

British Columbia Wildlife Watch (<http://www3.telus.net/driftwood/bcwwhome.htm>)



British Columbia Wildlife Watch

Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks

Biodiversity - Over 1100 species of vertebrates are found in British Columbia. These include 484 species of birds, 143 species of mammals, 19 species of reptiles, 20 species of amphibians, 83 species of freshwater fish and 368 species of saltwater fish. For birds, 310 species are known to breed in British Columbia.

Habitats - The abundance of wildlife species in British Columbia is a result of the province's wide range of landforms and climates. British Columbia's wildlife habitats include marine, estuary, wetland, fresh water, grassland, alpine, desert, and coastal, interior and mountain forests. There is an estimated 2,073 native vascular plants in the province.

Viewing - Watching wildlife is fun and rewarding. It is one of the fastest growing activities in North America. This site will provide you with detailed information on where, when and how to view the wildlife (birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, fish and insects) of British Columbia.

Wildlife Viewing Tips

We've all had it happen. You look up from the trail just in time to see an animal dive out of sight - a swoop of wing, a flash of antler, a slap of beaver's tail.

The truth is, most animals see, hear or smell us long before we are aware of their presence. They observe us and, depending on how far away we are and how we act, they decide to stay, defend themselves or flee. Even fleeing from us robs them of precious energy.

Fortunately, there are many simple ways that you can help blend into an animal's surroundings. Here are but a few. If you follow these practical tips you'll be treated to a wildlife show that makes your heart pound and your senses hum!



Fade into the woodwork by wearing natural colours and unscented lotions. Clothes that don't rustle are best.



Keep your distance and use binoculars or scopes. This allows you to observe animals without disturbing them.



Sometimes you will 'see' more by sitting quietly for a while with your eyes closed. Your ears may hear what is not readily visible to your eyes.



Let animals eat their natural foods. Sharing your sandwich, or other foods, with them may harm their digestive systems that are adapted to natural foods. Animals may become conditioned to handouts, eventually losing their fear of people and/or vehicles. This may put them, and you, into potentially dangerous situations. Instead, spend some time to watch and learn what natural foods they prefer.



Be easy to be with by moving like molasses: slow, smooth and steady. If you must advance, take a roundabout route, never move directly toward an animal. Avert your gaze as animals may interpret a direct stare as a threat.



Think like an animal. As a rule, the border between two habitats is a good place to see residents from both habitats.



Figure out the best time of day for viewing by imaging an animal's daily schedule. When does it feed? Rest? Bathe? Drink? Dawn and dusk are usually good bets. A dry, hot, sunny afternoon is not the best time to look.



Plants and the landscape are important parts of wildlife habitat. Please do not damage or remove them, and stay on designated trails or roads.



Keep pets on a leash at all times. Pets can harm wildlife, and reduce viewing opportunities.