

Windows to *Wildlife*



Nature Within Reach

Accessible wildlife viewing
across Idaho

On the Birding Trail

Wildlife viewing at Deer Flat
National Wildlife Refuge

In Your Back Pocket

Wildlife viewing guides help you
discover Idaho's wildlife

Osprey Nest Life on the Salmon River

The Salmon Outdoor
Classroom Livestream



In This Issue

Page 3

Osprey Nest Life on the Salmon River:
Salmon Outdoor Classroom Livestream

Page 4

Nature Within Reach: Accessible
wildlife viewing across Idaho

Page 6

On the Idaho Birding Trail at
Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge

Page 7

Discover Idaho's wildlife in your
back pocket

(Cover) A young osprey peers down from the safety of its nest. PHOTO: Shutterstock.com (Below) Ospreys soar on steady wingbeats over shallow water, using their incredible eyesight to spot fish from up to 100 feet in the air. PHOTO: Public Domain





Nature Watch

Nest Life on the Salmon River

The Salmon Outdoor Classroom Livestream

Perched forty feet above the Salmon River, a live nest camera offers a real-time look into the lives of Idaho's Osprey. This spring, the IDFG Salmon Outdoor Classroom nestcam is documenting an Osprey family's full season for the first time, from the first egg to the fledglings' early flights.

Three eggs were laid starting April 16, and the adults alternated incubation through spring storms. The first "pip" appeared May 28, and by May 30 all three chicks had hatched, turning the nest into a busy nursery. One chick was lost a couple of weeks later, but the remaining two are healthy and growing fast.

With two hungry chicks, the parents deliver fish throughout the day. The older chick typically eats first, but both get plenty. Osprey parents are attentive providers, and the steady flow of fish ensures the chicks grow quickly.

Now several weeks old, the chicks are entering one of the most active stages of nestling life. Fluffy down is rapidly giving way to juvenile feathers, and viewers can watch them stand, stretch, and flap vigorously as they build the muscle strength needed for flight. These wing exercises, sometimes called "helicoptering," can look almost comical as the chicks lift slightly off the platform before settling back down.

Osprey chicks typically fledge 50-55 days after hatching, putting this year's first flights in mid-to-late July. The fledglings will continue using the nest as they improve their flying and fishing skills, before eventually migrating south to their wintering grounds on their first instinct-guided journey.

One threat facing the nest is baling twine. The Salmon River corridor is surrounded by working agricultural land, and loose strands of synthetic cord shed from hay bales and scattered across fields and fence lines are a common sight. Adults unknowingly weave it into the nest, where it can entangle chicks around their legs, wings, or necks causing injury. IDFG staff constantly monitor the nest and will intervene if there is imminent danger.

The camera offers more than a glimpse into wildlife, it's a front-row seat to witness Idaho osprey life up close, made possible by the generous contributions of the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Salmon Valley Stewardship, Idaho Power, CusterTel, SteamWorld, and K12.Tech. Watch the action by visiting

idfg.idaho.gov/watch/wildlife/osprey-salmon

Nature Within Reach

Wildlife Experiences for Everyone



PHOTO: iStockphoto.com/CC BY-NC-SA 2.0 by Jodie SF

PHOTO: Shutterstock.com

Accessible Wildlife Viewing Across Idaho

Idaho's wild places are for everyone and summer is the perfect season to enjoy them. Across the state, there are wildlife-rich locations that offer flat trails, short walks, boardwalks, or vehicle-friendly routes that invites visitors of all ages and abilities to connect with nature.

In northern Idaho, **Kootenai National Wildlife Refuge** near Bonners Ferry offers an auto-tour loop with excellent views of sandhill cranes, deer, and waterfowl. The **University of Idaho Arboretum** in Moscow provides gentle, shaded paths perfect for spotting woodpeckers, warblers, and summer songbirds.

In central Idaho, riverfront trails in Lewiston and Clarkston give visitors easy access to osprey nests, pelicans, and herons along the Snake and Clearwater rivers. **Castle Rocks State Park** and **City of Rocks National Reserve** offer short, level interpretive paths with views of rock wrens, swallows, and high-desert scenery.

In southwest Idaho, **Kathryn Albertson Park**, **Esther Simplot Park**, and the **Boise River Greenbelt** offer some of the most accessible wildlife viewing in the state. From broad paved paths, visitors can watch families of geese holding their usual summertime takeover of the parks, stop by the **MK Nature Center** to explore underwater viewing windows, and observe cliff swallows under bridges. **Hyatt Hidden Lakes Reserve** adds level gravel loops around ponds busy with Red-winged Blackbirds, swallows, and dragonflies.

In south-central and southeastern Idaho, **Camas National Wildlife Refuge** provides easy viewing of grebes, cranes, and marsh birds from driving routes and short trails. **Bear Lake National Wildlife Refuge** offers boardwalks and roadside pullouts for watching white-faced ibis, pelicans, and herons. Near Ririe, the **Cress Creek Nature Trail** features a wheelchair-accessible first half-mile with broad views of the Snake River canyon and chances to spot raptors, songbirds, lizards, and summer wildflowers. Around Pocatello and Idaho Falls, the **Edson Fichter Nature Area** and the **Idaho Falls River Walk** offer smooth, level paths with reliable views of waterfowl and other summer wildlife.

Idaho is home to an incredible diversity of wildlife and summer brings much of it out into the open. From migratory birds to resident mammals, there is something to discover no matter where you go and your abilities.

The best part
of wildlife viewing.



idahobirdingtrail.com

Idaho Birding Trail



Deer Flat

National Wildlife Refuge

Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge, centered around Lake Lowell in southwest Idaho, offers excellent summer birding across its mix of open water, wetlands, riparian areas, and upland edges. With more than 280 species recorded, the refuge is one of Idaho's most productive birding sites, and summer brings an interesting mix of breeding waterbirds, raptors, and songbirds.

On the lake, visitors can see Western Grebes, Double-crested Cormorants, American Coots, and flocks of Mallards working the shorelines. Wading birds such as Great Blue Heron and Great Egret are regularly seen hunting the shallows. The refuge also hosts shorebirds including Spotted Sandpipers and the occasional Forster's Tern gliding over open water.

The riparian corridors around Lake Lowell support summer songbirds like Western Kingbirds, Northern Yellow Warblers, Cliff Swallows, Song Sparrows, Red-winged Blackbirds, and Bewick's Wren, making the trails especially active in early morning. Raptors such as Osprey and Northern Harrier may be seen as they hunt over the water and fields.

With its combination of accessible trails, shoreline viewing areas, and rich bird diversity, Deer Flat NWR is a standout destination for summer birdwatching in southwest Idaho.



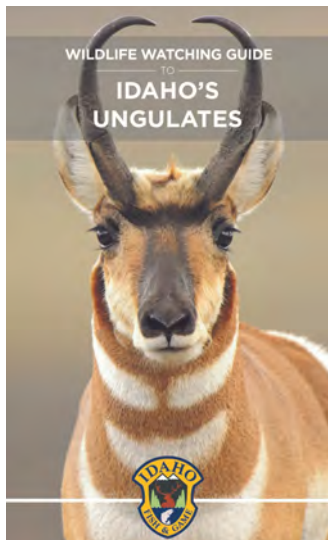
Discover Idaho's Wildlife

In Your Back Pocket



PHOTO: Burrowing Owls/Shutterstock.com

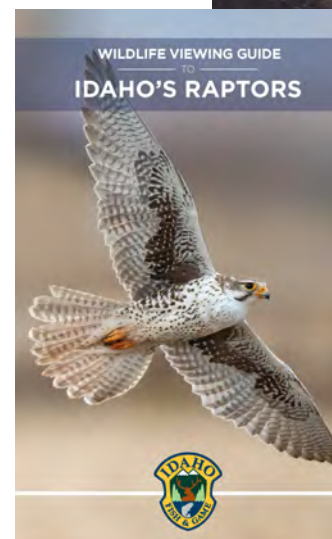
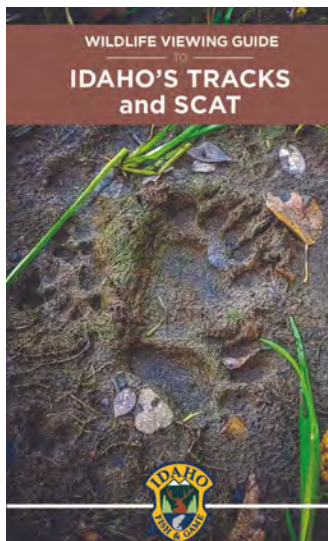
Free Pocket Guides Help Viewers Explore, Learn, and Protect



Wildlife viewing continues to grow in popularity across the United States and Idaho is no exception. According to the National Survey of Hunting, Fishing, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, more than 54% of Americans aged 16 and older participate in wildlife viewing, making it one of the fastest-growing outdoor activities in the country! This trend offers state fish and wildlife agencies, like IDFG, an important opportunity to reach new audiences and strengthen support for conservation.

To help people get the most out of their time outdoors, or in their own backyards, IDFG offers free, pocket-sized wildlife viewing guides, available at all regional offices. What began with guides on ungulates and owls has grown to include bats, raptors, and now a scat and tracks guide. Together, these booklets provide practical tips, guidance on where and when to look, and accessible information on the species and signs most commonly encountered.

Each guide is designed to help people appreciate Idaho's wildlife while minimizing disturbance to animals and their habitats. Whether you're visiting wildlife management areas, local parks, or observing from home, these guides offer simple tools to improve your chances of spotting wildlife and understanding what you see.



Thank You

Thank you to those who made direct donations, purchased or renewed a wildlife license plate, or contributed to the Idaho Nongame Wildlife Fund when completing their taxes.

Your contribution provides important funding for wildlife and habitat conservation, research, and outreach in Idaho.



Windows to Wildlife

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY PROGRAM

PO Box 25, Boise, ID 83707

Deniz Aygen — Editor

deniz.aygen@idfg.idaho.gov

To submit an article, obtain a subscription, or notify us of an address change, contact the Editor at the above address.

*The contents of the articles in this publication are the views and opinions of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent or reflect the policies or opinions of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game or the State of Idaho.

