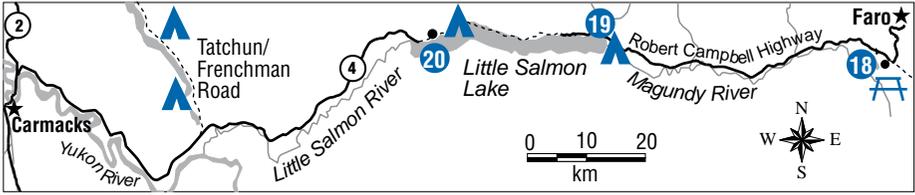
Stay left on the Blind Creek Road at the fork and you will end up at a cabin at the foot of Sheep Mountain. From this ideal vantage point, sheep are visible along the mountainside. The majority of the population use this area through the fall, winter and spring, moving into the alpine areas of Mount Mye (Ddhāl Jā̄t) in June. On cold days bring some firewood for the wood stove and enjoy the views from the comfort of the cabin.

**Warning: The Lower Road to Blind Creek is a rough 2-wheel drive gravel road. This road is not recommended for long vehicles such as motorhomes.**

### 17. Sheep Mineral Lick

12 km (8 mi.) along the Blind Creek Road  

At km 5.5 (mi. 3.5) of the Blind Creek Road, turn right onto the Lower Blind Creek Road and at the end of that road, turn left on the old mine road. Stop in the parking spot on the left. From October to June, Fannin Sheep are often visible along the top edge of the bluff where they lick minerals from the exposed soil. Wind scours this area and keeps it snow-free during the winter. Follow the trail along the bottom of the bluff from the parking area for a pleasant walk through the valley bottom vegetation.



**18. Fisheye Lake\***

km 415 (mi. 249)  

This day-use area provides a boat ramp and picnic facilities. Watch for diving ducks and loons. Fishing is good as this lake is stocked with Rainbow Trout and Kokanee (a landlocked Sockeye Salmon).

**19. Drury Creek Campground**

km 469 (mi. 293) 

In early summer, the campground’s sandy beach and picnic area on the east end of Little Salmon Lake (Chu cho) is a great place to view waterfowl.

**20. Little Salmon Lake Campground**

km 502 (mi. 312) 

Listen here for the haunting call of the Common Loon. The large lake takes a long time to freeze in the winter and thaw again in the summer, creating localized weather conditions.

**JUNCTION** with the Tatchun/Frenchman Road, km 543 (mi. 339), see site #9, see page 36

**JUNCTION** with the Klondike Highway, Highway #2, km 582 (mi. 364), see page 34



Dragonflies, with their brilliant colours and sensational flying abilities, are fascinating to watch. Yukon is home to at least 41 species of dragonflies, ranging in size from the tiny Sedge Sprite to the robust Lake Darner. Many species, such as the Four-spotted Skimmer and Boreal Whiteface, are widespread and common in wetland habitats such as ponds and sedge marshes. Others, such as the Plains Forktail and Muskeg Emerald, are sparsely distributed as they live in less common habitats such as fens, warm streams or hot springs. Dragonflies are easy to observe with just a bit of patience and a close-focusing pair of binoculars.

Hudsonian Whiteface, *Cameron Eckert*

               &                     

**These animals travel thousands of kilometres in their lifetime, returning to their birth places in order to reproduce.**

Distances are measured from the junction with the Klondike Highway.

This highway provides one of North America's easiest vehicle access routes into the Arctic, but you would be wise to check road conditions. Bring spare tires. Many arctic species that commonly summer and winter along the Dempster may not be found by any other Yukon highway. Watch for Sharp-tailed Grouse that are commonly seen on the first 20 km (12 mi.) of the Dempster Highway.

## 1. Dempster Highway Information

km 0.2 (mi. 0.1) 

A pullout on the east side of the road has an interpretive kiosk with historic and wildlife information on the Dempster Highway.

## Tombstone Territorial Park

km 49 (mi. 30)

This point marks the southern boundary of Tombstone Territorial Park. For the next 70 km (42 mi.), you will be travelling through the park. Covering 2,164 km<sup>2</sup>, this unspoiled wilderness has been set aside for protection under the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation Land Claim Agreement.

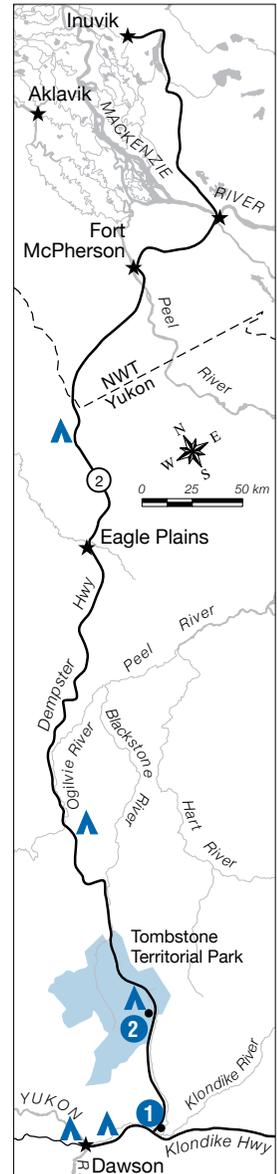
## 2. Tombstone Park Interpretive Centre

km 72 (mi. 45)    

This centre has displays on the natural history of the Dempster Highway region and Tombstone Territorial Park. The centre is open from late May to mid-September, seven days a week, including holidays. Campfire talks and nature walks are offered regularly. For a schedule of events, check the bulletin board in front of the centre. A 900-m (0.5-mi.) self-guided interpretive trail introduces you to the tundra. Pick up a copy of *The Dempster Highway Travelogue*.



Yukon Pond Lily  
(*Nuphar polysepala*),  
John Meikle,  
Yukon government



### 3. North Fork Pass Overlook

km 74 (mi. 46)  

This pullout is an excellent place to view the surrounding valley. The North Fork of the Klondike River can be seen below, flowing from Monolith and Tombstone mountains in the distance.

Northern Wheatears nest in the cliffs nearby. This unusual species nests in northern and western Alaska and Yukon but winters in North Africa and Southeast Asia.

### 4. North Fork Pass Summit

km 80 (mi. 50)  

This is the highest point on the Dempster Highway (1,289 m or 4,229 ft.). Here, you are crossing the Continental Divide. The land you see to the north drains via the Blackstone, Ogilvie, Peel and Mackenzie rivers to the Beaufort Sea; to the south, the Klondike and Yukon rivers drain to the Pacific Ocean. You are leaving the boreal forest of the south and entering unglaciated arctic tundra.

### 5. Angelcomb Peak

km 82 (mi. 51)  

The mountain to the east of the pullout is Angelcomb Peak, locally known as Sheep Mountain\*. It is a volcanic peak that has eroded to long, slender fleeted ridges, giving it a comb-like appearance. The peak is an important Dall Sheep lambing area in May and June. Therefore, hiking is not permitted during that time. Golden Eagles sometimes nest on the cliffs. During the summer, Hoary Marmots and Collared Pika are seen in the rock piles of the slopes.

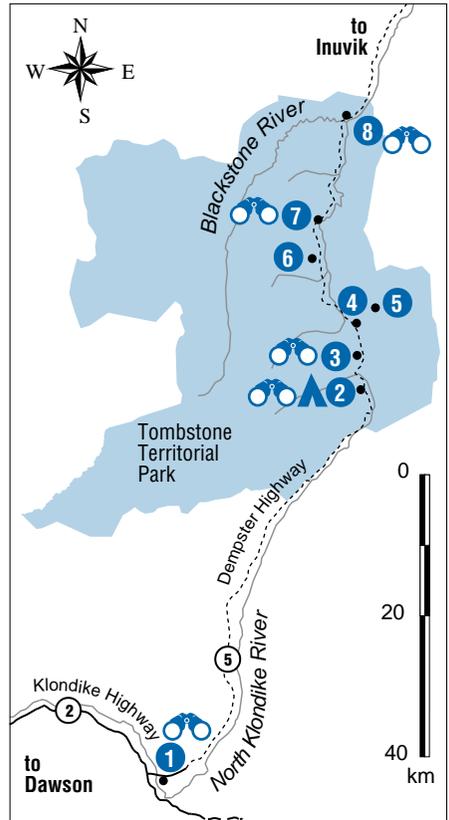
### 6. Blackstone Uplands

km 87-132 (mi. 54-82)  

For the bird watcher, this is the richest and most interesting area of the highway. Here, you may encounter the arctic species for which the highway is famous — Red-throated Loons, Long-tailed Ducks, Willow Ptarmigan, American Golden Plovers, Long-tailed Jaegers, Common and Hoary redpolls, Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings. Golden Eagles and Short-eared Owls are also common. The long-billed Whimbrel is often seen on the tundra to the east. Red Foxes and Woodland Caribou may be encountered in the summer.



Willow Ptarmigan, Dempster Highway





Harlequin Duck, Blackstone River

### 7. Two Moose Lake

km 102 (mi. 63)   

A large pullout and deck on the west side of the road overlooks Two Moose Lake. The lake is appropriately named, as moose are often seen here feeding on the aquatic vegetation. American Wigeon often nest on the shores of the lake and Gray-cheeked Thrush and American Pipit make their home in the surrounding willows. Watch for Harlequin Duck and Red-necked Phalarope feeding in the open water.

### 8. Chapman Lake

km 116 (mi. 72)   

Common Loons often nest on the island in this lake. This is the largest lake you will come across on your travels up the Dempster Highway. The Porcupine Caribou Herd commonly winters in this area and can be seen from October to April. In the spring, from May to June, wolves and Grizzly Bears are often seen scavenging the remains of winter caribou mortalities from here to the Richardson Mountains.



Porcupine Caribou are named for the Porcupine River that bisects their range. Porcupine comes from the ancient name "Choodeenjik" or "Porcupine Quill River." *Yukon government*

## 9. Windy Pass

km 154 (mi. 96) 

Windy Pass (at 1060 m or 3460 ft.) divides the drainages of the Blackstone River and Engineer Creek. The lack of vegetation causes flash flooding to the north of the pass, as recent highway work will show. This area is rich in Beringian endemic plants (restricted to a particular region) and butterflies. This is also a good location to see Wandering Tattlers, a shorebird that inhabits fast-flowing mountain streams. Caribou migration trails are visible on the bald, grey mountain directly ahead. For thousands of years, the Porcupine Caribou Herd have wintered in this area.



Gyrfalcon, Rick Kline, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology

## 10. Gyrfalcon nest

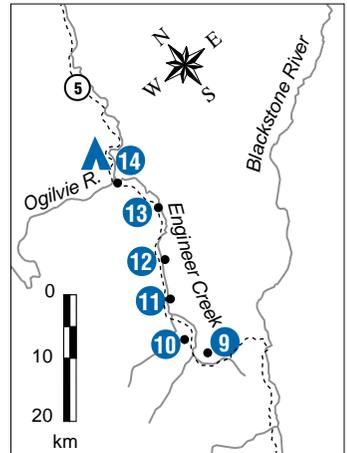
km 158 (mi. 98) 

Look across the road at the cliffs. Bird guano or whitewash covers the face of a ledge. This is the home of a Gyrfalcon family. These birds are especially active during the early hours of the morning and evening. The chicks call at the approach of the parents who bring a meal. Please do not disturb these birds; they are highly sensitive to human intrusion and are protected by Canadian laws.

## 11. Red Creek\* and Sulphur Springs

km 168 (mi. 104)

The reddish-brown stains of the rocks and river bed of Engineer Creek, locally known as Red Creek, come from dissolved minerals. The water of Red Creek is high in calcium, magnesium, bicarbonate, sulfate, hydrogen sulfide, sodium and chlorine. The sulfur smell comes from several warm springs that discharge hydrogen sulfide.



## 12. Sheep lick and trails

km 178 (mi. 111)

Dall Sheep are attracted to this area, especially in June. They come down the face of the rock slopes and head to the creek's shore to eat salt-enriched mud. The regularly used trails can be seen along the hillside. If you see a sheep at the lick or on the side of the hill, please remain in your vehicle, turn off the motor and enjoy the animals from a distance.

## 13. Engineer Creek sheep lick

km 184 (mi 114)

The sheep lick extends for about 2 km (1.2 mi) along Engineer Creek (Chuu Tسانh Creek), the water of which contains a heavy load of minerals. The creek's Gwich'in name means "stinking water creek." These licks are extremely important to maintain the animals' health. It is thought that sheep frequent mineral licks to restore calcium and magnesium balances in their bodies.



This woody plant is a staple winter diet for moose.

## 14. Engineer Creek Campground

km 194 (mi. 120) ▲ 🏕️ 🗺️

On the bluffs of Sapper Hill (Divii Ddhaa) Peregrine Falcons and Golden Eagles may be seen. The cliffs along the valley of the Ogilvie River are important for nesting Peregrine Falcons and Gyrfalcons. Please avoid disturbing them.

## 15. Ogilvie Ridge (Gwazhal Kak)

km 259 (mi. 161) 🏍️ ▲ 🐃

This viewpoint overlooks the Ogilvie/Peel watershed, another point on the Continental Divide. The area to the west drains via the Eagle, Porcupine and Yukon rivers to the Pacific; to the east, the rivers drain to the Mackenzie River and Beaufort Sea, part of the Arctic Ocean. Panels interpret the geological and cultural evolution of the region.

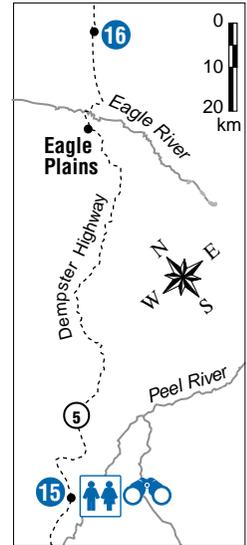
The short, contorted spruce trees seen from the viewpoint are krummholz (German for crooked wood). The many small trees found in a clump are only one tree; they share one root system. Winter winds constantly scour the trees with ice crystals. The abrasion marks on the trees are noticeable. The portion of the tree above the snowline is thin and damaged while the branches below the snow have denser needles.

**Eagle Plains Hotel, km 369 (mi. 229)**

## 16. Arctic Circle

km 406 (mi. 252) 🏍️ 🐃

66°33' latitude north marks the land of the midnight sun. Interpretive panels explain this phenomenon in further detail. In spring, watch for Grizzly Bears on the tundra. During summer, Short-eared Owls with their butterfly-like wingbeats can often be seen hunting in the open tundra. Look for Smith's Longspurs on the bare stretches of tundra north of the Arctic Circle. In fall and winter, this area abounds with the Porcupine Caribou Herd.



Dempster Highway, near the Arctic Circle

**17. Rock River Campground**

km 446 (mi. 277) ▲ 🌊

Formerly known as Cornwall Creek, this is a little pocket of boreal forest in an otherwise unforested area. Beyond here you will be travelling in open tundra country. Watch for Northern Wheatears. In winter and early spring, Snowy Owls can be seen in the Richardson Mountains.

**18. Yukon/Northwest Territories border**

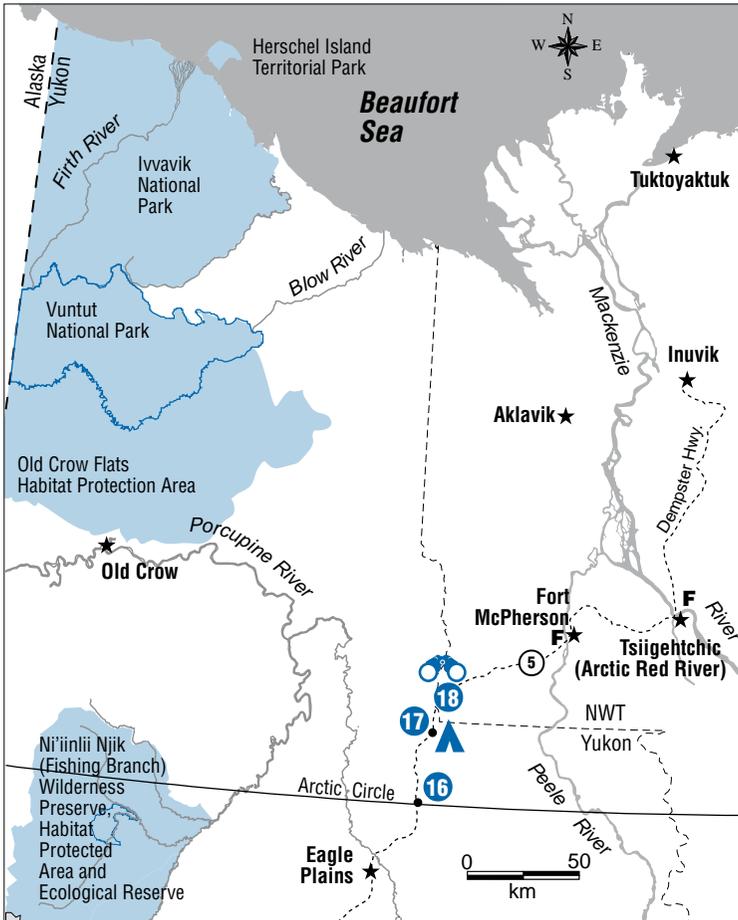
km 465 (mi 291) 🚲 🐻

You are now leaving the unglaciated landscape of the Eagle Plains. Once you cross the Richardson Mountains you will enter a landscape scoured by the Laurentide ice sheet over 10,000 years ago. Learn more about wildlife, Beringian flora and First Nations history at the kiosk here.

Peel River ferry, km 539 (mi. 335)

Fort McPherson, km 550 (mi. 342)

Mackenzie River ferry, km 608 (mi. 378)



HIGHWAY #5

Bearded Seal, Herschel Island, *Yukon government*Common Eider, *Yukon government*

### **Inuvik, NWT, km 733 (mi. 455)**

Inuvik is the centre of western arctic transportation.

### **Backcountry wildlife viewing**

#### **Herschel Island-Qikiqtaruk Territorial Park**

Qikiqtaruk is the Inuvialuit name for Herschel Island. Bowhead Whales, Bearded Seals and Ringed Seals and Barren-ground caribou are some of the species you may encounter. Watch for Peregrine Falcons, Rough-legged Hawks and Common Eiders as well as the beautiful blooms of the many arctic wildflowers. Canada's most westerly population of Black Guillemots nests at Pauline Cove.

#### **Ivvavik National Park**

Located on Yukon's arctic coast, this park has much to offer naturalists. Barren-ground Caribou, Grizzly Bear and Muskox are only a few of the mammal species that can be seen. Glaucous Gull, Common Eider and Long-tailed Jaeger nest in this arctic habitat.

#### **Vuntut National Park**

Vuntut National Park was established in 1995 following the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Land Claim Agreement. Ivvavik National Park, adjacent Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska and Vuntut National Park represent international efforts to protect a major northern ecosystem defined, in part, by the Porcupine Caribou Herd. Surrounded by protected areas, this 4,345 km<sup>2</sup> of wilderness is cooperatively managed by Parks Canada and the Vuntut Gwitchin Government of Old Crow.

#### **Old Crow Flats (Van Tat K'atr'anahtii) Habitat Protection Area**

Old Crow Flats is a 1.21-million-hectare Habitat Protection Area, internationally recognized for its important wetlands. It is known to the Gwitch'in as Van Tat, meaning "amongst lakes." Its wetlands contain more than 2,000 lakes, ponds and marshes. It is an important breeding and moulting area for half a million waterbirds.

#### **Ni'iinlii Njik (Fishing Branch) Territorial Park**

Chum Salmon travelling thousands of kilometres from the Bering Sea up to the Fishing Branch River bring nutrients that sustain a diverse ecosystem not often found in northern interior regions. Organize a Grizzly Bear viewing trip to the Yukon Parks camp at Bear Cave mountain in late fall. Ni'iinlii Njik Territorial Park is protected by Wilderness Preserve, Ecological Reserve, Habitat Protection Area and Vuntut Gwitchin Settlement Land.

Distances are measured from the junction with the Alaska Highway.

This road is not as heavily travelled as other roads in Yukon. This improves your chances of seeing wildlife from the road. The South Canol Road crosses many streams and rivers. These are usually excellent places to see waterfowl, Moose, Black Bears and Wolves. The North Canol Road continues north from Ross River to the Northwest Territories border. The highway is only maintained during the summer months and is impassable from late fall to late spring.

### 1. Natasin River (Nisutlin River)

km 68 (mi. 41)   

A short gravel road takes you to Natasin River (Nisutlin River) Recreation Site from where you can travel by boat to Nisutlin Bay (Natasin Ghe'yi Ta) on Teslin Lake. (See page 20.) This river offers a quiet and easy wilderness paddle of 180 km (108 mi.). Plan to take 4 to 6 days to complete the trip. Bald Eagles nest in tall trees on the riverbanks. Moose, bear and beavers are abundant along the shores. You may be fortunate and hear wolves serenade the night sky. Trumpeter Swans and other waterbirds breed in the numerous wetlands adjacent to the river. You can add a few days and a level of difficulty to your trip by putting in farther upstream on the Rose River (Ł'ex Hini).

### 2. Quiet Lake Campground

km 77 (mi. 47)  

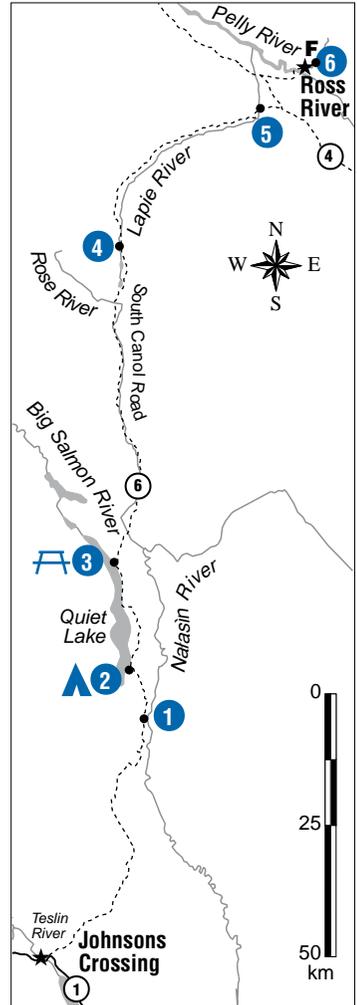
The boat launch here makes it easy to discover Quiet Lake (Chu La/Kit Den A) by boat or canoe. The shoreline of this big lake attracts many animals such as mink, moose and coyote, and songbirds such as the Tennessee Warbler, which is on the edge of its northwestern range here.

### 3. Quiet Lake Recreation Site

km 99 (mi. 60) 

A popular wilderness canoe journey on the Big Salmon River begins here and finishes in Carmacks, 350 km (218 mi.) away. The Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation call this river Gyò Cho Chú and to the Teslin Tlingit, it is T'à Tlèn Hini. Salmon spawn during August and September in this river and Grizzly Bears are often seen at that time.

Porcupine are found throughout Yukon but are most numerous in the north and central parts. They are easy to observe and photograph.



**4. Lapie Lakes**

km 163 (mi. 101)   

These are beautiful lakes to discover by canoe. A short dirt road takes you to a boat launch and an unmaintained camping area on the lake’s shore. Moose often come to graze on the shoreline. Waterfowl and Arctic Terns nest in the shallow bays around the lake. Listen for the call of the Savannah Sparrow in the shrubby willows and grasses around the lakeshore: “Sa sa vaaaaaanah sparrow.”



Arctic Terns

**5. Lapie River Crossing #2**

km 213 (mi. 132)   

There is a beautiful view of the Lapie River canyon at the bridge. On the east side of the road, north of the bridge, you will find a pullout with an interpretive panel. From this pullout, look at the mountains to the west across the road. Stone Sheep can sometimes be seen sunning themselves on the cliffs. For an even better view of the mountain, walk down the road, south of the bridge. (The Lapie River was named by George Dawson for an Iroquois First Nation canoe man who accompanied Robert Campbell, of the Hudson Bay Co., during his exploration of the Pelly River in 1843.)

**JUNCTION** with the Robert Campbell Highway, Highway #4, km 219 (mi. 133), see page 42

**6. North Canol Road**

In 1943, the American Army and its contractors built the Canol Road as a “tote” or supply road. The road paralleled an oil pipeline from Camp Canol, near the oil wells at Norman Wells, NWT. The pipeline was abandoned in 1945. The North Canol is a seasonal recreation road that provides access to the wilderness of the eastern central Yukon. It stretches 232 km from Ross River to Macmillan Pass, at the NWT border, and can be very steep and narrow at times. If the road gets slippery with rain, you are advised to pull over and wait until the surface dries before carrying on. There are no services on the North Canol. The road passes by several big lakes and the spectacular Itsi Range of mountains. The North Canol travels primarily through the traditional territory of the Kaska First Nation.



Savannah Sparrow, one of Yukon’s most widespread sparrows, can be found in any grassy and shrubby area, *Cameron Eckert*

\_ o \_ \_ u i \_ \_ e s

**Although these animals survive mostly on plant juices, they are better known as pesty “bloodsuckers.”**

Distances are measured from the Alaska Highway #1 at Jakes Corner. (See page 22.)

Agay Mene Territorial Park was created in 2005 and covers an area 725 km<sup>2</sup>. It is bounded on the west by the Atlin Road, the north by the Alaska Highway, and the south by the Yukon/British Columbia border. White Mountain and the campgrounds of Snafu and Tarfu lakes are all within the boundaries of the park.



Mountain Goat, Yukon government

### 1. White Mountain\*

km 9 (mi. 6)     

Watch for an interpretive sign on the east side of the road. White Mountain\* offers you an opportunity to view Mountain Goats. Scan the cliffs with binoculars or a telescope for goats perched high on the cliffs. If you want a closer look, follow the old road behind the interpretive sign. This road is an abandoned segment of the Atlin Road. It goes up the side of the mountain. At the highest point, there is an overlook of Little Atlin Lake, interpretive signs and a good view of Mount Minto and Mount Jubilee. Goats often come down to this area to feed. A predator of goats, the Golden Eagle, also nests on these sheer cliffs. Look for their huge nests in the rock crevices. Please don't hike on the face of the mountain in May and June when the goats are with their young.

This distinctive limestone mountain, was named after the Minister of the Interior, Thomas White, after whom White Pass is also named.

### 2. Snafu Lake Campground

km 26 (mi. 16)    

Snafu Lake can be accessed by a good 1-km dirt road from the Atlin road. The lakes system is a popular recreation area for Yukon residents and is an excellent flat-water canoe tripping location. The small bays, peninsulas and islands makes it a perfect location for beginners or families with children. Fish, Beaver and Osprey are highlights. The south-facing slopes are home to many plants that reach their northern limit here.

### 3. Tarfu Lake Campground

km 32 (mi. 20)    

Tarfu Lake can be accessed by a good 3.5-km dirt road from the Atlin Road. The lake is 5 km long by 1 km wide, making it an easy place to paddle and a nice hiking destination. Common Nighthawks and Mule Deer are commonly seen. Northern Pike can be viewed in the shallows.

**Atlin, B.C., km 98 (mi. 61)**



Black Bear at Liard

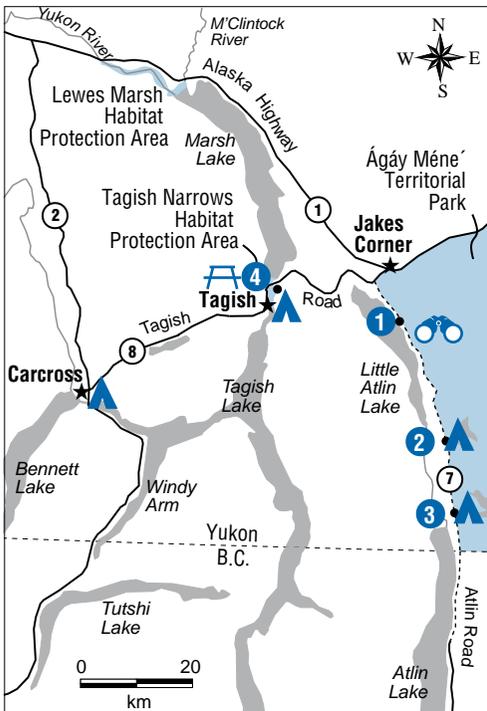
**4. Tagish Bridge Recreation Site and Tagish Narrows Habitat Protection Area**

*km 22 (mi. 14) from Jakes Corner  
37 km (23 mi) from Carcross*

Here the Tagish River, also known as the Six Mile River\*, flows into Marsh Lake. Waterfowl stage here in spring. It is one of the first places in Yukon where swans and other waterfowl appear in March. Located 1.5 km (1 mi.) northwest of the bridge is a Bald Eagle's nest. The bridge can be easily accessed from the campground. You will find a boat launch at the Tagish Campground just east of the bridge. This area is known for its Lake Trout, Whitefish, Lake Cisco and Arctic Grayling. The roadsides and meadows of the Tagish and Marsh lakes area are home to the distinctive black form of the Arctic Ground Squirrel. Unique to the Yukon River drainage and only commonly seen here.



Lynx, Yukon government



Black Ground Squirrel, Krista Funk



Snowshoe Hare, Jukka Jantunen

Distances are measured from the West Dawson ferry landing.

The Top of the World Highway takes you through some spectacular tundra landscapes on your way to Alaska. Because of the open nature of the landscape, wildlife viewing opportunities are everywhere. Stop occasionally along the way and scan the area with binoculars. You can never tell what may be hiding in the open tundra. Caribou, Red Fox and Gray Wolves may be well camouflaged in the habitat. Check for road conditions.



Peregrine Falcon, Gordon Court

## 1. Yukon River Campground

km 0.3 (mi. 0.2)   

An interpreted viewing deck overlooks the Yukon River. Across the river is a high cliff-face that is home to a family of Peregrine Falcons during the summer months. Look for white patches on the cliff face. You may be fortunate to see the male return from the hunt. Listen for high-pitched calls from high up in the sky.

## 2. Fortymile Caribou range

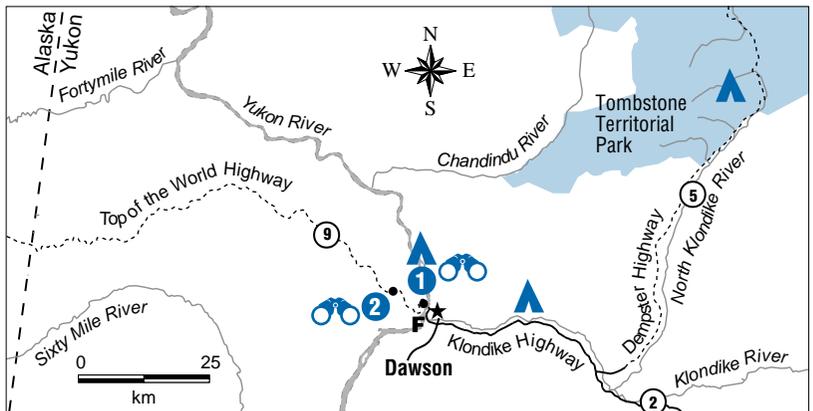
km 12.4 (mi. 7.7)  

There is a large rest-stop area on the south side of the road. A short trail leads to a deck overlooking the Yukon River valley. Panels interpret the Fortymile Caribou Herd that roams this valley and the history of the people of this area.



Red Fox, Kris Gustafson

**Canada/USA border, km 105 (mi. 65)**



Distances are measured from the Klondike Highway. This highway, that lies in the traditional territory of the Nacho Nyak Dun, provides easy access to alpine areas and many lakes. Take a few days to explore.

### 1. Bank Swallows

km 7 (mi. 4) 

A large colony of Bank Swallows nest on the silty cliffs of this river bank. Bank Swallows can be found in similar locations along all Yukon rivers.

### Moose Calving Key Habitat Area

km 4 to 16 (mi. 2 to 10)

This is a no-hunting zone to protect moose in this important calving area. In the spring, this is a likely place to view moose.

### 2. Devils Elbow Wetland

km 10 (mi. 6)    

Discover the age-old movements of the moose, the river and the Nacho Nyak Dun, “the Big River People.” Interpretive panels lead you on a 750-m (less than 0.5 mi.) walk to a viewing deck overlooking the Stewart River Valley and its important wetland habitat for moose and waterfowl. The trailhead is located in the rest area to the south of the road. Bring your binoculars.

### 3. Stewart River Lookout

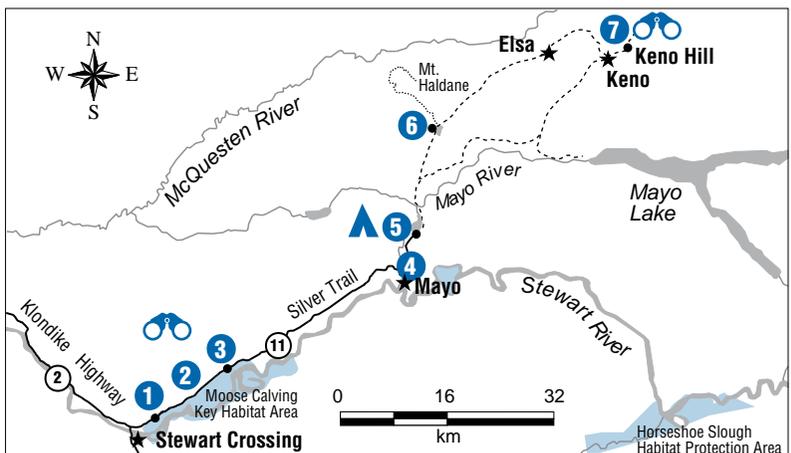
km 19 (mi. 12)  

Waterfowl nest in the adjacent sloughs, while swallows feed overhead. In the evening or early morning, you may be lucky to see moose feeding on aquatic vegetation.

### Backcountry wildlife viewing: Wind, Bonnet Plume and Snake rivers

From Mayo, you can charter an aircraft that will take you to the Wind, Bonnet Plume or Snake rivers. These tributaries of the Peel River offer great wilderness canoeing opportunities, but require whitewater-paddling skills. This is a pristine corner of Yukon where there are no roads and few developments. All rivers are clear with many good campsites. The many alpine hiking opportunities

improve your chances of seeing Caribou, Moose, Wolves, Grizzly Bears and ptarmigan. These rivers are corridors through the richest natural areas in the territory, with endless wildlife viewing opportunities.



#### 4. Binet House, Mayo

km 52 (mi. 32)  

A restored heritage building in the community of Mayo (corner of Second and Centre streets), Binet House is home to displays on area history, wildlife, geology and local permafrost studies. The exhibit features a three-dimensional map of the region. Nearby is a monument marking the start of the Prince of Wales Trail and the local section of the Trans Canada Trail. Visit the Binet House annex for tourist information and local arts and crafts (open May-September).



Pika

#### 5. Five Mile Lakes Campground

km 57 (mi. 35)  

A trail around the lake provides access to a wetland that is particularly active in early June. Mule Deer are sometimes seen on the hillsides. Across the Silver Trail, Lilypad Lake is an important stopover for migrating waterfowl.



Both Ermine and their close cousins the Least Weasel range throughout Yukon. Tiny (less than 30 cm) ferocious hunters, they sometimes capture prey larger than themselves. During winter, they are white with a black-tipped tail.

#### 6. Mount Haldane

km 76 (mi. 47)  

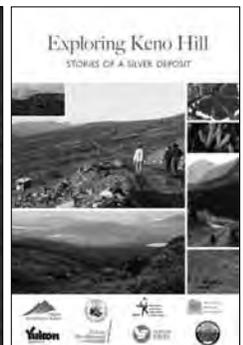
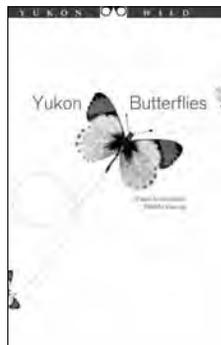
Watch for the turnoff to the northeast just before Halfway Lakes. Follow a gravel road 3.5 km (2 mi.) to the trailhead. This 6.5 km (4 mi.) trail leads to the summit of Mount Haldane which offers wonderful opportunities to view subalpine fauna and flora.

Estimated time is 6 hours return. A trail guide is available at the Binet House in Mayo.

#### 7. Signpost Hill\*, Keno City\*

km 111 (mi. 69)   

This area is renowned for its arctic butterflies, but there is far more to see. Collared Pika and Hoary Marmots are commonly seen. The Signpost Road, which can be driven, leads 10.5 km (6.5 mi.) to the milepost sign on top of Keno Hill. Learn more about alpine wildlife at the Keno Hill Alpine Interpretive Centre, beside the Keno City Mining Museum. Pick up your copy of *Viewing Alpine Wildlife on Keno Hill* and *Exploring Keno Hill: Stories of a silver deposit*, or any of the other free brochures.



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# INDEX: SPECIES WITH LOCATIONS

This is a partial list of Yukon wildlife and where to look for them. The symbols indicate in which habitat that animal can be found. In some cases, a species of animal might occur all over Yukon, so individual locations are not specifically listed. Instead, read up about their habitat in order to know where to look for them. Sometimes there are specific nesting sites or key locations where an animal is likely to be found; these sites are listed below the species. Bold numbers indicate there is a photograph on that page.

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Spring caribou viewing by snowmobile, Yukon government

# CONTACTS

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Haines Junction (867) 634-2345  
Mayo (867) 996-2926  
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Vuntut National Park (867) 667-3910  
[www.pc.gc.ca/pn-np/yt/vuntut/index\\_e.asp](http://www.pc.gc.ca/pn-np/yt/vuntut/index_e.asp)

Ivvavik National Park (867) 777-8800  
[www.pc.gc.ca/pn-np/yt/ivvavik/index\\_e.asp](http://www.pc.gc.ca/pn-np/yt/ivvavik/index_e.asp)

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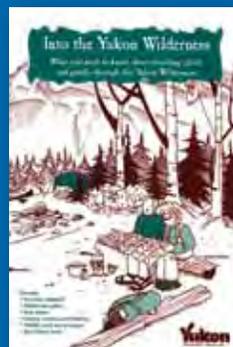
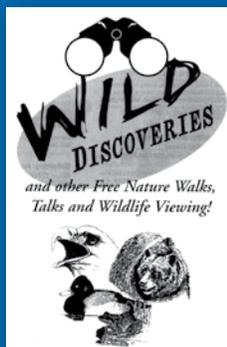
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(867) 633-2922, fax (867) 633-2425  
Located at km 8, Takhini Hot Springs Road



Fields of Draba in the Alsek Valley

You can get more information about wildlife viewing, backcountry travel and events from *Wild Discoveries* and *Into the Yukon Wilderness*.

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