



Fortymile Region

Watchable Wildlife

In the boreal forest and rolling alpine ridges of eastern interior Alaska, the many forks of the Fortymile National Wild and Scenic River create a tangled web. These numerous clear-water streams converge and flow to the Yukon River, carving cliff faces and steep bluffs. Visitors can enjoy quiet trips full of opportunities to view wildlife in the many habitats of the region.



Craig McCagg, BLM

Habitats Alpine tundra | Boreal forest | Shrubland | Riverine/riparian | Freshwater lakes/ponds

Species to See



Bob Wick, BLM

Caribou - The thousands of animals in the Fortymile caribou herd migrate between Alaska and Canada. They have adapted to life on the move, constantly in search of food. Their large concave hooves act like snowshoes in the winter and work as paddles to cross rivers in the summer. Look for their tracks stamped into the mud on the banks of the Fortymile River.



Jim Mogen, USFWS

Arctic grayling - Distinguish this freshwater fish by the large dorsal fin waving down its back and its colorful markings. Some grayling migrate into small headwater streams in summer and move to different sections of stream with the seasons, while others spend their whole life in a singular stretch. Grayling take advantage of the abundance of food in summer and eat anything they can, from flies to voles.



Frank Doyle, USFWS

Peregrine falcon - The word "peregrine" derives from a Latin word meaning traveler. This species migrates to Central or South America each winter and returns to Alaska to breed. Watch for this fast-flying raptor hunting other birds and look for peregrine falcon nests on the cliffs towering along the Fortymile River. A float down the river will bring you by over a dozen peregrine nests.



Bob Wick, BLM

Moose - World-record size moose roam through the wilderness of the Fortymile Area. They can grow to be six feet tall and weigh 1,600 pounds. Males grow large antlers that average five feet across and weigh 45-50 pounds. Moose antlers regrow each year, making it the fastest growing tissue of any mammal. The Mosquito Flats area is valuable moose calving and summer habitat.



- Grizzly bear
- Black bear
- Gray wolf
- Canada lynx
- Red fox
- North American beaver
- Alaska marmot
- Harlan's red-tailed hawk
- Harlequin duck
- Sharp-tailed grouse
- Short-eared owls
- Swainson's thrush
- Sheefish
- Hawkmoth



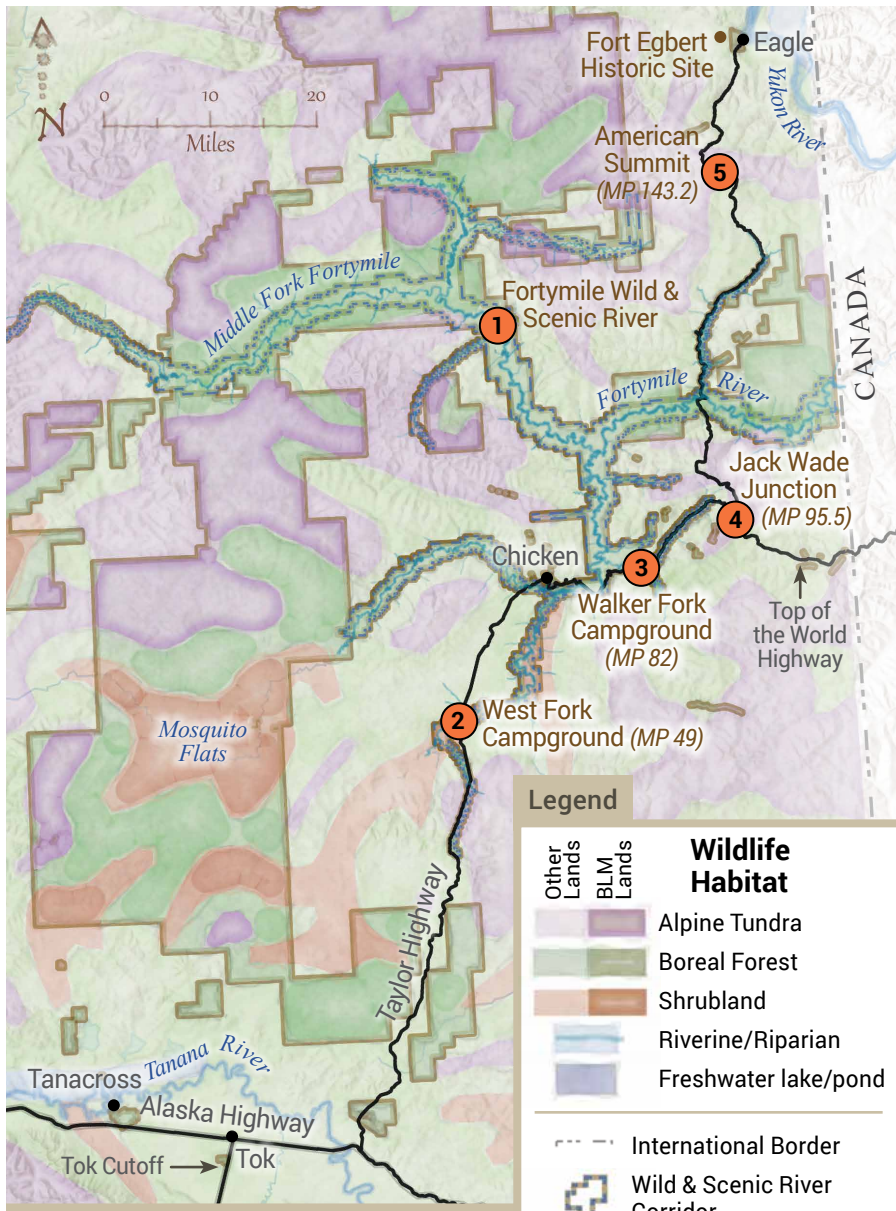
Wildlife Viewing Tips

Much of this area is accessible only by air or by boat. However, you can access a portion of the region from the Taylor Highway, which ends at the Yukon River in the small town of Eagle, Alaska.

The Taylor Highway is a combination of gravel and sealed surfaces and is generally open from May to early October, weather permitting.

Other Resources

[Fortymile Wild and Scenic River Guide](#) | [Fortymile/Taylor Highway Digital Public Information Map](#) | [Taylor Highway Guide](#)



Wildlife Viewing Sites

1 Fortymile National Wild and Scenic River - Float the river and look for sheefish and Arctic grayling in the clear waters. Caribou or moose may cross the river. Look for nesting peregrine falcons along the canyon walls and waterfowl in the river.

2 West Fork Campground (Taylor Highway (THW) MP 49) - Set up camp and spend time in the area. Look for moose and trumpeter swans in the pond, or peregrine falcons nesting in the cliffs. In June, the forest is filled with the songs of breeding birds, including various warblers, thrushes, sparrows, and flycatchers.

3 Walker Fork Campground (THW MP 82) - Once the site of a 1930s airstrip, today careful observers may see red-backed vole and red fox running through meadows. Arctic grayling hunt for food in the river, grabbing the insects that have fallen into the water. Caribou and bear roam through the area.

4 Jack Wade Junction (THW MP 95.5) - Whether you stay on the Taylor Highway or head east on Top of the World Highway, the road follows high open ridges offering great opportunities to see wildlife. Travelers often see caribou in small groups, or even running along the road! In August, when the Fortymile caribou herd begins to group up for migration, you may be fortunate to witness hundreds of animals moving across the landscape.

5 American Summit (THW MP 143.2) - Drive through the alpine tundra of this 3,652-foot-high mountain pass. The open landscape provides viewing opportunities for large groups of migrating caribou and fields of fireweed and pollinators.

Other Areas within the BLM Field Office

Fort Egbert Historic Site - At the end of the Taylor Highway, Fort Egbert overlooks the Yukon River and the town of Eagle. Search for raptors and Dall sheep in the rocky Eagle Bluff above the Fort. Nearby, look for fish wheels along the riverbank, evidence of resident's historical and continued dependence on salmon.



Other Notable Locations

■ **Yukon Charley National Preserve, National Park Service.** Explore the Yukon and Charley rivers for a chance to see peregrine falcons, bald eagles, salmon, black bear, wolves, and more.

■ **Top of the World Highway, Alaska Department of Natural Resources.** Search the alpine tundra for large mammals and the skies above for birds of prey as you drive east toward Canada.