

the Lightning Creek drainage toward "end of road." You'll reach the trailhead area by Lightning Creek Bridge at mile 15.5. All land here is public (FS).

Just before the bridge is the 2-mile-long, "easy" Trail 52 to Lake Darling. On the north side of the creek, about 200 yards beyond the bridge, is the 1-mile-long "moderate" Trail 554 to Gem Lake. You can drive about 2 miles farther along FR 1022 to the trailhead for Moose Creek Trail 237, Lake Estelle Trail 36, and Blacktail Lake Trail 24. The trails for Lake Estelle and Blacktail Lake branch off Trail 237. It's an "easy" 3-mile hike to Lake Estelle, an "easy" 1.5-mile hike to Moose Lake, and a "moderate" 3-mile hike to Blacktail Lake.

#### BIRDING:

On your drive up Trestle Creek, watch the roadsides for Spruce Grouse, and keep an eye out for Three-toed or Black-backed Woodpeckers flying across the road. The best birding, however, is along the lakes themselves. Regular summer species include Red-tailed Hawk, Vaux's and Black (rare) Swifts, Red-naped Sapsucker, Downy, Hairy, Three-toed, Black-backed, and Pileated Woodpeckers, Olive-sided and Hammond's Flycatchers, Gray and Steller's Jays, Clark's Nutcracker, Common Raven, Black-capped, Mountain, and Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Mountain Bluebird, Swainson's, Hermit, and Varied Thrushes, Cassin's and Warbling Vireos, Townsend's, Yellow-rumped, MacGillivray's, and Wilson's Warblers, Western Tanager, Pine Grosbeak, Cassin's Finch, Red and White-winged Crossbills, and Pine Siskin. In fall, American Pipits and Lapland Longspurs have been found in the short grass around the lakes. Expect to see Moose on nearly every trip to Gem, Moose, Darling, and Blacktail Lakes.

#### OTHER:

There is good trout fishing at all the lakes. A FS map can be very helpful, and can be purchased at the FS office (208/263-5111) in Sandpoint. The book *100 Hikes in the Inland Northwest* (see p. 321) can be useful, as well. See also Sandpoint to Beyond Hope Route, the next site.

## SANDPOINT TO BEYOND HOPE ROUTE

Authors: Earl Chapin, Kas Dumroese

Site P-6 — Map P-6

**Highlights:** Waterfowl, Shorebirds, Bobolinks

**Major Habitats:** Wetland, Meadow

**Location:** Bonner Co., Sandpoint

**Spring:** \*\*\*\* **Summer:** \*\*\* **Fall:** \*\*\*\* **Winter:** \*\*\*\*

*Sandpoint's city beach is one of Idaho's most dependable birding hotspots. The beach's sand is a precious commodity, since the rest of Lake Pend Oreille's (pond-o-RAY) long shoreline is mostly mud or rock. Many Idahoans believe that Pend Oreille is the prettiest lake in the entire state. Its huge size and bountiful fishes attract hundreds of diving birds, particularly loons, grebes, and bay ducks. Although beautiful vistas are found around the entire lake, the best birding is usually along the northeast shore. This 35-mile-long route starts in Sandpoint and ends near Clark Fork.*

#### DIRECTIONS:

This route begins in Sandpoint, at the intersection of US 95 North and US 2 East. From here, go north about 1 block, then turn right (east) on Bridge Street and follow it 0.1 mile to the city beach (go through the underpass).

#### BIRDING:

The city beach is always worth a visit. Check the jetty to the north of the beach, as well. In winter and spring large rafts of diving ducks, including Greater Scaup, can be seen. Rare species have included Pacific Loon, Little Blue Heron, Black, Surf, and White-winged Scoters, Oldsquaw, American Golden-Plover, Snowy Plover, Whimbrel, Marbled Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Short-billed Dowitcher, Little, Mew, Iceland, Glaucous, and Sabine's Gulls, and Common, Arctic, and Least Terns. Many of these were first state records, which emphasizes the importance of this tiny, productive vagrant trap. A few Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings are seen every October to November.

Backtrack to US 95/US 2 and turn right (north), following it through downtown Sandpoint, then turn right (north) following US 95 toward Canada. In about 1.5 miles, continue straight (east) on ID 200 toward Hope.

At milepost 35, ID 200 reaches Oden Bay. Turn right (south) at the Sportsman Access and go under the railroad bridge, then turn left (east) onto Sunnyside Road, zero your mileage, and follow Sunnyside as it parallels the water. The wet fields along the first three miles of Sunnyside attract Franklin's, Bonaparte's, and Ring-billed Gulls in spring. In summer, this is a good place to find a variety of seedeaters, especially finches and sparrows. In



toward the fish hatchery. In June the first quarter-mile of river is good for Harlequin Ducks. Return to ID 200 and turn left (east).

At milepost 55.3 in "downtown" Clark Fork you may take a 4-mile-long side trip to Johnson Creek Sportsman Access. To do so, turn right (south) onto Stevens Street. In a quarter-mile you'll cross the railroad tracks and stay left (east). Watch for Lewis's Woodpeckers (May and June) for the next half-mile until you cross the one-lane bridge. (There is an Osprey nest on top.) Just across the bridge, turn right (west) onto the gravel road. From here to Johnson Creek, watch for Cordilleran Flycatchers, American Redstarts, and Northern Waterthrushes, especially in the brushy areas and near cottonwoods. About 1.8 miles from the bridge you'll enter a cottonwood stand. *The land is all private, so stay on the road.* Stop and listen for Western Wood-Pewees, Eastern Kingbirds, vireos, Lazuli Buntings, and Bullock's Orioles. Continue another 0.75 mile to a Y and stay right toward Sportsman Access, watching for Black Swifts (rare) mixed with Vaux's during August and September. The parking lot and pit toilet are another 0.2 mile past the Y. Look for Barred Owls, Belted Kingfishers, Red-naped Sapsuckers, Swainson's Thrushes, Cassin's, Warbling, and Red-eyed Vireos, and Gray Catbirds. You may wish to backtrack to the Y and take the other fork (FR 278) about 100 feet to the bridge. Check underneath for nesting American Dippers.

Backtrack to ID 200. If you're visiting in August or September and want to try for Black Swifts, turn right (east). At milepost 60.9 is a pull-off on the north side of the road. This is just below Cabinet Dam, and Blacks often fly with Vaux's Swifts above the river. Another vantage is from the VFW Campground at milepost 61.5. The road in is steep and rutted. *Permission is required for entry.* As of this writing, permission could be obtained at Nate's Gun Repair (208/266-1252; best luck after 4 pm).

#### OTHER:

Fuel and food are available in Hope and Clark Fork. Sandpoint is a full-service community. See also Cabinet Mountain Lakes (p. 31).

## HOODOO VALLEY ROUTE

Author: Earl Chapin

Site P-7 — Map P-7/P-8/P-9

**Highlights:** American Bittern, American Redstart

**Major Habitats:** Mixed Conifer Forest, Wetland

**Location:** Bonner Co., 20 miles south of Sandpoint

**Spring:** \*\*\* **Summer:** \*\*\* **Fall:** \* **Winter:** N/A

*A short, 8-mile-long drive up the Hoodoo Valley can produce more than 100 bird species. Although late May to late June is the best time to visit, Hoodoo Valley is worth investigating all spring and summer.*

#### DIRECTIONS:

From Athol follow US 95 north 4 miles to milepost 453, then turn left (northwest) onto graveled Granite (a.k.a. Granite Lake) Road. Follow it about a mile to the T at Kelso Lake Road. Zero your mileage and turn left (southwest) on Kelso Lake Road. There is good birding all along this route. Stop and investigate wherever you see a birdy-looking area, but remember that *most land here is private.*

#### BIRDING:

At mile 0.5 is a small, primitive campground on the right (north) side of the road (at the western end of Granite Lake). Look in the rock slide behind the campground for Rock Wrens, and check the marshy area for Willow Flycatchers, Common Yellowthroats, Lazuli Buntings, Fox and Song Sparrows, and Red-winged Blackbirds.

Continuing west on Kelso Lake Road, you'll reach Kelso Lake and a good parking area at mile 1.6. Red-necked and Pied-billed Grebes nest here, as do a variety of ducks, including Common Goldeneyes. Continuing to about mile 4, investigate marshy areas on the left (south) side of the road for American Bitterns, Virginia Rails, Soras, Marsh Wrens, and Yellow-headed Blackbirds. Pay particular attention to the larger stands of Quaking Aspen lining the roads, since this is one of the best places in Idaho to find Red-eyed Vireos and American Redstarts. In conifer areas, you may find Red-naped Sapsuckers, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, Olive-sided Flycatchers, Western Wood-Pewees, Hammond's and Dusky Flycatchers, Chestnut-backed Chickadees, House and Winter Wrens, Townsend's Solitaires, Swainson's and Varied Thrushes, Cassin's Vireos, Yellow, Yellow-rumped, Townsend's, MacGillivray's, and Wilson's Warblers, Western Tanagers, Evening Grosbeaks, Cassin's Finches, and Red Crossbills.

At about mile 5 marsh and forest habitat are replaced by broad open meadows on both sides of the road. Nest boxes along the fence-line attract Tree and Violet-green Swallows, as well as Western and Mountain Bluebirds.

Continue straight to mile 0.4 and the intersection of Poirier Ranch Road and Rusho Lane. Turn left (south) onto Poirier Ranch Road, and as you drive check the trees and brush for Western Wood-Pewees, Eastern Kingbirds, swallows, nuthatches, Western Bluebirds, and Evening Grosbeaks. At mile 0.9 the main road curves right (west) and becomes Blanchard Loop Road. Southeast of the curve is a "Poirier Tree Farm" sign and the Poirier residence. A dirt access road leads down to the lake. After asking permission to walk the dirt road, scan the northwest corner of the lake (best done with a scope from the southwest corner) for grebes and, from July on, for Lesser Yellowlegs, Semipalmated, Western, and Least Sandpipers, and Long-billed Dowitchers. An Upland Sandpiper was spotted here in August 1994. In summer check willow trees along the western edge of the lake for Western Wood-Pewees, Eastern Kingbirds, swallows, Gray Catbirds, and Cedar Waxwings.

To bird Blanchard Loop Road, continue driving west. At mile 1.3 is the Stone Ridge Golf Course. Check power-lines and trees on your right (north) for Western Bluebirds. From mile 2.0 to 2.3, look for Great Blue Herons and waterfowl on the reservoir to the left (south). At about mile 4.0 you drive into Washington state. At mile 4.3, turn right (northeast) onto Blanchard Road, which leads back into Idaho at about mile 4.5 (watch for stray Bobolinks in June) and Blanchard at mile 7.

If you want to do more birding from Blanchard, turn left (north) onto ID 41 and travel northwest 1.8 miles to milepost 28.6, then turn left (west) on Roberts Lane. Check the grassy fields along the road for Northern Harriers, Red-tailed Hawks, swallows, Western Bluebirds, Bobolinks, and sparrows.

#### OTHER:

In fall, hunting occurs at Blanchard Lake, so fewer waterfowl are seen then. Stoneridge Timeshare Resort (208/437-2451) is located one mile southwest of Blanchard on Blanchard Road. The resort has a gymnasium, heated Olympic-size swimming pool, sauna, golf course, and a restaurant for evening meals (closed Mondays and Tuesdays). Rooms with cooking facilities are often available.

There is a convenience store, gas station, and several dining options in Blanchard. Groceries are available in Spirit Lake. See also Farragut SP, the next site.

## FARRAGUT STATE PARK

Authors: Kris Buchler, Cynthia Langlitz, Shirley Sturts

Site P-9 — Map P-7/P-8/P-9

**Highlights:** Western Bluebird, Cassin's Vireo

**Major Habitats:** Dry Conifer Forest and Mixed Conifer Forest

**Location:** Kootenai Co., 20 miles north of Coeur d'Alene

**Spring:** \*\*\* **Summer:** \*\*\* **Fall:** \*\* **Winter:** \*\*

*Farragut SP is situated on Idaho's largest lake, Pend Oreille. The park covers about 6 square miles and offers good birding, great views, and a chance to see Mountain Goats. In winter, only ID 54 is plowed; all side roads become favored destinations for cross-country skiers and snowmobilers. There is an entrance fee.*

#### DIRECTIONS:

From Coeur d'Alene travel north on US 95 about 20 miles to Athol. At milepost 449.1, turn right (east) on ID 54 and go about 4 miles to the park entrance. Stop at park headquarters, located on the right (south) just after entering the park, and pick up a bird checklist and a park map.

#### BIRDING:

Walk around park headquarters and look and listen for Black-capped Chickadees, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Swainson's Thrushes, and Cassin's Vireos. In winter look for Northern Pygmy-Owls. When you're done birding here, continue driving northeast on ID 54, and take the next right (east) onto paved South Road. Watch for American Kestrels and Western and Mountain Bluebirds on the wires, and Wild Turkeys and Coyotes in the meadow. After South Road curves left, your first birding stop could be to hike Highpoint Trail. It takes about 2½ to 3 hours to hike the entire trail, which offers three loops through various habitats, starting with open meadows, then conifer forest, and a final difficult loop that climbs through forest and up steep rocky slopes. Species seen might include Pileated Woodpecker, Mountain Chickadee, Cassin's Vireo, and Townsend's and MacGillivray's Warblers.

From Highpoint Trail, continue along South Road, passing Kestrel/Nighthawk Campground (on the left) along the way. Take the first right past the campground, onto an unmarked, somewhat paved road which leads you to Squirrel Cache Trailhead in about 0.1 mile. (You may also access this spot from the paved road to Button Hook Campground.) This trail through conifer forest can be easily walked in an hour; it is home to Ruffed Grouse, Swainson's Thrushes, and Townsend's and MacGillivray's Warblers.

Return to South Road and turn right (northeast). Turn right (south) for the Beaver Bay Swim Area. From the parking area you can walk in either direction (southwest or northeast) along Shoreline Trail, watching for Belted

Kingfishers, Brown Creepers, and Yellow and MacGillivray's Warblers. (If the gate to Beaver Bay is closed, you can access Shoreline Trail from Eagle Boat Launch, which is farther along South Road.)

From Beaver Bay return to South Road and turn right, continuing northeast past the RV dump station. Turn right (south) onto Eagle Boat Launch Road. Check the habitat surrounding the boat launch for Cedar Waxwings, Western Tanagers, and Black-headed Grosbeaks. Here you can access Shoreline Trail again. Follow it southwest toward Beaver Bay or northeast toward Sunrise and Willow Day Use Areas. Check the lake for loons, grebes, and ducks. Red-necked Grebes, Barrow's Goldeneyes, and Bald Eagles have been seen during winter. Willow and Sunrise Day Use Areas are the best places from which to view Mountain Goats residing on cliffs across the lake. You can also drive to Willow and Sunrise Day Use Areas by returning to South Road, turning right, and driving about 0.5 mile.

Your next stop is Locust Grove Picnic Area. From either Eagle Boat Launch or Willow Day Use Area, backtrack on South Road past the RV dump station, and turn right (north) at the sign that says "Bayview." Go about 0.2 mile to the stop-sign and turn right (east) and follow the road about 0.3 mile. Watch carefully—the sign for Locust Grove is on the right, but the picnic area is on the left and up a little hill. Start birding at the far end of the picnic area's parking lot, where there are several unmarked paths to explore. Species that frequent the area include Cordilleran Flycatcher, Red-eyed Vireo, Western Tanager, Black-headed Grosbeak, and Spotted Towhee. Near the restrooms you can walk a short loop road to access other forest habitat and meadows where Yellow and Yellow-rumped Warblers are frequently seen.

From Locust Grove Picnic Area, turn right (west) and continue straight about 0.5 mile back to ID 54. At ID 54, turn right (north) and go about 0.1 mile to a large pull-out on the left (west). A short path from this pull-out leads to a large amphitheater where a pair of Sharp-shinned Hawks is regularly seen.

Backtrack south on ID 54; it turns sharply to the right (west). In about 0.1 mile turn right (north) onto somewhat-paved North Road, marked by two concrete pillars. As you travel along North Road, there are several pull-outs where you can look for woodpeckers, chickadees, nuthatches, and kinglets. This area has nesting Red-tailed Hawks, American Kestrels, and a large concentration of Western and Mountain Bluebirds. In winter you may see Rough-legged Hawks, Northern Goshawks (rare), and Great Gray Owls (rare).

North Road terminates at ID 54, just opposite from where you initially turned onto South Road. Turn right (west) to exit the park. The park nature interpreter would welcome a list of your sightings for park records. Someone at headquarters will photocopy your checklist before you leave.

#### OTHER:

Farragut SP offers full-service campgrounds, museum, boat launch, swimming beach, and hiking trails. Cross-country skiing is popular in the winter season. Reservations are highly recommended during summer. Headquarters (13400 East Ranger Road, Athol, ID 83801; 208/683-2425) is open from about 7:30 am until 9:30 pm, Memorial Day through Labor Day (depending on weather). During winter, headquarters is open only on weekends, 9 am to 4 pm. See also Blanchard Lake (p. 39).

## HAYDEN LAKE ROUTE

Author: Shirley Sturts

Site P-10 — Map P-10

**Highlights:** Red-necked Grebe, Osprey, Red-eyed Vireo

**Major Habitats:** Wetland, Mixed Conifer Forest

**Location:** Kootenai Co., 5 miles north of Coeur d'Alene

**Spring:** \*\*    **Summer:** \*\*    **Fall:** \*\*    **Winter:** \*\*

*This 30-mile-long drive around Hayden Lake will take you through a variety of habitats. Much of the lakeshore is privately owned and difficult to access, but there are several good viewing-areas as well. Be aware that the center portion of this route follows a steep, curvy, gravel road that can be very snowy in winter and very muddy during spring.*

#### DIRECTIONS:

From I-90 Exit 12 in Coeur d'Alene, go north on US 95 for 3.6 miles. At milepost 434.3, turn right (east) on Honeysuckle Avenue. At the intersection in 0.7 mile, turn left (east), staying on Honeysuckle Avenue, and go one mile to Honeysuckle Beach. *All land is private except where noted.*

#### BIRDING:

If you have a scope, Honeysuckle Beach is a good place to check for grebes, ducks, and gulls from late fall to spring. It is also a popular swimming area and boat launch, so you may want to avoid it on busy summer days.

From the beach parking area backtrack on Honeysuckle Avenue about 100 feet and take the very first road to your left (south). This 0.4-mile-long, unmarked, seldom-used dirt road is sometimes called Dike Road; it is excellent for seeing waterfowl close by. Look for songbirds in cottonwoods and fields to the right (west), and waterfowl in the lake to your left (east).

At the end of Dike Road turn left (east) onto Lower Hayden Lake Road (narrow, busy, few pull-outs) and follow it one mile to Tobler Marina. Since 1981, there have been 7 fall or winter sightings of Oldsquaw along this section

