

# North Cascades

National Park Service Complex

## *Bird Finding Guide*

Special Code of Ethics

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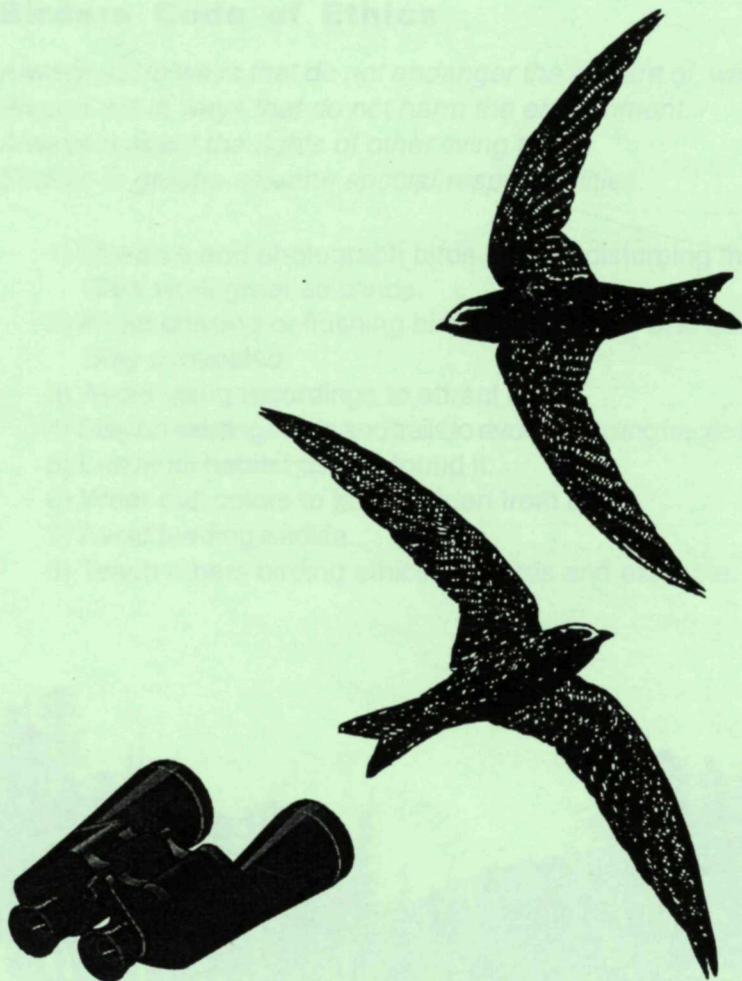
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North Cascades National Park Service Complex is a land of extremes. No fewer than five life zones produce a wild and diversified land complete with western and eastern representatives of the avian world. From the wet rainy west to the dry desertlike east, successful niches have been carved out of every available habitat by a wide variety of birdlife. Many species typical of the eastern United States can be located east of the cascade crest. Resident western species west of the crest share habitat with neotropical migrants that utilize the Pacific Flyway in spring and fall.

## **Birders Code of Ethics**

*Always act in ways that do not endanger the welfare of wildlife.*

*Always act in ways that do not harm the environment.*

*Always respect the rights of other living things*

*Birders in groups assume special responsibilities.*

- 1) Observe and photograph birds without disturbing them.  
Cars work great as blinds.
- 2) Avoid chasing or flushing birds. Walk slowly and quietly.  
Stay concealed.
- 3) Avoid using recordings to attract birds.
- 4) Stay on existing roads and trails to avoid trampling fragile habitat.
- 5) Leave all habitat as you found it.
- 6) Wear dull colors to keep hidden from birds.
- 7) Avoid feeding wildlife.
- 8) Teach others birding ethics by words and example.



## **For More Information**

**North Cascades National Park and  
Mt. Baker Ranger District  
Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest**

2105 State Route 20  
Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284  
(360) 856-5700 Ext. 515  
<http://www.nps.gov/noca>  
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/mbs>

**North Cascades Visitor Center (NPS)**

Newhalem, WA  
(206) 386-4495

**Golden West Visitor Center (NPS)**

Stehekin, WA  
360-856-5700 ext. 340, then 14

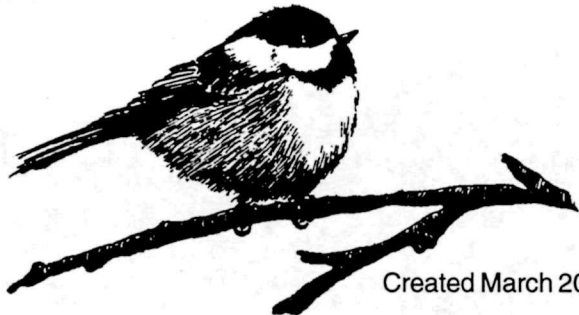
**Okanogan National Forest  
Methow Valley Visitor Center**

24 W. Chewuch  
Winthrop, WA 98862  
509-996-4000  
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/oka>

**Washington State Bird Box/Rare Bird Alert**

425-454-2662  
(sponsored by Washington Ornithological Society)

**Please report bird sightings** to the North Cascades or Golden West Visitor Centers.



Created March 2000

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## State Route 20

State Route 20 (SR 20), the North Cascades Highway, gradually ascends from Newhalem (500 ft.) east to Washington Pass (5,477 ft.). Along the way, the National Park Service as well as the National Forest Service has provided pullouts, rest stops, and observation points. Trailheads are marked along the highway, and complete information can be obtained from the North Cascades National Park Service Visitor Center in Newhalem. State Route 20 is closed at milepost 134 in winter, usually from mid-November to mid-April.

### County Line Ponds (Milepost 116.5)

These ponds can be accessed by foot only. Park at the pullout on the west side of SR 20 near the Whatcom/Skagit county sign. Proceed across the highway to the gated road which is owned by Seattle City Light, the public utility which owns the 3 dams on the Skagit River. Waterfowl such as Barrow's Goldeneye, Red-breasted Mergansers, Buffleheads, Mallards and grebes can be found, and in spring a good assortment of migrants visit the heavy junglelike vegetation growing around the ponds. Red-eyed Vireos are frequent visitors here, and American Redstarts nested here in 1996 and 1997.

Follow the maze of narrow roads around all the ponds in this area to search for possible Marsh and Winter Wren, singing Hammond's and Pacific-slope Flycatchers, and Townsend's, Black-throated Gray, Yellow-rumped and Yellow Warblers. The banks of the Skagit River can be accessed allowing views of Harlequin Ducks and Hooded Mergansers. Bald Eagles frequent the firs and hemlocks in winter. Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Brown Creepers and Golden-crowned and possibly Ruby-crowned Kinglets search for winter forage amongst the bare limbs of alder and cottonwoods. Spotted Towhees, Golden-crowned, White-crowned, Lincoln's and Fox Sparrows sing from ground cover, while in spring the possibility of Lazuli Buntings exists.



From the river bank, follow the small trail that parallels the Skagit River to a sandbar, about a half-mile distance. Check deciduous growth and search the river's muddy banks for possible mammal tracks.

Between the ponds and Newhalem along SR 20, there are numerous places to search for birdlife. Pullouts along the Skagit River offer possible views of Bald Eagles. Shrubby thickets along the way harbor sparrows, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, grouse, warblers, and in spring, Townsend's Solitaires. Raptors sail overhead and swifts and swallows are present except in winter.

### **Aggregate Ponds (Milepost 118)**

About one mile west of the Goodell Creek Campground is the entrance road to these human-made ponds.

Material dredged from this area was used in the construction of SR 20. Now the ponds are excellent birding areas. Keep in mind that these ponds are owned by Seattle City Light and vehicle access is not permitted. Park at least fifty feet from the gate and continue on foot.

In spring and early summer birdsong will be constant from dawn until midday. Neotropical migrants can be thick in tall cottonwood and alder trees along the road well before encountering the ponds. Warblers, vireos, flycatchers, tanagers, grosbeaks, and woodpeckers all vie for insect nourishment of which this area provides an abundance.

Check low shrubs for Spotted Towhees, Fox, Lincoln's, White-crowned, Golden-crowned and Chipping Sparrows. Varied and Swainson's Thrushes as well as an occasional Hermit Thrush can be found in spring. Common Yellowthroat Warblers, Song Sparrows and Winter Wrens usually scramble amongst dense understory vegetation. Listen for the birdlike vocalizations of Chickarees and Townsend's Chipmunks. These mammalian denizens can stop birders in their tracks, certain they've discovered a new avian species.



Follow the road straight ahead to parallel the highway. On the left flows an outwash channel lined with Vine Maple, elderberry and young cottonwoods. In spring this is excellent habitat for MaGillivray's and Yellow Warblers. Cassin's and Warbling Vireos make appearances to take advantage of insects cruising the

waterway. Watch for waterfowl such as Wood Ducks, Buffleheads, Mallards and also Belted Kingfishers.

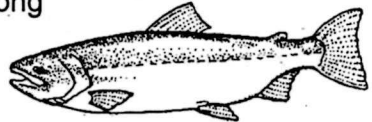


American Dippers and Spotted Sandpipers can create quite a racket early to mid-morning. Male Rufous Hummingbirds perform flight displays hoping to catch the eye of seemingly uninterested

females who inconspicuously perch close by. In early spring, Evening Grosbeaks, Red Crossbills and Townsend's Solitaires can be numerous throughout and Townsend's and Black-throated Gray Warblers seem to excel at all their varying song repertoires.

In late fall and winter check the channel for spawning Pink, Sockeye, Coho and Chum Salmon but be respectful of their space. Salmon at this point are stressed and focused on the end of their life cycle. Do not disturb their spawning areas.

Tall alder and cottonwood trees, along with lichen-draped Big-leaved Maples, separate SR 20 from this narrow track. Search these trees for Pileated, Hairy and Downy



Woodpeckers as well as Red-breasted, and occasionally, Red-naped Sapsuckers. Red-tailed and Sharp-shinned Hawks patrol this area hunting rodents and migrant and resident passerines. Continue on this road to enjoy limited views of the pond or backtrack to the first intersection and bear right. Shrubs and thickets border the road, and soon a large opening brings open sky and stunning views of Tee-Bone Ridge to the east. Seattle City Light uses this area, but nearby edge habitat usually has some interesting birdlife. Red Crossbills and Pine Siskins sometimes light in the very tops of border conifers, and Bald Eagles and other raptors can be seen in the open sky above. Western Meadowlarks, and flocks of American Pippits sometime congregate with Brewer's Blackbirds in the open field. Follow the road to the right to access the pond.

Approach the pond cautiously. Black and Vaux's Swifts, five species of swallows, Cedar Waxwings and Red Crossbills are all possible. A good selection of waterfowl including Barrow's and Common Goldeneyes, three species of Mergansers, Wood Ducks, and three species of grebes can usually be spotted rafting about in relative security. Belted Kingfishers, Red-winged Blackbirds, Great Blue Herons, Common Yellowthroat Warblers, Ruffed Grouse, Black-capped Chickadees and a wide assortment of resident and migrant species utilize this area from early spring to late fall, and an hour's visit can add to quite an impressive day list. Follow the road to view another pond to the left with equal chances of good birding opportunities. The little road terminates at the Skagit River and offers an excellent viewing spot for Bald Eagles, American Dippers, Red-breasted Mergansers and Spotted Sandpipers.

This area also hosts a variety of mammal species. Black Bear, Columbian Black-tailed Deer, Bobcat, River Otter, Raccoon, Beaver, and a variety of rodents have all been observed here. No hunting is allowed in this area.



## **Goodell Creek Campground (Milepost 119)**

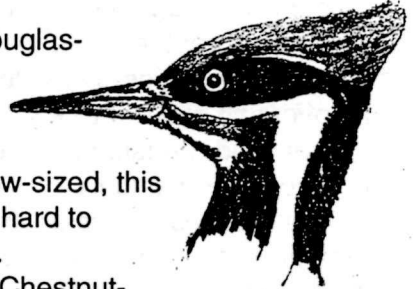
This secluded campground located about a mile west of the North Cascades Visitor Center off State Route 20 offers a good diversity of riparian species including warblers, vireos, tanagers, and flycatchers. The Skagit River which courses nearby hosts a number of ducks with occasional Harlequin and Red-breasted Mergansers. Watch for Violet-green, Rough-winged, Barn and Tree Swallows in spring competing with low flying Vaux's Swifts for scrumptious mosquitos. Belted Kingfishers, Great Blue Herons, American Dippers and Spotted Sandpipers occur along the river banks.

A walk around the campground in spring can be rewarded with singing Cassin's and Warbling Vireos. MaGillivray's, Orange-crowned, Yellow and if you're lucky, Nashville Warblers can be found along the thickets next to the road. River Otters occasionally occur around the mouth of Goodell Creek.

## River Loop Trail (Milepost 120)

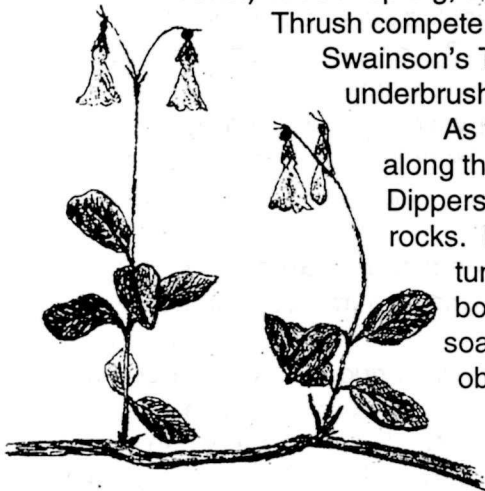
The 1.8 mile River Loop trail winds a gentle course from the North Cascades Visitor Center down to the Skagit River and back. Western Hemlock, Douglas-fir, and Western Red Cedar visibly dominate the route with a number of deciduous species making an appearance as maples, alders and cottonwoods. An old road makes up part of the trail where lodgepole pines take advantage of sunlight and shrubs such as dogwood and willow can be found.

In the deeper sections where Douglas-fir tower and lichen hang from hemlock limbs, listen for the high powered flicker-like call of the Pileated Woodpecker. Although crow-sized, this large and noisy woodpecker can be hard to locate in the deep coniferous shade.



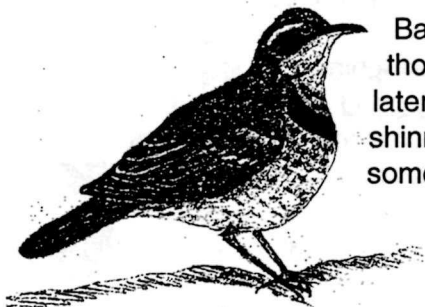
In the canopy listen and look for Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Townsend's, Black-throated Gray, and Yellow-rumped Warblers and possibly Red Crossbills. Occasionally Brown Creepers, Red-breasted Nuthatches, and Hairy Woodpeckers will associate with these mixed foraging flocks.

Listen for the bubbling song of the Winter Wren heard constantly throughout spring and early summer. (MaGillivray's Warblers can be found along the edge of the old lodgepole pine road.) Also in spring, the metallic-like songs of the Varied Thrush compete with the ethereal spirals of Swainson's Thrush that skulk in the moist underbrush.



As the trail winds its way down and along the river, watch for American Dippers hunting aquatic insects from rocks. Dippers enjoy the most tumultuous areas, precariously bobbing and dancing on stream-soaked boulders. Its also possible to observe Spotted Sandpipers sharing the Dippers habitat, though generally they are more active along the shore.

Steller's Jays, Ravens, and the distant songs of White-crowned Sparrows always seem to accent the background of any spring or summer hike along this trail. Migration brings Neotropical visitors such as Western Tanagers, Hammond's, Olive-sided, and Pacific-slope Flycatchers, all breeders in this area. The haunting song of the Western Wood Pewee can challenge any birder to discover its whereabouts. Good Luck!



In fall, watch for the return of Bald Eagles along the Skagit River though peak season for this activity is later in winter. Red-tailed and Sharp-shinned Hawks, Ospreys and sometimes Northern Harriers cruise the river, and in the fall of 1999 a Cooper's Hawk fledged at least two young not far from the trail.

## **Sterling Munro Overlook (Milepost 120)**

This short boardwalk trail leads from the North Cascades Visitor Center to a stunning viewpoint of the Southern Picket Range, Trappers Peak, and the terminus of the Goodell Creek drainage. Try to ignore the view (impossible!) and scan for Vaux's and Black Swifts. These aerialists provide quite a show in late spring and summer taking advantage of high flying insect abundance. Band-tailed Pigeons, raptors, and an assortment of songbirds such as Pacific-slope, Hammond's, and Olive-sided Flycatchers can be viewed at treetop level. This is one of the most reliable places in the park to locate Black Swifts and provides a great opportunity to practice identification skills as both Blacks and Vaux's hunt side by side. Black Swifts are slightly larger, more sickle shaped and tend to glide more with slower wing beats. Vaux's rarely glide for more than a few seconds and flap much faster.



## Newhalem (Milepost 120)

The town of Newhalem sits in a narrow slot of the Skagit River Valley paralleled by SR 20. Elevation here is only 500 feet above sea level, but the surrounding slopes and mountain views inspire the feeling of being much higher. Along with native vegetation, many exotic tree and shrub species were planted here along the highway and attract migrants in spring and resident species throughout the year.

In spring look for Rufous Hummingbird courtship display flights. Especially good areas include the thickets at the foot of the bluffs north of the road and under the powerlines. This habitat includes thick growth of elderberry, salal, and Oregon grape with Vine Maples interspersed throughout. Good concentrations of passerines take advantage of cover and forage opportunities; bushes and slopes should be carefully searched. Along the bluffs, Violet-green Swallows and Vaux's Swifts patrol, while at ground level, Spotted Towhees, White-crowned, Golden-crowned, Lincoln's, Fox and Song Sparrows are frequent visitors in April through June. Wilson's, Nashville, Orange-crowned and McGillivray's warblers forage at low to medium levels while Western Tanagers can be found in taller trees close by. Overhead, or usually in the tallest conifers, Red Crossbills,



Evening Grosbeaks, and Pine Siskins are heard before seen. Overhead, Common Nighthawks sound their "peent" calls and can easily be identified by the white rings around their wings. The Oregon race of the Dark-eyed Junco and even a Ruffed Grouse or two can sometimes be flushed from the thick undergrowth.



A stroll to the greenspace by the Newhalem Post Office in spring can be rewarded with flocks of American Pipits, Common Snipe, and a small resident population of Canada Geese. Ravens frequent the powerline towers and Steller's Jays call from conspicuous perches, while overhead Cedar Waxwings give their high pitched "see see" calls.



The intersection of SR 20 and the North Cascades Visitor Center road can be a good place to scan for Chipping Sparrows and even Western Meadowlarks in migration. Lazuli Buntings have been known to frequent the edge habitat under the powerlines as well as Red-eyed vireos, Ruffed and Blue Grouse, Rufous Hummingbirds, and on rare occasions, Gray Catbirds. Directly across from the Visitor Center road is a road leading to the Department of Transportation (DOT), garage parking lot. This area is lined with mixed conifer and deciduous trees. Under the powerlines listen for the explosive “fitz bew” song of the Willow Flycatcher and the sharp chip call of the McGillivray’s Warbler. Around the DOT parking lot look for Western Tanagers, Black-headed Grosbeaks, warblers, flycatchers and vireos. In the spring of 1999 Evening Grosbeaks were seen frequently around the gas pumps! A walk along the road that leads back to the Goodell gravel pit can reveal Varied Thrushes, Rufous Hummingbirds, Winter Wrens, sparrows, warblers, flycatchers and tanagers. This is also a good place to owl prowl as Barred and Northern Pygmys frequent the fir and hemlock forests along the road. Northern Pygmy Owls are very responsive to mimic calls and can be lured in with their monotonous whistled hoot.

A number of short trails can be accessed from the Newhalem area that provide an introduction to mature western hemlock forests, riparian woodland and associated birdlife.





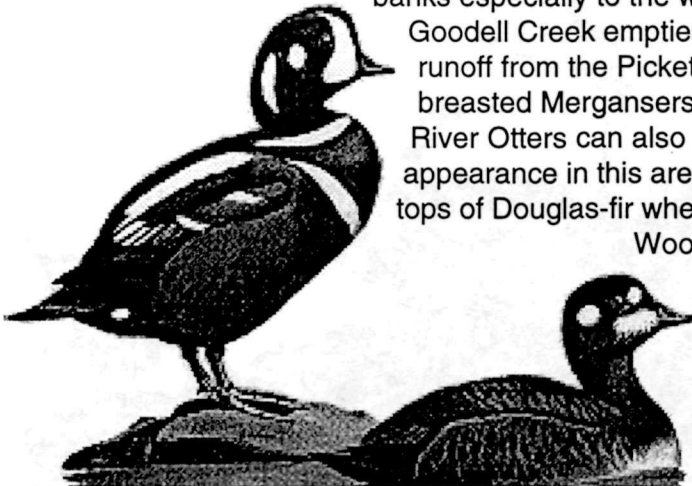
## Trail of the Cedars, Newhalem (Milepost 121)

This short loop stroll begins at the end of “downtown” Newhalem. Park in town near the general store and proceed to the suspension bridge that crosses the Skagit River. The trail winds around a number of large, old Western Red Cedar and Douglas-fir trees towering above the river itself. Look and listen for Winter Wren, “the mousebird of the undergrowth”. Black-throated Gray and Townsend’s Warblers share the canopy with Golden-crowned Kinglets, Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Red-breasted Nuthatches and possibly Red Crossbills. This trail now connects with the River Loop trail. Turn right at the old Newhalem powerhouse to access the new linking trail which parallels the road to Newhalem Campground Loop C. The road crosses a bridge over tumbling Newhalem Creek, usually a good place for Dippers. In spring and summer Violet-green Swallows, Vaux’s and Black Swifts streak across open spaces just above the forest canopy twittering their flight songs along the way. Varied and Swainson’s Thrushes flush suddenly from invisible nooks under the sword fern throughout the deepest woods. Watch along path and road edges for the Oregon race of the Dark-eyed Junco possibly mixed with White-crowned, Golden-crowned and Song Sparrows.

The new trail passes through Loop C to cross the Visitor Center road. Continue on to link up with River Loop Trail, but spend a moment scanning both sides of the one-way bridge over the Skagit River. Harlequin Ducks sometimes can be found along the

banks especially to the west where Goodell Creek empties its glacier runoff from the Picket Range. Red-breasted Mergansers as well as River Otters can also make an appearance in this area. Search the tops of Douglas-fir where Pileated

Woodpeckers pound for meals and Red-breasted Sapsuckers forage at mid-elevations.



## Diablo Lake Trail (Milepost 127)

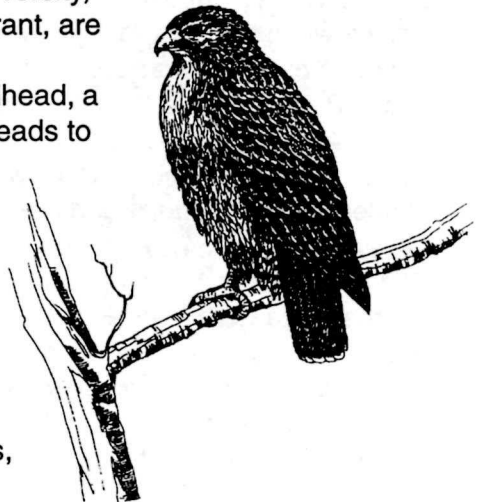
This trail is located on the north side of Diablo Lake. Take the access road across Diablo Dam to its termination point at the Diablo Lake Trailhead. Park out of the roadway and walk out on the dam to check for possible Townsend's Solitaires, Red Crossbills, and Violet-green Swallows. Be very careful of other traffic on the dam. The lake can harbor Barrow's Goldeneyes, Western Grebes, Buffleheads and Canada Geese. Check the pilings for cormorants and around the docks and logfloats for Horned and Pied-billed Grebes. White-crowned, Golden-crowned and Song Sparrows sing in spring from the edge of the road, and the deciduous trees along the way can produce



Western Tanagers, Black-throated Gray and Townsend's Warblers. Park at the gravel parking lot at the end of the road. Look for the trailhead sign located north of the road. Beyond the road is the location of the North Cascades Environmental Learning Center opening in fall of 2000.

The trail is just under four miles one way and gently climbs through rich and diverse habitats including mature fir forests, mixed deciduous growth and rocky outcroppings with open sky. Because of this diversity, many species, resident and migrant, are attracted here.

About two miles from the trailhead, a small social trail turns right and leads to a dramatic view of Diablo Lake and surrounding peaks. This area is not only a great lunch spot but an excellent place to scan for raptors. Bald Eagles, Red-tailed, Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks are all very probable here. Peregrine Falcons and Northern Goshawks, both rare in the park, have been observed here. Northern Flickers,



Pileated, Hairy, and rarely, Three-toed Woodpeckers are present. Red Crossbills, Townsend's Solitaires, Pine Siskins and Red-breasted Nuthatches are a good bet as well as Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Yellow-rumped, Wilson's, Nashville and Townsend's Warblers. This open space is also great for Rufous Hummingbirds, butterflies and dragonflies. Look in the tall maple and alder trees for Cassin's and Warbling Vireos, Hammond's and Pacific-slope Flycatchers and an occasional Northern Pygmy Owl. Ruffed Grouse and Spotted Towhee frequent the thickets around the edge.



## **Colonial Creek Campground (Milepost 130)**

Colonial Creek Campground is located eleven miles east of the North Cascades Visitor Center in Newhalem. SR 20 winds through some of the most rugged and beautiful country in the United States hinting at remote mountain peaks, glaciers, and giant fir and hemlock forests. Wilderness is obvious even from the comfort of your car as you pass through this lush and diverse land. Clean mountain air beckons one to experience, explore, and revel in the bounty Nature has to offer. Take your time!

Before reaching Colonial Creek make quick stops at Gorge Creek Falls and Gorge Lake. In summer the falls can be thick with visitors but a stop can be rewarding. A short loop trail offers interpretive signs and nice views of Gorge Lake as well as the possibility of Ravens, Steller's Jays, Red-tailed Hawks and distant waterfowl on the lake itself. Townsend's Chipmunks scurry along the boulders and Pikas pierce the waterfall's roar with their warning cries. Pullouts along the way offer closer views of Gorge Lake where Canada Geese, Common Loons, Western Grebes, Barrow's Goldeneyes and Buffleheads can easily be spotted. Violet-green, Tree, Cliff and Barn Swallows swoop low overhead and White-crowned Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos sing from rocky outcrops. Continue on to Colonial Creek but stay on the road as mountain scenery makes driving very difficult!



Colonial Creek Campground is the park's largest campground. Turn right soon after crossing Colonial Creek itself and park in the large parking lot immediately after the ranger kiosk. This area is one of the best birding places in the park as the combination of Diablo Lake, open sky, edge habitat, and deep, ancient forest all accent diversity. Take a deep breath and start your list!



The best times are weekdays in early morning, early spring to late fall. In summer the campground can be brimming with visitors and boat traffic so an early start is recommended. Check the lake for Barrow's and Common Goldeneyes, Buffleheads, Western and Pied-billed Grebes, Common Loons, Harlequin Ducks, and Cinnamon Teal. American Wigeon, Lesser Scaup, Mallards, Shovelers and Ring-necked Ducks frequent the

waterway near the SR 20 bridge over the arm of Diablo Lake. Five species of swallows are common here in spring and Vaux's Swifts accompany them. In the mixed deciduous growth around the lot look for Western Tanagers, warblers, Northern Flickers, Red Crossbills and large flocks of Pine Siskins. Raptors such as Osprey, Bald Eagles, Red-tailed, Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks are possible. In the Fall of 1999 a Northern Goshawk was hunting the campground.

In shrub thickets and Vine Maple groves at the parking lot's perimeter, look for White-crowned, Golden-crowned, Fox, Lincoln's and Song Sparrows mixed with large flocks of Dark-eyed Juncos. In late spring and into early summer of 1999 a White-throated Sparrow was present here. Rufous Hummingbirds whine by hovering before your astonished eyes, too quick for binocular observation. Steller's Jays, Ravens, American Crows and good numbers of Ruby-crowned Kinglets occur as constant companions. Try to pick out Sourdough Mountain fire lookout high on the ridge to the north.



Continue on the one-way road that leads directly into the campground from the parking lot. Here large Douglas-fir, Western Red Cedar and Western Hemlock shade the campground and provide great habitat for Pileated and Hairy Woodpeckers, Red-breasted Sapsuckers, Brown Creepers and Red-breasted Nuthatches. Varied and Swainson's Thrushes haunt the road edge as Winter Wrens sing up a storm. Red-winged Blackbirds, and occasionally, Yellow-headed Blackbirds are found along the camps closest to Diablo Lake. In spring, eight species of warbler, three species of vireo, four species of flycatcher and five species of woodpecker can be observed within this area alone. Try not to strain neck muscles while searching for these!

Thunder Creek Trailhead is located at the end of the campground. This trail is a must for the casual as well as hard-core birder. Thunder Creek Valley is home to some of the most impressive ancient forest in the park and to hike even a small amount of time here brings one closer to the spirit of wilderness. Pileated Woodpeckers call from invisible perches, and the whistled call of the Varied Thrush is ever present. Soft chips, chirps and cheeps sound overhead in the moss and lichen covered branches revealing Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Golden-crowned Kinglets, warblers, flycatchers, and Brown Creepers. Western Wood Pewee and Western Tanagers sing in unison, daring birders to locate them. An explosion of branches may reveal a small flock of Band-tailed Pigeons, and during the day, Barred and Northern Pygmy Owls can call. As the trail continues, look for American Dippers along the shore and watch in spring for Mountain Bluebirds and American Pipits on sandflats accompanied by Spotted Sandpipers.



Be sure to watch your step as Banana Slugs also share the trail. Chicarees chatter and Townsend's Chipmunk sound their sharp birdlike calls while occasionally Raccoons hunt the waters edge.



Along the way there are many places where breaks in the vegetation allow views

into the surrounding forest. In these edge

areas look for Orange-crowned, Yellow, and Common Yellow-throat Warblers as well as Cassin's and Warbling Vireos. Chickadees, kinglets and creepers usually can be located close to the trail.



Almost a mile from the trailhead a suspension bridge crosses roaring Thunder Creek. This is an excellent place to have lunch and take in the old-growth forest. Harlequin Ducks and American Dippers sometimes float underneath the bridge allowing close-up viewing. Black and Vaux's Swifts, accompanied by Violet-green Swallows, course down the stream, and Ospreys are seen overhead. In spring this has become a very good area for locating Red-naped Sapsuckers, usually a more eastern species. Pine Grosbeaks also can be seen perched high in fir trees on either side of the bridge. Red-breasted Sapsuckers have been observed sounding off on the bridge itself, drumming to advertise their presence, and Pileated and Hairy Woodpeckers call in the distance.





Across the bridge is an extensive thicket of willow, maple and alder. Spend some time here as American Redstarts have been present in migration and Red-breasted and Red-naped Sapsuckers vie for position among the taller trees. If you choose to continue, which is highly recommended, be advised that the trail can sometimes become wet and overgrown with Devil's Club and nettles. In these thickets however, MaGillivray's Warblers and Winter Wrens call, and occasionally, White-throated Sparrows hide in the undergrowth. Red Crossbills and Pine Grosbeaks are possible overhead, and Pileated Woodpeckers become more plentiful.

The trail now climbs slightly. Red-breasted Sapsuckers and Olive-sided Flycatchers make more of an appearance and Varied Thrushes are usually present. Steller's Jays scold from above and in winter, mixed foraging flocks of chickadees, kinglets and creepers brighten the misty forest.

In time the trail breaks out of the trees at an old burn. This is a good place for Hermit

Thrushes, Fox Sparrows, and Olive-sided Flycatchers. Small flocks of Pine Grosbeaks

sometimes pass overhead and raptors cruise the ridgetop. This is a good place to turn around.

While walking the trail, keep an eye out for mammals.

Pine Martens have been observed crossing the Thunder Creek bridge and Black

Bear are always possible.

Scan the surrounding cliffs in winter and spring for grazing Mountain Goats.



## **Diablo Lake Overlook (Milepost 131)**

This area offers beautiful views of Diablo Lake, Sourdough Mountain, Colonial and Pyramid Peaks. In early spring look for Mountain Bluebirds from the parking lot as well as Red Crossbills, Chipping, White-crowned and Fox Sparrows. Summer brings in Violet-green and Tree Swallows, Cedar Waxwings and Dark-eyed Juncos.

This is a great area for close observation of small mammals such as Golden-mantled Ground Squirrels, Pikas, and Townsend's Chipmunks. Unfortunately, these animals are being fed by well-meaning visitors. Unnatural human food can cause sickness and sometimes death for these critters, as well as making them dependent on outside forces for their survival. Above all, please do not contribute to this habit. Feeding the animals in any way is against park policy and is a ticketable offence. **DO NOT FEED THE ANIMALS!!**

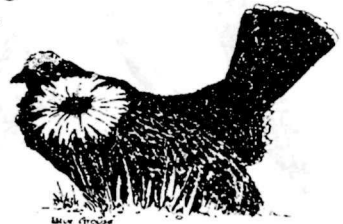
## **Mt. Hardy Burn (Milepost 153)**

From the Diablo Lake Overlook, SR 20 continues its gradual ascent towards Rainy and Washington Passes.



Forest habitat starts to change to Mountain Hemlock, Pacific Silver and Subalpine Fir communities. Associated birdlife adapts to higher elevation and cooler temperatures where weather can change rapidly.

Immediately past milepost 153, turn left at the gravel road on the northeast side of the highway that leads a short way to a gravel pile. Park on the north side of the pile. A short walk around this area can produce Blue Grouse, Mountain Chickadees, White-winged Crossbills and two species of Swift. Red-breasted Sapsucker, Gray Jay, Hermit Thrush, Townsend's Warbler, and Lincoln's Sparrow make up only a small list of what may be available from the gravel pile area.





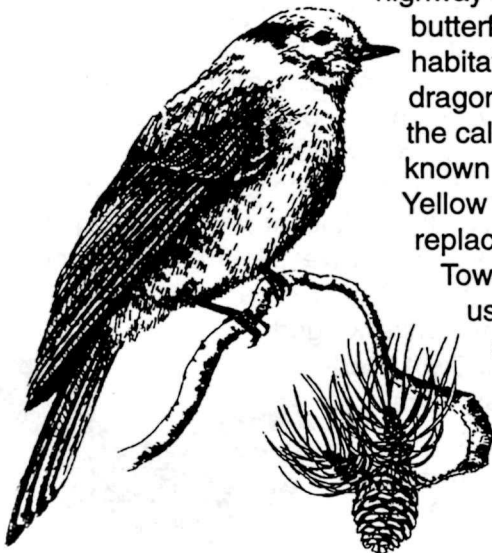
To the east of the gravel pile a fading fire-crew trail leads up to the burn. This trail is not maintained and is in fairly poor shape but can be followed with patience. Be advised that the trail can be difficult in places and extreme caution should be exercised. After a steep hike the "trail" leads out of the trees to the open burn area. Birding here can be excellent in spring and early summer.

Watch for Clark's Nutcrackers swooping from tree to tree and listen for the nasal songs of Mountain Chickadees. Gray Jays, Townsend's Solitaires and Red Crossbills can be observed in good numbers, and Hermit Thrushes sing their song in minor key. Red-naped Sapsuckers search for nesting cavities among old snag trees and the possibility of Spruce Grouse and Gray Crowned Rosy Finch exist. Black-backed and Three-toed Woodpeckers have been reported here as well as Mountain Bluebirds and Calliope Hummingbirds.

Take the time to look around as the views are spectacular. Here one can observe a classic glacier scoured "U" shaped valley that SR 20 now winds through. Northern Goshawks and Peregrine Falcons are possible in the deep sky and other raptors follow the highway corridor. In summer,

butterflies abound in this high open habitat, and numerous species of dragonflies are present. Listen for the call of the Pika, otherwise known as the "rock rabbit", and here Yellow Pine Chipmunk start to replace the more western

Townsend's Chipmunk. Please use caution among these high spaces. Habitat is fragile, and the land is steep, and help is far away. Use good judgement.



## Rainy Lake, Lake Ann, & Maple Pass Loop (Milepost 157)

Turn right near milepost 157 to access the Rainy Pass rest area. The Okanogan National Forest does an excellent job of administering the trails here and maintains a beautiful picnic area as well. Forests of Pacific Silver Fir, Mountain Hemlock, and Engelmann Spruce reflect the 4,860 ft. elevation. Accessibility in spring can be extremely limited, and cool temperatures prevail here even in summer. Snow can linger into August but summer weather can be warm, and sun precautions should be taken. Remember to take plenty of water and gear for all weather conditions.

Two trails begin at the entrance to the picnic grounds. A large National Forest trailhead sign designates starting points for the two mile round trip to Rainy Lake or the seven mile round trip to Maple Pass. The shorter trail to Rainy Lake is level and paved offering a great introduction to this montane habitat. Birds here include Yellow-rumped, Townsend's, and Wilson's Warblers, Chestnut-backed and Mountain Chickadees, Brown Creepers, Red Crossbills, Golden-crowned Kinglets, and Winter Wrens.

In summer, many species are possible such as Townsend's Solitaire, Pine Grosbeak, Gray Jay, and Clark's Nutcracker. Northern Pygmy Owls are resident here and occasionally Golden Eagles visit. Rainy Lake itself is worth the stroll, a deep blue gem surrounded by peaks and waterfalls. The lake's cold, glacier water contains few birds, but mergansers and other waterfowl are seen on occasion.

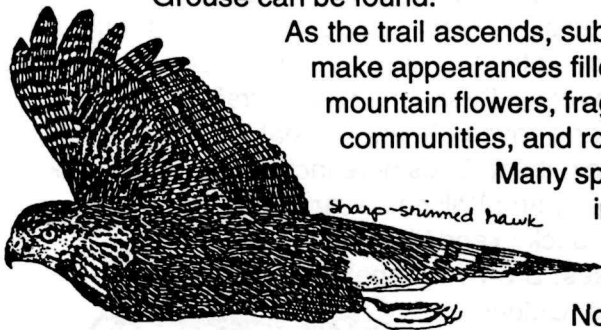


The seven mile Maple Pass Loop takes the hiker to subalpine habitat in a relatively short time. Subalpine Fir and Mountain Hemlock grow sparse as the trail climbs a moderate pace. Listen for Pika and Hoary Marmot amidst talus slopes and soak in the myriad of wildflower color in summer. Black Bears frequent the area and though seldom seen, Mountain Lions are resident. Before the trail leaves the shade of Pacific Fir and Englemann Spruce, a trail branches to the left and down to Lake Ann. The right fork continues on to Maple Pass, a more advisable route.

Birdlife here is usually present high in slender conifers and conspicuous by voice. Check treetops for Mountain Chickadees and Red-breasted Nuthatches. Clark's Nutcrackers and Gray Jays easily make their presence known, but Townsend's Solitaires are more secretive. Chipping and Fox Sparrows forage in heather and huckleberry shrubs and Blue, and on rare occasion Spruce Grouse can be found.

As the trail ascends, subalpine meadows make appearances filled with colorful mountain flowers, fragile heather communities, and rocky talus habitat.

Many species congregate in and around these rich areas. Golden Eagles and Northern Goshawks are spotted occasionally



sharp-shinned hawk

soaring around the peaks. Hermit Thrushes and American Pipits inhabit moist meadows and Steller's and Gray Jays forage low in the trees. Chestnut-backed and Mountain Chickadees form foraging flocks with kinglets, creepers, and nuthatches. White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows sing in spring and Dark-eyed Juncos are plentiful. Listen for the chip chip flight songs of Pine Grosbeaks and try to distinguish them from the similar songs of Red Crossbills. In summer a "quick, three beers" will identify an Olive-sided Flycatcher and Pacific-slope Flycatchers sound their "pee-a-wheet" song.

Please be very careful of this subalpine habitat. Meadows at this elevation are extremely fragile and take many years to form. Stay on the trail at all times. Lingering snow can tempt one to stray off trail causing serious erosion problems. Please be respectful of the land you are traveling through!

The trail ascends to almost seven thousand feet where snow is sometimes present throughout the summer. Here, twisted Subalpine Fir, Mountain Hemlock, Western Larch and Whitebark Pine serve as perching posts for Clark's Nutcrackers, Townsend's Solitaires and Mountain Bluebirds. Snowmelt create small wetlands where White-tailed Ptarmigan reside. Gray-crowned

Rosy Finch and Blue Grouse inhabit these rocky slopes and Golden Eagles, Red-tailed Hawks, Cooper's Hawks, and occasionally, Northern Goshawks sail the thermals.

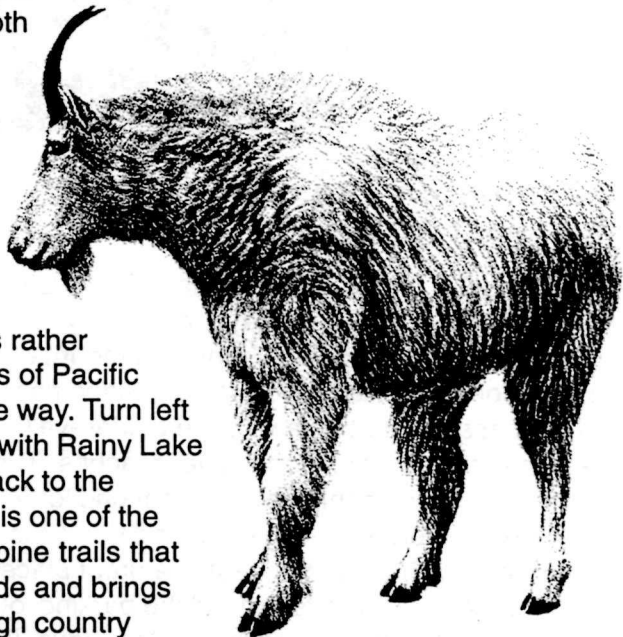


At the pass, search the mountain horizon to the southwest where volcanic Glacier Peak rears its icy head. Scan the valleys for Black Bears while Mountain Goats are always possible in the area.

Continue on where the trail begins its descent through outstanding flowered meadows. Watch for butterflies along the way and look for Chipmunk and Pika scrambling amongst the boulders. At this

point, it is

possible to view both Lake Anne to the left and Rainy Lake to the right as you straddle the knife-edge ridge that separates these drainages. The trail now descends rather steeply until forests of Pacific Silver Fir shade the way. Turn left at the intersection with Rainy Lake trail to bring you back to the parking area. This is one of the most scenic subalpine trails that is moderate in grade and brings the visitor to the high country with relative ease. In summer it can be crowded so the early birder gets the birds!



## **Blue Lake Trail (Milepost 161)**

Turn right at the National Forest trailhead sign. Blue Lake Trail winds through subalpine habitat of Pacific Silver Fir, Mountain Hemlock, Douglas-fir, and scattered Western Larch. This four and one half mile round trip leads to another typical alpine lake complete with all the beautiful mountain adjectives that define most of this area of the North Cascades. SR 20 does most of the climbing so you can spend more time birding.

This is a good area for Three-toed Woodpeckers, a hard to find species elsewhere. Look for them at the beginning of the trail where Pacific Silver Fir shades the way. In summer warblers are plentiful and Clark's Nutcrackers, Gray Jays, and Ravens are present. At the lake search for Townsend's Solitaires, Mountain Bluebirds, Red-breasted and Red-naped Sapsuckers, Pine Grosbeaks and Red Crossbills.



## **Washington Pass Overlook (Milepost 162)**

This is the highest point of State Route 20, reaching an elevation of 5,477 feet. To say the scenery is awesome would be understating the obvious. Liberty Bell mountain and Early Winters Spires loom overhead as Kangaroo Ridge rises to the east. In the fall the pass is set ablaze with the golden-yellow of Western Larch trees that cluster around the lower reaches. Turn left at the trailhead sign and continue to the parking lot. A short accessible trail leads to a breathtaking view, and vertigo is free of charge!

Kangaroo Ridge to the east is a great place to search for migrating raptors. Birdlife around the parking lot includes Mountain Chickadees, Clark's Nutcrackers, Gray Jays, Red-breasted Nuthatches and Cassin's Finches. Mountain Bluebirds are possible and Violet-green Swallows crowd the skies on summer days. The short loop trail, which is steep in places, can score Yellow-rumped Warblers and Brown Creepers, Red Crossbills and occasionally Pine Grosbeaks.

# Stehekin

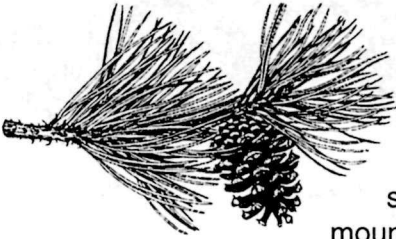
Isolated at the head of Lake Chelan with access only by boat, plane or foot, the Stehekin Valley lies in a transition zone between the westside and eastside of the Northern Cascades crest.

Because of its unique geography and climate, bird life thrives. The diversity of habitats includes rich

riparian areas, numerous lakes, Ponderosa Pine forests, enticing

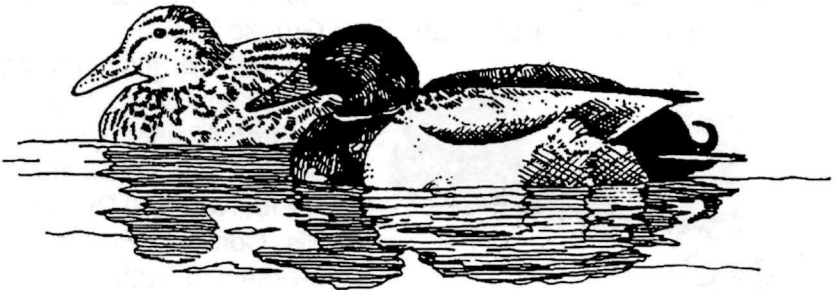
rock outcroppings, and high alpine areas. Birds to expect

include the many eastside species that dwell in forest and mountain areas.



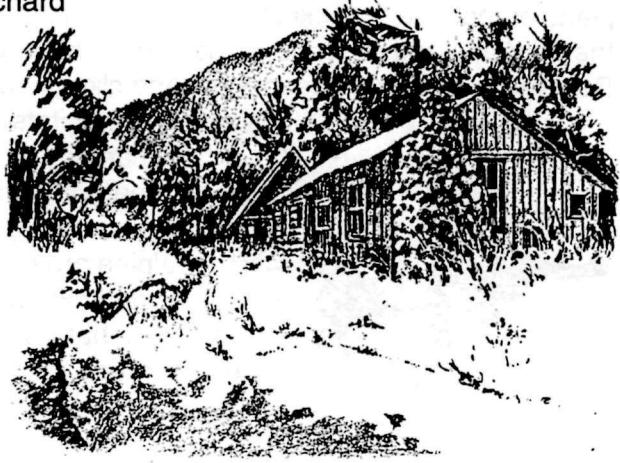
## Landing/Lake Head

Along the two-mile stretch of road, between landing and bakery, many habitat types are crossed. On the open water of Lake Chelan, look for Common Loons, Horned and Western Grebes, Ring-necked Ducks, Barrow's Goldeneye, Common and Hooded Mergansers. In the marshy areas at the lake's head, look for Mallards, Canada Geese, Gray Catbirds and Soras. The forest edges may yield Nashville, Yellow-rumped, Yellow, Wilson's, MacGillivray's and Townsend's Warblers. Veeries, Swainson's and Varied Thrushes, Olive-sided and Hammond's Flycatchers, Red-breasted Nuthatches as well as Calliope and Rufous Hummingbirds. At the bakery, California Quail may dodge across the road or Common Nighthawks might swoop overhead. Keep eyes open and ears alert for the jackhammer drumming of Pileated Woodpeckers.



## Buckner Orchard

This historic orchard is a perfect place for viewing species that love open spaces. Say's Phoebes and Chipping Sparrows abound. Red-naped Sapsuckers are often spotted exploring the bark of the old apple trees, a popular



nesting site for House Wrens. Down by the river look for Harlequin Ducks in spring and the abundant American Dipper. Across the road is Rainbow Falls. If the roar of the falls is not too overwhelming, you may be rewarded with the downward-spiraling call of the Canyon Wren.

## Coon Lake

Along the Pacific Crest Trail between High Bridge and Bridge Creek, Coon Lake is the valley's birding mecca. Barrow's Goldeneyes, Wood Ducks, Hooded Mergansers and Cinnamon Teals lounge on the lake, while around the shore Yellow, MaGillivray's, and Nashville Warblers, along with Chipping Sparrows can be seen. Cassin's Finch, Cedar Waxwings, Black-headed and Evening Grosbeaks as well as Pileated Woodpeckers stay busy in the trees. Ruffed and Blue Grouse forage near the



edge, while overhead you may spot a Golden Eagle. Sightings of all three Accipiters are possible. Keep your ears open for Northern Pygmy Owls, Common Ravens and Red-breasted Nuthatches.



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