

NORTHWESTERN  
COLORADO  
TRAIL GUIDE



COLORADO

BIRDING TRAIL



# Meet the Partners

## Audubon Colorado

Audubon Colorado exists to inspire and work with people to conserve, restore and enjoy natural habitats in our state. We focus on birds and other wildlife through education, research, careful use of our resources, and by serving as strong voices for the natural world. [co.audubon.org](http://co.audubon.org)



## Colorado Parks and Wildlife

Our Mission is to perpetuate the wildlife resources of the state, to provide a quality state parks system, and to provide enjoyable and sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities that educate and inspire current and future generations to serve as active stewards of Colorado's natural resources. [cpw.state.co.us](http://cpw.state.co.us)



Colorado Field Ornithologists

## Colorado Field Ornithologists

CFO is a non-profit statewide organization open to anyone interested in birds, including recreational birders and professional ornithologists. The diversity of our members' interests creates a dynamic organization and offers learning opportunities for all. [www.cfo-link.org](http://www.cfo-link.org)

## Great Outdoors Colorado

Known as GOCO to its friends, this board provides Colorado Lottery funds for worthwhile projects, statewide. Without the GOCO funds allocated for the printing of this Colorado Birding Trail Guide, the project could not have been completed. Show your support for wildlife by playing the Colorado Lottery! [www.goco.org](http://www.goco.org)



DON'T FORGET TO PLAY!



## National Park Service

The National Park Service preserves the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education and inspiration of this and future generations. Colorado features 12 unique NPS sites. [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)



## Playa Lakes Joint Venture

The Playa Lakes Joint Venture's (PLJV) mission is to conserve playa lakes, other wetlands and associated landscapes through partnerships for the benefit of birds, other wildlife and people. [www.pljv.org](http://www.pljv.org)



## Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory

Our mission is to conserve birds of the Rocky Mountains, Great Plains, and Intermountain West and the habitats on which they depend through research, monitoring, education, and outreach. [www.rmbo.org](http://www.rmbo.org)



## USDA Forest Service

Our mission is to lead in the conservation and wise use of the nation's forests and grasslands. We provide outdoor enthusiasts with amazing opportunities on 11 National Forests and 2 National Grasslands in Colorado. [www.fs.fed.us](http://www.fs.fed.us)



## CryBaby Design

CryBaby Design is a design studio specializing in web design & development, branding and print design for clients ranging from non-profit organizations to the Fortune 500. A great deal of their work focuses on conservation, ecology, wildlife and organic/natural lifestyle industries. [www.crybabydesign.com](http://www.crybabydesign.com)



## Bill Schmoker

Bill Schmoker is a science teacher, birder, and skilled photographer. Many of the wildlife images in this guide are provided through his generosity. You can learn more about Bill by visiting his website. [www.schmoker.org](http://www.schmoker.org)

### Additional Credits:

Natban Pieplow and Andrew Spencer for all their hard work, Trina Romero and Dean Riggs from Colorado Parks & Wildlife, Glenn Giroir for additional photography, and the friendly people of Colorado who have embraced and implemented the Colorado Birding Trail vision for healthy wildlife resources and vigorous economies in their communities.

# The Colorado Birding Trail

Join us on the Colorado Birding Trail to experience a wildlife adventure of your own! Explore Colorado's incredible diversity of wildlife and the habitats they depend on in unbelievably spectacular settings. From the dry grasslands of the short-grass prairie to the snowy peaks of the Rocky Mountains, Colorado has nearly 1,000 species of wildlife for you to seek in an endless variety of fantastic habitats.

Colorado's wildlife - It's something to see! From the sleek pronghorn of the vast, high plains prairie to the camouflaged White-tailed Ptarmigan of the alpine tundra, an exciting outdoor adventure awaits you on the Colorado Birding Trail. The easily-navigated web site, Birding Trail Guide and trail maps will assist you in planning your personalized wildlife viewing experience.



### Amenities Legend

- \* Site may require a fee to visit. Please see below for information on visiting particular sites.
- Some handicapped facilities are available.
- Hiking trails provide access to wildlife habitats.
- On-site services available.
- On-site facilities available.
- Staffed facility available during business hours.
- Provide enhanced wildlife viewing opportunities for visitors.
- On-site facilities available.
- Camping permitted - sites may vary from primitive camping to RV sites with hook-ups. There may be an additional fee for camping. Call specific sites for more information.
- Hunting licenses are required for all hunters.
- A fishing license is required for people between the ages of 16 and 64. Free licenses are available for seniors, age 64 and older.

### \*Admission:

**State Wildlife Areas (SWA):** No Fee. Open to the public for wildlife-based recreation subject to management closures, as posted.  
**State Parks:** You must purchase a day pass or have a State Parks Annual Pass for your vehicle.  
**National Parks:** You must purchase a day pass or have an Annual Pass for your vehicle.  
**US Forest Service:** Most picnic and campgrounds require a user fee.  
**Private Sites:** For most sites, contact the owner at least 48 HOURS prior to visit. Fee depends upon services/facilities provided. Please remember, many private sites are working ranches as well as a private residence, and there may be times when the landowner cannot accommodate visits. While you are on a private site, remember to stay on roads, leave gates as you find them (whether open or closed), and refrain from taking anything off the ranch or leaving trash behind.







# Browns Park Trail



## Colorado's Last Frontier

It's five hours to Browns Park from Denver by car, but it might as well be fifty. The few people who venture as far as the state's northwesternmost corner are richly rewarded. Here you will find the magnificent Gates of Lodore, where the Green River enters the soaring canyon that cuts through Dinosaur National Monument. To the north is Irish Canyon, even less traveled, where Canyon Wrens and Chukars can be found alongside ancient petroglyphs. In between is Browns Park National Wildlife Refuge, a surprising oasis of green in this arid land, where ducks, shorebirds, and other water-loving wildlife congregate year-round. This is a land of jackrabbits and mule deer, Sage Sparrows and Pinyon Jays, rough dirt roads and precious few signs of civilization – a wonderful place to experience Colorado's natural beauty.



## Sites on the Browns Park Trail:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Oxbow State Trust Land                       | 5. Browns Park National Wildlife Refuge |
| 2. Dry Mountain Road                            | 6. Irish Canyon                         |
| 3. Douglas Mountain                             | 7. Diamond Peak area                    |
| 4. Dinosaur National Monument (Gates of Lodore) |   |





### 1. Oxbow State Trust Land

**Description:**

Oxbow State Trust Land is one of the best locations along this trail for shorebirds. In addition to mudflats present when water levels are low, there is a good marsh with Yellow-headed Blackbird, rails, and dabbling ducks. The sage flats you walk through to get to the oxbow are full of Sage Sparrow and Sage Thrashers, as well as Brewer's and Lark Sparrows.

**Directions:**

From Maybell, travel 17 miles northwest on CO 318 to the parking area, on the left.

**Access:**

Mar 1 - Aug 15



### 2. Dry Mountain Road

**Description:**

This road into BLM land passes through some of the highest quality 'PJ' in the county. You could see any of the birds which call this habitat home, from Pinyon Jay to Juniper Titmouse to Black-throated Gray Warbler. Sage flats pepper some of the draws and forest edges, and Brewer's, Sage, and Lark Sparrows, Sage Thrasher, and perhaps Greater Sage-Grouse are found here as well.

**Directions:**

From Maybell, travel northwest on CO 318 for 28 miles to Dry Mountain Road, on the right.

**Access:**

Open all year

### 3. Douglas Mountain

**Description:**

Douglas Mountain is the only location in this part of Colorado where you can bird ponderosa pine woodland. This also means it's the only place in this part of Colorado where you can see birds like Pygmy Nuthatch and Western Bluebird. Other possible species include Williamson's Sapsucker, Wild Turkey, Red Crossbill, and Townsend's Solitaire.

**Directions:**

From Maybell, travel northwest on CO 318 for 34 miles to Moffat CR 12 and turn left. Go 5.5 miles to CR 10 and turn left. In 3 miles turn right on CR116. The birding begins after about 5 miles on CR 116.

**Access:**

Closed during the winter months

### 4. Dinosaur National Monument

**(Gates of Lodore)**

**Description:**

The Gates of Lodore may be Colorado's least known scenic gem. Here the Green River cuts right into Diamond Mountain, creating a giant red gateway into a sheer, precipitous canyon. The drive in takes one through some riparian habitat, where species like Yellow-breasted Chat and Lazuli Bunting can be found. Along the trail at the campground look for Juniper Titmouse, Pinyon Jay, Black-throated Gray Warbler, and Gray Flycatcher.

**Directions:**

From Maybell, travel northwest on CO 318 for 40 miles to Moffat CR 10. Go left for 0.6 miles to CR 34. Go right for 8.5 miles, to the entrance of the National Monument.

**Access:**

Open all year



### 5. Browns Park National Wildlife Refuge

**Description:**

Browns Park is an extensive area of wetlands and riparian habitat unique along this trail. Birding is good along the auto tour route, where pullouts provide an opportunity to scan some small ponds, riverside riparian, and extensive sage flats. Also, be sure to check the trails around the headquarters, which enter excellent riparian habitat, and the drier terrain around the famous Swinging Bridge. This is the best area on the trail to find Willow Flycatcher, Yellow-breasted Chat, and a wide variety of waterfowl.

**Directions:**

From Maybell, travel northwest on CO 318 for 60 miles, where the road to the headquarters heads south. The road to the Swinging Bridge (CR 83) heads south just before this point and goes 2.5 miles to the bridge. The auto loop leaves from CO 318, 10 miles east of CR 83, and loops back to CR 83.

**Access:**

Open all year



### 6. Irish Canyon

**Description:**

Limestone Ridge, cut by the dramatic Irish Canyon, is among the most scenic areas on the trail. Covered in high quality pinyon-juniper, mixed with abundant cliffs and rocks, Irish Canyon is the best

place in northwestern Colorado to look for Chukar. The typical 'PJ' birds are also present, and be sure not to miss the Native American petroglyphs at the southern end of the canyon, complete with interpretive signs.

**Directions:**

From Maybell, travel northwest on CO 318 for 41.5 miles to Moffat CR 10N, on the right. Take CR 10N for six miles to the canyon.

**Access:**

Open all year



### 7. Diamond Peak area

**Description:**

As far northwest as one can get in Colorado, and rarely visited, this is a good place to get away from it all. One can bird Diamond Peak, which features a thick mixed conifer and aspen woodland, or the Wiggins Unit of the Browns Park SWA, against the Utah border.

**Directions:**

From Maybell, travel northwest on CO 318 for 41.5 miles to Moffat CR 10N. Go right, and in 17 miles go left on CR 72. Go approximately 9 miles to the birding areas.

**Access:**

Closed during the winter months

# Did You KNOW?

## Bighorn Sheep: Rocky Mountain and Desert Dwellers

*Ovis canadensis*



The bighorn sheep is Colorado's official animal. Colorado has the largest population of bighorn in North America, so you have a good chance of spotting one.

There are two species of bighorn sheep in Colorado. The Rocky Mountain species is native, and the desert species was introduced near the Colorado National Monument in 1979. Both species may be hunted, but it is carefully regulated.

The Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep can be seen in many areas of the state. One unique feature in northwestern Colorado is the opportunity to view the desert bighorn sheep. Visit the Colorado National Monument to have an opportunity to view the desert bighorns. When you enter the Monument, inquire about the best area to see bighorn sheep during the time you are visiting.

These sturdy, majestic sheep quickly flee from people. Be prepared for viewing with a good set of binoculars or a spotting scope. Hike without your pets, as bighorns will see them as a predator and will quickly leave the area.



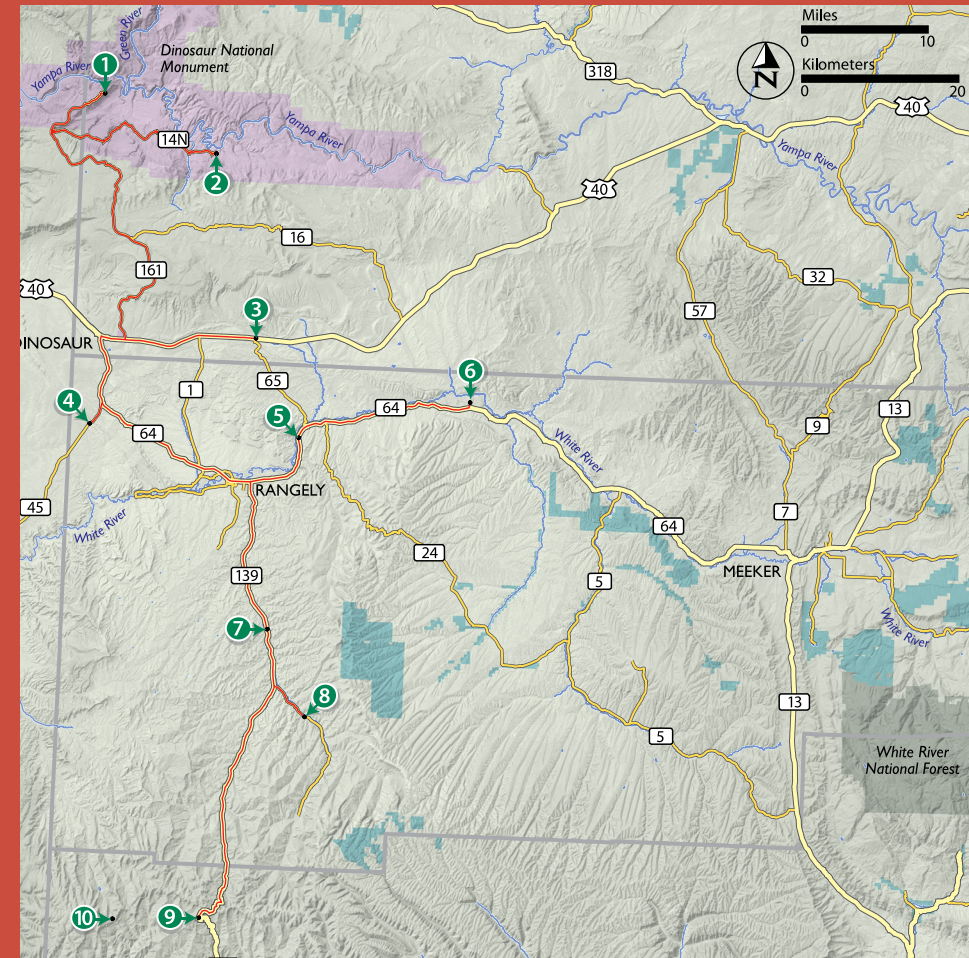


# Dinosaur Trail



## Fossils, Canyons, and Wildlife

Almost everywhere in this dry landscape is evidence of the ancient past. The colorful sandstone in this region encases some of America's richest and most famous fossil beds, the namesake of Dinosaur National Monument and its nearest town. Echo Canyon is Colorado's answer to the Grand Canyon – broad and braided, carved out of thousands of layers of sedimentary rock by the Green River. On top of the fossil-bearing rock is a mosaic of thriving modern animal and plant communities. On this trail you may find characteristic species of the northern Great Basin, such as white-tailed prairie-dogs and Greater Sage-Grouse, alongside creatures of the southwestern junipers, including Gray Vireos, Scott's Orioles, and even the rare and elusive ringtail. Along the river bottoms, Lazuli Buntings mingle with the occasional Indigo, and Gray Catbirds vie for song perches with Yellow-breasted Chats and Blue Grosbeaks. Few places can cater so well to both a paleontologist's and a naturalist's tastes.



## Sites on the Dinosaur Trail:

- |  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. Dinosaur National Monument<br>(Harper's Corner and Echo Park) | 6. Stadtman Mesa  |
| 2. Dinosaur National Monument<br>(Yampa Bench Road)              | 7. Canyon Pintado |
| 3. Martin Gap  | 8. Douglas Creek  |
| 4. Mormon Gap  | 9. Douglas Pass   |
| 5. Kenney Reservoir  | 10. Baxter Pass   |





### 1. Dinosaur National Monument (Harper's Corner and Echo Park)

#### Description:

The southern entrance to the National Monument heads north near the town of Dinosaur and offers access to amazing scenery, excellent sagebrush and pinyon-juniper woodland, and riparian. The best birding is along the trail at Harper's Corner and in the riparian at Echo Park. Look also for Greater Sage-Grouse along the entrance road.

#### Directions:

From US 40 just east of Dinosaur, head north on Harpers Corner Road. The Echo Park Road is on the right in 24.5 miles (and descends 11.5 miles to the river), and Harpers Corner is in 27.5 miles.

#### Access:

Closed during the winter months



### 2. Dinosaur National Monument (Yampa Bench Road)

#### Description:

Billed as a 4x4 only road, this remote and spectacularly gorgeous byway can sometimes be passable in a passenger vehicle with care. The road passes through a variety of pinyon-juniper, montane shrubland, and semi-desert shrubland habitats, with birds such as Green-tailed Towhee, Plumbeous Vireo, Virginia's Warbler, and Canyon Wren.

#### Directions:

From just east of the town of Dinosaur along US-40 near the Utah border, head north on Harper's Corner Road. The road is in Colorado for 21.5 miles from US-40, then crosses into Utah for 4 miles where the Echo Park Road takes off to the east. Follow this for just over 7 miles to Moffat CR 14N, on the right. This is the start of the Yampa Bench Road, which travels for 45 miles or so back to US-40 at Elk Springs.

#### Access:

Closed during the winter months



### 3. Martin Gap

#### Description:

Just east of the town of Dinosaur, a dramatic stone 'reef' rises out of the desert floor and though it appears nearly impregnable, there is an opening at Martin Gap. Here you can bird sage flats and thick pinyon-juniper woodland; look for Sage Sparrow, Pinyon Jay, Canyon Wren, and more.

#### Directions:

From Dinosaur, head east on US 40 for 7.5 miles and go left on an unmarked county road. Go to a 'T' and take a left. Follow this road as it turns into an unimproved road for a little over a mile, to the Gap.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 4. Mormon Gap

#### Description:

Just outside of Rangely, this area of sparse pinyon-juniper and desert habitat is a good place to look for species such as Say's Phoebe, Lark Sparrow, Black-throated Sparrow, and Loggerhead Shrike. Rarer species sightings might include Scott's Oriole or Burrowing Owl in one of the white-tailed prairie-dog colonies. Watch for white-tailed jackrabbits and pronghorn.

#### Directions:

From Rangely, head west on CO 64 for 12.5 miles to Rio Blanco CR 21, on the left. This road goes 4.8 miles to the state line; bird anywhere along here.

#### Access:

Open all year

### 5. Kenney Reservoir

#### Description:

Kenney Reservoir can be good for waterfowl and may have a few terns and gulls. Scoping the west end of the lake may give you a loon or grebe in migration, as well as diving ducks. The easternmost portion of the lake, a Watchable Wildlife area, has some marshy land with the possibility of Marsh Wren, Yellow-headed Blackbird, or rails, and maybe an ibis or heron.

#### Directions:

From Rangely, go east on CO 64 for 5 miles to Kenney Reservoir, on the left.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 6. Stadtman Mesa

#### Description:

A beautiful area of pristine pinyon-juniper woodland, Stadtman Mesa is a good location to search for the typical suite of pinyon-juniper birds, including Pinyon Jay, Juniper Titmouse, Black-throated Gray Warbler, and more. Rocky areas may have Rock

and Canyon Wrens. At night listen for Common Poorwill, and, with a good deal of luck, Northern Pygmy-Owl.

#### Directions:

From Rangely, go east on CO 64 for 25 miles to the various BLM roads in the area and turn left. The whole area is covered in good habitat.

#### Access:

Open all year

### 7. Canyon Pintado

#### Description:

This is an area of historical importance managed by the BLM; "pintado" refers to the abundant Native American petroglyphs. A number of pullouts with interpretive signs dot the area along CO 139. The best spot for birding is the Cow Canyon site, a couple of miles off the highway.

#### Directions:

From Rangely, take CO 139 south for about 6 miles. There are a number of marked pullouts along a 7-mile stretch of the highway on the left side.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 8. Douglas Creek

#### Description:

Douglas Creek is an island of riparian habitat in the middle of pinyon-juniper woodland. Though privately owned, it can be partly birded from the road. Listen for birds hard to find in the area such as Yellow-breasted Chat, Bullock's Oriole, Downy Woodpecker, and others. The pinyon-juniper forest, especially further up the creek, is on public property.

#### Directions:

From Rangely, take CO 139 south for 17 miles to Rio Blanco CR 27 and turn left. Anywhere along this road is good, especially after 4-5 miles.

#### Access:

Open all year

### 9. Douglas Pass

#### Description:

Douglas Pass offers the only high elevation access on this trail. Pinyon-juniper woodland here has Juniper Titmouse, Black-throated Gray Warblers, and at night Common Poorwill. Higher up the forest turns to mixed conifer and aspen; look for Williamson's and Red-naped Sapsuckers, Dusky Grouse, and

Flammulated Owls at night.

#### Directions:

Douglas Pass is along CO 139, 40 miles south of Rangely and 33 miles north of Loma.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 10. Baxter Pass

#### Description:

Driving this remote road from Vernal, Utah to Loma, Colorado is time consuming, but can be well worth it. The lower portions of this road are an excellent location for Chukar. The extensive pinyon-juniper woodland portion of the road has some Scott's Orioles, and Gray Vireo is a distinct possibility.

#### Directions:

From the north, take US 40 into Utah and look for the brown sign that says Baxter Pass and Bonanza (Hwy 2776) in the town of Jensen. From here it is 57 miles to the state line. From the south, take exit 11 off I-70, head north to US-6, and follow the signs to Baxter Pass.

#### Access:

Most of the area is closed during the winter





# Elkhead Trail



## The Northwest Passage

Carved out of the extreme northwestern corner of Colorado, Moffat County is a sprawling quadrangle nearly the size of Connecticut with fewer than 15,000 human residents, most of them in the town of Craig. This trail cuts through the heart of it, weaving across a diverse and dramatic landscape of sagebrush steppe sliced through by canyons large and small. It rises as high as the spruce-covered crest of the Elkhead Mountains and drops as low as the lush cottonwood bottomlands along the Yampa River. Three species of lekking grouse in spring, nesting Sandhill Cranes in summer, and one of the state's densest populations of deer and elk make this an excellent place for wildlife watchers in any season.



## Sites on the Elkhead Trail:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Divide Creek Reservoir                      | 6. Loudy Simpson Park                           |
| 2. Dinosaur National Monument (Deerlodge Park) | 7. Yampa River State Park (river access points) |
| 3. Cedar Mountain                              | 8. Elkhead Reservoir and State Park             |
| 4. WFMC Gravel Pit                             | 9. Elkhead Ranch                                |
| 5. Craig Station Inlet Pond                    | 10. Black Mountain (Elkhead Mountains)          |





### 1. Divide Creek Reservoir

#### Description:

When this small reservoir has water it can be a magical oasis. Various species of ducks, shorebirds, and riparian species (such as Yellow-breasted Chat and Lazuli Bunting) are possible. The drive in passes through extensive sage habitat, and Greater Sage-Grouse are sometimes seen here.

#### Directions:

From Massadona, travel east on US 40 for 3 miles, to a BLM road just past a Watchable Wildlife sign, on the right. Pass through the gate and go 1.2 miles to another right. Go 0.4 miles to the reservoir.

#### Access:

Open all year

### 2. Dinosaur National Monument (Deerlodge Park)

#### Description:

More often used as a rafting launch site for people floating the Yampa, Deerlodge is also one of the most extensive riparian patches in northwestern Colorado, along with pinyon-juniper forest and cliffs. In the riparian areas look for Black-headed Grosbeak, Cooper's Hawk, and Eastern Kingbird, while the 'PJ' hosts Virginia's and Black-throated Gray Warblers, and Rock and Canyon Wrens.

#### Directions:

From Maybell, go west on US 40 for 16 miles to Deerlodge Road. Turn right and go 12 miles to the park.

#### Access:

Closed during the winter months



### 3. Cedar Mountain

#### Description:

Just to the north of Craig, this is a good place to find pinyon-juniper habitat. A variety of hiking and biking trails crisscross the mountain. Any of the 'PJ' birds are possible, including Pinyon Jay, Juniper Titmouse, and Black-throated Gray Warbler. There are also some patches of montane shrubland nearby.

#### Directions:

In Craig, at the junction of Victory Way and US 40, go north on Victory Way for seven miles to the turnoff for Cedar Mountain, on the right.

#### Access:

Open all year, daylight hours



### 4. WPMC Gravel Pit

#### Description:

Just south of Craig, these gravel ponds are among the best waterbird spots in the area. They are on private property so scan from the road. Look for a good variety of dabblers, divers, an occasional loon or grebe, and shorebirds when the water is low. This is a good place for Barrow's Goldeneye during the winter.

#### Directions:

From Craig, head south on CO 13 for 3.5 miles to Moffat CR 107. The gravel pits are on the right (west) side of the highway.

#### Access:

Open all year, daylight hours

### 5. Craig Station Inlet Pond

#### Description:

Just south of Craig, this pond, while on private property, is viewable from a public road. Being somewhat deep, it is good for diving ducks, loons, and grebes. Even rarer divers such as Canvasback and Barrow's Goldeneye have been seen here. It is best visited during the late fall and early spring.

#### Directions:

From Craig, head south on CO 13 for 3.5 miles to Moffat CR 107 and turn left. Go 0.6 miles to the pond on the right.

#### Access:

Open all year, daylight hours

### 6. Loudy Simpson Park

#### Description:

Welcome to northwestern Colorado's best migrant trap! Excellent riparian habitat, combined with the island effect of being in the middle of Craig, makes this a superb place to look for a variety of passerine migrants during spring and fall migration. A half-mile loop trail goes through the best habitat, as well as a two-mile trail around the perimeter of the park. Wintertime is quite a bit slower, but look for sparrow flocks.

#### Directions:

In Craig, take Ranney St. south from US 40 to the Yampa River. Cross the river and turn immediately right into the parking area.

#### Access:

Open all year, daylight hours



### 7. Yampa River State Park (river access points)

#### Description:

Though it has many access points, the headquarters area of this park is the best for birding, featuring a Visitor's Center and good trail system. It is also a good spot to camp near Craig or Hayden. Look for species such as Yellow-breasted Chat, Lazuli Bunting, and others. Sandhill Cranes can often be seen in wet fields nearby.

#### Directions:

The park headquarters is on the south side of US 40, 2.5 miles west of Hayden, and 14 miles east of Craig.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 8. Elkhead Reservoir and State Park

#### Description:

This large reservoir can sometimes be good for ducks, loons, and grebes. When the water is low, look for migrating shorebirds. Surrounding sage flats contain Sage Thrasher and sometimes Greater Sage-Grouse, while willow riparian just to the east might have Sharp-tailed Grouse during the winter.

#### Directions:

From Craig, go east on US 40 for 6 miles to Moffat CR 29. Turn left and go 4 miles to CR 28, and turn right. Follow this road to the reservoir.

#### Access:

Closed during the winter months



### 9. Elkhead Ranch

#### Description:

This private working ranch includes 9,500 scenic acres of pastures, creeks, forests, wetlands and meadows. The ranch has been in operation since 1883 and was designated a state historic site in 1996. Most of the ranch is now protected under a conservation easement.

#### Directions:

From Hayden, drive north on Walnut St/River View Dr which turns into CR 80. There are signs for Elkhead Ranch at every turn and it is about 16 miles from Hayden. Follow CR 76 and CR 36. Generally keep heading towards the Bears Ears Peaks. Turn right onto CR 56 and the ranch will be on your right after crossing the bridge at Elkhead Creek.

#### Access:

Contact owner prior to visit at 970-276-3920



### 10. Black Mountain (Elkhead Mountains)

#### Description:

An isolated mountain range just north of Craig, the Elkheads provide a good variety of coniferous forests with species such as Dusky Grouse, Pine Grosbeak, and Gray and Steller's Jays, among others. The lower slopes are covered in sagebrush; montane meadows higher up are excellent for both birds and butterflies.

#### Directions:

From Craig, go north on CO 13 for 13 miles to Moffat CR 27 and take a right. This road crosses the mountains, with forest starting after 10 miles.

#### Access:

Closed during the winter months

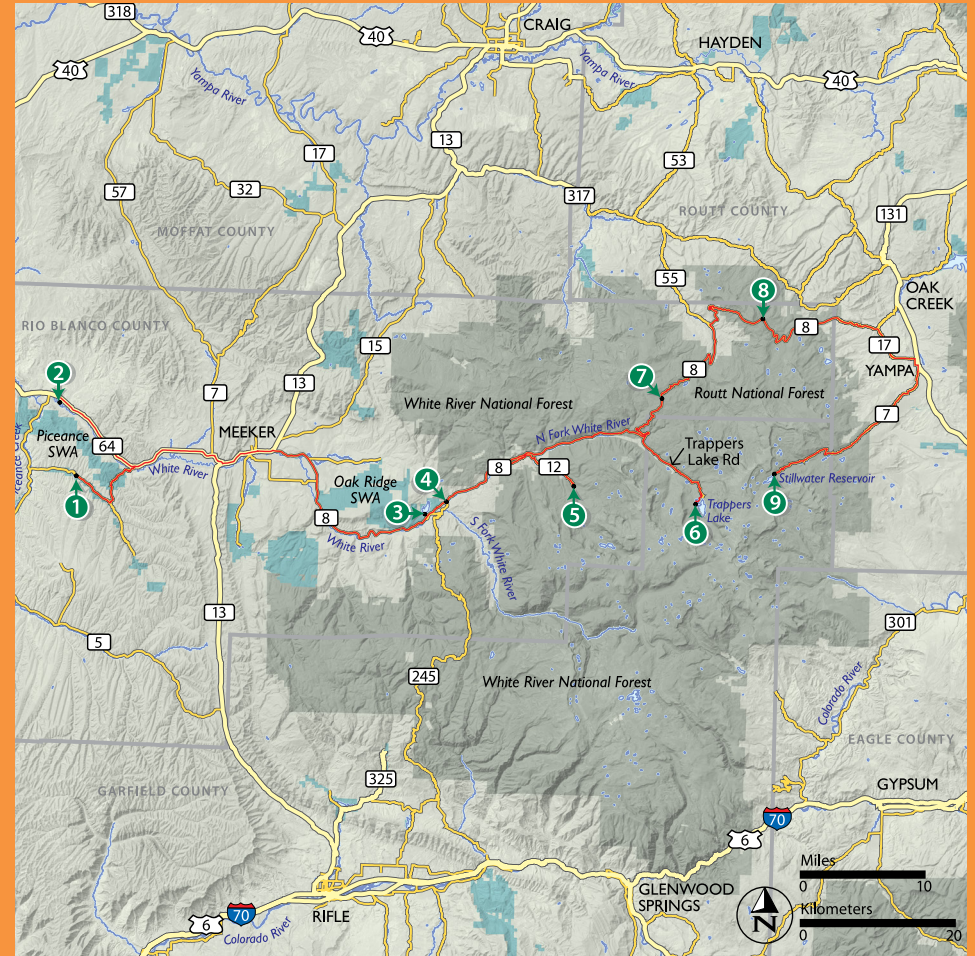


# Flat Tops Trail



## Difficult to Top

Even among native Coloradans, the Flat Tops are a well-kept secret. Flat though their tops may be, these impressive mountains are the centerpiece of the second-largest wilderness area in the state. They include a vast landscape of subalpine forest, alpine tundra, sheer cliffs, and sparkling lakes. Here you can hike the death-defying trail across the Devil's Causeway, where thousand-foot drops are separated from one another by a knife ridge only a few feet wide. You can visit Trappers Lake, one of the only known breeding sites in Colorado for Barrow's Goldeneye, and explore aspen stands with nesting Purple Martins and oak scrublands where Dusky Grouse are common. You can see Band-tailed Pigeons winging their way overhead. This is a special area, well worth the effort to get to.



## Sites on the Flat Tops Trail:

1. Piceance State Wildlife Area
2. Rio Blanco Lake State Wildlife Area
3. Oak Ridge State Wildlife Area Lake (Avery Unit)
4. Buford Area
5. Big Marvine Peak
6. Trappers Lake
7. Ripple Creek Pass
8. Duncley Pass and Vaughn Lake
9. Stillwater Reservoir and the Devil's Causeway





### 1. Piceance State Wildlife Area

#### Description:

This spread-out SWA has a number of units, but the Little Hills Experiment Station is probably the most worth visiting. Among the cliffs and pinyon-juniper forest you can usually find White-throated Swift, Lazuli Bunting, and Rock and Canyon Wrens. In the marshy riparian areas look for Yellow-headed and Red-winged Blackbirds, sparrows, and sometimes a few shorebirds at the ponds.

#### Directions:

From Meeker, head west on CO 64 for 18.6 miles to CR 5 and turn left. Go 7.3 miles to CR 22 and turn left. Go about 4 miles to the wildlife area.

#### Access:

Open all year, daylight hours



### 2. Rio Blanco Lake State Wildlife Area

#### Description:

Rio Blanco Lake just west of Meeker is the best lake in the area for waterbirds and shorebirds. The best area for shorebirds is along the north shore when the water level is low. Several species of finches, flycatchers, and warblers may be found in the cottonwoods and shrubs between the lake and the river. While driving to or from the lake, keep an eye out for Bald Eagles and Sandhill Cranes.

#### Directions:

From Meeker, head west on CO 64 for 18.5 miles to the lake, on the left.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 3. Oak Ridge SWA Lake (Avery Unit)

#### Description:

Lake Avery is a good spot to look for Barrow's Goldeneyes and other waterfowl in the fall and early winter. Also check the willows and marshy area near the inlet, which are good for warblers and other songbirds. The nearby Oak Ridge SWA is a good place to look for Dusky Grouse amid the abundant Gambel oak woods.

#### Directions:

From Meeker, take CO 13 north to just outside of town and take a right on Rio Blanco CR 8. Go 19 miles to a left onto CR 82. The lake and wildlife area are in just over a mile.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 4. Buford Area

#### Description:

This small town along the Flat Tops Scenic Byway is the last place to stock up if you're coming from Meeker. It's also a good area to look at hummingbird feeders at the general store, which can have Black-chinned and Broad-tailed Hummingbirds. The Buford Road, which heads south from here towards I-70, passes through excellent aspen and mixed-conifer woodlands, with Purple Martin colonies, American Three-toed Woodpeckers at higher elevations, and chances for Dusky Grouse and Northern Goshawk.

#### Directions:

From Meeker, take CO 13 north to just outside of town and take a right on Rio Blanco CR 8. Go just over 20 miles to Buford. The Buford Road heads south from town.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 5. Big Marvine Peak

#### Description:

The road along Big Marvine Creek passes through excellent aspen and mixed conifer woodland; look especially for Purple Martin around the aspen stands, and Northern Goshawk throughout. Willow carrs in the area support Fox Sparrow, and typical spruce-fir birds like Pine Grosbeak and Gray Jay. A trail continues above the end of the road into alpine tundra.

#### Directions:

From Meeker, take CO 13 north to just outside of town and take a right on CR 8. Go 26.6 miles to CR 12, and take a right. Go 7 miles to the campground at the end.

#### Access:

Closed during the winter months



### 6. Trappers Lake

#### Description:

This large mountain lake on the northern Flat Tops is a long drive from anywhere, but it's worth visiting to those who want to see some of the only easily

accessible breeding Barrow's Goldeneyes in the state. The lake is about a quarter-mile hike beyond the end of the road; bring a scope to help with the search. The goldeneyes should be easy to find on the lake throughout the summer.

#### Directions:

From Meeker, take CO 13 north to just outside of town and take a right on Rio Blanco CR 8. Go 38.5 miles to CR 155 and take a right. Follow this 9 miles to the end of the road.

#### Access:

Closed during the winter months



### 7. Ripple Creek Pass

#### Description:

The Flat Tops Scenic Byway over Ripple Creek Pass goes through excellent coniferous woodlands and montane meadows. Species such as Red Crossbill, Hammond's, Dusky, and Cordilleran Flycatchers, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and even less common birds like American Three-toed Woodpecker, Dusky Grouse, and Northern Goshawk are all possible here. Also of greatest interest is a colony of Purple Martins near Vaughn Lake.

#### Directions:

Ripple Creek Pass is along Rio Blanco CR 8, 40 miles east of Meeker. Vaughn Lake is 2.8 miles east of the pass.

#### Access:

Closed during the winter months



### 8. Dunckley Pass and Vaughn Lake

#### Description:

Just to the east of Ripple Creek Pass, the forest (and birds) here are fairly similar, with more meadows, and especially more aspen woodland. Dusky Grouse can be seen along this stretch of road with some regularity, and this part of Colorado has among the highest density of Northern Goshawk in the state.

#### Directions:

Dunckley Pass is along Rio Blanco CR 8, 62 miles east of Meeker and 23 miles west of Yampa.

#### Access:

Closed during the winter months



### 9. Stillwater Reservoir and the Devil's Causeway

#### Description:

This remote location provides the best access to the eastern Flat Tops and to the scenic Devil's Causeway. The road rises to a trailhead at Stillwater Reservoir; look for Fox Sparrow and Wilson's Warblers along the way in. From here you can hike up to the top of the Flat Tops and excellent alpine tundra.

#### Directions:

From the town of Yampa head south on Garfield CR 7 for 17 miles, to the trailhead at the end of the road.

#### Access:

Closed during the winter months



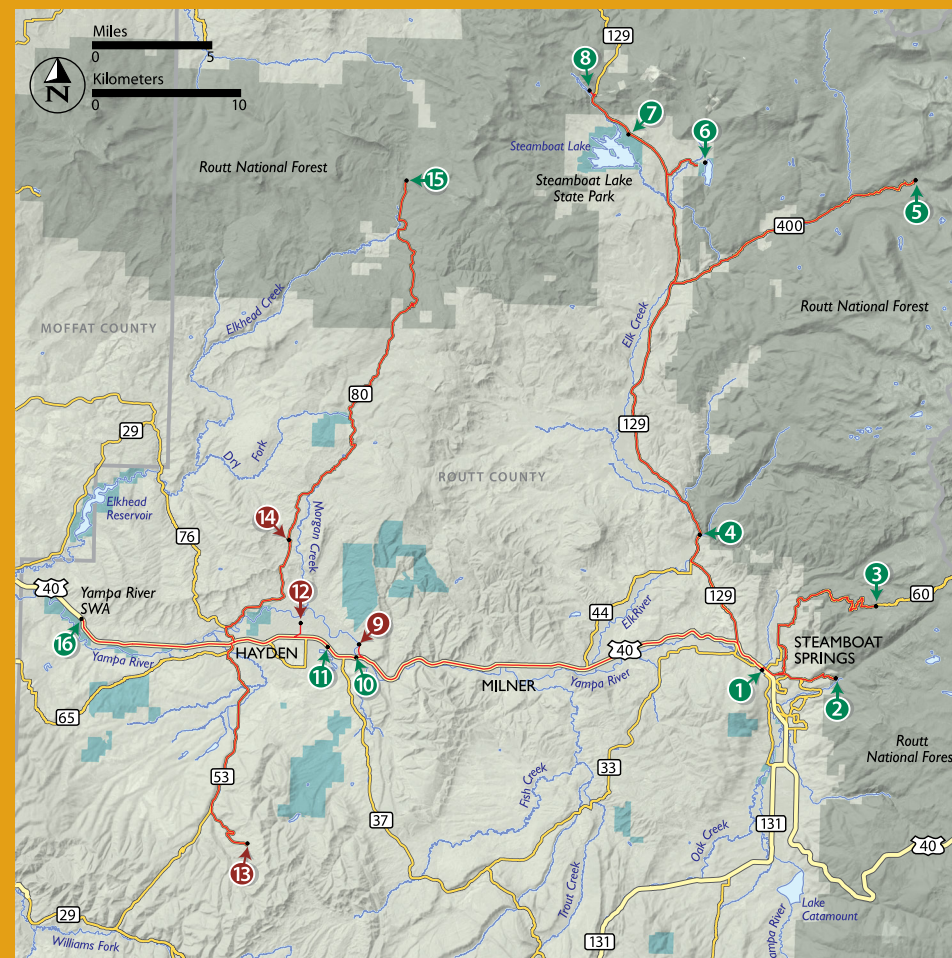


# Yampa Trail



## One of the Last Wild Rivers

The Yampa is one of the few rivers in Colorado that remains almost entirely undammed and undiverted. Much as in past centuries, it supports a rich riparian ecosystem along most of its length. People are often surprised to find Wood Ducks on the water, Gray Catbirds singing in the dense undergrowth, and Bobolinks gurgling over the adjacent wet meadows, but these species are regular here due to the valley's unique hydrology. The resort town of Steamboat Springs is drained by the Yampa, as are the remote peaks of the Zirkel Wilderness and the wild upland parks where some of Colorado's only breeding Sharp-tailed Grouse and Sandhill Cranes are found. Exploring this watershed is a wonderful way to get to know Colorado up close and personal.



## Sites on the Yampa Trail:

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1. Yampa River Core Trail    | 10. Yampa Preserve                                     |
| 2. Fish Creek Falls          | 11. Carpenter Ranch                                    |
| 3. Spring Creek Trail        | 12. Colorado Crane Conservation Coalition Viewing Site |
| 4. Mad Creek Trail           | 13. Seneca Reclaimed Mined Land, Former Coal Mine      |
| 5. Slavonia Trailhead        | 14. Hayden Grouse Leks                                 |
| 6. Pearl Lake State Park     | 15. California Park                                    |
| 7. Steamboat Lake State Park | 16. Yampa River State Wildlife Area                    |
| 8. Hahns Peak Lake           |  |
| 9. Morgan Bottoms            |  |





### 1. Yampa River Core Trail

#### Description:

This cycling and walking trail follows a riparian corridor for six miles right through the middle of Steamboat. The Yampa Botanical Gardens is a pleasant stop midway along the trail. American Dipper can be found along the trail year round, and summer residents include Tree and Cliff Swallows, Gray Catbird, and Bullock's Oriole.

#### Directions:

The trail runs along the Yampa River through Steamboat Springs and can be accessed at over 20 places in town.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 2. Fish Creek Falls

#### Description:

These dramatic falls are just outside of town and offer good montane shrubland and aspen groves. Look for Band-tailed Pigeon, Orange-crowned and Virginia's Warblers, Townsend's Solitaire, and American Dipper. You can also access this area in the winter, when Sharp-tailed Grouse are sometimes found.

#### Directions:

From US 40 in Steamboat Springs, head northeast on 3rd Street, then right on Fish Creek Falls Road. Go 3 miles to the first or second parking lot.

#### Access:

Open all year, daylight hours



### 3. Spring Creek Trail

#### Description:

Just outside of Steamboat, this is a good place for a short hike near town. Covering a variety of habitats, a wide assortment of birds could be seen - lower down, look for Green-tailed Towhee, and Orange-crowned and Virginia's Warblers, while higher up Steller's Jay, Lincoln's Sparrow, Dusky Flycatcher, and Violet-green Swallow.

#### Directions:

From Steamboat, head northeast on 3rd Street, then right on Fish Creek Falls Road, then left in 0.3 miles on Amethyst Drive, and right on Spring Creek Road in 0.4 miles. Park at the entrance to the road.

#### Access:

Upper trail closed during the winter



### 4. Mad Creek Trail

#### Description:

This trail not far outside of Steamboat is a good place to experience the montane shrubland that dominates the lower slopes in the area. This is good habitat for species like Green-tailed Towhee, Virginia's Warbler, Steller's Jay, and Mountain Bluebird in the Gambel oak woodland, and American Dippers on the creek below.

#### Directions:

From Steamboat Springs, head west on US 40 to Elk River Road just outside town. Turn right and go 5.5 miles to the parking area, on the right.

#### Access:

Closed during the winter



### 5. Slavonia Trailhead

#### Description:

Accessing the Zirkel Wilderness, this trail is a good introduction to montane habitats. Look in willow carrs for Lincoln's and White-crowned Sparrows, and in coniferous woodland for Olive-sided Flycatcher, Townsend's Solitaire, and finches. A large blowdown is good for woodpeckers, including American Three-toed. Keep an eye out for elk here as well.

#### Directions:

From Steamboat Springs, head west on US 40 to Elk River Road just outside town. Turn right and go 18 miles to Seedhouse Road. Travel 9 miles to the trailhead at the end of the road.

#### Access:

Closed during the winter months



### 6. Pearl Lake State Park

#### Description:

Remote and beautiful, this state park is surrounded by coniferous forests, and is a good place to look for species such as Olive-sided Flycatcher, Pine Grosbeak, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and, if you're lucky, Dusky Grouse. Red-naped Sapsucker and Flammulated Owl nest in the aspen woodlands. Sandhill Cranes can sometimes be found in montane meadows nearby.

#### Directions:

From Steamboat Springs, head west on US 40 to Elk River Road just outside town. Turn right and go 24 miles to CR 209, and turn right. The entrance is on the right in a mile.

#### Access:

Closed during the winter months



### 7. Steamboat Lake State Park

#### Description:

This large lake typically has a good number of nesting waterfowl and can be a decent stop during migration for divers and loons. The meadows in the area are good for Sandhill Crane, and marshy areas have Yellow-headed Blackbird and Savannah Sparrow. Mule deer and red foxes are sometimes seen here.

#### Directions:

From Steamboat Springs, head west on US 40 to Elk River Road just outside town. Turn right and go 26 miles to the entrance, on the left.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 8. Hahns Peak Lake

#### Description:

This small lake is better for montane forest species than waterbirds. Mixed lodgepole and ponderosa pine, with a good dose of aspen, make this a good place to look for birds such as Olive-sided, Cordilleran, and Dusky Flycatchers, Williamson's Sapsucker, and at night, Flammulated Owl.

#### Directions:

From Steamboat Springs, head west on US 40 to Elk River Road just outside town. Turn right and go 28 miles to CR 129F. Turn left and travel about one-half mile to the lake.

#### Access:

Closed during the winter



### 9. Morgan Bottoms

#### Description:

CR 70, right along the Yampa River, has riparian on one side and sagebrush and meadows on the other. Check the wet fields for migrant Sandhill Cranes in season, and the riparian for Great Horned Owls and

Bald Eagles. Occasionally, Sharp-tailed Grouse can be seen in the shrubland. Mule deer are common here.

#### Directions:

From Hayden, head east on US 40 for 6 miles to Routt CR 70, and turn left. The birding is along this road for the next several miles.

#### Access:

Open all year

### 10. Yampa Preserve

#### Description:

Owned by The Nature Conservancy, this preserve accesses excellent riparian habitat. Well-marked trails pass through the woodland; keep an eye out for Belted Kingfisher, Great Horned Owl, Gray Catbird, Bullock's Oriole, Yellow Warbler, and American and Lesser Goldfinches. Veery also breeds here, though it can be hard to find.

#### Directions:

From Hayden, head east on US 40 for 5 miles to the parking area, on the south side of the highway, west of the river.

#### Access:

Open all year, daylight hours



### 11. Carpenter Ranch

#### Description:

This is a working cattle ranch owned by The Nature Conservancy. Drop-in visitors are welcome between 9:00 AM and noon on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays from May 15 to September 1. There is a trail system in riparian habitat along the Yampa River, and this is the best place for Bobolink in western Colorado.

#### Directions:

From Hayden, head east on US 40 for just under 5 miles to the entrance to the ranch, on the left.

#### Access:

Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, May 15 to Sept 1, 9:00 AM-12:00 PM







## 12. Colorado Crane Conservation Coalition Viewing Site

### Description:

This private site has views of a hay meadow that is visited by Sandhill Cranes during migration, including during the Yampa Valley Crane Festival in early September. The Yampa River runs through the property with excellent waterfowl and shorebird habitat as well as a large stand of cottonwood trees. In addition to great birding opportunities, beaver and river otter are seen regularly in the area.

### Directions:

From two miles east of Hayden on US Highway 40, turn north onto County Road 69. Turn north again on County Road 69A. Proceed a few hundred meters to end of road.

### Access:

Open all year; visit in spring and fall for Sandhill Crane viewing



## 13. Seneca Reclaimed Mined Land, Former Coal Mine

### Description:

This former surface coal mine was reclaimed and restored in 2007. It features an active Sharp-tailed Grouse lek with a blind for viewing in spring. Dusky Grouse can be seen in the oak brush south of the lek.

### Directions:

Take Poplar St. south in Hayden, toward the fairgrounds on CR 53. Turn right at the stock car track and fire training facility. Travel south on CR 53 to Seneca 2W Mine entrance on the left. Travel two miles and turn right. Travel past the shop 0.5 miles and the lek is on the left approximately 50 yards from the road.

### Access:

April 10 - May 25, 5:00 AM - 8:00PM



## 14. Hayden Grouse Leks

### Description:

Just outside of Hayden, CR 80 is a good place to look for two species of lekking grouse, as well as Dusky Grouse. For Sharp-tailed Grouse take CR 80 over the first rise, down into the valley, and up to the next rise. Look on the small hill to the right for the lek. For Greater Sage-Grouse continue for a total of 4 miles from the start of CR 80 and look about 200 yards off to the left for the lek. The best spot for

Dusky Grouse is right on top of the first rise.

### Directions:

From Hayden, head north on River View Dr. for just under a mile. At the 'T' with CR 80, turn right, and bear left in 3 miles. Directions to the leks are given from here.

### Access:

Closed during the winter months

## 15. California Park

### Description:

California Park has a healthy breeding population of Sandhill Cranes, and is a good place to look for this species in the late spring and late summer (the road is closed during the nesting season). Also look for Purple Martins in aspen groves, Sharp-tailed Grouse in shrubland, and Fox Sparrows in the willows.

### Directions:

From Hayden, head north on River View Dr for just under a mile. At the 'T' with CR 80 take a right, and bear left in 3 miles. California Park is in about 18 miles.

### Access:

July 1st through the end of fall



## 16. Yampa River State Wildlife Area

### Description:

This SWA has good trails accessing some of the best riparian habitat in western Colorado; look for species such as Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, Yellow Warbler, Lazuli Bunting, Yellow-breasted Chat, and others. Fields in the park often play host to Sandhill Cranes. This is also a good spot to look for migrants in season.

### Directions:

From Hayden, head west on US 40 for 6 miles to the parking area, on the left.

### Access:

Open all year



# You "Otter" Look For This...

*Scientific name: Lontra canadensis*

While on your search for that life-list bird species, don't forget to look for this active aquatic mammal. Although not common in Colorado, river otters are found in northern drainages including the Upper Colorado. Look for otters near Hot Sulphur Springs and in both the Colorado and Gunnison Rivers near Grand Junction.

The river otter is the longest of our weasels, ranging from 3 to 4 1/2 feet, of which the powerful, cylindrical tail comprises about one-third. Webbed toes and water-resistant fur suit the animal to a life spent largely in water. Otters sometimes paddle, but the force for swimming comes mostly from eel-like movements of the body and tail.

Otters are rich brown in color, with silvery brown beneath. The otter is about twice as long and five times as heavy as mink, and is the only other aquatic carnivore in the Rockies.

Otters live in riparian habitat, where aquatic animals like crayfish, frogs, fish, young muskrats and beavers are favored foods. Usually living in bank dens abandoned by beavers, otters are active mostly at dawn and dusk. They spend large amounts of time playing, sliding on ice, snow and mud or simply swimming.

Otters breed in spring. Embryo implantation is delayed until the following winter, and one to four young are born in early spring. While the female is nursing one litter, mating occurs again.

*The river otter's status in Colorado is threatened. If you are fortunate enough to see one of these amazing, agile creatures, consider yourself lucky!*



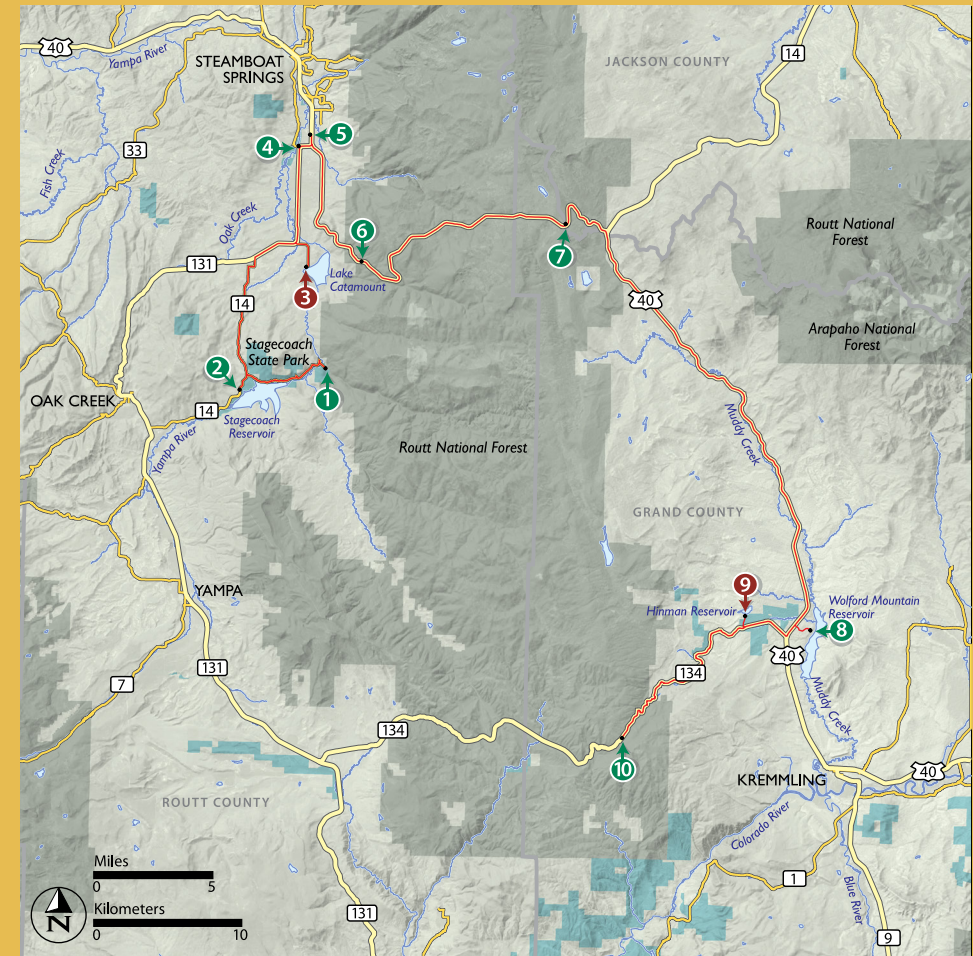




# Rabbit Ears Trail

## Bird and Butterfly Bonanza

The area south and east of Steamboat Springs is one of the lushest regions of Colorado, boasting relatively few people but high natural diversity, including huge numbers of deer, elk, and pronghorn along the backroads. Rabbit Ears Pass, just east of Steamboat, rises from serviceberry shrubland with Spotted and Green-tailed Towhees, up to spruce-fir forests excellent for Three-toed Woodpeckers and Saw-whet Owls. The road that traverses these gradients is famous among butterfly enthusiasts for hosting more than a dozen species of fritillary. The low elevations in this area retain hints of the south, in the form of the occasional Gambel oak and Band-tailed Pigeon, while the high-elevation understory is highlighted by thimbleberries and monkeyflowers, echoing the flora of regions far to the north. These links with the north help make this the most reliable part of the state for finding nomadic winter flocks of Bohemian Waxwings. This area can richly reward a visitor at any time of year.



## Sites on the Rabbit Ears Trail:

- |  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. Sarvis Creek State Wildlife Area                          | 6. Ferndale Picnic Area            |
| 2. Stagecoach Reservoir State Park                           | 7. Rabbit Ears Pass and Muddy Pass |
| 3. Lake Catamount  | 8. Woford Mountain Reservoir       |
| 4. Chuck Lewis State Wildlife Area                           | 9. Hinman Reservoir                |
| 5. Yampatika's Environmental Learning Center at Legacy Ranch | 10. Gore Pass                      |





### 1. Sarvis Creek State Wildlife Area

#### Description:

Adjacent to Stagecoach Reservoir State Park, this day-use area has good riparian habitat. The Sarvis Creek Trail leads from the wildlife area up into coniferous forests, and into the Sarvis Creek Wilderness. Black bears are sometimes seen here, but elk and mule deer are more commonly sighted.

#### Directions:

From Steamboat Springs, head east on US 40 for 4 miles to CO 131 and turn right. Go 6.5 miles and turn left onto Routt CR 14. Go just over 7 miles to the parking area on the right.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 2. Stagecoach Reservoir State Park

#### Description:

Stagecoach Reservoir is excellent for waterbirds, as well as shorebirds when the water is low. Surrounding the lake are meadows with some willows (good for Lincoln's Sparrow), and montane shrubland (good for Orange-crowned Warbler, Green-tailed Towhee, Western Scrub-Jay and more). Just across the road from the reservoir is a wildlife area with some small ponds and blinds.

#### Directions:

From Steamboat Springs, head east on US 40 for 4 miles to CO 131, and turn right. Go 6.5 miles and turn left onto Routt CR 14. Go just over 6 miles to the park.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 3. Lake Catamount

#### Description:

This very large and often bird-filled lake is entirely private, but can be scanned from public roads. Look especially for a good variety of divers, often including Barrow's Goldeneye, as well as loons and grebes. The marshy fringes of the lake are good for Yellow-headed Blackbird and Pied-billed Grebe.

#### Directions:

From Steamboat Springs, head east on US 40 for 4 miles to CO 131 and turn right. In 4.5 miles turn left onto Routt CR 18 and go 1.5 miles to the lake on the left.

#### Access:

Open all year, though lake is frozen during the winter, daylight hours

### 4. Chuck Lewis State Wildlife Area

#### Description:

This small SWA provides good access to the Yampa River and associated riparian habitat. Look for Western Tanager, Bullock's Oriole, American Dipper, occasional ducks, and loads of Cliff Swallows nesting under the bridge by the entrance.

#### Directions:

From Steamboat Springs, head east on US 40 for 4 miles to CO 131, and turn right. Go a half mile and continue straight onto CR 14F. Parking is at the Yampa River crossing.

#### Access:

Open all year, daylight hours



### 5. Yampatika's Environmental Learning Center at Legacy Ranch

#### Description:

Legacy Ranch is owned by the City of Steamboat Springs and is maintained as a working ranch and as an environmental learning center. The ranch was originally homesteaded by a woman in 1899. The Yampa River runs through the ranch. There are plans to develop trails in the near future which would open up some great birding opportunities in riparian habitat dominated by willows.

#### Directions:

From State Hwy 131 south of Steamboat Springs, drive north on US 40 for 0.4 miles. Legacy Ranch will be on your left. There are white signs just off the road.

#### Access:

Contact Yampatika prior to visit at 970-871-9151



### 6. Ferndale Picnic Area

#### Description:

Ferndale is a delightful picnic area with stands of tall aspen transitioning to coniferous forest. Look for Tree Swallow, Steller's Jay, and MacGillivray's Warbler. A good variety of woodpeckers can also be found. Ferndale is famous as a butterfly location, with nearly a dozen species of fritillaries, among a wide variety of others.

#### Directions:

From the top of Rabbit Ears Pass, head west for 8 miles (14 miles east of Steamboat Springs) to the entrance, on the north side of the road.

#### Access:

Closed during the winter, day-use only



### 7. Rabbit Ears Pass and Muddy Pass

#### Description:

Both of these passes traverse excellent forest and montane meadows, though Rabbit Ears is the more vegetated of the two. The whole area is excellent for woodpeckers, including American Three-toeds. Other species include Williamson's Sapsucker, Pine Grosbeak, and Golden-crowned Kinglet. The area around Muddy Pass Lake often has Osprey during the breeding season.

#### Directions:

Both passes are along US 40; Rabbit Ears Pass is 22 miles east of Steamboat Springs and 27 miles west of Kremmling, and Muddy Pass is 3 miles further east.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 8. Wolford Mountain Reservoir

#### Description:

This large reservoir is popular with boaters and fishermen, but it can attract waterbirds, especially in late fall. Look for loons, grebes, ducks, and gulls. The campground includes accessible facilities and 48 sites with RV electrical hookups. There is a fee for entry.

#### Directions:

From Kremmling, head west on US 40 for about 6.5 miles to the recreation area entrance, on the right.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 9. Hinman Reservoir

#### Description:

Water is rather scarce in Middle Park, so this small reservoir can be surprisingly attractive to ducks and grebes. If the water level is low, shorebirds may stop here in migration also. The reservoir is private, so view it only from the road.

#### Directions:

From Kremmling, head west on US 40 for 6 miles and turn left on CO 134. Go 2 miles, turn right onto CR 17 and go north for 0.7 miles to the reservoir.

#### Access:

Open all year

### 10. Gore Pass

#### Description:

This is a rather remote stretch of road that winds through scenic high country, mostly high-altitude sagebrush steppe and lodgepole and spruce-fir forest. Look for pronghorn, mule deer, and the occasional elk. Expect Mountain Bluebird and Brewer's Blackbird in open areas. In summer, Pass Creek just northeast of Gore Pass supports a breeding population of Veery.

#### Directions:

From Kremmling, head west on US 40 for 6 miles and turn left on CO 134. Gore Pass is in about seven miles.

#### Access:

Open all year



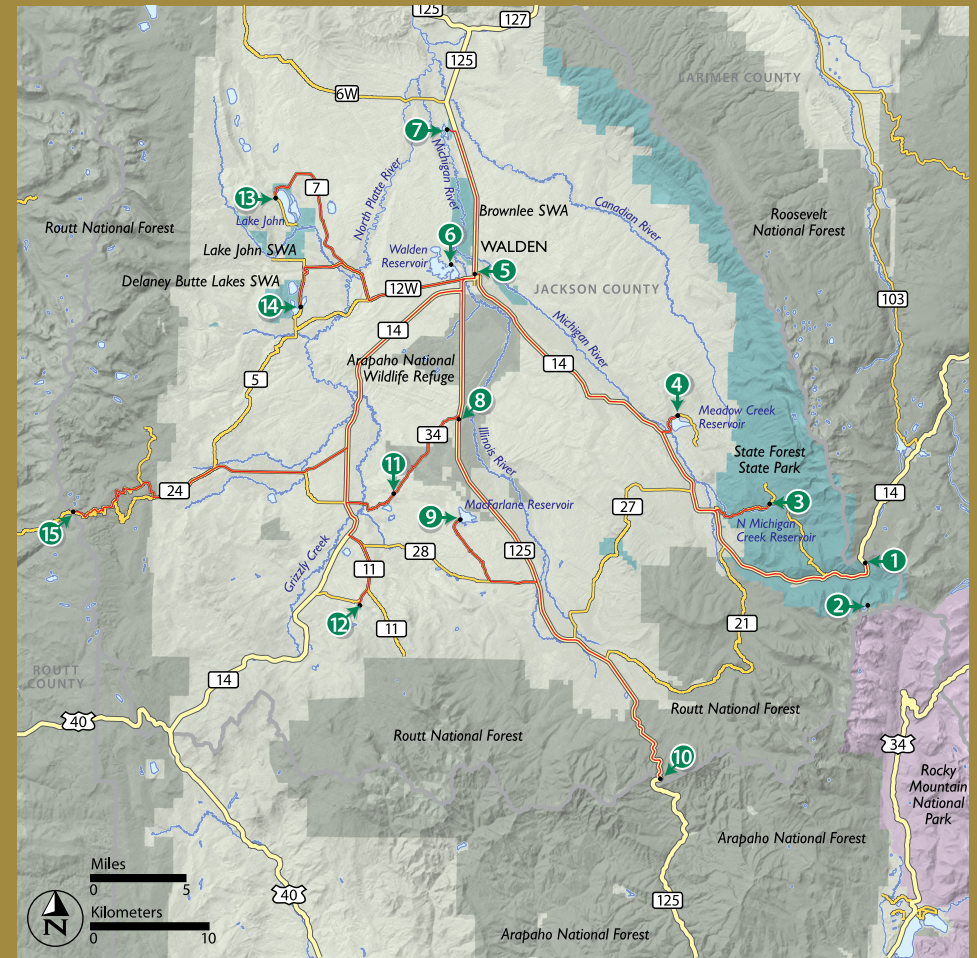


# North Park Trail



## A Taste of the North

**N**orth Park, virtually synonymous with Jackson County, is a high, flat, peak-ringed valley that teems with far more wildlife than people. Some of Colorado's finest and most extensive remaining sagebrush country can be found here, right beside some of Colorado's finest and most extensive wetlands. This is one of the best areas in Colorado to see moose, lekking Greater Sage-Grouse, breeding colonies of waterbirds such as Eared Grebe and Franklin's Gull, and the elusive Boreal Owl. In summer, the willow-lined creek bottoms provide homes for nesting Veeries and Slate-colored Fox Sparrows. In winter, the landscape takes on the stark beauty of areas far closer to the Arctic Circle, attracting cold-weather wanderers such as all three species of rosy-finches and, rarely, Gyrfalcons. Among Coloradans, North Park has a reputation as a wildlife watcher's paradise, and the reputation is well deserved.



## Sites on the North Park Trail:

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Cameron Pass                     | 9. MacFarlane Reservoir                     |
| 2. American Lakes                   | 10. Willow Creek Pass                       |
| 3. Colorado State Forest State Park | 11. Hebron Waterfowl Area                   |
| 4. Jackson County Road 30           | 12. Seymour Reservoir State Wildlife Area   |
| 5. Walden                           | 13. Lake John State Wildlife Area           |
| 6. Walden Reservoir                 | 14. Delaney Butte Lakes State Wildlife Area |
| 7. Cowdrey Lake State Wildlife Area | 15. Buffalo Pass                            |
| 8. Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge |   |





### 1. Cameron Pass

#### Description:

Most famous as a night birding location, this is a good spot to look for Boreal Owls during the early spring months. The Extensive forest is also good for American Three-toed Woodpecker and Golden-crowned Kinglet. Roadside birding and comprehensive trails give good access. Watch also for large mammals, including moose and bighorn sheep.

#### Directions:

Cameron Pass is along CO 14, 31 miles east of Walden and 59 miles west of the intersection of CO 14 with US 287

#### Access:

Open all year



### 2. American Lakes

#### Description:

The easiest access for above treeline birding on the trail can be reached by hiking along the Michigan Ditch south from Cameron Pass to a trail which leads up to the American Lakes, in the shadow of the Nokhu Crags. Brown-capped Rosy-Finch breeds on the cliffs and the chirps of pikas are often heard in the area.

#### Directions:

Park at Cameron Pass and hike south along the dirt road beside the canal (the Michigan Ditch) about two miles to where it meets the Michigan River; from there follow the trail up the valley about another two miles to the lakes.

#### Access:

Roads not maintained in winter



### 3. Colorado State Forest State Park

#### Description:

Two areas of this state park are of particular interest. The first is the road to North Michigan Reservoir, with beautiful willow habitat and breeding Fox Sparrow and Veery. The second spot is the Moose Visitor's Center, with excellent feeders that can be great for finches at all times of year, including Red Crossbill, Cassin's Finch, Pine Grosbeak, and, in winter, rosy-finches.

#### Directions:

From Walden, head east on CO 14 for 19 miles to Jackson CR 41. Turn left and enter the park. The Moose Visitor's Center is 5 miles further down CO 14, on the right.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 4. Jackson County Road 30

#### Description:

The willows between Highway 14 and the private Meadow Creek Reservoir are reliable for Veery during the summer months. The road continues past the reservoir through some decent sage, lodgepole and willow habitats, where you have more chances at Veery, Swainson's Thrush, and American Dipper. Watch for moose anywhere in the area.

#### Directions:

From Walden, head east on CO 14 for 13.5 miles to CR 30 on the left (north).

#### Access:

Open all year

### 5. Walden

#### Description:

The county seat and largest town, Walden is a good base while birding this trail and is well located near many birding sites. The trees in town can have migrants in season. Hummingbird feeders can attract four species in late summer, and rosy-finches occasionally visit feeders here in winter.

#### Directions:

Walden is at the junction of CO 14 and CO 125, 31 miles west of Cameron Pass and 34 miles east of the junction of CO 14 and US 40.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 6. Walden Reservoir

#### Description:

This is the best lake on the trail for birding; usually there is a little of everything here, including dabblers, divers, shorebirds, gulls, terns, and waders. Birds such as American White Pelican, Black Tern, and Franklin's and California Gulls breed here. Raptors are often around to take advantage of the avian feast.

#### Directions:

From Walden, head south for less than half a mile on CO 125/14 and turn right onto CR 12W. Go 200 yards to CR15 and turn right to the reservoir.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 7. Cowdrey Lake State Wildlife Area

#### Description:

A fairly small reservoir, this lake can be productive for waterbirds, including mixed flocks of geese, diving ducks, and even loons in fall. There is a nice patch of thick vegetation along the southeast shore where migrant passerines are sometimes concentrated and species such as Lincoln's Sparrow breed.

#### Directions:

From Walden, head north on CO 125 for 7.5 miles to CR 39 on the left, marked by a large green SWA sign.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 8. Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge

#### Description:

Numerous small ponds in this NWR make for an excellent place to check for various waterfowl and shorebirds. Adjacent marshes can be good for Short-eared Owl and Yellow-headed Blackbird, while Greater Sage-Grouse are sometimes found along the auto tour route. The area around the headquarters is a reliable spot to look for moose.

#### Directions:

From Walden, head south on CO 125 for 4 miles to the entrance to the auto route, on the right. Note that the refuge roads are closed in winter.

#### Access:

Closed during the winter months, daylight hours

### 9. MacFarlane Reservoir

#### Description:

This remote reservoir can be difficult to get to (a high-clearance vehicle helps) and is closed for access until Aug. 15, but is an excellent lake for ducks and other waterbirds. It is also one of the few places in Colorado where American White Pelicans breed, and is an excellent spot for various raptors. Elk are common, and an occasional moose is sometimes seen.

#### Directions:

From Walden, travel south on CO 125 to CR 28 and take a right. Go 2.3 miles to an unimproved road on the right. Follow this for approximately 4 miles to the reservoir.

#### Access:

Inaccessible during the winter months



### 10. Willow Creek Pass

#### Description:

This pass, which exits North Park to the south, travels through good spruce-fir forest, as well as extensive beetle-killed lodgepole forests. A smattering of willow carrs makes for a good habitat mix. Look for a variety of woodpeckers, especially in the beetle-killed forests, and for Fox Sparrow in the willows.

#### Directions:

Willow Creek Pass is on CO 125, 32 miles south of Walden, and 21 miles north of the junction of US 40.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 11. Hebron Waterfowl Area

#### Description:

These shallow ponds along CR 34 are an excellent spot to look for ducks, shorebirds, and terns. Look for a large variety of dabblers, American Avocet, and the occasional Black Tern. CR 34 is a good spot to keep an eye out for Greater Sage-Grouse and raptors abound along this road as well.

#### Directions:

From Walden, drive south on CO 125 for 10 miles (or south on CO 14 for 17 miles) to CR 34. Hebron Waterfowl Area is about mid-way between the two highways.

#### Access:

Open all year

### 12. Seymour Lake State Wildlife Area

#### Description:

This small reservoir often has a few ducks and is a good place to get close views. Watch also for shorebirds when the water is low. CR 28, to the north of the reservoir, can be a great place to look for Greater Sage-Grouse, especially in mid-morning during the lekking season.

#### Directions:

From Walden, head west on CO 14 for 18 miles to CR 11 and turn left. Head east for 1 mile and bear right at the fork. Continue for about 2.5 miles and go left on CR 11A, to the turnoff to the lake on the left.



**Access:**

Higher roads not maintained in winter

**13. Lake John State Wildlife Area**

This relatively deep lake is good for diving ducks, and, if water levels are low, shorebirds. The extensive sage flats around here support Greater Sage-Grouse and Sage Thrasher, and raptors including Golden Eagle, Ferruginous Hawk, and Prairie Falcon. Short-tailed weasel has sometimes been seen around the lake also.

**Directions:**

From Walden, head south for less than half a mile on CO 125/14, and turn right onto CR 12W. Go 10 miles to CR 7 and turn right. Go just over 5 miles to the entrance to the SWA on the left.

**Access:**

Open all year

**14. Delaney Butte Lakes State Wildlife Area****Description:**

The three lakes can sometimes be good for water-birds; the north lake is typically most productive. The riparian corridor and fields just to the south sometimes have Short-eared and Great Horned Owls perched up in the evening. The most accessible Greater Sage-Grouse lek is also here - a prime reason to visit this site during the spring months. Please observe lek etiquette: arrive before dawn, use your car as a blind, keep noise and movement to a minimum, and don't leave until after the birds do.

**Directions:**

From Walden, head south for less than half a mile on CO 125/14. Turn right onto CR 12W and go 5 miles to CR 18. Continue west onto CR 18 for 4.5 miles and bear right onto CR 22. Go 0.5 miles to CR 5, turn left and continue on to the lakes, on both sides of the road.

**Access:**

Open all year

**15. Buffalo Pass****Description:**

This high mountain pass, an alternative route between Walden and Steamboat Springs, travels through superb high mountain forest. Watch especially for Dusky Grouse on the North Park side. The forest at the top is a good location for American Three-toed Woodpeckers, as well as other species such as Olive-sided Flycatcher, Gray Jay, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and Swainson's Thrush.

**Directions:**

From Walden, go west on CO 14 for 12.5 miles to CR 24 and take a right. The summit of Buffalo Pass is 17 miles to the west.



## A view of the old west in new times Greater Sage-Grouse

*Scientific name: Centrocercus urophasianus*

There are two species of sage-grouse in Colorado, Greater Sage-Grouse and Gunnison Sage-Grouse. Greater Sage-Grouse are the largest grouse in North America. Males often weigh in excess of 4-5 pounds and hens weigh in at 2-3 pounds. Adult males differ from females in appearance. White breast feathers on males conceal two large, skin sacs (used in courtship displays) which are yellow in color. Males also have yellow eyecombs (obvious in the spring during courtship displays). Both males and females have similar coloration and distinctive pointed tail feathers, but only the males utilize these feathers in their display. Sage-grouse, as the name implies, are found only in areas where sagebrush is abundant. Sagebrush is a critical component for sage-grouse providing both food and cover. Although these birds are found at altitudes of 6,000-8,500 feet, they are not forest grouse and prefer relatively open sagebrush flats or rolling sagebrush hills.

In winter, sagebrush accounts for 100% of the diet for these birds. In addition, it provides important escape cover and protection from the elements. In late winter, males begin to concentrate on traditional strutting grounds or leks. Females arrive 1-2 weeks later. Leks can occur on windswept ridges, knolls, or areas of flat bare openings in the sagebrush. Breeding occurs on the leks and in the adjacent sagebrush, typically from March through May. Males strut in a complex and ritualistic breeding display. Successfully bred females nest in the sagebrush, laying a clutch of 7-9 eggs. After a period of approximately 26 days the chicks hatch. Chicks are dependent on insects and forbs for their food. The hen moves her brood to relatively moist areas in close proximity to the sagebrush. Broods disperse at 10-12 weeks when the chicks have their juvenile plumage.

*The largest populations of Greater Sage-Grouse to view in Colorado are found in North Park (Jackson County), Grand County, and Moffat County. Remember wildlife viewing ethics and be prepared for cold, windy weather at springtime leks!*





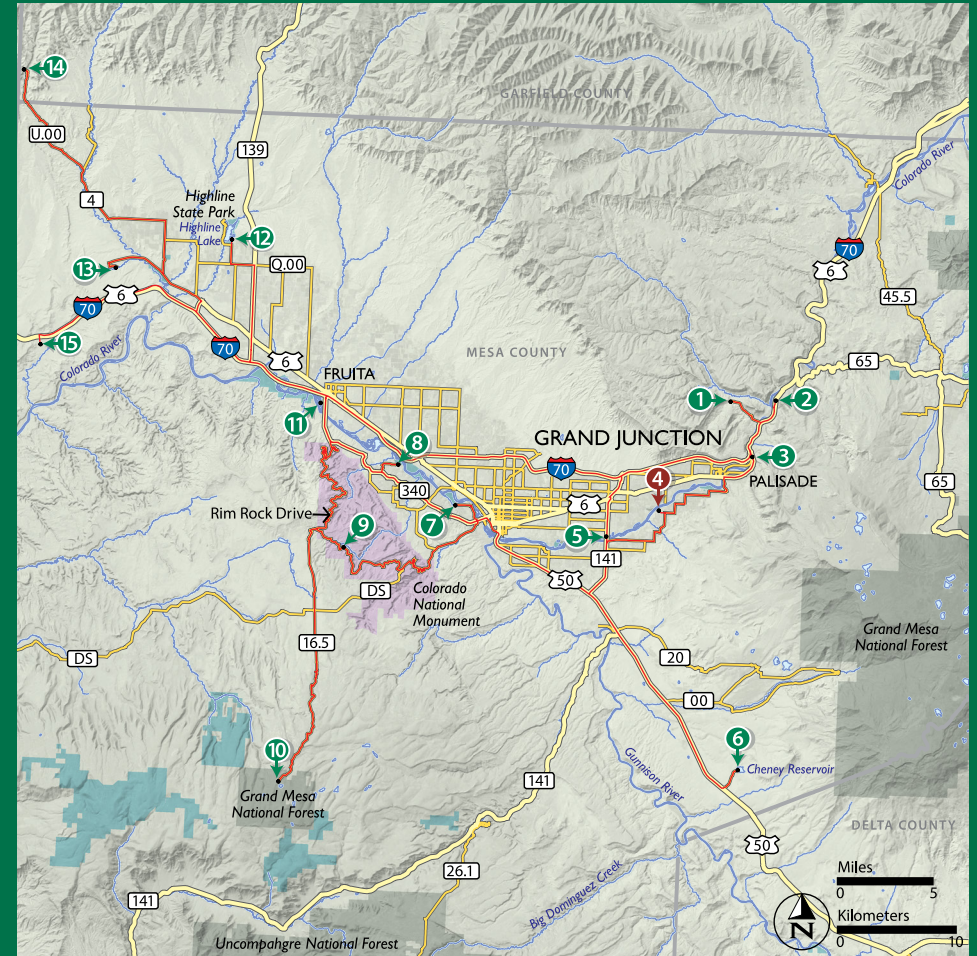


# Grand Valley Trail



## A Red Rock Sculpture Garden

**G**rand Junction, the largest town on Colorado's West Slope, sits at the confluence of the Colorado and Gunnison Rivers at the foot of soaring redrock mesas sculpted by wind and water into dramatic shapes. Any visitor wishing to experience the unique landscape of the Great Basin would do well to begin here. This is the easiest place in Colorado to find specialty birds of the desert such as Gambel's Quail, Gray Vireo, Black-throated Sparrow, and Scott's Oriole. Cliff-loving species like Canyon Wren and White-throated Swift thrive here amid the world-class scenery of the Colorado National Monument. The cottonwoods along the rivers are home to Lazuli Buntings by day and Western Screech-Owls by night. With its mild climate and well-developed tourist infrastructure, the Grand Valley is a great base from which to explore the rest of western Colorado.



## Sites on the Grand Valley Trail:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Coal Canyon   | 9. Colorado National Monument                                  |
| 2. James M. Robb - Colorado River State Park (Island Acres Section)    | 10. Pinyon Mesa  |
| 3. Palisade Fruit and Wine Byway                                       | 11. James M. Robb - Colorado River State Park (Fruita Section) |
| 4. Avant Farm & Vineyards  | 12. Highline Lake State Park                                   |
| 5. James M. Robb - Colorado River State Park (Corn Lake Section)       | 13. Six and Fifty (6 & 50) Reservoir                           |
| 6. Cheney Reservoir  | 14. Prairie Canyon   |
| 7. James M. Robb - Colorado River State Park (Connected Lakes Section) | 15. Rabbit Valley and Brewster Ridge                           |
| 8. Leatha Jean Stassen State Wildlife Area                             |  |





## 1. Coal Canyon

### Description:

This BLM land is managed for the local herd of wild horses, but it is also a well-known spot for Chukar in the spring. The best strategy is to arrive early in the morning, listening for their distinctive calls, and scanning the cliff faces. The shrubland has a variety of other birds, such as Black-throated Sparrow, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and Rock Wren.

### Directions:

From Grand Junction, head east on I-70 to the Cameo exit (exit 46). Go north on the dirt road for about a mile to the parking area for the canyon.

### Access:

Open all year

## 2. James M. Robb - Colorado River State Park (Island Acres Section)

### Description:

The easternmost unit of this State Park is perhaps best known as a place to look for Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep. In addition, it's a good place to camp not far outside Grand Junction while watching the river for goodies like American Dipper, Bald Eagle, Canyon Wren and White-throated Swift, among a variety of other birds.

### Directions:

From Grand Junction, head east on I-70 to exit 47 and enter the park, just north of the exit ramp.

### Access:

Open all year



## 3. Palisade Fruit and Wine Byway

### Description:

This byway features very scenic driving or biking opportunities to explore the wine and fruit growing regions around Palisade. There are many vineyards and farms operating along the byway. Orchards go into full bloom by late-April or early-May when neotropical migrant birds are returning and many flycatchers, warblers and other species can be observed feasting on the recently hatched insects in the area. This is a great area to search for Gambel's Quail as well.

### Directions:

The trail begins in Palisade and there three routes. Follow the Palisade Fruit and Wine Byway signs or visit their Facebook page to obtain a map.

### Access:

Open all year



## 4. Avant Farm & Vineyards

### Description:

This private farm, vineyard and winery is a beautiful site with commanding views of Mt. Garfield and the Bookcliffs. The house and wine tasting room are located on a bluff on the south side of the Colorado River overlooking several acres of conserved land. The wetlands and Colorado River below support many migrating shorebirds and waterfowl species. There is also a large cottonwood tree that has hosted both Bald Eagle and Great Blue Heron nests. The creosote bushes near the house are a good site for spotting Gambel's Quail year round. Wine tasting offered year round and peaches are available in August.

### Directions:

To inquire about access to this site and to get directions, please call Neil Guard at 970-216-9907 a minimum of 48 hours in advance of your potential visit. Please remember that this is a working vineyard and farm as well as a private residence, and there may be times when the landowner cannot accommodate visits.

### Access:

Contact owner prior to visit



## 5. James M. Robb - Colorado River State Park (Corn Lake Section)

### Description:

There are two sections of the Colorado River State Park close to each other here, both fairly comparable. Corn Lake has more facilities and a nice pond. A paved trail runs from here to the Colorado River Wildlife Area section of the state park a couple of miles to the west, through excellent riparian habitat.

### Directions:

For Corn Lake, from the Clifton exit off of I-70, head towards Grand Junction on US 6 and turn left onto CO 141 in just over a mile. Take this for 2 miles to the entrance, on the right. To get to the wildlife area from there, head north on CO 141 for a hundred yards and take a left onto CR D and go 3 miles to the entrance, on the left.

### Access:

Open all year, daylight hours



## 6. Cheney Reservoir

### Description:

Cheney Reservoir is an excellent shallow reservoir near Grand Junction. In migration look for shorebirds, dabblers and divers, grebes, and herons and ibis around the edge. The drive in through the shrubland is a good place to look for Sage Sparrow, Horned Lark, and Lark Sparrow. After a rain, the road in may be impassable.

### Directions:

From Grand Junction, head south on US 50 toward Delta, and pass the junction with CO 141. Travel 9.5 miles past this junction and turn left onto an unmarked BLM road; go 1.5 miles to the reservoir.

### Access:

Open all year

## 7. James M. Robb - Colorado River State Park (Connected Lakes Section)

### Description:

Connected Lakes Section, and the nearby Ela Wildlife Sanctuary contain the most extensive habitat in the area. Several trails allow good access to the riparian habitat and the river. Keep an eye out for species like Bullock's Oriole, Plumbeous and Warbling Vireos, Yellow Warbler, and, at night, Great Horned Owl and Western Screech-Owl.

### Directions:

From downtown Grand Junction, take Broadway/CO 340 west to Power Road and travel northwest. Continue on Dike Road to the park.

### Access:

Open all year



## 8. Leatha Jean Stassen State Wildlife Area

### Description:

This SWA in the heart of Grand Junction gives good access to riparian habitat and a small marsh. Keep an ear out for Sora and Virginia Rail in the marsh, and riparian species such as Western Kingbird, Warbling Vireo, and Lazuli Bunting. The brushy margins of the SWA could have birds like Virginia's Warbler and Black-chinned Hummingbird.

### Directions:

From downtown Grand Junction, take Broadway/

CO 340 west for west for 5.5 miles to Mesa CR 20 1/2 and turn right. Go another half-mile to CR F 3/4 and turn right, and then an immediate left onto Round-Up Dr and then an immediate right onto Spur Cross Rd. Follow Spur Cross for 0.2 miles to Baseline Dr and the parking area.

### Access:

Open all year, daylight hours



## 9. Colorado National Monument

### Description:

This magnificent monument of sculpted rock is the crown jewel of the Grand Valley. Birding is excellent throughout; stop at various roadside pullouts to check pinyon-juniper woodland and scan the cliffs. For good trail birding, head to the Devil's Kitchen trail. Look here for Gray Vireo, Black-throated Sparrow, Pinyon Jay and more. Good facilities and camping round out the draw of this location.

### Directions:

For the east entrance, from downtown Grand Junction, take Broadway/CO 340 over the Colorado River for 300 yards to a left on Monument Road. Go 4 miles to the entrance. For the west entrance, from the Fruita exit off I-70, head south on CO 340 for 2.4 miles to the entrance, on the right.

### Access:

Open all year



## 10. Pinyon Mesa

### Description:

Accessed by driving through the Colorado National Monument, this isolated mesa contains a good mix of forested and sagebrush habitats. In the lower portions look for Sage Thrasher, Brewer's Sparrow, and more. Higher up, check for MacGillivray's Warbler, Steller's Jay, and nightbirds like Flammulated and Northern Saw-whet Owls.

### Directions:

From the east entrance of Colorado NM go 4 miles to Glade Park Road and take a left. This road reaches the Glade Park store in 5.5 miles. For sagebrush habitat, head west on Mesa CR DS. For forested habitat, south from Glade Park on CR 16.5 for approximately 11 miles.

### Access:

Open all year





### 11. James M. Robb - Colorado River State Park (Fruita Section)

#### Description:

The westernmost section of the Colorado River State Park makes a good camping base for the Grand Valley. It also has good access to the riparian woods along the Colorado River. Great-tailed Grackles frequent the camping area, and migration birding can be productive. Small ponds here should be checked for waterbirds and swallows.

#### Directions:

From the Fruita exit off I-70, head south on CO 340. Go through the roundabout, to the entrance on the right, in a few hundred yards.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 12. Highline Lake State Park

#### Description:

The most productive reservoir for birding in the Grand Valley, this makes an excellent location to look for ducks, shorebirds (when the water is low), and migrant landbirds in the nearby woods. A good campground makes a good base and should be checked for species like Lazuli Bunting, Loggerhead Shrike, and more.

#### Directions:

From the Loma exit off I-70, head north on CO 139 for 5 miles to Mesa CR Q. Take a left and go 1.3 miles to CR 11.8. Take a right and go 1 mile north to the main entrance to the park.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 13. Six and Fifty (6 & 50) Reservoir

#### Description:

While often dry, when it has water this small reservoir is well worth a stop. Watch especially for shorebirds, dabbling ducks, and the occasional heron or ibis. The semi-desert shrubland surrounding the entire area has Lark and Black-throated Sparrows, and in areas with sage, Sage Thrasher and Sage Sparrow.

#### Directions:

From the Loma exit off I-70, head north on CO 139 for 1 mile to US 6, and turn left. Go 9 miles and turn left onto an unmarked BLM road. The reservoir is in a few hundred yards.

#### Access:

Open all year

### 14. Prairie Canyon

#### Description:

Remote and spectacular, this canyon has excellent pinyon-juniper woodland with Gray Vireo, Pinyon Jay, Ash-throated Flycatcher, and extensive sage flats with Sage Sparrow and Sage Thrasher. Some semi-desert shrubland could contain Black-throated Sparrow and Loggerhead Shrike, and the whole area is a good place to look for various reptile species.

#### Directions:

From Loma, travel west on US 6 for 3.7 miles to Mesa CR 10 and take a right. Go 3 miles to CR R and take a left. Go 1.5 miles to CR 8 and take a right. Go 1 mile to CR S and take a left. Take this for 7 miles to CR U 1.5 road, and take a left. Take this road for 6.5 miles to the canyon.

#### Access:

Open all year

### 15. Rabbit Valley and Brewster Ridge

#### Description:

Right on the Utah border, this remote ridge is among the best desert birding spots in Colorado. Look especially for Scott's Orioles (along the ridges), Gray Vireo, and Black-throated Sparrow. A night visit could produce Long-eared Owls and or an Ord's kangaroo rat on the road. Reptiles are abundant and varied here as well.

#### Directions:

For Rabbit Valley, head west from Grand Junction to exit 2 off I-70 and turn left. Several roads head immediately into good habitat from here. For Brewster Ridge, from Loma, head west on US 6 for 7 miles to CR 8 and turn right. Go 2.5 miles to CR S and turn left. Go 5.5 miles to an unmarked road and turn left. Go about 1.5 miles to the best habitat.

#### Access:

Open all year

# The Colorado Riverfront Trail System Grand Valley Trail

The Colorado Riverfront Trail System is a successful venture of the Riverfront Commission, local agencies and many volunteers. This trail system (that in most sections is a true "riverfront trail") is planned to be contiguous from Palisade on the east end of the Grand Valley, through Grand Junction to Fruita on the west end. Grand Junction is aptly named for the junction of the Colorado and the Gunnison Rivers. The junction of these two mighty rivers provides a beautiful and rich habitat for wildlife and riparian vegetation in an otherwise arid region.

The river trails in Mesa County pass through cottonwood groves, wetlands, cattail marshes, over gravel bars, and across islands. This rich and diverse environment is home to over 200 different species of birds, four endangered species of fish, and an abundance of small animals.

There are many trailhead parking areas allowing access to the riverfront trail system. State Parks require a park pass for vehicles driving to state park trailheads. There is no walk-in or bike-in fee. Realize this trail provides many recreational opportunities to all users. The trail is often filled with children, people walking pets, joggers, bikers, and wildlife viewers. Please be courteous, yield to other users, keep your speed down, and enjoy the experience.

Grants received from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) have funded much of the Riverfront Trail project. GOCO funds are generated by Colorado lottery ticket sales. Projects that receive GOCO funding are an integral part of maintaining the legacy of Colorado. The Colorado Birding Trail planning, layout, website and printed guide are all paid for by GOCO funds. When you purchase a Colorado lottery ticket, you help support important projects like these!

Additional maps and information on other trails in the area can be obtained by contacting state, federal, and local agencies. In the meantime, just sit back, relax, and enjoy viewing wildlife from the trail! For trail specific information, please visit <http://riverfrontproject.org/trails>





# Grand Mesa Trail



## The World's Largest Table Mountain

Just east of Grand Junction, the Grand Mesa is an astonishing place. Here, nearly 500 square miles of pristine forest have been lifted some 5,000 feet above the surrounding terrain, creating what some call the largest flat-topped mountain in the world. Many natural and man-made lakes make the mesa a fishing haven. Unlike anywhere else in Colorado, the peerless subalpine ecosystem here just goes on and on without ever rising to a peak. With a paved and plowed road providing nearly year-round access, the Grand Mesa is one of the best places in Colorado to look for spruce-fir species such as Three-toed Woodpeckers, Red and White-winged Crossbills, and the hard-to-find Boreal Owl. The mesa also supports reintroduced and growing populations of Shiras moose. It's worth a prime spot on any nature lover's itinerary.



## Sites on the Grand Mesa Trail:

1. Rifle Gap State Park
2. Riffe Falls State Park
3. Riffe Falls Fish Hatchery
4. Riffe Mountain Park
5. Coulter Mesa
6. Harvey Gap Reservoir and State Park
7. Jerry Creek Reservoirs
8. Grand Mesa
9. Vega State Park and Reservoir





### 1. Rifle Gap State Park

#### Description:

Of the three state parks in the area, Rifle Gap has the most facilities, including camping. The lake itself is not really birdy, but combined with the surrounding pinyon-juniper woodland and montane shrubland it makes a good birding location. Look for Bushtit, Pinyon Jay, and more. On the lake, look for various ducks and waterbirds.

#### Directions:

From I-70 exit 90, head north on CO 13 for 4 miles to CO 325. Turn right and go about 5 miles to the entrance, on the left.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 2. Rifle Falls State Park

#### Description:

Rifle Falls is among Colorado's most scenic and most accessible waterfalls, complete with nesting Black Swifts. Early morning and late evening are the best time to see them, but with searching, the nests are sometimes visible behind the falls. In forests around the falls, look for Virginia's and Black-throated Gray Warblers, Pinyon and Western Scrub-Jays, and more.

#### Directions:

From I-70 exit 90, head north on CO 13 for 4 miles to CO 325. Turn right and go for 8.5 miles to the entrance, on the right.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 3. Rifle Falls Fish Hatchery

#### Description:

Adjacent to Rifle Falls State Park, the hatchery sits at the foot of a very large cliff that hosts a large colony of White-throated Swifts. There is a gravel road going west from the parking area in Gambel oak habitat and foot trails connect the state park and the hatchery for a longer walk. Self-guided hatchery tours are available, organized tours upon request.

#### Directions:

From I-70 exit 90, head north on CO 13 for 4 miles to CO 325. Turn right and go 11.4 miles to the entrance, on the right.

#### Access:

Open all year, daylight hours



### 4. Rifle Mountain Park

#### Description:

This canyon with world-class cliffs is famous among rock climbers around the world. It is also a pleasant, cool, shady place in the hot summer for a picnic. Swainson's Thrush, Gray Catbird, Virginia Rail, and American Dipper occur here. As you leave the canyon, the habitat opens up and becomes forested, with a different mix of species.

#### Directions:

From I-70 exit 90, head north on CO 13 for 4 miles to CO 325. Turn right and go for 10.4 miles to the start of the park.

#### Access:

Open all year, daylight hours



### 5. Coulter Mesa

#### Description:

If you have a 4x4 vehicle and are looking for a place to get away from it all, Forest Road 832 is a good place to visit. It takes you up onto the southwestern end of the Flat Tops into excellent aspen woodland. Look for Purple Martin and (at night) Flammulated Owls among others.

#### Directions:

From I-70 exit 90, head north on CO 13 for 4 miles to CO 325. Turn right and continue on this road as it turns to dirt; go 16 miles to FR 832 on the left.

#### Access:

Open all year

### 6. Harvey Gap Reservoir and State Park

#### Description:

This large and fairly shallow reservoir isn't the best for waterbirds, but can still be worth a look. The surrounding habitat is mostly made up of meadows and montane shrubland, and is often birdier than the lake itself. Species such as Mountain Bluebird, Green-tailed Towhee, Violet-green Swallow, and Western Scrub-Jay are all possible.

#### Directions:

From I-70 exit 90, head north on CO 13 for 4 miles to CO 325. Turn right, go 6.9 miles to Grass Valley Road (CR 226) and take a right. Go 4.3 miles to CR 237 and take another right. The entrance to the park is on the left in half a mile.

#### Access:

Open all year, daylight hours



### 7. Jerry Creek Reservoirs

#### Description:

These two medium-sized reservoirs have excellent waterbirding. Best in the late fall and early winter, of particular note is a fairly decent chance at seeing Barrow's Goldeneye and semi-regular Long-tailed Ducks. Less common birds such as loons and grebes also show up here. You can almost always find a Bald Eagle in the fall and spring.

#### Directions:

From Grand Junction, head east on I-70 to exit 49. Take CO 65 for 10 miles and continue east on CO 330. Go 2 miles, cross a bridge, and turn left into the parking area. A half-mile trail leads to the lakes.

#### Access:

Open all year, daylight hours



### 8. Grand Mesa

#### Description:

The Grand Mesa, an enormous table mountain covered in beautiful forest and crossed by a good highway, offers a myriad of birding opportunities. Birding can be good at various pullouts along CO 65, at Mesa Lakes, and around the Visitor's Center near the south end of the mesa. Look for Fox and Lincoln's Sparrows in the willows, American Three-toed Woodpeckers and more in the coniferous forests, and possibly Boreal Owls in the spring if you venture out at night.

#### Directions:

From Grand Junction, head east on I-70 to exit 49 and take CO 65 to the east. The good birding starts in about 15 miles; Mesa Lakes are on the right in 25 miles, the Visitor's Center on the left in 34 miles.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 9. Vega State Park and Reservoir

#### Description:

This large mountain reservoir on the east end of the Grand Mesa isn't particularly good for waterbirds, but is surrounded by montane shrubland and aspen forests that make for a good visit. There are several Purple Martin colonies near here, and the martins can sometimes be seen over the lake or in the large aspen stands not far to the south. In the montane shrubland look for Virginia's Warbler, Dusky Flycatcher, and Green-tailed Towhee.

#### Directions:

From Grand Junction, head east on I-70 to exit 49. Take CO 65 for 10 miles and continue east on CO 330. Go 16 miles to Peninsula Road (CR 64.6) and turn right. The park entrance is in 4 miles.

#### Access:

Open all year





# Eagle Trail



## The Heart of the Rockies

West of Vail Pass, the Colorado River and Interstate 70 come together to wind through the heart of the Rocky Mountains, where Bald Eagles spend the winter fishing in the fast-moving water. If you're vigilant, you stand a good chance of seeing one of them even from the interstate. Several ponds and parks along the river's course attract ducks, Great Blue Herons, and Pied-billed Grebes. North of the river is a mosaic of mesas and canyons with a surprising variety of scenery and species, Gray Catbirds in the riparian tangles, Pinyon Jays in the juniper woods, Mountain Bluebirds in the sage meadows. South of the river are some of Colorado's highest peaks, where Gray Jays and Northern Goshawks breed. Along this trail you can have as many or as few of the comforts of civilization as you like, and all the benefits of wilderness.



## Sites on the Eagle Trail:

- |                               |                                     |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Veltus Park                | 7. Derby Mesa                       |
| 2. Hanging Lake               | 8. Catamount Recreation Site        |
| 3. Dotsero Ponds              | 9. Gypsum Ponds State Wildlife Area |
| 4. Deep Creek Recreation Area | 10. Cottonwood Pass Road            |
| 5. Colorado River Ranch       | 11. Brush Creek Ranch               |
| 6. Trail Gulch Road           | 12. Sylvan Lake State Park          |



### 1. Veltus Park

#### Description:

This small park is one of the best near Glenwood. Lewis's Woodpecker is semi-reliable here, and the river can be quite good for American Dipper, especially during the winter months. Look in the riparian habitat for various breeding birds during the summer and sparrows during the winter months.

#### Directions:

From I-70 exit 116, head south on Grand Ave and cross the river. Take your first right onto 7th St. Go to a 'T'; turn left onto Midland Ave and drive south to the park entrance, on the left.

#### Access:

Open all year, daylight hours



### 2. Hanging Lake

#### Description:

This gem of a lake is famous for its vivid colors and dramatic waterfalls. It's also a good place to look for breeding Black Swifts during the summer, as well as American Dipper. The hike in to the lake is a steep 1.5 miles along a very popular hiking trail, which can also be good for birding.

#### Directions:

Hanging Lake can only be accessed from the east-bound lanes of I-70 at exit 125. Westbound travelers must exit at exit 121 and return east to exit 125. Follow signs from the exit to the trailhead.

#### Access:

Closed during the winter months



### 3. Dotsero Ponds

#### Description:

The small ponds in the Two River Park development can be worth a quick scan. Several types of waterbirds might be found here along with nesting Osprey. For some forest birding you can access some pinyon-juniper habitat just north of the interstate exit along the Colorado River Road (CR 301) at the Frank Olsen Trailhead.

#### Directions:

From I-70 exit 133, head just to the south and take a right onto Buffalo Blvd. The ponds are at the west end of Buffalo Blvd.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 4. Deep Creek Recreation Area

#### Description:

A truly unique location, the mixture of riparian woods with pinyon-juniper and oaks that coat sheer hillsides makes for a fascinating combination of breeding birds, and you may find Cordilleran and Dusky Flycatchers, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Canyon Wren, and Virginia's and Black-throated Gray Warblers all side-by-side. This is also a good location for Colorado Hairstreak.

#### Directions:

From I-70 exit 133, head north on the Colorado River Road for 1.7 miles to Deep Creek Road, on the left. The recreation area begins in a half mile.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 5. Colorado River Ranch

#### Description:

Colorado River Ranch is a large historic ranch property of over 1,000 acres with a diversity of habitats ranging from sagebrush shrublands to riparian cottonwood forests. The ranch land covers a two-mile stretch of the Colorado River with access to both sides. The boat launch is open to the public. To access other parts of the property please contact Scott Jones at (970) 524-9854.

#### Directions:

From I-70 in Dotsero, drive north on Colorado River Rd for 10.6 miles. Just after passing Trail Gulch Rd on your right, turn left at the large sign for the Colorado River Ranch. Follow this to the River for access to the public boat launch. If you would like to access other parts of the ranch, please contact Scott Jones for permission and directions.

#### Access:

Boat launch is accessible when snow is absent; contact owner prior to visit to other areas



### 6. Trail Gulch Road

#### Description:

Connecting I-70 with the Colorado River Road, parts of this road run through some of the best sagebrush in the area; much of it is on private land so be sure to bird from the road. Look for Sage Sparrow and Sage Thrasher. Some pinyon-juniper forest along the road is also worth a check.

#### Directions:

From I-70 exit 140 (Gypsum exit), head north on Trail Gulch Road, which runs for 10 miles to the Colorado River Road north of Dotsero.

#### Access:

Open all year

### 7. Derby Mesa

#### Description:

The Derby Mesa Loop is a 17-mile loop along Derby Creek. Northern Goshawk and Dusky Grouse can both be found here, with luck. In the lower portions the loop passes through montane shrubland; watch for Green-tailed Towhee, Orange-crowned and Virginia's Warblers. Higher up, MacGillivray's Warbler, Red-naped Sapsucker, and the occasional Purple Martin are possible.

#### Directions:

From I-70 exit 133, head north on the Colorado River Road for 21.5 miles to the south entrance of the loop, on the left. The north entrance is in another mile.

#### Access:

Limited access in the winter



### 8. Catamount Recreation Site

#### Description:

The Catamount Recreation site is used as a launch site for whitewater rafters, but is also a good spot to have a picnic while birding the riparian habitat along the Colorado River. Look for species such as Yellow-breasted Chat, Lazuli Bunting, Bullock's Oriole, and migrants in season.

#### Directions:

From I-70 exit 157, head north on CO 131 for 20 miles to the town of McCoy. Turn left onto the Colorado River Road, and go 7 miles to the recreation site, at the bridge.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 9. Gypsum Ponds SWA

#### Description:

The shallow ponds at this small SWA can be good for dabbling ducks, Osprey can sometimes be seen during the summer, and Bald Eagle at other times of year. Riparian along the Eagle River is worth checking out for migrants and breeding species such as Warbling Vireo, Yellow Warbler, Western Kingbird, and others.

#### Directions:

From I-70 exit 140, head east out of the roundabout south of the exit onto the frontage road. Go about a mile to the parking lot for the ponds.

#### Access:

Open all year, daylight hours



### 10. Cottonwood Pass Road

#### Description:

This road has a wide variety of habitats, the best of which is scrub-oak forest and sagebrush. Look for Virginia's and Orange-crowned Warblers, and Green-tailed and Spotted Towhees. Some farmer's ponds located below the road by the Garfield County line may have breeders like American Coot, Canada Goose, Mallard, Green-winged Teal, and Ring-necked Duck.

#### Directions:

From I-70 exit 140, take US 6 east into the town of Gypsum. In a half-mile turn right onto Valley Road. In 2.5 miles turn right again onto Cottonwood Pass Road (CR10).

#### Access:

Open all year

### 11. Brush Creek Ranch

#### Description:

This private ranch is located just south of the entrance to Sylvan Lake State Park. The property includes mixed conifer, pinyon-juniper and riparian habitat. Currently, viewing is available from the road but soon they plan to develop a boardwalk that will link to existing trails.

#### Directions:

From I-70 exit 147, head south and follow the signs to Sylvan Lake State Park through the town of Eagle. The Ranch will be on your right just before the entrance to the state park, approximately 9 miles south of town.

#### Access:

Viewing from road open all year. To inquire about access, contact Scott Schlosser (970) 390-9223.





## 12. Sylvan Lake State Park

### Description:

Sylvan Lake is very pretty mountain lake, which, while not very attractive to birds itself, is surrounded by very nice forest that can be fun to spend some time in. The forest around it is mixed-conifer with lots of lodgepole; downstream (north) from the lake are some streamside willows with potential for Fox and Lincoln's Sparrows and Swainson's Thrush. Nearby Crooked Creek Pass has great spruce-fir forests, and Fulford Road below the park has a good mix of riparian and coniferous woodland.

### Directions:

From I-70 exit 147, head south and follow the signs to the park through the town of Eagle. The entrance is 10 miles south of town.

### Access:

Closed during the winter months



# Did You KNOW?

## Boreal Owl

Moose country is also owl country



Of the lower 48 states, we are fortunate in Colorado to have the required habitat type for Boreal Owls. Boreal Owls in western mountains live in subalpine forests of fir and spruce. The Grand Mesa and North Park Trail provide a good place to view these small owls.

Boreal Owls nest in some form of tree cavity, usually an old woodpecker hole. They hunt from perches at night and surprise prey with a swooping dive. Listen for their distinctive calls at night.

# Soaring Eagles The Eagle Trail

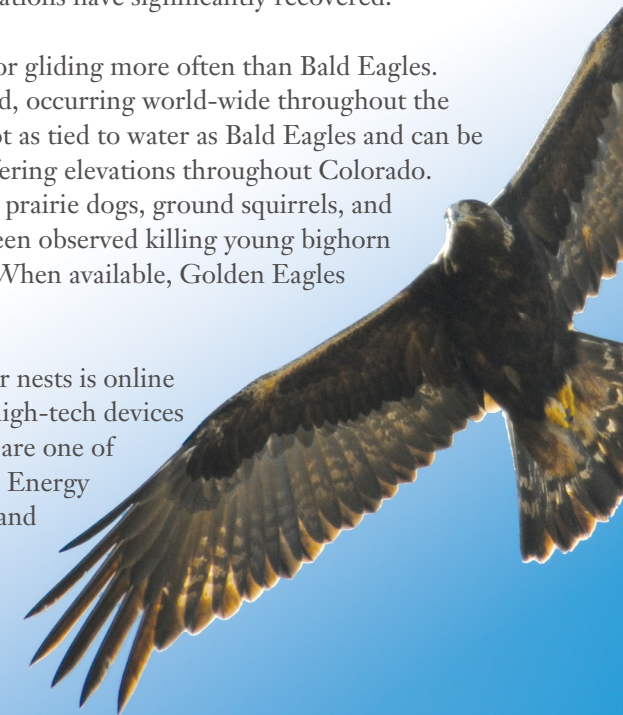
Eagles have long had importance in North American history. Native Americans revere eagles for their feathers, and the feathers of both Bald and Golden Eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) are used in traditional headdresses and for other significant cultural events. Bald Eagle has had significance in the United States as our national symbol of freedom and independence since 1782. Interestingly, Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) are only found in North America.

Both species of eagles are residents of Colorado throughout the year. Many Bald Eagles winter in Colorado and can be viewed along river corridors on the Western Slope. Look for them on the Yampa and Colorado Rivers roosting in large trees in winter. Golden Eagles are distributed throughout Colorado in the summer and winter, and can be found in many different types of habitat.

Bald Eagles are usually seen close to water near large rivers and lakes. Their diet includes fish, sick and injured waterfowl, muskrats, squirrels, rabbits, prairie dogs and they often eat carrion and road-killed animals. Bald Eagle populations declined in the early-mid 20th century due to use of pesticides such as DDT, human disturbance and loss of trees for nesting habitat. Consequently Bald Eagle was placed on the Endangered Species List. With the ban of the pesticide DDT and protection of nesting habitat, Bald Eagle populations have significantly recovered.

Golden Eagles can be seen soaring or gliding more often than Bald Eagles. Golden Eagles are widely distributed, occurring world-wide throughout the Northern Hemisphere. They are not as tied to water as Bald Eagles and can be seen in multiple habitat types at differing elevations throughout Colorado. Their diet consists of rabbits, hares, prairie dogs, ground squirrels, and marmots. They have occasionally been observed killing young bighorn sheep lambs, pronghorn, and deer. When available, Golden Eagles will readily feed on carrion.

A popular way to view eagles in their nests is online via live-feed "Eagle Cams". These high-tech devices are host to many species, but eagles are one of the most interesting to watch. Excel Energy hosts an eagle camera in Colorado, and there is a link to it from the Colorado Parks & Wildlife website.



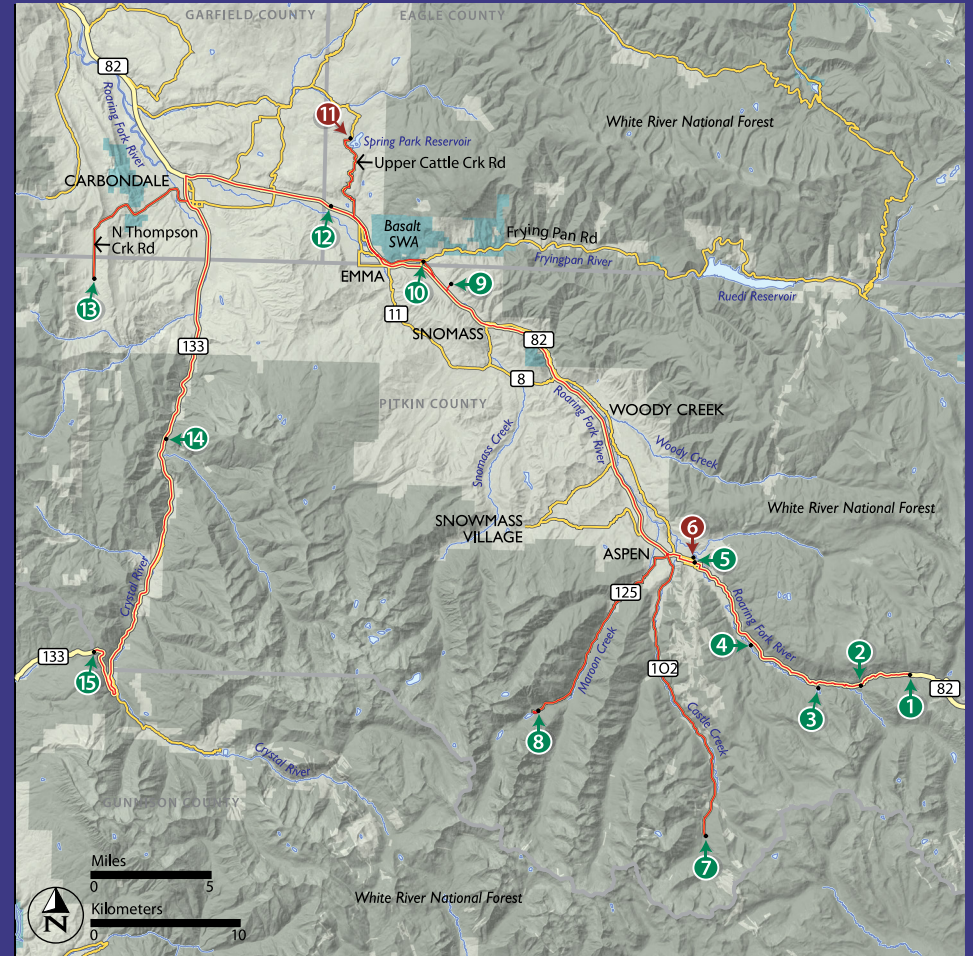


# Roaring Fork Trail



## Colorado's Scenic Headquarters

The Roaring Fork River crashes down out of the West Elk Mountains towards the Colorado River, carving out a beautiful mountain valley as it goes. In this drainage are some of Colorado's most renowned sights, including the famous Maroon Bells, some of the most photographed mountains in the world, as well as the resort town of Aspen. Wildlife watching opportunities abound. Along this trail you can traverse tundra in search of pipits, ptarmigans, and Prairie Falcons. You can hear Black-throated Gray Warblers buzz in the junipers outside Carbondale, or a Pine Grosbeak warbling from the top of a spruce in the Frying Pan Wilderness. This is steep country that has narrow roads, sharp curves, and steep grades with a high rate of return for any visitor willing to invest some time.



## Sites on the Roaring Fork Trail:

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Braille Trail                                 | 9. Arbaney Kittle & Sloane Peak Trail |
| 2. Lincoln Creek                                 | 10. Frying Pan River Valley           |
| 3. Weller Lake                                   | 11. Spring Park Reservoir             |
| 4. Difficult Campground                          | 12. Blue Lake (El Jebel)              |
| 5. Aspen   | 13. Thompson Creek Road               |
| 6. Aspen Center for Environmental Studies (ACES) | 14. Crystal River Valley              |
| 7. Castle Creek                                  | 15. McClure Pass                      |
| 8. Maroon Lake                                   |                                       |





### 1. Braille Trail

#### Description:

When this trail was first founded in 1967, it was the first of its kind in the country - a chance for the blind to experience the smells and sounds of the forest and feel of the trees, with a series of informative signs in braille. This is a good place to see (and hear!) species such as Gray Jay, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Brown Creeper, and others.

#### Directions:

From Aspen, head west on CO 82 for 14.5 miles to the entrance for the trail, on the right.

#### Access:

Closed during the winter months



### 2. Lincoln Creek

#### Description:

This side creek just above the narrows on CO 82 is unbelievably scenic, with beautiful smooth granite boulders carved into bizarre shapes by the rushing creek and surrounded by gorgeous spruce-fir forest. Golden-crowned Kinglet seems particularly common here, and Fox Sparrow is usually easily found in the willows, with American Dippers haunting the creek.

#### Directions:

From Aspen, head east on CO 82 for 10 miles to the Lincoln Creek Road on the right. The best viewing is along the first 4 miles.

#### Access:

Closed during the winter months



### 3. Weller Lake

#### Description:

If you're looking for an easy hike in the mountains near Aspen, then this is a good bet for you. It starts out in aspen forest and montane shrubland (look for Orange-crowned Warbler, Western Tanager and Red-naped Sapsucker) as well as willows (look for Fox and Lincoln's Sparrows) before heading into nice spruce-fir woodland.

#### Directions:

From Aspen, head east on CO 82 for just over 8 miles to the parking area, on the right.

#### Access:

Closed during the winter months



### 4. Difficult Campground

#### Description:

Not far to the east of Aspen, the Difficult Campground and nearby trails are a good place to get into the forest without driving too far. Along the access road to the campground, one passes through excellent willow-riparian habitat, while nearby mixed coniferous woodland is good for birds like Brown Creeper, Hermit Thrush, Red Crossbill, and (with luck) Dusky Grouse.

#### Directions:

From Aspen, head east on CO 82 for just over 4 miles to the entrance to the campground, on the right.

#### Access:

Closed during the winter months



### 5. Aspen

#### Description:

Aspen is, perhaps, Colorado's most famous resort town and it makes a good base for exploring the Roaring Fork Valley. Aspen has a lot of trees planted around town which makes it a birdy place. The best birding here is in the winter, with various species of finches. Fruiting trees might have waxwings, of either species.

#### Directions:

Aspen is along CO 82, 41 miles east of Glenwood Springs, and 20 miles west of Independence Pass.

#### Access:

Limited access in the winter months



### 6. Aspen Center for Environmental Studies (ACES)

#### Description:

ACES, a 22-acre wildlife preserve set aside to protect Hallam Lake, is an excellent birding spot right in the heart of Aspen. It provides good birding any time of year. Look especially on the small lake for waterbirds and wading birds. A number of boardwalks throughout the preserve take you through a good variety of habitat including willows, riparian, and mixed conifers.

#### Directions:

At the junction of Main St. (CO 82) and Mill St., turn north onto Mill and drive to Puppy Smith Street, then turn left. At the 'Y' bear right to the ACES entrance gate.

#### Access:

Open all year, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Saturday



### 7. Castle Creek

#### Description:

Castle Creek will give you nearly everything you would find at Maroon Lake, minus the heavy traffic. While the views may not be as world famous, they certainly aren't too shabby, and bird-wise you'll find many of the same species. Look for MacGillivray's Warbler, Lincoln's and Fox Sparrows, and American Dipper.

#### Directions:

From Aspen, head just west of town on CO 82 to the roundabout and take the southwestern exit onto Castle Creek Road. This road goes for over 12 miles.

#### Access:

Closed during the winter months



### 8. Maroon Lake

#### Description:

The views of the Maroon Bells from Maroon Lake are among the most famous in the world. The whole area is also quite birdy, especially along the trail around the lake. Watch for American Dipper, Pine Grosbeak, Red Crossbill, Gray and Steller's Jay, and MacGillivray's Warbler, among others.

#### Directions:

From Aspen, head just west on CO 82 to the roundabout, and exit onto Maroon Creek Road. Go 9 miles to the lake. When vehicle access is restricted (during the daytime in summer), take the shuttle bus tour (fee) starting at Four-Mountain Sports in Aspen Highlands.

#### Access:

Closed during the winter months, closed to cars 9:00 AM - 4:30 PM; use the bus



### 9. Arbaney Kittle & Sloane Peak Trail

#### Description:

One of the few locations near Aspen with pinyon-juniper woodland. Look for species such as Pinyon Jay, Juniper Titmouse, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and Gray Flycatcher. Some Douglas-fir penetrates into the pinyon-juniper, bringing in birds like Hermit Thrush, Hammond's

Flycatcher, and Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

#### Directions:

From Aspen, head west on CO 82 for 17 miles to Bishop Road, and take a right. Follow the signs to the Arbaney Kittle Trailhead, in 0.5 miles.

#### Access:

Open all year, daylight hours



### 10. Frying Pan River Valley

#### Description:

It's hard to pin one of Colorado's many mountain river valleys as the most scenic, but the Frying Pan is surely among the top contenders. Check the blue spruce/Douglas-fir forest from some of the many pullouts and one could find species such as Cordilleran Flycatcher, Common Merganser, American Dipper, Western Tanager, and a host of other birds.

#### Directions:

From Aspen, head west on CO 82 for 20 miles to Basalt. Take a right onto Fiou Lane and go west onto Midland Rd. This road becomes Frying Pan Road and enters the valley.

#### Access:

Limited access in the winter months



### 11. Spring Park Reservoir

#### Description:

Easily the best waterbirding site on this trail. Perhaps the biggest draw is the large staging of Barrow's Goldeneye that happens every spring, but a large variety of other ducks and the occasional shorebird can also be found. All the land here is private, so please look at the reservoir from the road.

#### Directions:

From Aspen, head west on CO 82 to El Jebel Road (CR 102), in 22 miles. Turn right (north) at the traffic light and go north about 5 miles until you see the reservoir.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 12. Blue Lake (El Jebel)

#### Description:

This residential subdivision has a small recreational spring-fed pond that remains open almost all winter. In addition to making this a magnet for waterfowl, it also makes it one of the best places in the state to find Barrow's Goldeneye all winter long.

#### Directions:

From Aspen, head west on CO 82 for 24 miles to the residential development on the right. The best parking is at the Community Center just up the road on the left. Park there and walk back to the pond, on the left.

#### Access:

Open all year, daylight hours

### 13. Thompson Creek Road

#### Description:

This road has the best pinyon-juniper forest on the trail. Look for species such as Pinyon Jay, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Bushtit, Juniper Titmouse, and (at night) Common Poorwill. Portions of the road pass through Douglas-fir habitat, where a slightly higher-elevation mix of birds including Western Tanager, Hermit Thrush, and Hammond's Flycatcher can be seen.

#### Directions:

From Carbondale, head west on Main St. and go 0.8 miles to CR 108. Turn left and go 8 miles to the habitat, which continues for the next couple of miles.

#### Access:

Closed during the winter months



### 14. Crystal River Valley

#### Description:

Most of the land along this scenic river is private, but there are numerous pullouts and some river access points that can be good birding. Along the lower parts watch for Lewis's Woodpeckers, and higher up Townsend's Solitaire, MacGillivray's and Wilson's Warblers, Fox and Lincoln's Sparrows, and American Dipper.

#### Directions:

The Crystal River Valley parallels CO 133 for 25 miles from Carbondale to McClure Pass.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 15. McClure Pass

#### Description:

This low mountain pass is an excellent birding location filled with beautiful aspen and mixed conifer forest. Keep an eye out for the rare Purple Martin, as well as Red-naped Sapsucker, Green-tailed Towhee, Dusky Flycatcher, and Western Tanager, among others. During the colder months watch for finches along the road.

#### Directions:

McClure Pass is along CO 133, 25 miles south of Carbondale.

#### Access:

Open all year



## Grouse of the mountains Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse

*Scientific name: Tympanuchus phasianellus Columbianus*

Two types of Sharp-tailed Grouse are found in Colorado, Plains Sharp-tailed Grouse and Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse (also known as Mountain sharp-tailed). Sharp-tailed Grouse weigh in at around 1.5 pounds and they have distinct black V-shaped marks on the breast feathers. Compared to other grouse in Colorado, sharp-taileds have a frosty appearance due to white spotting on the body and wing feathers. The conspicuous white spots on the wing feathers are an easy way to distinguish sharp-taileds from Dusky (formerly known as Blue Grouse) and sage-grouse.

This species uses the high mountain shrub-grassland community and associated edges. Sharp-taileds are most commonly found in high elevation grassland areas interspersed with serviceberry, chokecherry, oakbrush, sagebrush, snowberry, and aspen. Unlike sage-grouse or Dusky Grouse, sharp-taileds may utilize agricultural fields and feed on waste grain and associated insects.

Like sage-grouse, Sharp-tailed Grouse breed on leks or traditional strutting grounds. Sharp-tailed Grouse leks are typically located on knolls or ridge-tops. An average of 14 birds display and breed on an area of around 100 feet in diameter. The best time to view their mating rituals is when males begin displaying in late March or early April. During the breeding season, males exhibit orange eyecombs and purple air sacs which form an integral part of the courtship ritual. Sharp-tailed males "dance" by stomping their feet and running in a circle to attract females.



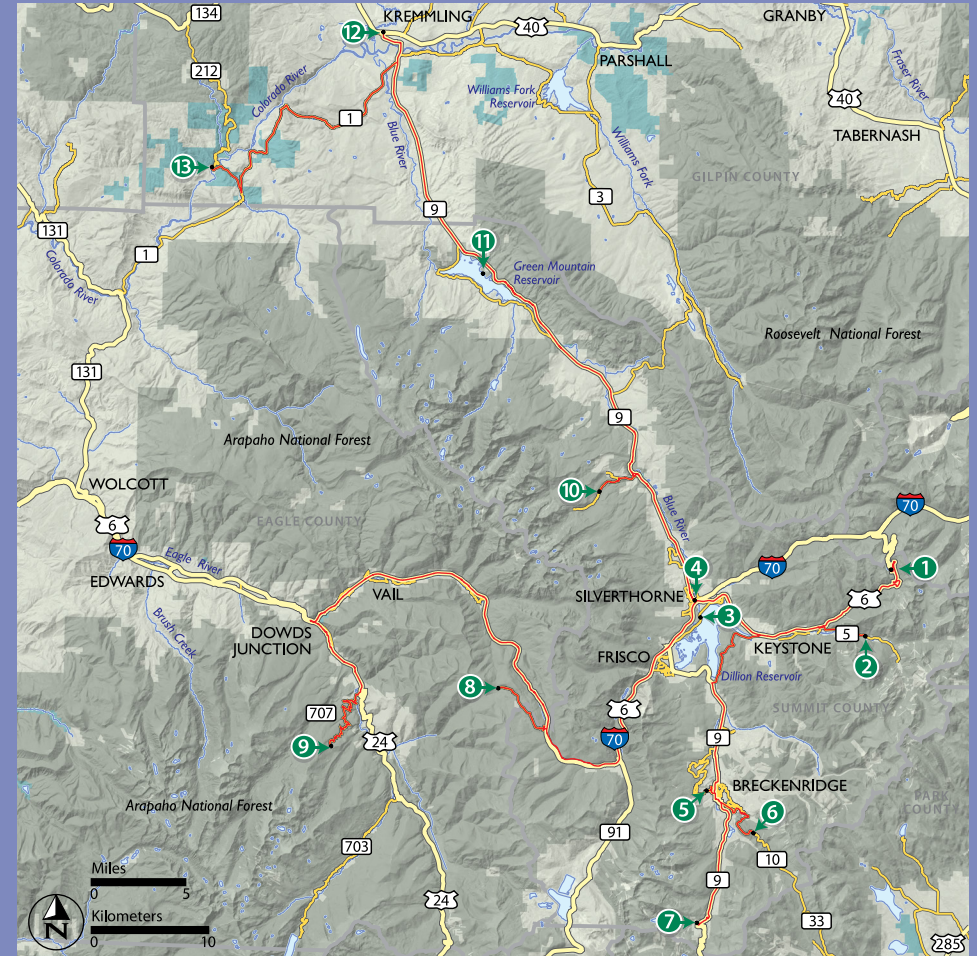
*In late fall and winter, the birds form small flocks and are dependent on shrubs for food and cover. In spring the males head toward the leks and the cycle begins again.*



# Summit Trail

## Winter and Summer Playground

For travelers driving west from Denver, Summit County offers the first taste of the West Slope. Famous for ski resorts like Breckenridge, Arapahoe Basin, and Copper Mountain, it's also home to well-preserved natural areas that offer good wildlife watching at any time of year. Right in the town of Silverthorne, one can find nesting Ospreys all summer and Barrow's Goldeneyes all winter. The county's mountain wetlands support Wilson's Warblers and Lincoln's Sparrows in summer, and in any season, weather permitting, the more adventurous travelers can walk the Continental Divide from Loveland Pass in search of ptarmigan. But high elevations are not the area's only charm; to the north, this trail descends into the arid semi-desert ecosystems of southwestern Grand County and the Colorado River canyons, where southwestern species like Black-chinned Hummingbirds and Juniper Titmice can be found. This trail offers something special for every season.



## Sites on the Summit Trail:

1. Loveland Pass (Summit side)
2. Montezuma Road
3. Dillon Reservoir
4. Silverthorne
5. Cucumber Gulch Nature Preserve
6. Boreas Pass Road
7. Blue Lakes Road
8. Shrine Pass
9. Tigiwon Road
10. Alfred M. Bailey Bird Nesting Area
11. Green Mountain Reservoir
12. Kremmling
13. Radium State Wildlife Area





### 1. Loveland Pass (Summit side)

#### Description:

This high, windswept, scenic pass is one of the few places to look for White-tailed Ptarmigan in winter and spring, when they are entirely white. Finding one may take hours of strenuous hiking. Brown-capped Rosy-Finch is possible, but not common. Keep an eye out for marmots and pika.

#### Directions:

From the east: I-70 exit 216, south on CO 6 to the pass. From the west: I-70 exit 205, south on CO 6 through Dillon and Keystone to the pass.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 2. Montezuma Road

#### Description:

Paved and plowed in winter, this road accesses high-elevation forests. Birding is best in early summer, with woodpeckers, Pine Grosbeaks, Golden-crowned Kinglets and MacGillivray's and Wilson's Warblers. Dippers can be seen all year. The road can be busy, and there is no visitor parking in the town of Montezuma.

#### Directions:

From I-70 at Silverthorne (exit 205), travel south/east on US 6, following signs to Keystone. Eight miles from I-70, the exit for Montezuma Road is on the right.

#### Access:

Open all year

### 3. Dillon Reservoir

#### Description:

The birding on this large reservoir is best in late fall and early winter, when small numbers of ducks and gulls may be seen on the water, including mergansers, both species of goldeneye and occasionally Common Loon or even a scoter. Bald Eagles and Ospreys sometimes soar over the water.

#### Directions:

From I-70 exit 203, south 4.1 miles on CO 9; left on Swan Mountain Road; another quick left toward the Summit Water Treatment facility and the reservoir.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 4. Silverthorne

#### Description:

This is a great place to see Barrow's Goldeneye in

winter - a few can typically be found at the Blue River Wastewater Treatment Plant right along CO 9 north of the interstate. In the summer, up to three active Osprey nests can be seen on artificial platforms near the highway.

#### Directions:

Silverthorne is on I-70 at exit 205. The Blue River Wastewater Treatment Plant is on the east side of CO 9, 2.7 miles north of I-70.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 5. Cucumber Gulch Nature Preserve

#### Description:

These fragile fen wetlands between the town of Breckenridge and the ski area are now a preserve for wildlife including the endangered boreal toad, moose, beaver, and birds including Wilson's Snipe, Wilson's Warbler, and Lincoln's Sparrow. Access is restricted during the summer, but the area is circled by hiking trails.

#### Directions:

From I-70 exit 203, travel south on CO 9 to Breckenridge. Keep right at roundabout to stay on CO 9. At second stoplight, turn right on Ski Hill Road. Nordic Center parking lot is on the right in half a mile.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 6. Boreas Pass Road

#### Description:

This fairly rough road rises to near treeline for a scenic backcountry car trip near Breckenridge. Moose, elk, deer, and marmots may be seen along the road. Breeding birds include Red Crossbill, White-crowned and Lincoln's Sparrows, Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets, and Mountain Chickadee.

#### Directions:

From I-70 at Frisco (exit 203), travel south on CO 9. In Breckenridge, 11.2 miles from the interstate, turn left (east) on Boreas Pass Road (CR 10).

#### Access:

Roughly June-October

### 7. Blue Lakes Road

#### Description:

This gravel road quickly leads to treeline and spectacular scenery. Pikas are easy to see in boulder fields

near the end of the road. White-crowned Sparrows, Wilson's Warblers and American Pipits may be seen. History buffs will enjoy the views of several abandoned mines.

#### Directions:

From Breckenridge, go south 7.5 miles on CO 9. Turn right on Blue Lakes Road (FR 850), keeping straight at the fork. Road can be rough; drive with care.

#### Access:

Roughly June-October

### 8. Shrine Pass

#### Description:

Shrine Pass is a slow, scenic, road-less-traveled alternative to I-70 over Vail Pass. As the road rises out of the village of Red Cliff, it follows a beautiful stream with lots of willow, through aspens and mixed conifers. The road then runs through several miles of truly excellent spruce-fir forest before the pass; birds such as Pine Grosbeak, Gray Jay, and Golden-crowned Kinglet could be found.

#### Directions:

From the Minturn/Leadville exit off I-70 (exit 171), head south on US 24 for 10 miles to High Road, and take a left. Go 0.6 miles into the town of Red Cliff; here take a left onto Turkey Creek Road, which goes for 9.5 miles to Shrine Pass, and continues for 2 more miles to I-70 at Vail Pass.

#### Access:

Closed during the winter months

### 9. Tigiwon Road

#### Description:

This narrow, winding mountain road covers a wide variety of habitats. Right at the start of the road, along the stream, you can find breeding Swainson's Thrush and American Dipper. A little higher up are some nice aspen stands, and higher still lots of lodgepole pine before transitioning into nice spruce-fir before the campground at the end of the road.

#### Directions:

From the Minturn/Leadville exit off I-70 (exit 171), head south on US 24 for 4.8 miles to a right turn onto Tigiwon Road. The road goes for 6 miles to its end.

#### Access:

Closed during the winter months



### 10. Alfred M. Bailey Bird Nesting Area

#### Description:

In 1971, this remote area was designated a special

management area due to high-elevation birds including Northern Goshawk, Northern Pygmy-Owl, Fox Sparrow, and Williamson's Sapsucker. To reach the actual Bird Nesting Area requires a two-mile hike, but no hiking is required to bird the excellent habitat along the entrance road.

#### Directions:

From I-70 exit 205, travel 7.5 miles north on CO 9, 1.2 miles west on Rock Creek Road (FR 1350). Turn left and follow signs 1.7 miles to Rock Creek Trailhead (rough road).

#### Access:

June - October



### 11. Green Mountain Reservoir

#### Description:

This high-elevation reservoir does not usually have many birds on it, but Bald Eagles and Ospreys can be seen hunting here sometimes. Willow Flycatcher breeds in the willows southwest of the reservoir. There is a day use fee in the area.

#### Directions:

From I-70 exit 205, travel north 16.7 miles on CO 9, turn left (west) on Heeney Road (CR 30). The reservoir is on the right (north).

#### Access:

Late May - October



### 12. Kremmling

#### Description:

Birding in town can be excellent, especially in winter, when rosy-finches and redpolls sometimes congregate at feeders. Southeast of town, County Road 33 runs past wetlands and seasonally flooded fields with Wilson's Snipe in summer, ibis and waterfowl in migration, and mule deer all year.

#### Directions:

Kremmling is at the junction of CO 9 and US 40, about 25 miles west of Granby. CR 33 heads east from CO 9 about one mile south of Kremmling.

#### Access:

Open all year







### 13. Radium State Wildlife Area

#### Description:

Remote but fascinating, this is one of the closest places to Denver to see pinyon-juniper birds such as Black-throated Gray Warbler, Juniper Titmouse, and Pinyon Jay. Look also for Black-chinned Hummingbird, Bushtit, Rock Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, desert cottontail and short-horned lizard.

#### Directions:

From Kremmling, travel south on CO 9 one mile; right (west) on Trough Road (CR 1) 14.6 miles; right on CR 11, cross the river, then left onto CR 111.

#### Access:

Open all year



## Altitude Attitude The Summit Trail

Preparation is of utmost importance when traveling in Colorado's backcountry and can mean the difference between life and death. Even short hikes with the best intentions of not traveling far from a trailhead or your vehicle can change in an instant when a summer thunderstorm suddenly arrives, or it begins to unexpectedly snow in the summer.

Particularly at high elevations, it is important to time your travel and be prepared for the elements. Leave early in the morning, sometimes before day break in preparation for a long hike at high altitude. Take along layers of clothing to protect you from the elements. There are many things to be aware of above 10,000 feet: varying temperatures, sudden changes in weather, dehydration, altitude sickness, and sunburn.

Carry more water than you think you will ever use, at least 3 liters per person for a day of active hiking. High energy snacks will provide good nutrition and required energy to get back to the trailhead, but water is essential! Sunscreen is important at high altitude, as you can burn easily. Reapply sunscreen throughout the day. Altitude sickness occurs when you cannot get enough oxygen from the air at high altitudes. The first signs of altitude sickness (also known as acute mountain sickness) are headache, dizziness, and nausea. The higher in elevation you ascend, the less oxygen that is available for your body to utilize. The only way to treat these symptoms is to go down in elevation until the symptoms subside.

*The bottom line is – be safe, be smart, and be prepared before traveling in Colorado's high country!*



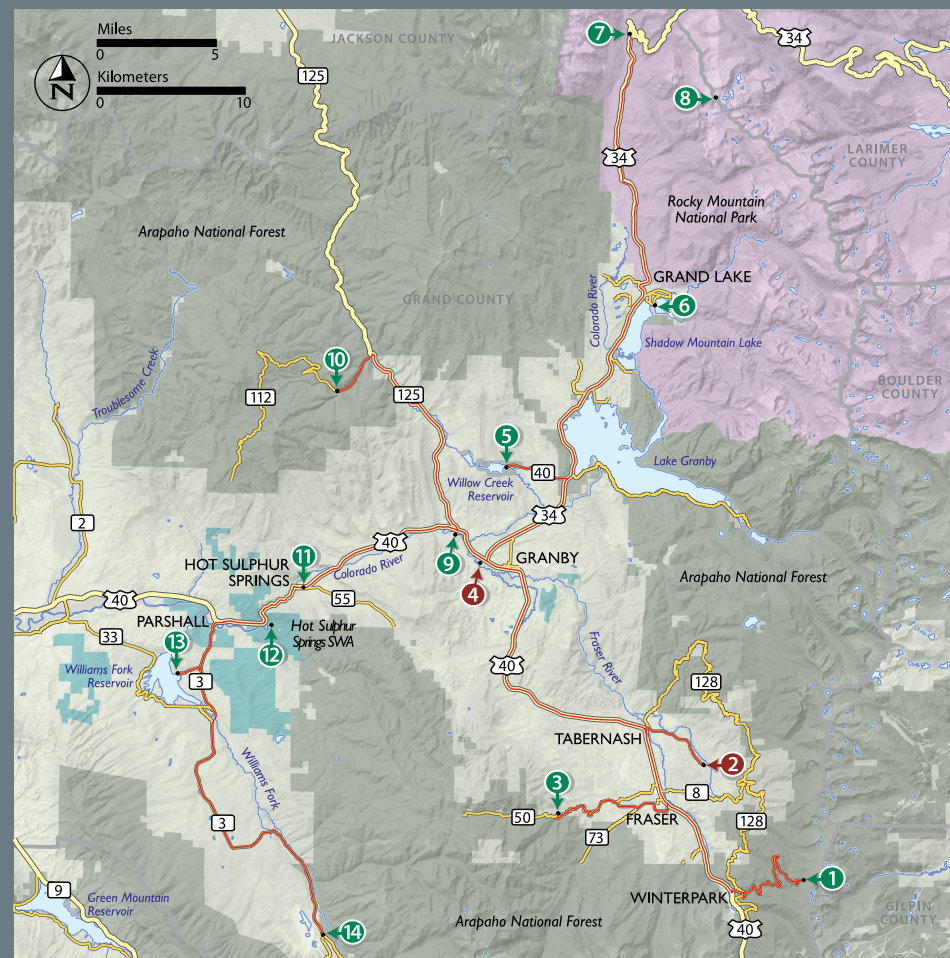


# Grand Lake Trail



## Headwaters of the Colorado

Here at the start of the river that carved the Grand Canyon lies an easy-to-reach taste of Colorado's West Slope. Starting as a trickle of snowmelt high in Rocky Mountain National Park, the Colorado runs across mountain meadows, underneath tangles of willows and over the feet of trout fishermen and moose. It fills up the many lakes and reservoirs around the towns of Grand Lake and Granby, where Osprey spend the summer and Barrow's Goldeneye pass the winter. It wanders across the open steppe of Middle Park, home to pronghorn and Greater Sage-Grouse. Then it slides down into a series of canyons to begin its career as a whitewater rafting destination, passing juniper woodlands, Pinyon Jays, and Black-throated Gray Warblers. This area in Grand County is the closest place to Denver to sample all these western ecosystems together, providing something for every kind of nature lover.



## Sites on the Grand Lake Trail:

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| 1. Rollins Pass (West Side)                  | 8. Mount Ida                                |
| 2. Devil's Thumb Ranch Resort and Spa        | 9. Windy Gap Watchable Wildlife Area        |
| 3. FR 139 (Crooked Creek / Keyser Creek Rds) | 10. Cabin Creek Road and CO 125             |
| 4. Fraser River Ranch                        | 11. Hot Sulphur Springs                     |
| 5. Willow Creek Reservoir                    | 12. Hot Sulphur Springs State Wildlife Area |
| 6. Grand Lake Area                           | 13. Williams Fork Reservoir                 |
| 7. Trail Ridge Road (Grand County section)   | 14. Williams Fork Valley / Ute Pass         |





### 1. Rollins Pass (West Side)

#### Description:

The rather rough Moffat Road (FR 149) follows the historic route of the railway from Winter Park to the Continental Divide, through lodgepole and spruce-fir forest up to the tundra, home of ptarmigans, pipits and marmots. Views are breathtaking here, and crowds tend to be sparse.

#### Directions:

Moffat Road (FR 149) heads east from US 40 on the south end of the town of Winter Park, about a mile north of the Winter Park Ski Resort.

#### Access:

Road open early summer - late fall



### 2. Devil's Thumb Ranch Resort and Spa

#### Description:

This ranch resort and spa features over 20 miles of hiking and cross-country skiing trails through creek-side meadows, large aspen stands and ponderosa pine forests covering 6,000 acres. In addition to the outdoor activities there are 80 guest rooms, three restaurants, a cross-country ski rental shop, a retail store and many historic homesteads on site. In the summer you can expect to find Wilson's Snipe, Violet-green Swallows, and White-throated Swifts flying over the meadows, Warbling Vireos singing from the aspens and Western Tanagers calling from the top of a tall ponderosa pine.

#### Directions:

From Hwy 40 south of Tabernash, head southeast on CR 33 for 3 miles. The route is well-signed.

#### Access:

Summer; contact owner prior to visit



### 3. FR 139 (Crooked Creek / Keyser Creek Rds)

#### Description:

Those with a penchant for exploration should enjoy this area in the high country west of Fraser. A network of roads traverses aspen stands, lodgepole pine and spruce-fir forests, and willow-lined stream crossings with Swainson's Thrushes. A good map is needed; visit the USFS office in Granby for current information.

#### Directions:

From US 40 in Fraser, at the stoplight in front of the Safeway Center, go west on CR 72. Head south under a railroad bridge and keep right at the 'Y'. Continue to a 'T' with CR 73 and go left 0.8 miles,

then right on CR 50 S, which becomes CR 50, Crooked Creek Road.

#### Access:

Road open early summer - late fall



### 4. Fraser River Ranch

#### Description:

This private working ranch has diverse birding opportunities including riparian, sagebrush and grassland habitats. It is accessible year-round and features unique fen wetlands. This site can be birded from several locations along County Road 57.

#### Directions:

From Hwy 40 in Granby, turn south on 5th St/Railroad Ave towards CR 57. Continue west on CR 57 and drive less than a mile. There are a couple turn-outs on the right that provide access or viewing.

#### Access:

Open all year

### 5. Willow Creek Reservoir

#### Description:

This lake has more to offer the fisherman than the birder, but it does have some nice scenery, a Forest Service campground, and breeding Osprey. There is a fee for vehicle access.

#### Directions:

From the junction of US 40 and US 34 just west of Granby, north 5 miles on US 34; head left (west) on CR 40 to the reservoir.

#### Access:

Late May - mid-October



### 6. Grand Lake Area

#### Description:

Grand Lake, Shadow Mountain Reservoir and Lake Granby are good places to see Osprey in summer and Barrow's Goldeneye in fall before the water freezes. In winter, the Barrow's move into the canal between Grand Lake and Shadow Mountain Reservoir. This area is one of the best in Colorado for seeing moose.

#### Directions:

The town of Grand Lake, Shadow Mountain Reservoir, and Lake Granby are all along US 34, about six miles north and east of the town of Granby.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 7. Trail Ridge Road (Grand County section)

#### Description:

The lower parts of this spectacular road, just inside Rocky Mountain National Park, can provide up-close views of moose, mule deer, elk, and chipmunks. Higher up, at scenic overlooks, it's hard to miss Steller's Jays, Gray Jays, and Clark's Nutcrackers. Farther up is Rainbow Curve, one of the best sites in the nation to see the elusive White-tailed Ptarmigan.

#### Directions:

From Grand Lake, follow US 34 north, following signs to Rocky Mountain National Park. US 34 becomes Trail Ridge Road inside the park.

#### Access:

Open all year, but upper road closed mid-Oct - late May



### 8. Mount Ida

#### Description:

This steep, difficult 4-mile day hike in Rocky Mountain National Park maximizes your opportunities for seeing bighorn sheep, ptarmigan, and Brown-capped Rosy-Finches. It requires excellent physical conditioning, an early start, food, water, sturdy boots, sunscreen, and raingear, plus a healthy respect for potentially dangerous weather and terrain.

#### Directions:

From Grand Lake, follow US 34 into Rocky Mountain National Park to Milner Pass trailhead. Follow the trail to Ida, keeping right at the junction below treeline.

#### Access:

Early summer - fall



### 9. Windy Gap Watchable Wildlife Area

#### Description:

There are almost always birds on this reservoir, including many ducks, Canada Geese, and often some gulls or terns in migration. The water is easy to scan from the parking lot of the Watchable Wildlife area along US 40, which is a good place for a picnic. Viewing scopes are available.

#### Directions:

From Granby, west on US 40 about 2 miles to the junction with CO 125; the wildlife area is on the south side of the road.

#### Access:

May 1 - Sep 30, daylight hours



### 10. Cabin Creek Road and CO 125

#### Description:

The Cabin Creek road starts off with beautiful riparian willows and spruces where MacGillivray's Warblers breed. The farther up the road you travel, the fewer people you will encounter. Eventually you will arrive at beetle-killed forests with interesting birds such as Townsend's Solitaire, Pine Grosbeak, Clark's Nutcracker, and woodpeckers.

#### Directions:

From Granby, west on US 40 about 2 miles, then right (north) about 9 miles on CO 125, then left (west) on Cabin Creek Road.

#### Access:

Open all year (Cabin Creek Rd not maintained in winter)

### 11. Hot Sulphur Springs

#### Description:

The biggest attraction for wildlife watchers is Pioneer Park, a mile-long stretch of mature cottonwood forest along the Colorado River in town. This is a wonderful place to look for birds from spring through fall, including Bullock's Orioles, Lazuli Buntings, and Yellow Warblers. River otters are here, but rarely seen.

#### Directions:

Hot Sulphur Springs is on US 40, 11 miles west of Granby. To get to Pioneer Park, turn north on Park Street, then left (west) on Grand.

#### Access:

Camping spring-fall



### 12. Hot Sulphur Springs State Wildlife Area

#### Description:

This State Wildlife Area contains a good example of mid-elevation riparian habitat, where willows and spruces meet, providing nesting habitat for Swainson's Thrush, Wilson's Warbler, and Red-naped Sapsucker, among others. The best unit of this SWA to bird is the Paul Gilbert Fishing Area. This location





provides day-use access and picnic tables.

**Directions:**

From Hot Sulphur Springs, go 3 miles west on US 40 to west end of Colorado River bridge; then south.

**Access:**

Open all year



**13. Williams Fork Reservoir**

**Description:**

This reservoir is not very attractive to waterfowl, but Ospreys breed on nest platforms near the road, and wet meadows host Savannah Sparrows, Brewer's Blackbirds, and Wilson's Snipe. Southeast of the lake, streamside willows support breeding Veery, Swainson's Thrush, and Fox Sparrow. Pronghorn and mule deer are numerous.

**Directions:**

From Granby, 15 miles west on US 40; left (south) on CR 3; south 5.3 miles across the river (listening for Veeries), then right to access the reservoir's south side.

**Access:**

Mostly May - Oct



**14. Williams Fork Valley / Ute Pass**

**Description:**

South of the Williams Fork Reservoir, CR 3 runs through mountain meadows with Vesper Sparrows, Brewer's Blackbirds, and pronghorn, then rises into coniferous forest where Hermit Thrush, Olive-sided Flycatcher, and Dusky Flycatcher may be found. Moose are numerous, and dippers nest along the river. The forest is regenerating nicely from the pine beetle epidemic.

**Directions:**

From Granby, 15 miles west on US 40; left (south) onto CR 3. At 18.1 miles south of US 40, keep left for the upper Williams Fork.

**Access:**

Mostly late May - October

# Did You KNOW?

## Colorado is moose country!



The moose is one of the state's most successful reintroduced species. In 1978, the first of many transplants occurred and secured the North Park area as the place to see moose in Colorado. Later transplants occurred in Colorado and helped to establish strong populations in the Laramie River Valley, near Creede, the Grand Mesa and the Flat-tops. Since the transplants, our moose have thrived and expanded their range into good habitats. Not only do the moose provide recreational opportunities for sportspeople, they also have become a main attraction for all of those who enjoy watching wildlife. In recognition of this wildlife phenomena, the state legislature designated Walden as the "Moose Viewing Capital of Colorado" in 1995.

The term moose comes from the Algonquin Indian word meaning "eater of twigs". They can be found in a wide range of riparian habitats from sagebrush, high mountains above timberline, and traditional willow, aspen, pine and beaver pond-type habitats.

Moose are the largest ungulate in Colorado. Adult bull moose can weigh up to 1,200 pounds. Moose do not have natural predators in Colorado, and they do not handle harassment well. Do not view moose with pets, as they will treat dogs as a predator and attack. Provide plenty of distance between you and a moose. Remember to use good viewing ethics and be prepared with a good set of binoculars, a telephoto lens or a spotting scope.

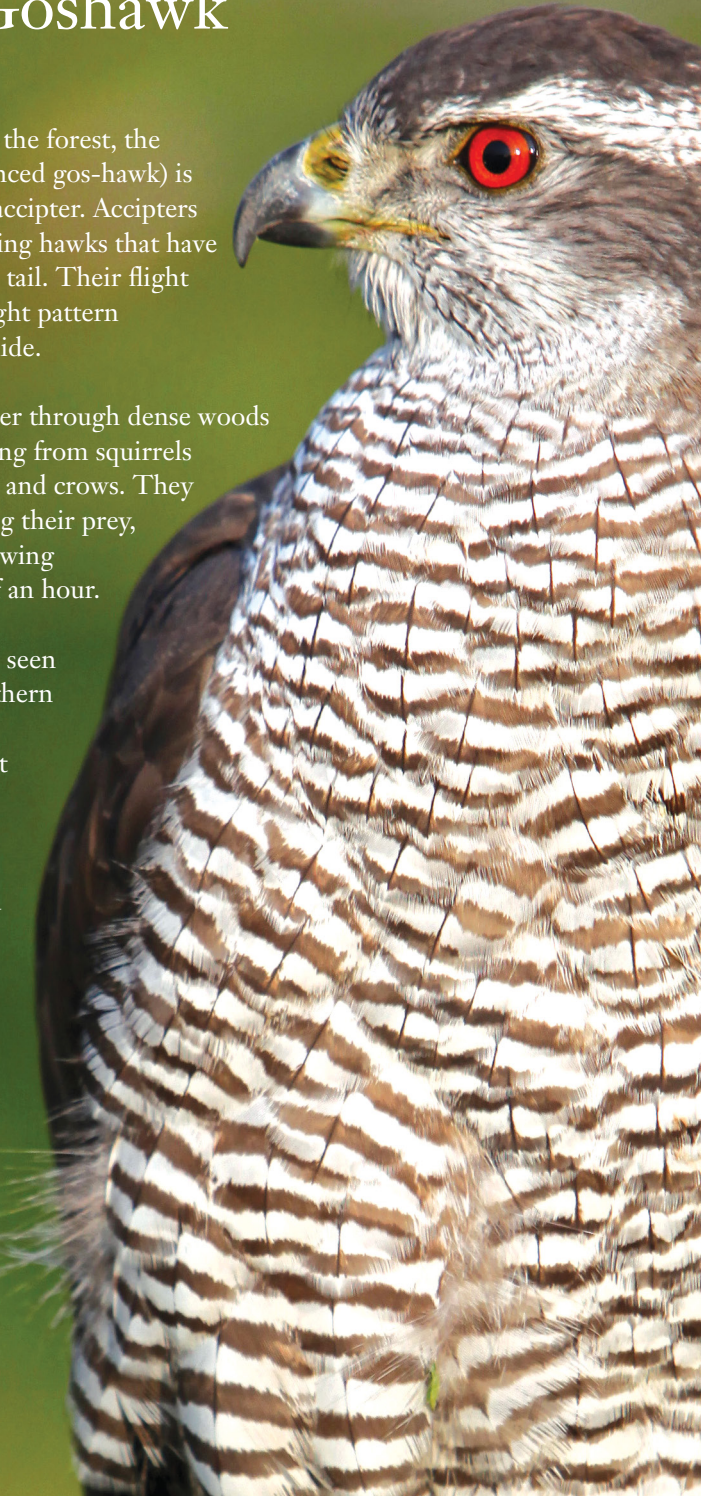
## Forest Flyers Northern Goshawk

*Accipiter gentilis*

Our most powerful raptor of the forest, the Northern Goshawk (pronounced gos-hawk) is the largest North American accipiter. Accipters are a genus of forest-inhabiting hawks that have short broad wings and a long tail. Their flight is easily distinguished as a flight pattern of several quick flaps and a glide.

Northern Goshawks maneuver through dense woods with ease, hunting prey varying from squirrels and snowshoe hare to grouse and crows. They are very persistent in pursuing their prey, and have been observed following potential prey for upwards of an hour.

Their persistence can also be seen in defense of their nest. Northern Goshawks commonly attack people and other animals that may unknowingly approach too close to their nest. Be aware on your pursuits to view this forest dweller – you may be the one 'chased'! As always, respect wildlife, their habitat, and be cautious. We are visitors in their homes.





# A Guide to Ultimate Wildlife Watching!

Here are some simple ways you can help blend into an animal's surroundings. In return, you'll be treated to a wildlife show that makes your heart pound and your senses hum.

## Fade Into the Woodwork

- Wear natural colors and unscented lotions. Remove glasses that glint.
- Walk softly so as not to snap twigs or trample wildflowers.
- Crouch behind boulders or vegetation to blend your figure or break up your outline.

## Camera Tips

- Use at least a 400 mm lens.
- Have the sun at your back – afternoon light is best.
- Aim for featuring wildlife within its natural surroundings, not a full frame profile.

## Let Animals Be Themselves

- Resist the temptation to “save” baby animals. Mom is usually watching from a safe distance.
- Give nests a wide berth. Your visit may lead predators to the nest or cause the parents to leave, exposing eggs or young to the elements.
- Let animals eat their natural foods. Sharing your sandwich may harm wild digestive systems and get animals hooked on handouts.

## Come to Your Senses

- A wildlife encounter is a spectrum of sensations. Deepen awareness by tapping your sense of smell, taste, touch, hearing, and sight.
- Use your peripheral vision rather than turning your head.
- Look above and below you. Animals occupy niches in all the vertical and horizontal layers of a habitat.
- Cup your hands around the back of your ears to amplify natural sounds.
- Silence can speak volumes. Animals may fall silent when a predator is passing through an area.
- Peer through a hand lens to enter the world of insects.

## How to Use Binoculars

- Find the subject with your unaided eyes.
- Bring the eyepieces just under your eyes.
- Sight the subject over the tops of the eyepieces.
- Slowly bring the binoculars to your eyes.



## Understanding the signs and routes along the Colorado Birding Trail

As you travel the backroads and byways of the Colorado Birding Trail, watch for the brown on white Birding Trail Logo on the site ID signs. These signs will help you locate the public birding trail sites all along the trail. Some private sites may have ID signs to assist you in locating them, but some will require you to call prior to visiting to get directions from the landowner.

Additionally, Colorado Birding Trail Interpretive Kiosks and signs will be located along some of the trails as you travel through the state. These large, full color signs will provide roadside information to assist you in selecting trails and sites to visit along your route. Look for them at Colorado Welcome Centers, National Parks sites and other locations along the Colorado Birding Trail.

Look for the brown binocular signs that designate other great wildlife viewing areas along our roadsides.

If you are traveling on one of Colorado's 24 Scenic and Historic Byways, you will be following the blue "Columbine" signs that designate our state Byways. These Byways promise interesting heritage, culture, and historic sites throughout the state, as well as some of our most scenic driving routes. Visit [www.coloradobyways.org](http://www.coloradobyways.org) for more information.

## Colorado Parks and Wildlife Regional Offices [cpw.state.co.us](http://cpw.state.co.us)

**Northeast Region**  
303-291-7227  
6060 Broadway  
Denver, 80216

**Northwest Region**  
970-255-6100  
711 Independent Ave  
Grand Junction, 81505

**Southeast Region**  
719-227-5200  
4255 Sinton Rd.  
Colorado Springs, 80907

**Southwest Region**  
970-247-0855  
415 Turner Drive  
Durango, 81301

**Brush:** 970-842-6300

**Fort Collins:** 970-472-4300

**Glenwood Springs:** 970-947-2920

**Gunnison:** 970-641-7060

**Hot Sulphur Springs:** 970-725-6200

**Lamar:** 719-336-6600

**Meeker:** 970-878-6090

**Monte Vista:** 719-587-6900

**Montrose:** 970-252-6000

**Pueblo:** 719-561-5300

**Salida:** 719-530-5520

**Steamboat Springs:** 970-870-2197





[cpw.state.co.us](http://cpw.state.co.us)

Colorado Parks and Wildlife is the state agency responsible for managing wildlife and its habitat, and providing outdoor recreation on 43 state parks. Wildlife management in Colorado is funded through the sale of hunting and fishing licenses, federal grants and Colorado Lottery proceeds through Great Outdoors Colorado.