

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 260 wildlife species inhabit the area, including 45 mammals, 165 birds, 8 amphibians, 16 reptiles, and 25 fish. This 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.

Need help identifying a specific raptor? Check the Raptor Identification Guide for birds commonly seen in the NCA. Also our "Where Are The Birds" flyer will show you which birds to expect to see at different times of the year.

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, including golden eagle, red-tailed and Swainson's hawks, American kestrel, prairie falcon, osprey, and turkey vulture. Also look for canyon and rock wrens, Say's phoebe, cliff and violet-green swallows, white-throated swifts, common ravens and rock doves. Sage and Brewer's sparrows and western meadowlarks can also be seen in the shrubs along the trail. Facilities include vehicle parking, two vault toilets, interpretive kiosk and trail signs, and a short gravel trail that leads to the overlook. More details and photographs of Dedication Point.

Ted Trueblood Wildlife Area

Called the "duck ponds" for many years, this area covers nearly 300 acres of public land upon which three ponds were constructed in 1969. The name of the area was changed in 1987 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 could observe bald eagles, trumpeter swans and rough-legged hawks. Spring visitors may see migrating osprey, marbled godwits, Franklin's gulls, Bonaparte's gulls, black terns, Lewis' woodpeckers, solitary vireos, Nashville warblers, western tanager, 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. More details and photographs of the Trueblood area.

C.J. Strike Wildlife Management Area

The C.J. Strike Wildlife Management Area encompasses 20,725 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 the 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 Jack's 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 cove 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.

Facilities include a pit toilet and boat ramp. Camping is allowed, but there is no available electricity or potable water. More details and photographs of the general CJ Strike area.

Bruneau Dunes State Park

Known primarily for having the tallest single-structured sand dune in North America, Bruneau Dunes State 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. 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 also 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. More details about Bruneau Dunes State