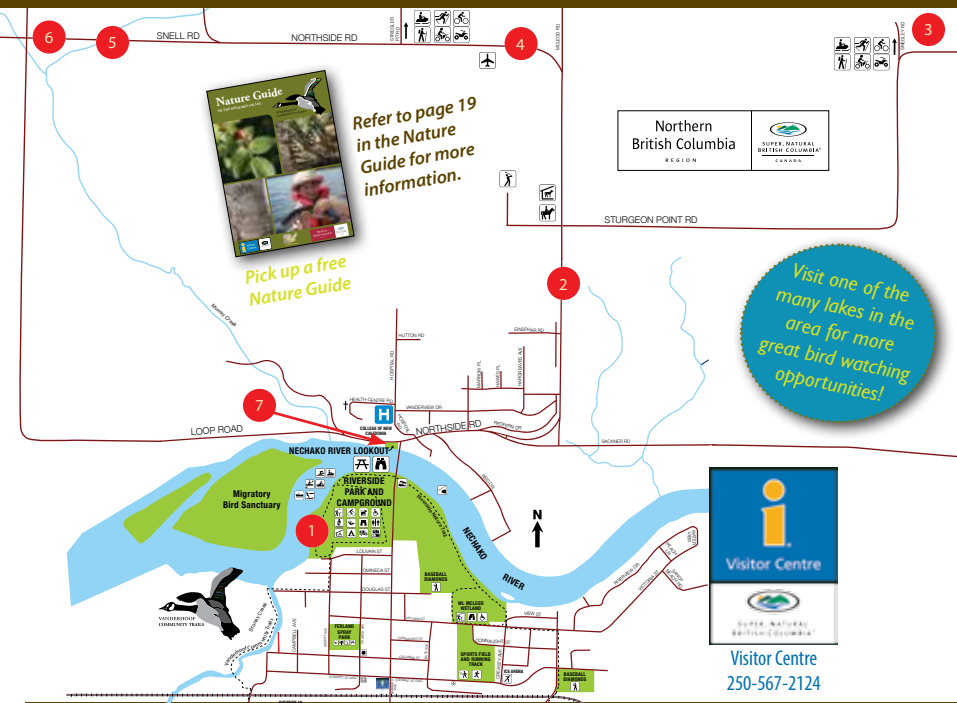


# Bird Watching Hot Spots



## DETAILS

Total Distance: 20.0 km  
Roads: Paved and Gravel  
Time Estimate: 2.0 hr  
Things to bring: Bird Species list, an ID book, camera, notebook, recording of owl calls, flashlight, high-visibility vest.

## TOUR DESCRIPTION

The Nechako Valley in general is a great place to see birds. This loop tour is an example of places to start birdwatching. Be sure to let your sense of adventure take you to different places in the area, or ask at the Visitor Centre. This tour starts at the Nechako River and takes you to agricultural fields, forest stands and back again on paved and gravel roads. Go at dawn or dusk to see a different assortment of birds, including owls (see over).

## HOW TO GET THERE

From the Visitor Centre (VC), drive north on Burrard Ave. Turn left into Riverside Park. Return to Burrard Ave and turn left, then turn right after the bridge onto Northside Rd. Turn right onto Sturgeon Pt Rd to Smedley Rd and go straight up the hill to Waterlily Lake. Return to Northside Rd, turn right and follow to Snell Rd. Go straight onto Snell Rd, turn left at Loop Rd. Turn right at the bridge and return to the VC.

## BIRD WATCHING HOT SPOT DESCRIPTIONS

- 1. Nechako Migratory Bird Sanctuary:** Home to thousands of Canada Geese each spring and fall, this migratory bird sanctuary at Riverside Park is a haven for a wide diversity of birds. In the spring find American White Pelicans on the river, while Osprey and Belted Kingfishers are seen all summer diving for trout. Take a walk along the **Vanderhoof Community Trails** system to see many more birds including dozens of songbirds.
- 2. Ponds along Northside Road:** Drive slowly along Northside Road for about 2 km. There are ponds on either side of the road that offer a great view of Canada Geese, Trumpeter Swans and a myriad of ducks in the spring and fall.
- 3. Waterlily Lake Trail:** Stop here and take a short walk into the forest along the marked trail. Listen for songbirds, woodpeckers and grouse. Return here in the evening and spend some time calling out an owl (see below).
- 4. Farmers Fields along Sturgeon Pt and Northside Roads:** Take your time driving along these long straight rural roads and keep an eye on the fence posts, power lines and open fields. Northern Harrier are almost always seen gliding over the fields, while Kestrel, Red-tailed Hawks and Merlins can be seen on the posts and wires watching the fields for movement.
- 5. Snell Road:** Stop your car at the culvert crossing on Snell Road. The creek below is Murray Creek, a salmon bearing stream and part of the Murray Creek Rehabilitation Project. Look for a variety of duck species here, including Mallards, Wigeons, Coots, Northern Pintails and others during spring and fall migration, and in the summer as some pairs remain here to breed.
- 6. Snell and Loop Road Intersection:** Stop here again and listen and look for songbirds. Murray Creek crosses under Loop Road here and the small wooded area is a great place to spot birds. Look for Mountain Bluebirds, Cedar Waxwings and more.
- 7. Nechako River Look-out:** On a good day, five species of swallow can be seen from this spot. These birds come in the hundreds to this location each spring and stay for the summer to hatch their clutches. Swallows swooping over and under the bridge are a regular summer scene in Vanderhoof.



**How to Call Out an Owl:** Owling is not a perfect science. Do not expect to see an owl on your first attempt. Be patient. The reward of spotting an owl is worth it!

- Although owls can be seen during the day, they are more active at night. Arrive at dusk. Wear high visibility clothing for safety.
- Bring a flashlight and a recording of an owl call (eg. [www.theowlfoundation.ca/species.htm](http://www.theowlfoundation.ca/species.htm)).
- Mimic an owl call or play the recording.
- Wait quietly for several minutes - call again. Repeat about 5 times.
- If you hear fluttering in the trees or a return owl call, turn on your flashlight and point it into the high branches of the trees. Look for a reflection of the owl's eyes.
- Repeat this procedure at a number of locations for best results.

