

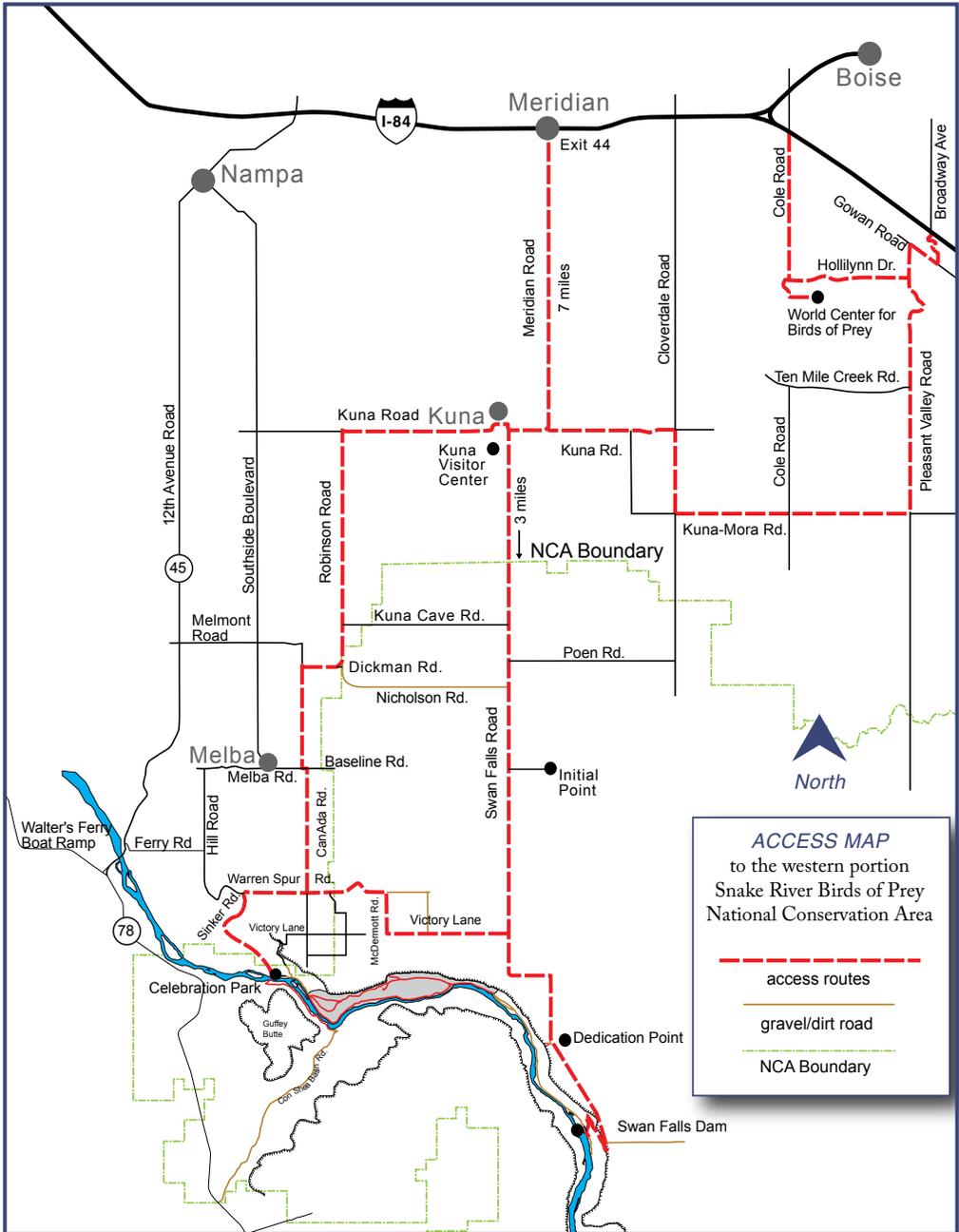
BLM

Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area

VISITOR GUIDE



Access Map



There are no services in the NCA but its surrounding towns such as Kuna are a good place to purchase gasoline and supplies.

I-84 Exit 44 to Kuna—8 miles
 Kuna to Dedication Point—16 miles
 Kuna to Swan Falls Dam—21 miles
 Kuna to Celebration Park—20 miles

Morley Nelson

Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area

VISITOR GUIDE



Access Map (opposite page)

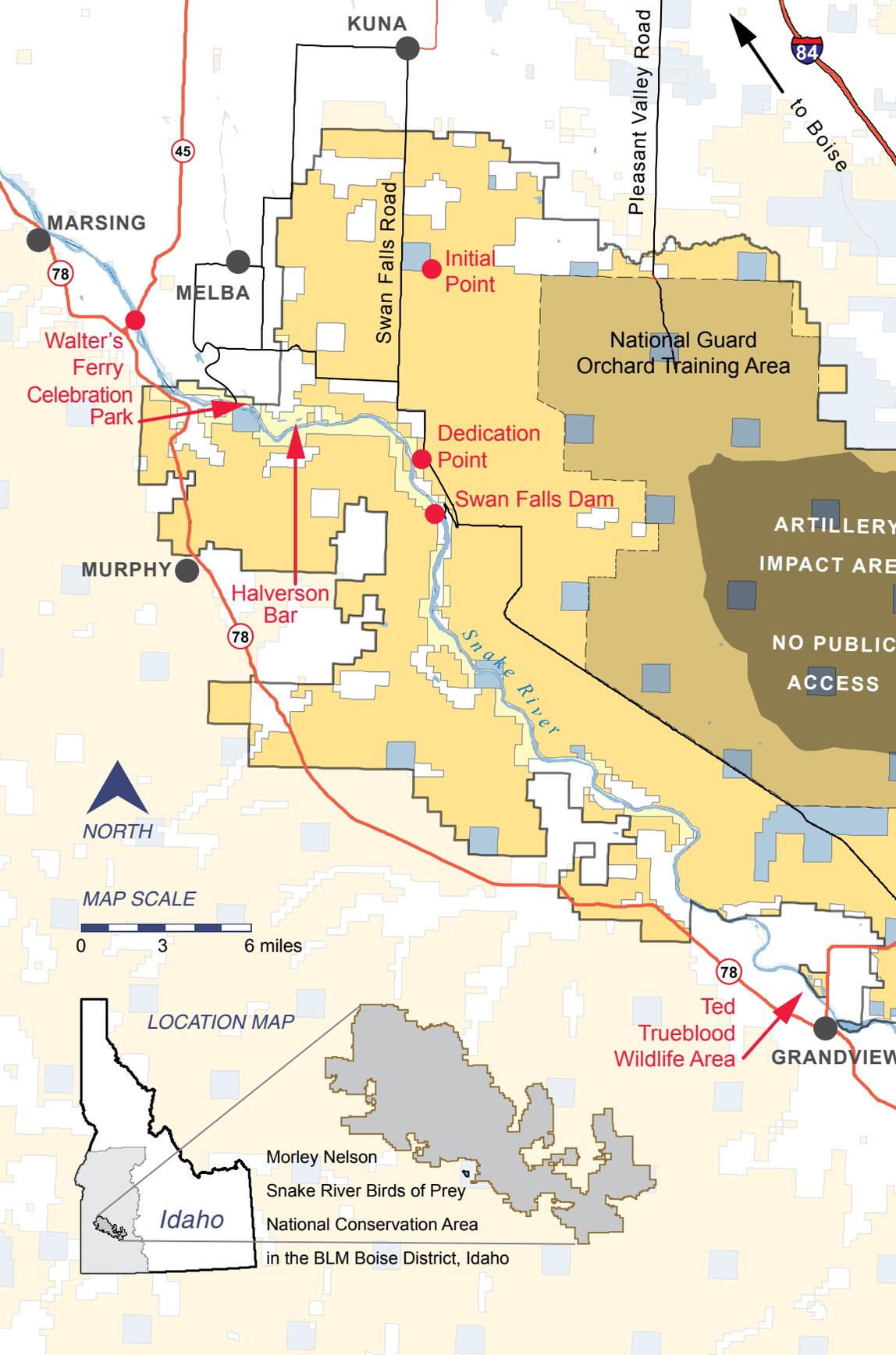
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Cover: Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) / ©Rob Palmer

Above: Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) / ©John Tobin



KUNA

45

MARSING

78

MELBA

Swan Falls Road

Initial Point

Pleasant Valley Road

84

to Boise

Walter's Ferry Celebration Park

National Guard Orchard Training Area

Dedication Point

Swan Falls Dam

MURPHY

Halverson Bar

78

Snake River

ARTILLERY IMPACT AREA
NO PUBLIC ACCESS



MAP SCALE

0 3 6 miles

LOCATION MAP



Idaho

Morley Nelson
Snake River Birds of Prey
National Conservation Area
in the BLM Boise District, Idaho

Ted Trueblood Wildlife Area

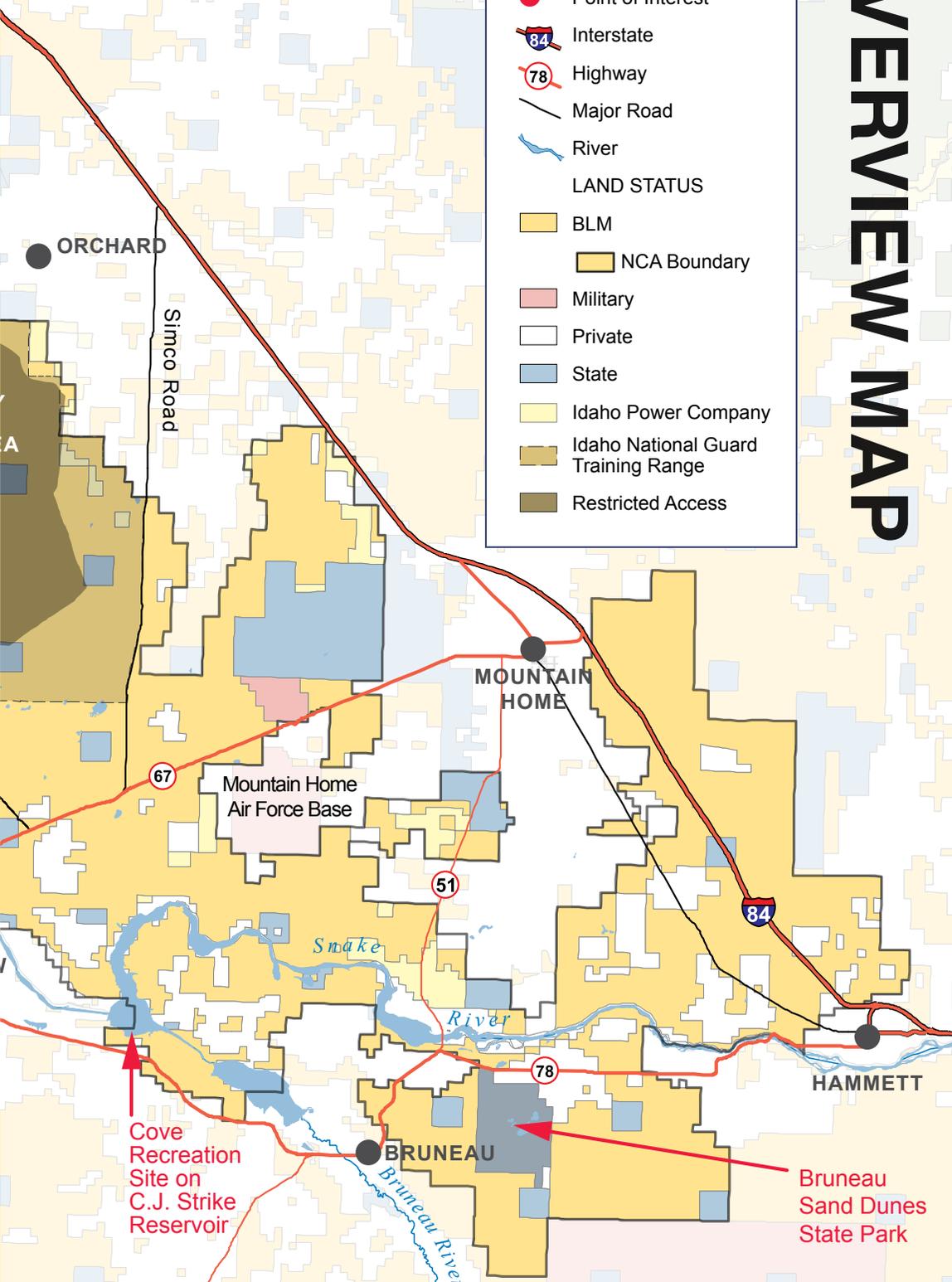
GRANDVIEW

78

OVERVIEW MAP

MAP LEGEND

- Point of Interest
-  Interstate
-  Highway
-  Major Road
-  River
- LAND STATUS
 -  BLM
 -  NCA Boundary
 -  Military
 -  Private
 -  State
 -  Idaho Power Company
 -  Idaho National Guard Training Range
 -  Restricted Access





Rough-legged Hawk (*Buteo lagopus*) Photo: ©Rob Palmer

Welcome

Crags and crevices, the deep canyon of the Snake River, thermal updrafts, and a broad plateau rich in small wildlife provide habitat for the greatest concentration of nesting birds of prey in North America – and perhaps, the world.

The Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area (NCA) was established by Congress in 1993 to recognize and perpetuate the area's wildlife values. In March 2009, the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act was signed into law. Among other things, this law recognized Morley Nelson as a long-time advocate for birds of prey and the NCA by adding his name to the area's name. It is now the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area. The NCA is managed by the Department of Interior's Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

The BLM's mission is to preserve this remarkable wildlife habitat while providing for other compatible uses of the land. Our aim is to manage the area so that birds of prey flourish here, as they have for thousands of years, and that future generations of people will be able to experience and enjoy this special place.





Photo: Echo Films

Morlan “Morley” Nelson, 1916-2005

Morley Nelson was a national authority on birds of prey—an advocate for raptors and their importance in a healthy ecosystem. Though Morley was a soil scientist by training, he had a life-long passion for raptors which started in childhood when he saw a falcon strike down a duck. He settled in Boise in the late 1940s and soon recognized the importance of the Snake River canyon south of Boise as a sanctuary for birds of prey.

In the 1950s Morley began to document birds of prey and the Snake River canyon on film. He worked on numerous films with Walt Disney, Paramount Pictures, Public Broadcasting Service, and other networks. In the 1980s and 1990s he participated in many documentaries and videos featuring his birds. Through these efforts he influenced public opinion about birds of prey away from seeing these birds as vicious predators to seeing these magnificent soaring birds as having a special role in the environment.

Morley was instrumental in the establishment of the Snake River Birds of Prey Natural Area in 1971 by convincing Secretary of the Interior Rogers Morton to give special protection to the area of public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Extensive research of raptors and their use of the area followed. This research identified the critical relationship between the canyon nesting habitat and the prey habitat on the plateau. As a result, in 1980 Secretary of the Interior Cecil Andrus created a larger Snake River Birds of Prey Area. In 1993, U.S. Representative Larry LaRocco led the effort in Congress to make the area a National Conservation Area.

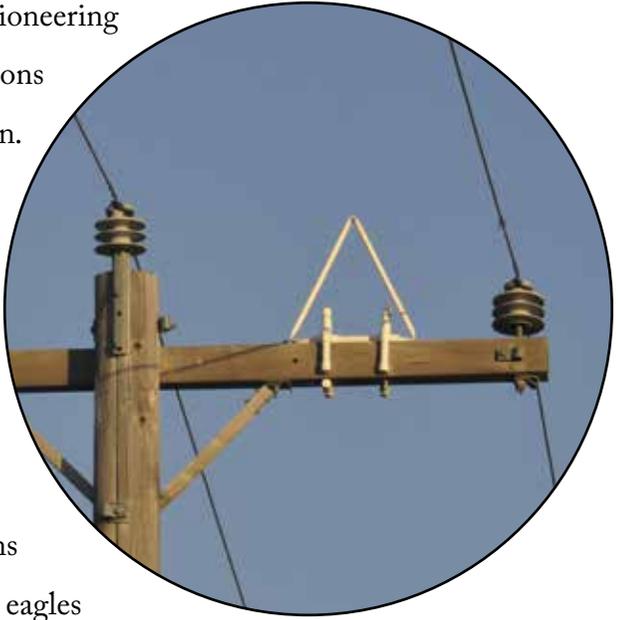
On the Board of Directors of The Peregrine Fund from 1981 to 2005, Morley worked with state and local governments, federal and state agencies, Boise State University, and Boise-based corporations and local citizens to find a location for the World Center Birds of Prey facility and provided assistance to bring The Peregrine Fund to Boise.

Morley is also known for his pioneering work on power pole modifications to save raptors from electrocution.

He worked with the Idaho Power Company and Edison Electric Institute to study how raptors use power lines.

Using mock power poles, he tested structure designs, identified conductor separations needed to safely accommodate eagles and other perching raptors, and proposed

modification to existing poles to prevent bird electrocution. He also designed nesting platforms that attach to large transmission lines which have helped to expand the nesting areas of raptors. His power line corrections and nesting platform designs are still in use today, worldwide.



Throughout his life, Morley rehabilitated injured raptors brought to him, including many exotic species. His home in the foothills of Boise was well-known as a place to see and learn about all sorts of birds of prey and he would talk for hours about his passion to anyone who showed interest.

Morley Nelson passed away in February 2005. In recognition of his work on behalf of raptors and the NCA, his name was added to the area's name in 2009. It is now the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area.

A Place Like No Other

The NCA encompasses approximately 484,000 acres of public land along 81 miles of the Snake River in southwest Idaho. The river lies within a deep canyon that is surrounded by a vast plateau. Cliffs towering up to 700 feet above the river provide countless ledges, cracks, and crevices for nesting birds of prey, also known as raptors. These magnificent birds launch from their cliff-side aeries to soar and hunt on warm air currents rising from the canyon floor.

At first glance, the surrounding plateau looks unremarkable, but it holds the key that makes this area so valuable for birds of prey. Over the past 10,000 years, desert winds have deposited a deep layer of finely textured soil on the north side of the Snake River Canyon. This soil and the plants that grow in it support large populations of ground squirrels and jackrabbits that supply the main food source for birds of prey.



Ferruginous Hawks (*Buteo regalis*) juveniles on nest. Photo: Larry Ridenhour

The combination of ideal nesting habitat in the Snake River Canyon and extraordinarily productive prey habitat on the adjacent plateau make this a place like no other for birds of prey. The area is actually a giant natural raptor nursery. Sixteen species nest here each spring. Eight other raptor species use the area during migrations and in the winter.

The NCA is especially important for prairie falcons. Around 200 pairs nest here and they are an important part of the species' known population. Nesting success for prairie falcons is closely linked to the abundance of Piute ground squirrels, while nesting success for other raptors, especially golden eagles, is tied to the population cycles of black-tailed jackrabbits.

Migrating Raptors

- Bald eagle
- Sharp-shinned hawk
- Cooper's hawk
- Northern goshawk
- Peregrine falcon
- Merlin
- Gyrfalcon
- Rough-legged hawk

Nesting Raptors

- Golden eagle
- Prairie falcon
- American kestrel
- Red-tailed hawk
- Ferruginous hawk
- Swainson's hawk
- Northern harrier
- Osprey
- Turkey vulture
- Barn owl
- Great horned owl
- Western screech owl
- Burrowing owl
- Long-eared owl
- Short-eared owl
- Northern saw-whet owl

Observing Raptors

This is nature in the rough. The birds in the NCA are not on display. They follow the rhythms of nature and not the desires of people who come to see them. Your chance of seeing wildlife will improve if you follow these tips:

- Bring a good pair of binoculars. Field guides or spotting scopes are also helpful.
- Viewing tends to be best in mid-March, May and June in the early morning and evening hours when raptors are actively hunting.
- During April, viewing opportunities decrease as raptors spend more time sitting on nests incubating their eggs.
- By July, the canyon temperatures are fiercely hot, and many raptors seek shelter to escape the heat, while others migrate out of the area.
- Look for raptors sitting on fence posts, telephone poles/wires, power poles, and rock outcrops. Anything that gives them a higher vantage point for hunting. Also look up in the sky for soaring birds. On rare occasions you may spot a raptor standing on the ground.
- Wildlife are wary of humans. Patience is a wildlife watcher's best virtue.
- When an animal changes behavior as a result of your presence, you are too close.



Breeding Raptor Seasons



in the NCA



not in the NCA

American Kestrel	Can be seen in the NCA year-round											
Golden Eagle	Can be seen in the NCA year-round											
Ferruginous Hawk	Small number in NCA through the winter	Migrating	National Conservation Area		Migrating	Small number in the NCA through the winter						
Northern Harrier	Can be seen in the NCA year-round											
Osprey	Central & South America		Migrating	National Conservation Area		Migrating	Central and South America					
Prairie Falcon	Migrating	National Conservation Area				Moves to Higher Elevation Prairies	Migrating	Southwest U.S.				
Red-tailed Hawk	Can be seen in the NCA year-round											
Swainson's Hawk	Argentina		Migrating	National Conservation Area		Migrating	Argentina					
Turkey Vulture	SW U.S. & Mexico	Migrating	National Conservation Area				Migrating	Southwest U.S. and Mexico				
Barn Owl	Can be seen in the NCA year-round											
Burrowing Owl	SW U.S. & Mexico	Migrating	National Conservation Area				Migrating	Southwest U.S. and Mexico				
Great Horned Owl	Can be seen in the NCA year-round											
Long-eared Owl	National Conservation Area											
Northern Sawwhet Owl	Migrating	National Conservation Area		Migrating	Higher Elevations		Migrating	National Conservation Area				
Short-eared Owl	Can be seen in the NCA year-round											
Western Screech Owl	Can be seen in the NCA year-round											
Species	JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.	MAY	JUN.	JUL.	AUG.	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.

Migrating Raptors Seasons



in the NCA



not in the NCA

Species	JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.	MAY	JUN.	JUL.	AUG.	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.
Bald Eagle	National Conservation Area			Central and Northern Idaho & other regions further north								
Cooper's Hawk	National Conservation Area		Migrating									
Gyrfalcon	Possibly in National Conservation Area		Migrating	Arctic regions of Canada and Alaska		Migrating		Possibly in National Conservation Area				
Merrin	National Conservation Area		Migrating	Canada and Alaska		Migrating		National Conservation Area				
Northern Goshawk	National Conservation Area		Migrating		Central Idaho Mountains/Forests		Migrating		National Conservation Area			
Peregrine Falcon	Southwest U.S. & Northern Mexico		Migrating	Historically used the National Conservation Area		Higher elevation plains		Migrating		Southwest U.S. & Northern Mexico		
Rough-legged Hawk	National Conservation Area			Migrating		Arctic regions of Canada and Alaska		Migrating		National Conservation Area		
Sharp-shinned Hawk	National Conservation Area		Migrating		Higher elevations in Idaho		Migrating		National Conservation Area			

Frequently-Observed Raptors

American kestrel

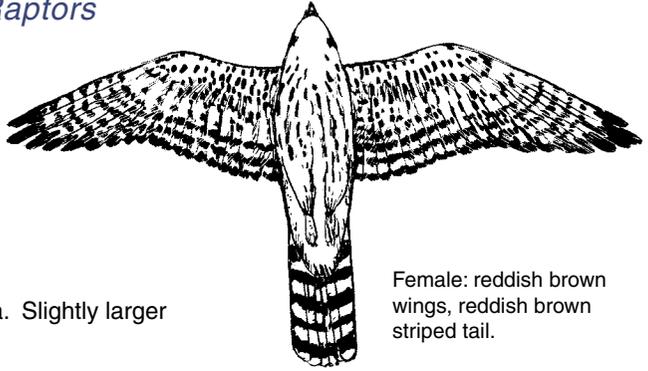
Falco sparverius

Wing span: 20-24 inches
Length: 8-11 inches
Weight: 3.4 to 5.3 ounces

Smallest falcon in North America. Slightly larger than a robin.

Behavior: perches on phone wires or “hovers” over fields with rapid wing beats.

Seen in the NCA: Year-round



Female: reddish brown wings, reddish brown striped tail.

Male: blue-gray wings, thick black stripe on end of reddish tail

Both: two mustache marks

Ferruginous hawk

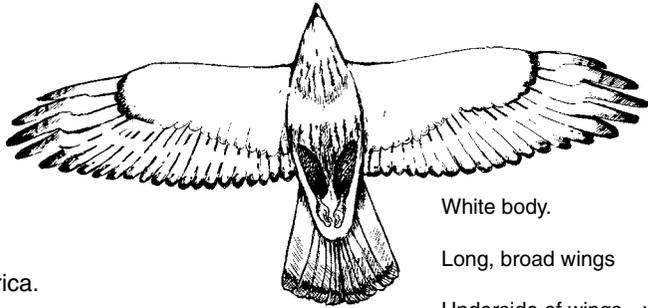
Buteo regalis

Wing span: 48-60 inches
Length: 21-27 inches
Weight: 2-4.5 pounds

Largest hawk in North America.

Behavior: Slow wing beats. Soars and circles with uptilted wings.

Seen in the NCA: April through July.



White body.

Long, broad wings

Underside of wings—white with reddish patches.

Dark legs form a “V” again white belly.

Golden eagle

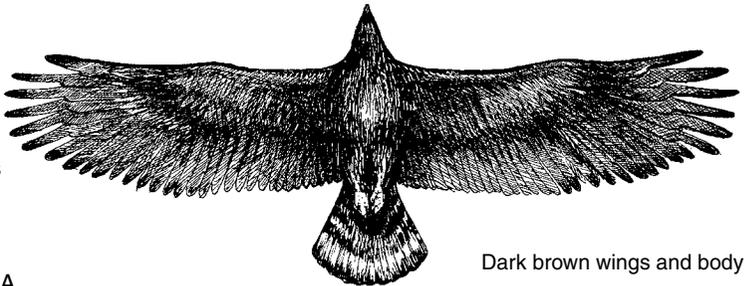
Aquila chrysaetos

Wing span: 72-85 inches
Length: 30-40 inches
Weight: 7-13 pounds

Largest raptor in the NCA

Behavior: Usually soars for long periods without flapping wings.

Seen in the NCA: Year-round.



Dark brown wings and body

Broad wings

Large rounded tail

White patches toward the end of the wings and near the base of the tail on immature golden eagles

Northern harrier

Circus cyaneus

Wing span: 41-50 inches

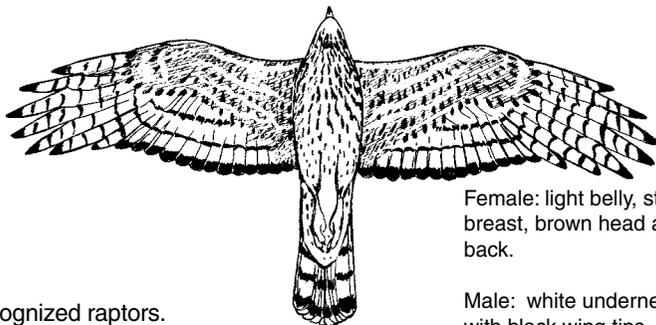
Length: 17-21 inches

Weight: 0.8-1.1 pounds

One of the most easily recognized raptors.

Behavior: Usually flies low over fields with an undulating flight.

Seen in the NCA: Year-round.



Female: light belly, streaked breast, brown head and back.

Male: white underneath with black wing tips, grey head and back

Both: white strip (rump patch) on upper tail.

Prairie falcon

Falco mexicanus

Wing span: 37-43 inches

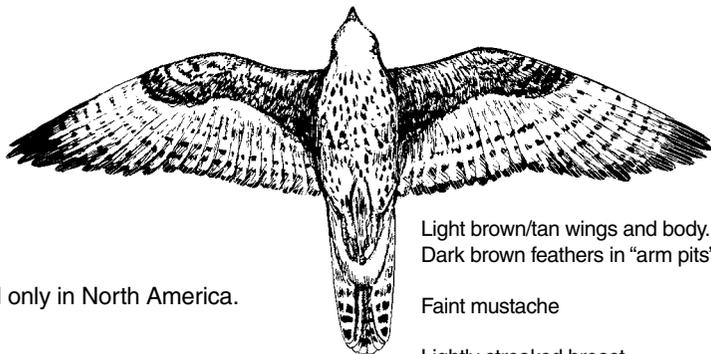
Length: 15-18 inches

Weight: 1-2 pounds

Medium sized falcon found only in North America.

Behavior: rapid wing beats

Seen in the NCA: February through late July.



Light brown/tan wings and body.
Dark brown feathers in "arm pits"

Faint mustache

Lightly streaked breast

Long-pointed wings

Red-tailed hawk

Buteo jamaicensis

Wing span: 42-56 inches

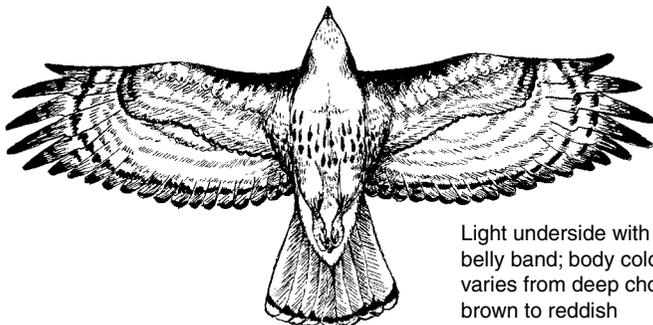
Length: 17-25 inches

Weight: 1.5-3.3 pounds

The most common and widespread hawk in North America.

Behavior: Usually soars for long periods without flapping wings.

Seen in the NCA: Year-round.



Light underside with dark belly band; body color varies from deep chocolate brown to reddish

Broad wings

Adults have red tails with many dark bars.

Rough-legged hawk

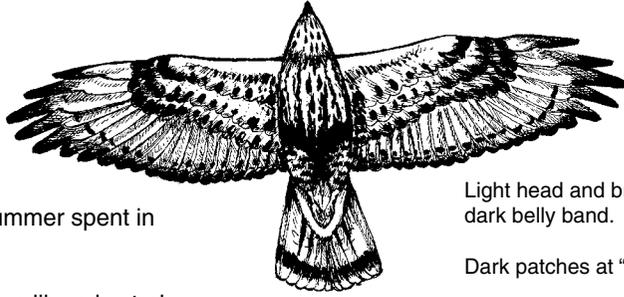
Buteo lagopus

Wing span: 48-56 inches
Length: 18-23 inches
Weight: 1.5-3 pounds

Winter bird only; spring/summer spent in arctic regions.

Behavior: Commonly hovers like a kestrel when hunting.

Seen in the NCA: November through April



Light head and breast with dark belly band.

Dark patches at "wrists."

White tail with a broad, black terminal band.

Legs completely feathered to the toes.

Swainson's hawk

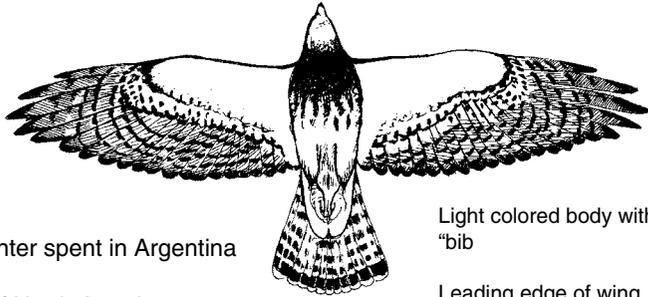
Buteo swainsoni

Wing span: 48-54 inches
Length: 17-22 inches
Weight: 1.5-2.5 pounds

Spring/summer bird only; winter spent in Argentina

Behavior: Most gregarious of North American raptors.

Seen in the NCA: April through September



Light colored body with dark "bib"

Leading edge of wing underside is pale, trailing edge is dark.

Tail underside is light with dark barred pattern.

Turkey Vulture

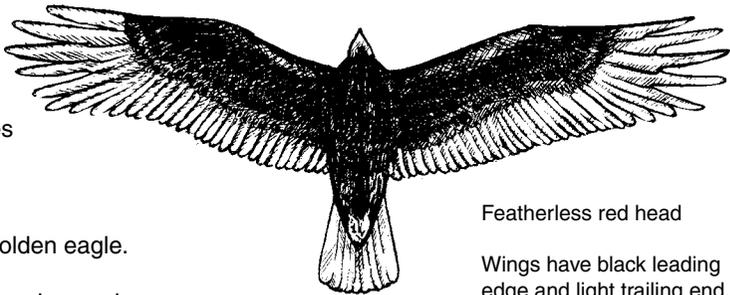
Cathartes aura

Wing span: 67-72 inches
Length: 26-28 inches
Weight: 3.5-5 pounds

Slightly smaller than a golden eagle.

Behavior: Soars with wings in a v-shape, rocking/teetering from side to side.

Seen in the NCA: March through August



Featherless red head

Wings have black leading edge and light trailing end, giving a two-toned effect to the underwing.

Long tail with rounded end.

Burrowing owl

Athene cunicularia

Wing span: 20-24 inches
Length: 7.5-11 inches
Weight: 4.5-9 ounces

This owl nests and roosts in abandoned animal burrows.

Behavior: Only small owl likely to be seen in the open in daylight.

Seen in the NCA: March through August.



Small owl that lacks ear tufts; has long legs and relatively narrow wings.

Upperparts are spotted brown and buffy.

Underparts - buffy white with darker barring.

Tail - short with buffy white bands.

Great horned owl

Bubo virginianus

Wing span: 36-60 inches
Length: 18-25 inches
Weight: 3-5 pounds

The only large/heavy owl with ear tufts in North America.

Behavior: Primarily hunts at dusk and during the night.

Seen in the NCA: Year-round.



Large owl with ear tufts.

Varies in overall color but markings fairly constant.

Upperparts - dark mottling with dark bars on wings and tail.

Underparts - thin brown bars on whitish base. Bold white throat patch.

Barn owl

Tyto alba

Wing span: 42-47 inches
Length: 12.5-20 inches
Weight: 11-22 ounces

North America's only member of the owl family Tytonidae.

Behavior: Although highly nocturnal, can be observed hunting in daylight.

Seen in the NCA: Year-round.



Pale tawny and white plumage

Heart-shaped facial disk

Large head lacks ear tufts.

Upperparts - gold to buff, with white to black.

Underparts - white with spotting.

If You Find an Injured Raptor

For raptor rehabilitation in southwest Idaho, contact the Idaho Fish & Game Department's Southwest Region office in Nampa at 208-465-8465; Cathie Havlina at Treasure Valley Raptor Rescue, 208-336-1218; or Monte Tish, 208-463-8819.

Veterinarians that treat raptors include Treasure Valley Veterinary Hospital in Meridian at 208-888-4844 and Idaho Veterinary Hospital in Nampa at 208-466-4614.

Tips For Handling Injured Raptors:

- A blanket, towel, jacket or any other lightweight material that is large enough to cover the entire bird is needed. This will reduce visual stimulation of the bird.
- Wear gloves if available. A raptor's feet and talons are its means of defense.
- Approach the bird from the rear. If the bird is alert and can follow your movements, anticipate that it will struggle when first covered.
- Carefully place the blanket, towel or jacket over the bird. Make sure it is covered completely. Gently fold the bird's wings into its body with your hands.
- Gently but firmly lift the bird into a transport container—either a plastic pet kennel or sturdy cardboard box with the top closed. Avoid bird or wire cages as these can cause feather and soft tissue damage. The carrier should have plenty of ventilation holes and be just large enough to allow the bird some movement, but not so large as to allow the bird to thrash around inside.

- Never feed an injured raptor unless you have been instructed to do so by a licensed rehabilitator. Attempting to feed a raptor or give it water orally may worsen its condition.
- Handle an injured raptor as little as possible. Stress resulting from human contact can reduce a bird's chance of recovery.
- Until the bird can be transferred, provide it with a dark, quiet, calm, warm environment. Extra care should be taken to keep the bird away from children and pets.

Abandoned Chick?

- Be certain the baby raptor is truly orphaned. Often young birds are out of the nest before they can fly and are being cared for by parents that are nearby but possibly not visible.
- If on the ground, and injured, place in a container and call one of the local rehabilitators. If not injured, make sure you know what species it is. There are several species in the NCA that nest in or on the ground and it is normal for the young to be found on the ground (burrowing owl, northern harrier, short-eared owl). If it is not a ground nester, place it back as close to its nest as possible, or on a branch. If the bird is unable to perch yet, place it in a container (small box or strawberry carton) attached to the tree.



The Peregrine Fund and the World Center for Birds of Prey

The World Center for Birds of Prey is the headquarters of The Peregrine Fund, a non-profit organization dedicated to raptor conservation. The facility is located just south of Boise on 580 acres with a spectacular view of the Treasure Valley.

The Velma Morrison Interpretive Center at the World Center offers a unique opportunity to learn about birds of prey. The Interpretive Center has multimedia exhibits and interactive displays. Visitors can see live bird presentations and learn how The Peregrine Fund breeds endangered raptors in captivity and reintroduces them into their native regions. The facility is also home to the Archives of Falconry and tours are available daily.



Raptor education at the Velma Morrison Interpretive Center Photo: The Peregrine Fund

Summer hours:

March – October

Open daily 9 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Winter Hours:

November – February

Open Tuesdays - Sundays

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Holidays:

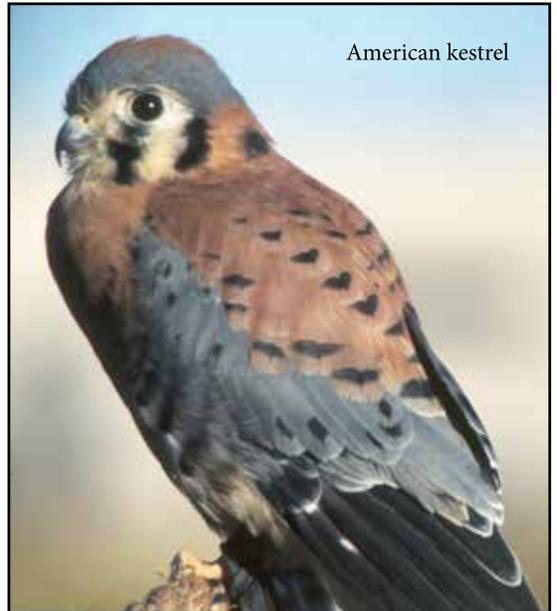
Closed New Year's Day, Easter,
Thanksgiving, and Christmas.



Great horned owl

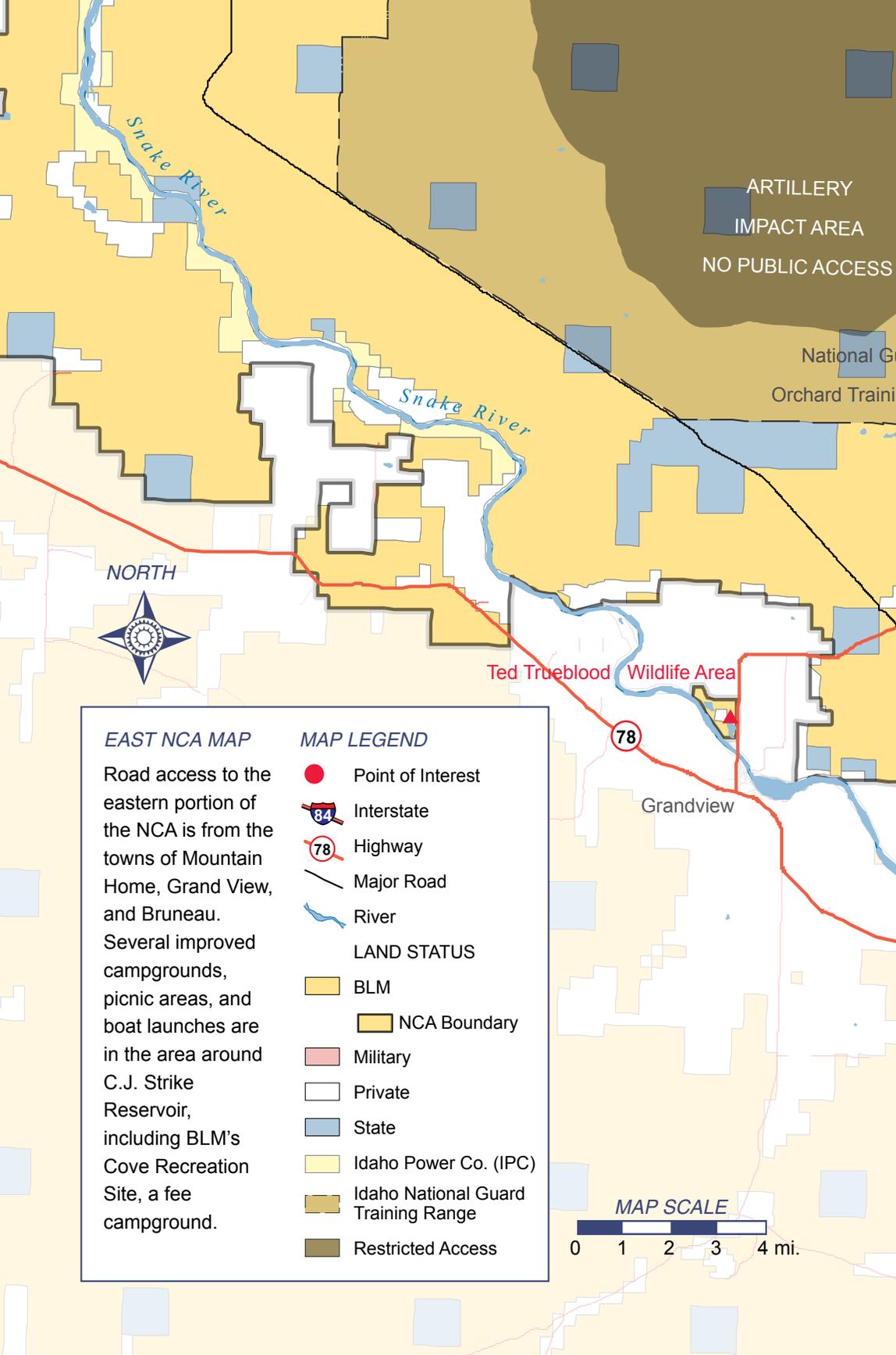
To reach the World Center, take Exit 50 south off Interstate 84, and follow signs to South Cole Road. Continue south on Cole Road for about 6 miles. Turn right onto Flying Hawk Lane and follow this road up the hill to the World Center.

A visit to the World Center makes an excellent addition to the driving tour of the NCA. Allow one to two hours to tour the World Center and about 30 minutes to drive to Kuna from Boise. The Access Map shows



American kestrel

a scenic route to Kuna through farmlands on paved county roads. Raptors, particularly kestrels, are often seen perched on power poles along the way.



Snake River

Snake River

ARTILLERY
IMPACT AREA
NO PUBLIC ACCESS

National G
Orchard Traini

NORTH



Ted Trueblood Wildlife Area

78

Grandview

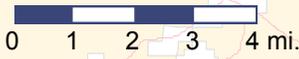
EAST NCA MAP

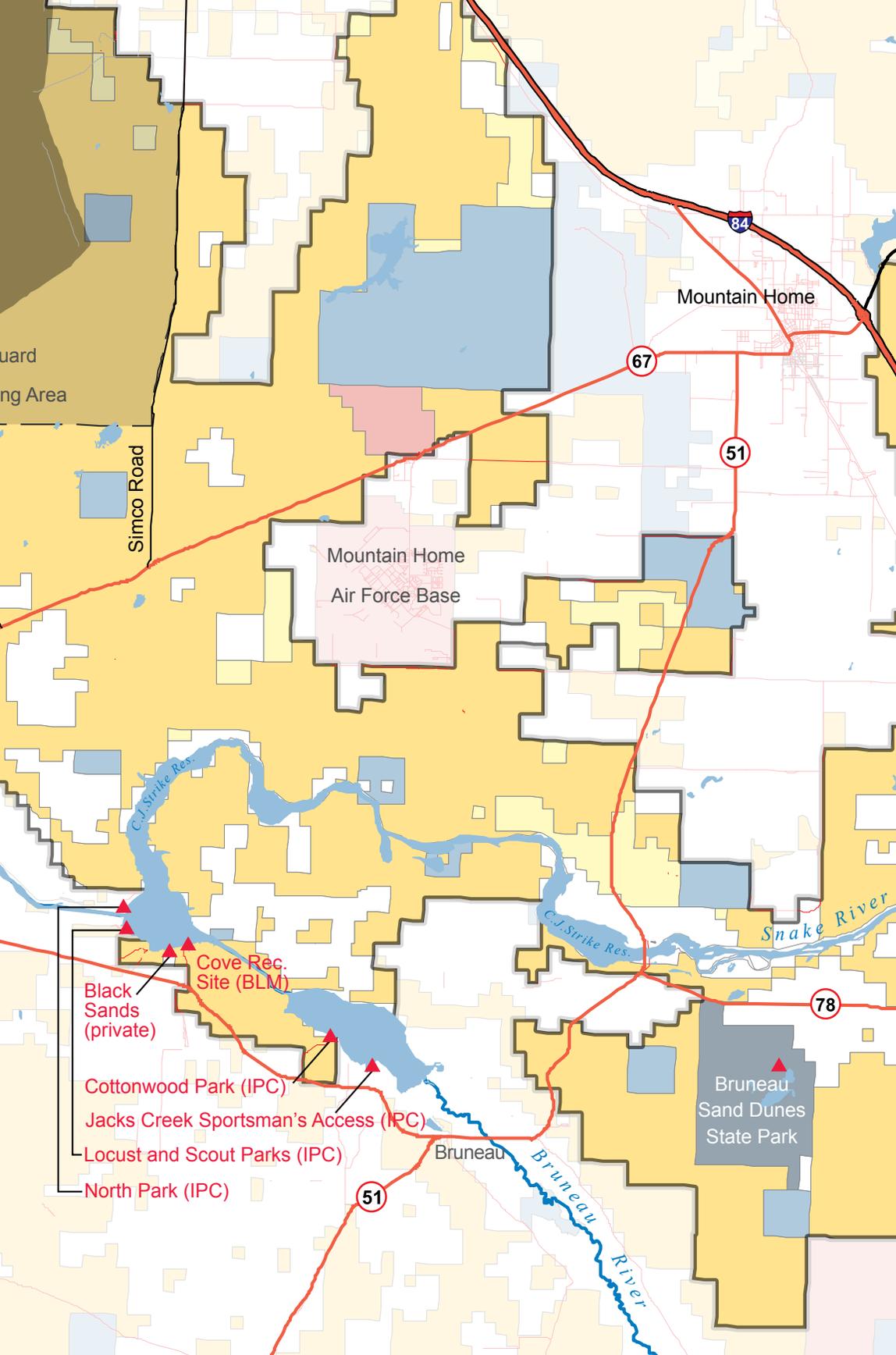
Road access to the eastern portion of the NCA is from the towns of Mountain Home, Grand View, and Bruneau. Several improved campgrounds, picnic areas, and boat launches are in the area around C.J. Strike Reservoir, including BLM's Cove Recreation Site, a fee campground.

MAP LEGEND

- Point of Interest
- Interstate
- Highway
- Major Road
- River
- LAND STATUS**
- BLM
- NCA Boundary
- Military
- Private
- State
- Idaho Power Co. (IPC)
- Idaho National Guard Training Range
- Restricted Access

MAP SCALE





Guard
ing Area

Simco Road

Mountain Home

Mountain Home
Air Force Base

C.J. Strike Res.

Snake River

C.J. Strike Res.

78

- Cove Rec. Site (BLM)
- Black Sands (private)
- Cottonwood Park (IPC)
- Jacks Creek Sportsman's Access (IPC)
- Locust and Scout Parks (IPC)
- North Park (IPC)

Bruneau
Sand Dunes
State Park

Bruneau

Bruneau River

51

Watchable Wildlife Sites

More than a gathering spot for raptors; the NCA hosts one of the nation's largest concentrations of badgers, and is one of the few places in Idaho to see black-throated sparrows. Approximately 360 wildlife species inhabit the area, including 55 mammal, 250 bird, 7 amphibian, 18 reptile and 27 fish species. The large variety of species prompted the entire NCA to be designated as a Watchable Wildlife area. Although Dedication Point and the Snake River Canyon are the most popular areas for viewing wildlife, there are three additional recognized Watchable Wildlife sites within the NCA: the Ted Trueblood Wildlife Area, C.J. Strike Wildlife Management Area, and Bruneau Dunes State Park.



The NCA/Celebration Park and C.J. Strike Wildlife Management Area are also sites designated as Blue Ribbon sites on The Idaho Birding Trail (IBT), a network of sites that provides the best opportunities to view birds in Idaho. Blue Ribbon sites are “the best of the best” bird viewing opportunities in Idaho. These areas are also identified as Important Bird Areas—sites that provide essential nesting, migration, or wintering habitat for birds.

Dedication Point

Look for side-blotched, western fence, and sagebrush lizards, gopher snakes, scorpions, ground squirrels, cottontail and black-tailed jackrabbits in the sagebrush, winterfat and cheatgrass habitat surrounding Dedication Point. From the canyon rim overlook, 400 feet above the Snake River, watch for seasonal raptors, canyon and rock wrens, Say's phoebe, cliff swallows, white-throated swifts, common ravens and rock doves. Sage, Lark, and Brewer's sparrows and western meadowlarks can also be seen in the shrubs along the trail. Facilities include graveled vehicle parking, two pit toilets, interpretive signs, a covered cabana for education programs, and a short gravel trail that leads to the overlook.

Ted Trueblood Wildlife Area

Called the “duck ponds” for many years, this area covers nearly 320 acres of public land in which three ponds were constructed in 1969. In 1987, the area was named in memory of Ted Trueblood, an avid hunter, conservationist, public land advocate and renowned outdoor writer who made his home in Idaho.

Summer visitors might see American white pelicans, white-faced ibis, cinnamon teal, black-necked stilts, American avocets, Caspian terns, yellow-breasted chats and lazuli buntings.

Winter visitors might see bald eagles, trumpeter swans and rough-legged hawks.



Western Tanager

Spring visitors might see migrating osprey, marbled godwits, Franklin’s and Bonaparte’s gulls, black terns, Lewis’ woodpeckers, solitary vireos, Nashville warblers, western tanagers, black-headed grosbeaks and green-tailed towhees.

All three ponds are located west of Highway 67 just north of Grand View, Idaho. Ponds

1 and 2 are accessible from a parking area one mile north of the Grand View

Bridge over the Snake River. Pond 3 can be

reached from Shaw Lane, another half mile north from the parking area.

Part of the area is closed to foot traffic during the waterfowl breeding season.

Closure dates are posted.

C.J. Strike Wildlife Management Area

The C.J. Strike Wildlife Management Area encompasses more than 18,500 acres of C.J. Strike Reservoir, adjacent marshes, ponds and wildlife food plots, extending 26 miles up the Snake River and 12 miles up the Bruneau River, between the towns of Grand View and Bruneau, Idaho. The land is owned by Idaho Power Company, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and Bureau of Land Management. Because the management emphasis for the area focuses on waterfowl and upland game bird production, much of the area is closed to the public from February 1 through July 31.

There are many access points around the reservoir, but the best birding site is the Jacks Creek Sportsman's Access. As you enter the access road you pass through private land for the first quarter mile. As you approach the reservoir, waterfowl, coots, and rails may be seen in the cover to the west. Look for Clark's and western grebes from spring to late summer on the reservoir. During the winter, large rafts of waterfowl rest on the "Bruneau Arm" of the reservoir during the waterfowl season. This concentration of waterfowl attracts bald and golden eagles who feed on dead and injured ducks and geese. At approximately one mile, a road to the right leads to a Russian olive woodland, which is a gathering place for wintering songbirds and raptors. Northern shrikes, rough-legged hawks, northern goshawks, sharp-shinned hawks, and Cooper's hawks are frequently seen in or near this woodland.

The end of the road is a good spot to view birds all year, with a good view of the Bruneau River Delta. A spotting scope is helpful but not necessary to see the birds. During spring and summer, American white pelicans, double-breasted cormorants, California and ring-billed gulls, Foster's and Caspian terns, great blue herons, egrets, American avocets and black-necked stilts can be seen here. During spring migration, Franklin's, Sabine's and Bonaparte's gulls and black terns sometimes gather here. White-tailed and mule deer are commonly seen in this area at dawn and dusk.



American avocets

Bruneau Dunes State Park

Known primarily for having the tallest single-structured sand dune in North America, this park also provides a great place to watch an assortment of wildlife species. Park habitat includes a mix of sagebrush desert and grassland flats with two shallow, marshy lakes lined with riparian vegetation. Most duck species traveling through Idaho can be seen here, and many stay the winter, with bald eagles as neighbors. Water birds such as tundra swans, Canada geese, dabbling and diving ducks and great blue herons can be seen around the ponds just north of the park. Also look for American avocets, long-billed curlews, red-necked and Wilson's phalaropes, western and least sandpipers, black-necked stilts and killdeer.

Although many types of mammals, reptiles and amphibians call the park home, evidence of their presence lies only in the tracks found in the sand. In the early morning and evening, look for coyotes, black-tailed jackrabbits, Ord's kangaroo rats, short-horned and western whiptail lizards and gopher snakes. Park facilities include a visitor center, vehicle parking, hiking trails, picnic site and campground.

Recreation Opportunities

While the BLM's mission is to maintain the remarkable wildlife habitat within the NCA, recreation activities, such as camping, fishing, hiking, bird watching, horseback riding and sightseeing, which are compatible with this mission, can occur.



Camping in Developed Areas

Cove Recreation Site, on C.J. Strike Reservoir, is BLM's only improved public camping facility within the NCA. Facilities at this fee site include potable water, picnic shelters, fire rings, picnic tables, fishing docks, RV dump station, and a boat ramp. This campground does not take reservations; it is a first come-first served campground.

On the south side of the reservoir and west of Cove Recreation Site, the privately-operated Black Sands Resort offers campsites with full hookups, restaurant/bar and boat launch.

Idaho Power Company manages four campgrounds around the reservoir (North Park, Scout Park, Locust Park, and Cottonwood Campground).



Camping in Undeveloped Areas

Primitive camping is allowed throughout the NCA. Avoid areas where birds are nesting and observe these low-impact camping practices:

- If you pack it in, pack it out, and always remember to LEAVE NO TRACE!
- Use stoves to cook instead of campfires. Open campfires are allowed in the NCA only in improved campsites with fire rings.
- To dispose of human waste and waste water, dig a small hole at least 200 feet from water and 6-8 inches deep. Do not bury food waste in the hole, as animals will dig it up.



Fishing

Fishing is usually poor between Grand View and Swan Falls Dam. Between Swan Falls and Walter's Ferry, fishing for smallmouth bass and catfish is good. Those planning to fish, however, must have an Idaho state fishing license and should obtain the current regulations from the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, as some species are catch and release only.



Hiking and Bicycling

There are many miles of roads and trails throughout the NCA that are open to non-motorized users. One popular trail runs along the north side of the Snake River from the steel gate below Swan Falls Dam to Celebration Park. This 5-mile stretch includes wildlife viewing, scenery, easy access to the Snake River, and passes interesting old homesteads and cultural sites. A primitive trail system on the south side of the river can be accessed by crossing Swan Falls Dam or Guffey Bridge at Celebration Park.



Horseback Riding

Most equestrian users ride within the Snake River Canyon and usually begin in the Celebration Park area. From here riders can access the Halverson Bar area which is designated for non-motorized uses. Another option is to ride downstream from the park and cross the Guffey Bridge to trails on the south side of the Snake River. Riders can also use the roads and trails.



Boating

Boating provides a great way to view raptors and explore the Snake River Canyon. However, variable winds, fluctuating water levels, and shifting sand and gravel bars often create hazardous boating conditions on the Snake River. C.J. Strike Reservoir has 7,000 acres of flatwater for more relaxed boating, and three developed launch sites.



Boating on the Snake River

Motorized craft can navigate with caution above Swan Falls Dam and below Celebration Park, but the river is rocky and treacherous for motorboats between Swan Falls Dam and Celebration Park. Developed launch sites are located at Grand View, Swan Falls Dam, Celebration Park, and Walter's Ferry.



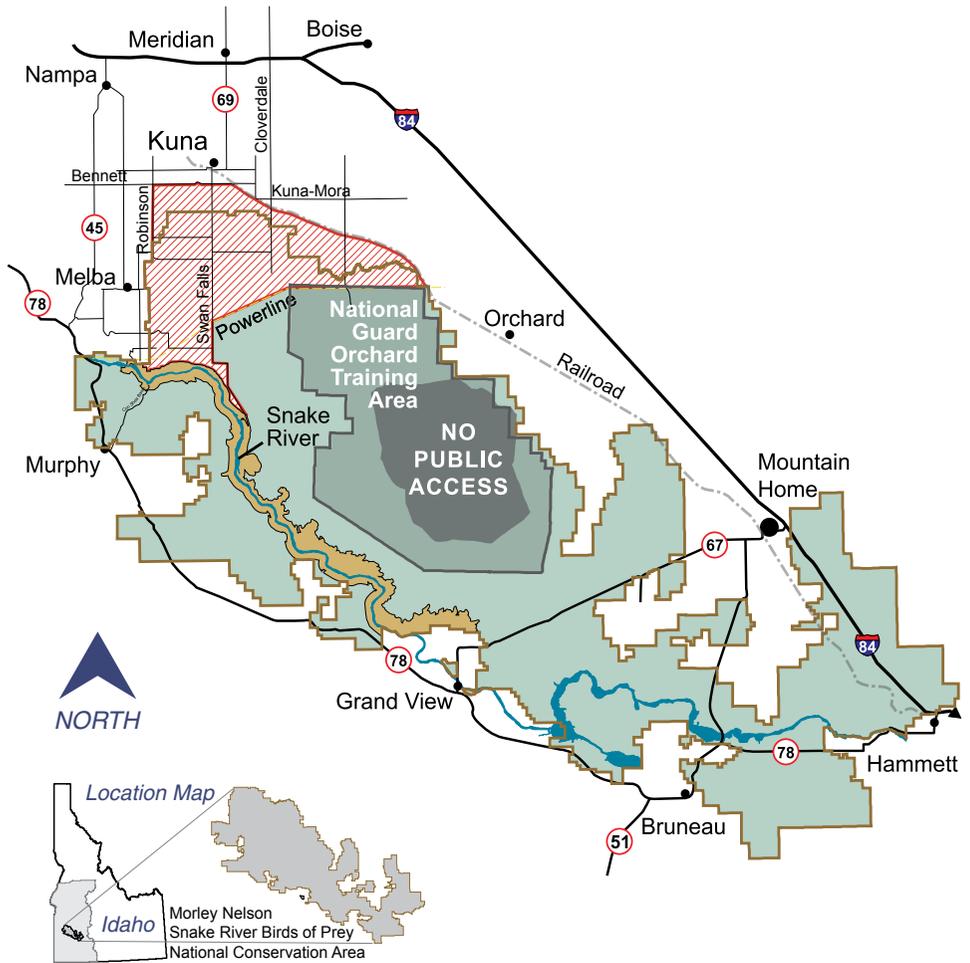
Non-motorized or float boats can be launched from Grand View and Swan Falls Dam. Floaters launching from Grand View should plan on camping one night along the river before reaching Swan Falls Dam. This stretch of river has no rapids, but winds and waves can create difficult conditions.

Floaters can portage around Swan Falls Dam to continue down river to Celebrations Park. This stretch of the river contains two Class II rapids and makes a nice day trip for rafters or experienced canoeists. The river slows considerably between Celebration Park and Walter's Ferry. No commercial shuttle services are available.



Target Shooting and Hunting (SEE MAP ON RIGHT)

To protect visitors, shooting restrictions have been implemented in the most heavily visited portion of the NCA. If you plan to shoot in the NCA, be sure you are in an area where it's permitted and that you follow safe shooting practices. Please refer to the safe shooting, safety and canyon zones on the map.



SAFETY AND SHOOTING ZONES

 Snake River Birds of Prey NCA Boundary

 OPEN TO **SAFE SHOOTING**

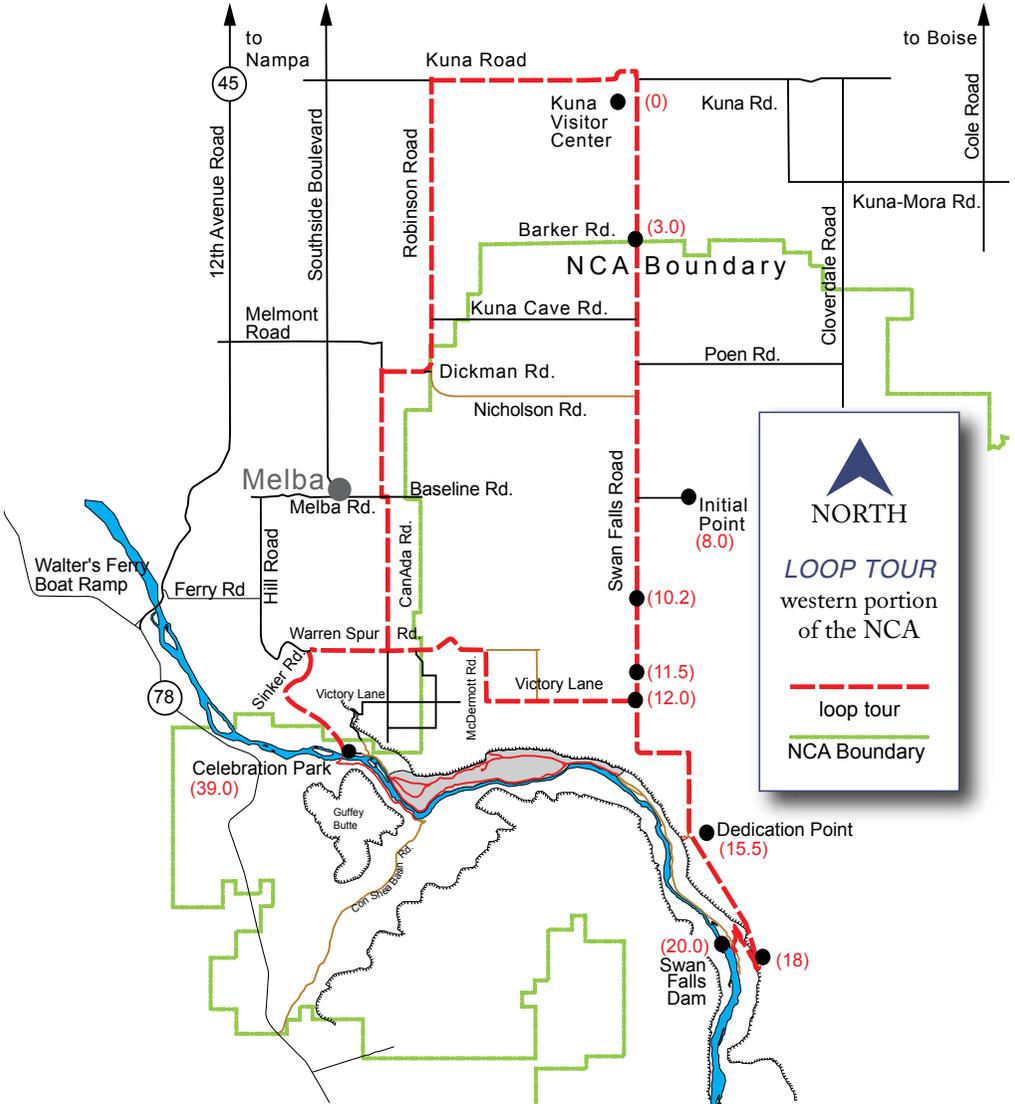
 SAFETY ZONE (Snake River Plateau):
Open to shotguns and muzzleloaders.
Closed to rifles and pistols year-round.

 CLOSED TO SHOOTING (Snake River Canyon):
Closed year-round to rifles and pistols, and closed to ALL firearms between February 15 and August 31. The closed area lies one-half mile on both sides of the Snake River or 100 yards back from the canyon rim whichever is greater. This applies to the Snake River Canyon between Grand View downstream to the old Guffey Bridge.

EXCEPTION: Rifle hunting is allowed in Unit 40 during established deer season.

Driving Loop Tour

A 56-mile loop tour beginning at Kuna Visitor Center provides opportunities to view wildlife and scenic vistas, and to visit cultural sites in the NCA. Allow at least 3 to 4 hours to complete the route. Depending on the length of stops, one can easily spend an entire day exploring the loop drive.



Mile 0.0 Kuna Visitor Center

Staffed by the Kuna Chamber of Commerce, the Kuna Visitor Center contains interpretive displays and information about Kuna history and raptors and recreation in the NCA.

Mile 3.0 Barker Road

Barker Road marks the northern boundary of the NCA. Northern harriers and prairie falcons frequent this area, while red-tailed and Swainson's hawks sometimes perch on the telephone and power poles. Piute ground squirrels and black-tailed jackrabbits take cover in the sagebrush. Look for American kestrels on wires between power poles.

Kuna Butte, on the west side of the road, burned in 1996. The furrows you may see are from rangeland drill seedings of bunchgrasses. Prior to the fire, this butte and the surrounding area were covered with sagebrush and bunchgrasses.

Mile 8.0 Initial Point

In a sense, Idaho begins at Initial Point. The prominent lava butte, located one mile to the east, provided the starting point for Idaho's official land survey, begun in 1867. Beginning at this geographic reference point, the entire state was surveyed, and each township was referenced to this "Initial Point" of the survey. A short walk up the rocky, steep access trail brings visitors to an observation deck and survey marker at the summit of the butte.

Look for raptors perching and hunting on the volcanic rock outcrops to the south. The Owyhee Mountains are visible to the southwest.



Red-tailed Hawk

Mile 10.2 PacifiCorp 500kV Powerline

Some birds of prey enjoy roosting or nesting on the steel towers that support this powerline. Special nesting platforms have been placed on some of the towers to encourage raptors to nest below the electrical lines. Large powerlines do not usually electrocute birds. The greatest number of electrocutions occur on much smaller powerlines where the wires are closer together, where a wingspan may touch two lines. This powerline marks the southern “no shooting” boundary east of Swan Falls Road.

Mile 11.5 Idaho Power Company Double-pole Powerline

The cross-arms of this powerline provide hunting perches. In winter look for rough-legged hawks perched on the cross-arms. Winterfat, a low silvery shrub, provides excellent food and cover for Piute ground squirrels (which become food for raptors), and helps hide the abundant badger holes. Most people don't realize the NCA contains one of the densest badger populations in the world (up to 11 badgers per square mile).

Mile 12.0 Intersection with Victory Lane

Fence posts and powerline cross-beams provide prairie falcons and red-tailed hawks great vantage points for hunting.

Sinker Butte, an extinct volcano, lies directly south across the canyon. Travelers on the South Alternate of the Oregon Trail passed around the south side of this butte.

Mile 15.5 Dedication Point

Dedication Point overlook provides an outstanding view of the Snake River Canyon. During the spring, this is a good place to spot birds of prey in flight. Winterfat and scattered patches of sagebrush provide habitat for Piute ground squirrels. For raptors with hungry nestlings in the canyon cliffs, a food supply this close to the canyon rim makes for a quick turnaround.

Interpretive signs along the one-quarter mile trail describe the plants, wildlife and geology of the NCA and aid with bird identification.



School children at Dedication Point Overlook

Mile 18 Three-Pole Pullout/Swan Falls Grade

Before descending into the canyon, stopping at the Three-Pole pullout or the top of Swan Falls grade offers a great view of Swan Falls Dam and the Snake River Canyon. Look for prairie falcons, red-tailed hawks and turkey vultures. As you descend the grade, observe the different geologic layers that form the canyon wall.

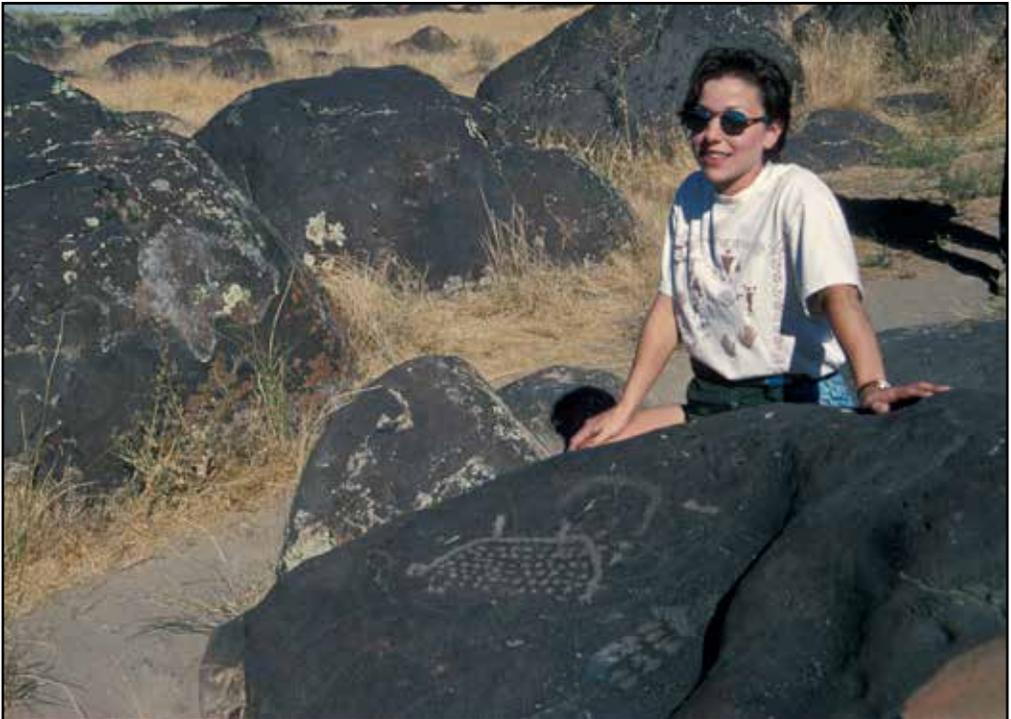
Mile 20.0 Swan Falls Historic Exhibit

Swan Falls Dam was built in 1901 (the first hydroelectric dam on the Snake River). Originally, the dam supplied power to gold and silver mines in the Owyhee Mountains. Eventually, it provided electricity for settlement and

agriculture on the Snake River Plateau. The dam, operated by Idaho Power Company, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1978.

In 1995, a new powerhouse was completed and the old historic powerhouses renovated into a visitor/interpretive center. The center provides a history of the Swan Falls Dam and hydroelectricity, plus information about the natural and cultural resources of the NCA. Tours may be available by appointment only, one week in advance by calling Idaho Power at 208-736-3458. Other facilities at Swan Falls Dam include restrooms, drinking water, a public telephone, and picnic area.

To continue the loop tour, retrace Swan Falls Road eight miles to Victory Lane. Turn west on Victory Lane and follow the highlighted route on the Loop Map on page 28 to reach Celebration Park.



Observing pictographs at Celebration Park

Mile 39.0 Celebration Park

Canyon County's Celebration Park was established as Idaho's first archaeological park in 1989. Park staff interpret the Snake River Canyon's fascinating archaeological and cultural history through tours and presentations. A short hiking trail leads visitors past petroglyphs carved on boulders by Native American and early settlers.

A non-motorized trail along the north bank of the Snake River provides access upstream to Halverson Lake, a small pond nestled along the canyon wall.

Other non-motorized trails lead through the Bonneville Flood boulders scattered across Halverson Bar. These trails converge into one trail and can be followed up stream approximately 10 miles toward Swan Falls Dam. This trail opens to motorized use about halfway to the dam.



Guffey Bridge, located at the downstream edge of Celebration Park, provides one of the few crossings over the Snake River. The one-time railroad bridge, built in 1897, has been restored for non-motorized use and provides access to primitive trails on the south side of the river. The park's facilities include vehicle parking, an interpretive center, restrooms, picnic area, boat launch, and atlatl range.

Please refer to the Loop Map on page 28 to reach the nearby town of Melba or return to Kuna to complete the driving loop tour.

Wildland Fire and the NCA

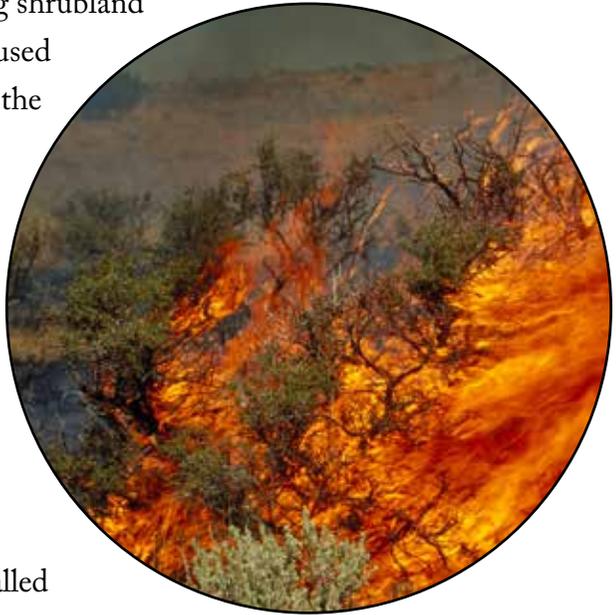
Wildland fire poses one of the most serious threats to the health and future of the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey NCA. Summer lightning storms and heavy public use make the area particularly susceptible to wildfire.

More than 60 percent (over 300,000 acres) of the NCA has been burned by wildfires since 1979. Replacing shrubs and grasses proves extremely difficult due to the dry desert climate. Without this valuable small mammal habitat, raptors will find less prey upon which to feed.

Help us preserve the remaining shrubland habitat and prevent human-caused fires in the NCA by observing the following fire prevention tips.

Fire Prevention Tips

- All motorized vehicles must stay on existing roads. Cross-country vehicle travel is prohibited. All motorcycles and ATVs must be equipped with an approved and properly installed spark arrestor. Don't drive or park on dry grass. Catalytic converters can reach temperatures of over 1,000 degrees and can easily start a wildfire.
- Open campfires are only allowed in improved campsites with fire rings. During periods of high fire danger, additional restrictions may be imposed. Do not leave campfires unattended.
- Smoke only in a vehicle (and use the ashtray), or smoke in an area without grass or other flammable material.



Use Regulations and Safety Precautions

- All motorized vehicles must stay on existing roads. Cross-country vehicle travel is prohibited. Motorized vehicles are prohibited in the canyon starting five miles below Swan Falls Dam at the steel gate down river to Celebration Park.
- The Idaho Army National Guard uses a training area within the NCA boundary. Visitor access is prohibited within a portion of the training area. Contact BLM for more information about safety precautions and access to this area.
- Collecting or defacing Native American artifacts and historic objects is a federal crime. Please respect and help preserve the petroglyphs and cultural resources found in the NCA.
- To protect the historical/cultural and visual resources of the area, the use of paintball guns and equipment are prohibited within the Snake River Canyon and within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of the canyon rim.
- Stay back from cliffs. Most cliff areas are composed of crumbling, unstable rock. Walking along canyon rims is dangerous, and can disturb nesting raptors.
- Rock climbing and rappelling are prohibited due to safety and resource concerns.
- Watch for poisonous plants and animals. Rattlesnakes and scorpions make their home in the NCA, and poison ivy is common along the Snake River. All can be avoided by watching where you walk and where you put your hands.
- Be self sufficient. Weather is variable and unpredictable and the canyon is isolated. Sudden high winds can chill hikers, swamp small boats, and make rafting difficult. Summer temperatures frequently exceed 100 degrees. Proper clothing, plenty of water, and conservative hiking plans can avert problems.
- To protect visitors, shooting restrictions have been implemented in the most heavily visited portion of the NCA. If you plan to shoot in the NCA, refer to page 26 and the map on page 27.

Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area

BLM, Boise District, Four Rivers Field Office

3948 Development Ave., Boise, Idaho 83705

208-384-3300

http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/prog/blm_special_areas/

Fishing and Hunting Regulations

Idaho Department of Fish and Game Region 3 Office

3101 South Powerline, Nampa, Idaho 83686

208-465-8465

<http://fishandgame.idaho.gov>

Celebration Park

5000 Victory Lane, Melba ID 83511

208-495-2745

www.canyonco.org/Parks/Celebration_Park/

Snake River Canyon



World Center for Birds of Prey

The Peregrine Fund

5666 Flying Hawk Lane, Boise, ID 83709

208-362-3716

www.peregrinefund.org

IDP Recreation Facilities and River Levels

Idaho Power Company

1221 West Idaho, Boise, ID 83702

208-388-2200

www.idahopower.com/OurEnvironment/Recreation

www.idahopower.com/OurEnvironment/Water Information

Lodging and Visitor Services

Idaho Department of Commerce

700 West State Street, Boise, ID 83702

1-800-VISIT-ID

www.visitidaho.org/





prairie falcon, photo: Larry Ridenhour

BLM/ID/GI-94/012+4333 rev. 2012