

## COEUR D'ALENE AREA

Authors: Shirley Sturts, Gertie Hanson, Roger Young

Site P-11— Maps P-11 (1-4)

**Highlights:** Gulls, Pygmy Nuthatch

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

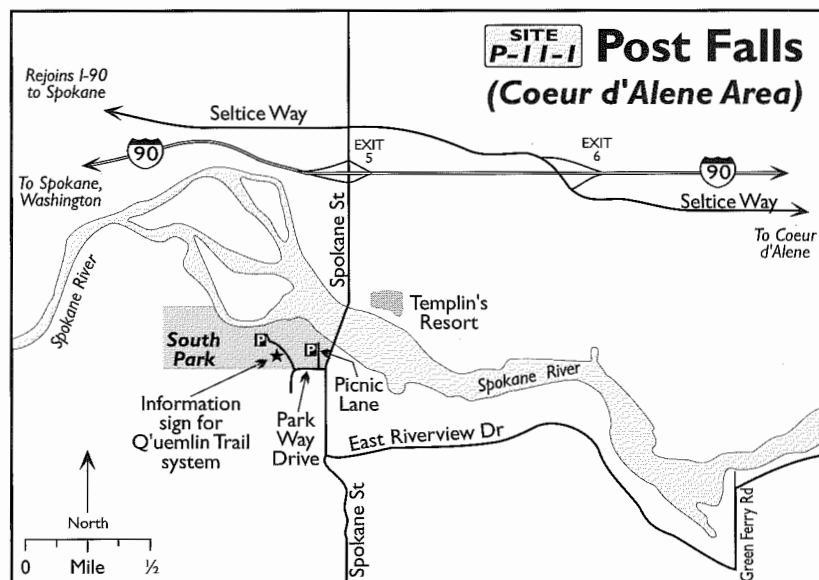
**Location:** Kootenai Co., Coeur d'Alene

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

*The Coeur d'Alene Area can pack in some great birding. This is one of the easiest spots to find Pygmy Nuthatches and rare waterfowl in Idaho, and it's also the single best place to look for uncommon gulls.*

### DIRECTIONS:

The Coeur d'Alene Area can be divided into four sections: Post Falls, US 95, North Shore, and Wolf Lodge Bay. The starting point for all four sections is the intersection of US 95 and I-90 (Exit 12), in Coeur d'Alene. Unless specified otherwise, all land is private, and roads are paved.



## BIRDING:

### POST FALLS

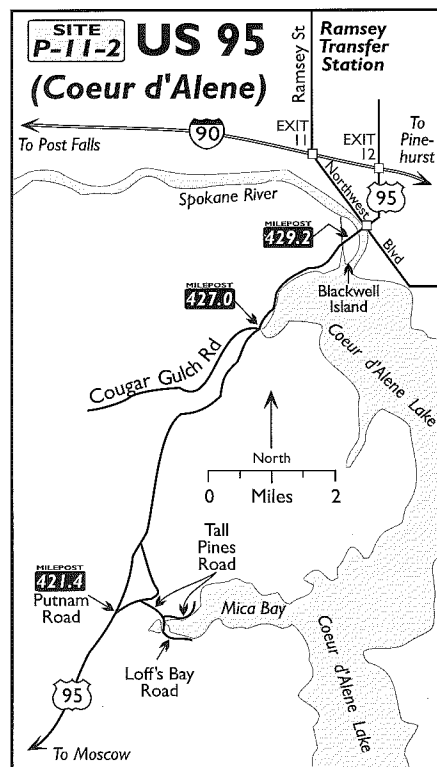
From the starting point follow I-90 west 7 miles to Post Falls. At Exit 5 turn left (south) on Spokane Street (toward tourist info) and follow it 0.5 mile to the Spokane River. Immediately after crossing the bridge, turn right (west) onto Park Way Drive. Go 100 feet and take the next right (north) on Picnic Lane to the parking lot of South Park. Except for summer, South Park is generally little used. Scope here for wintering waterfowl, including Ring-necked Ducks, Common and Barrow's Goldeneyes, Buffleheads, and Hooded, Common, and Red-breasted (rare) Mergansers. Vagrants have included a Pacific Loon (October) and a Double-crested Cormorant (January). Backtrack to Park Way Drive and turn right (west). In 0.1 mile you'll come to the Q'uemlin Trail sign and parking area on the right (north). Turn into the parking area. In 0.1 mile, on the left (west) you'll find a large map of the 13 trails, with a combined total distance in excess of 4 miles. Trail signs have disappeared over the years so it's easy to get lost, but if you're adventurous, exploring the area on foot is well worth your time (maps available; see below). Species include Downy and Pileated (rare) Woodpeckers, Cliff Swallow, Townsend's Solitaire, Cassin's Vireo, MacGillivray's Warbler, Spotted Towhee, and Red Crossbill.

For another good winter waterfowl spot or to see summer Ospreys, backtrack to Spokane Street and turn right (south). Go about 0.3 mile and turn left (east) on East Riverview Drive. Go 1.9 miles and take a left (north) on Green Ferry Road. In 0.2 mile, where Green Ferry Road veers right, continue straight on a dirt road 0.1 mile to the river. This spot is good for close views of Horned Grebes, Tundra Swans, Canada Geese, Ring-necked Ducks, Common Goldeneyes, and Hooded Mergansers during late fall and winter. Look for Bald Eagles as well. There are three Osprey nests here.

### US 95

A 10-mile drive south of Coeur d'Alene takes you to several good birding spots. From the starting point follow US 95 south 1.4 miles. At milepost 429.2, turn right (west) into the parking area for Blackwell Island. The BLM manages 22 acres of river and riparian habitat at the mouth of the Spokane River. If the road is gated, park alongside and walk in. This area is currently undeveloped. To bird, just wander along the unimproved road and trails, investigating the deciduous and coniferous forest for Northern Flickers, Black-capped Chickadees, and Pygmy Nuthatches. In summer, also look for Red-naped Sapsuckers, Swainson's Thrushes, and Yellow and MacGillivray's Warblers. Ring-necked Pheasants and Ruffed Grouse are seen year round in hawthorns along the canal.

Return to US 95 and continue south about 2 miles to milepost 427. Then turn right (west) onto Cougar Gulch Road and park. You may bird the marshy area directly to your left (south) from the road and, using extreme caution, walk across the highway to view the more-expansive wetland on the east side of US 95. Unfortunately, the highway can be very noisy. Red-necked Grebe,

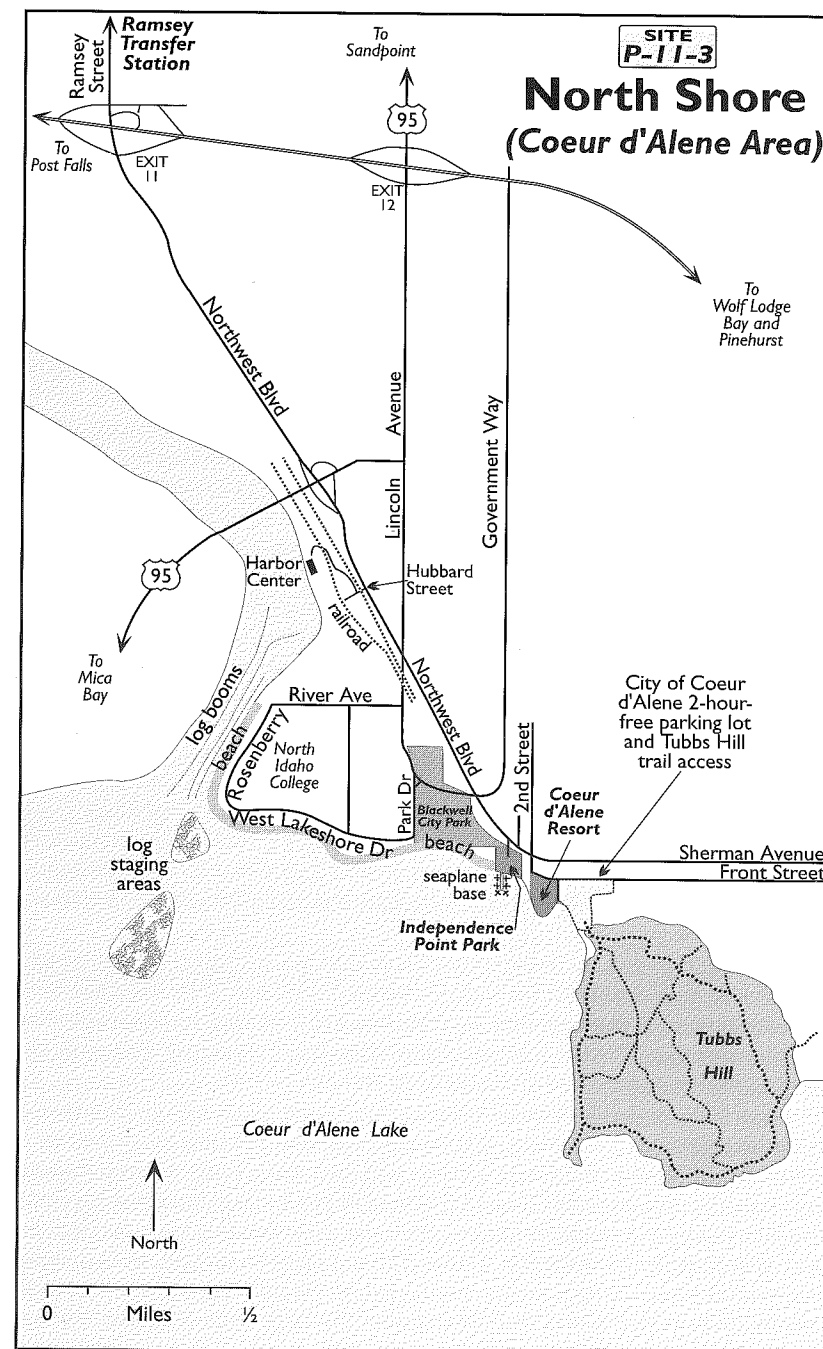


ing on Tall Pines Road. After 0.1 mile stop at the large "Adopt a Wetland" sign on the right (south) and look for Belted Kingfishers, Eastern Kingbirds, and Winter Wrens. You may drive another 0.1 mile to the public boat ramp, a good place to look for migrant and wintering waterfowl, Bald Eagles, Herring and Glaucous Gulls, Caspian Terns, Northern Pygmy-Owls, and Northern Shrikes.

Backtrack on Tall Pine Road, and go left (south) along graveled Loff's Bay Road. In the first 100 feet you'll cross Mica Creek bridge, which supports nesting Barn Swallows. As you continue south, look for Pied-billed and Red-necked Grebes, Canada Geese, Wood Ducks, Mallards, Cinnamon and Blue-winged Teals, and Virginia Rails on both sides of the road. In spring and summer, watch for Willow Flycatchers, Eastern Kingbirds, Red-eyed Vireos, Yellow and MacGillivray's Warblers, and Song Sparrows in the roadside willows, alders, and cottonwoods. In 0.6 mile you'll reach the Mica Bay Boater Park (BLM campground), which is always worth a visit. A short, closed road provides walk-in access, passing through habitat for woodpeckers, Black-capped, Mountain, and Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Brown Creepers, and Golden-crowned Kinglets. Once you reach the campground, scope the bay for waterfowl.

Cinnamon Teal, Osprey, Sora, and Red-winged Blackbird are some of the nesting species. During migration large numbers of Tundra Swans, Canada Geese, Mallards, American Wigeons, and Northern Pintails can be seen, as well as smaller numbers of Green-winged and Blue-winged Teals, Northern Shovelers, and Eurasian Wigeons (rare, winter/spring). Other interesting migrants include Double-crested Cormorant, Great Egret (vagrant), American Avocet, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Western Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, and Wilson's Phalarope. If the water is unfrozen, look for wintering Ring-necked Ducks, Buffleheads, Hooded Mergansers, and Bald Eagles.

About another 5.5 miles south along US 95, turn left (east) onto paved Tall Pines (a.k.a. Putnam) Road at milepost 421.4 toward Mica Bay. Go 0.6 mile to the Y and bear right (south) onto Tall Pines Road. After another 0.7 mile, turn left (east), stay-



## NORTH SHORE

This is the section for Pygmy Nuthatches and rare wintering gulls. From the starting point head west on I-90 to Exit 11 (Northwest Boulevard). Turn right (north) onto Ramsey Street and go 0.9 mile to the Ramsey Transfer Station where garbage is collected. The station's entrance is on the right (east) side. Ask if you may look at gulls, and you'll probably be directed to drive behind the transfer building where you can park and get close-up views from your car of Ring-billed, California, Herring, and Thayer's Gulls, and maybe a Glaucous-winged and/or Glaucous.

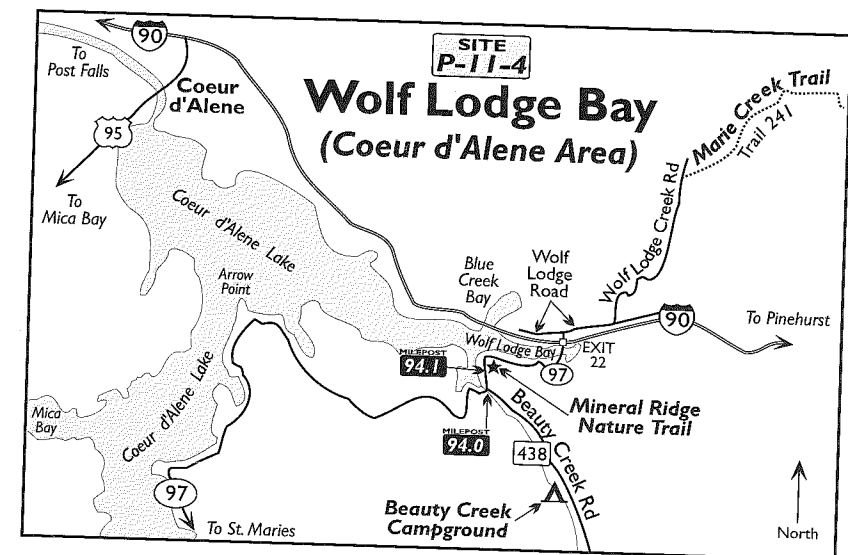
To continue birding, backtrack over the interstate and go another 1.3 miles southeast on Northwest Boulevard, and turn right (south) at the wooden "Harbor Center" sign (Hubbard Street). Cross the railroad tracks and take the first right (west), following the road for 0.3 mile to the lower parking lot and office building. The wooden boardwalk along the river offers good opportunities for examining gulls (same species as at Ramsey Transfer Station) roosting on floating log booms. Listen for Pygmy Nuthatches in the Ponderosa Pines.

Return to Northwest Boulevard, turn right (east) and continue 0.2 mile before turning right (south) onto Lincoln Way for one block, where you turn right (west) onto River Avenue. Drive west for 0.3 mile until River Avenue ends on Rosenberry Drive. Rosenberry Drive (a one-way drive) follows the dike which separates North Idaho College from the Spokane River. Look for vagrant gulls on log booms in the river. Wintering duck species include Ring-necked Duck, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, and Common Merganser. The dike is shaded by large Ponderosa Pines which often contain Pygmy Nuthatches, Red Crossbills, and occasionally Pileated Woodpeckers. Beware of vehicle and pedestrian congestion along the dike when college is in session. Follow Rosenberry Drive along the dike for 1.1 miles (Rosenberry Drive turns into Lakeshore Drive along the way) to where the dike ends. Turn left onto Park Drive for 0.2 mile before turning right onto Government Way, which returns you to Northwest Boulevard after one block.

Turn right (east) onto Northwest Boulevard, go one block, and turn right (south) into the parking lot for Independence Point Park. The seaplane dock on the west end of the sand beach provides a good vantage point for scanning the lake and the river for both gulls and waterfowl. Recently, this park has been a good spot for Mew Gulls (January and February).

From Independence Point parking lot, turn right (east) and go two blocks to Second Street. Turn right (south) onto Second for one block before it curves left and becomes Front Street. Just past the Coeur d'Alene Resort, turn right (south) into the "City of Coeur d'Alene 2 Hour Free Parking Lot." You'll have to get a validation ticket, then stay right heading back toward the boat launch area. Access for Tubbs Hill, a 135-acre, largely undeveloped urban wilderness park, is at the south end of the parking area. Accessible only by foot, a 2-mile-loop trail begins near the large map of Tubbs Hill and

follows the shoreline, providing picturesque views of Coeur d'Alene Lake along the west, south, and east sides of the hill. Secondary trails lead you to the top of the hill. Look for grebes, ducks, and gulls out on the water. Ospreys may be seen flying overhead during spring and summer. During winter, Bald Eagles are often seen flying over the lake. Along the western side of the hill are several dead and dying trees that attract Hairy Woodpeckers, Northern Flickers, Black-capped, Mountain, and Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Red-breasted and Pygmy Nuthatches, and Brown Creepers. Vagrants have included Lewis's and Pileated Woodpeckers and Northern Shrikes. Fall is a good time to look for Golden-crowned Kinglets, Red Crossbills, Pine Siskins, Evening Grosbeaks, and migrating warblers. In spring and summer, enjoy the many wildflowers while looking for nesting Cassin's Vireos and Yellow and Yellow-rumped Warblers.



## WOLF LODGE BAY

From the starting point follow I-90 east 10 miles to Exit 22. Turn right (south) on ID 97, zero your mileage, and cross over Wolf Lodge Creek. Scan the bay wherever there is a pull-out. Two of the best are at miles 0.2 and 0.8 (Mineral Ridge Public Boat Launch at milepost 95.4).

From late November to mid-March, migrant Bald Eagles come to Wolf Lodge Bay to feed on spawned-out Kokanee Salmon. Most eagles (40 to 70) and eagle-watchers are present mid-December to mid-January. There's also a good population of wintering waterfowl, such as Horned, Red-necked, and Western Grebes, Common and Barrow's Goldeneyes, Buffleheads, and Hooded Mergansers. The bay is also popular with gulls, which are best viewed

at the east end of the bay. Rarities include Mew, Herring, Glaucous-winged, and Glaucous. Watch for Clark's Grebes in migration.

Ospreys arrive in late March, as do Common Loons, Tundra Swans, and Northern Pintails. If you're lucky enough to have a canoe, meander up Wolf Lodge Creek in the warmer months, and look for Wood Ducks, Cinnamon Teal, Vaux's Swifts, Eastern Kingbirds, Red-eyed Vireos, MacGillivray's Warblers, and Red-winged Blackbirds. American Dippers may be seen during winter.

The Mineral Ridge Nature Trail (pit toilets and picnic tables available) is on the left (east), at ID 97 milepost 94.1. The 3.3-mile-long, moderate-to-difficult nature trail leads to the top of Mineral Ridge. Along the way, look for Northern Pygmy-Owls (winter), Red-naped Sapsuckers, Mountain and Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Swainson's and Varied Thrushes, Cassin's Vireos, and Black-headed Grosbeaks.

At ID 97 milepost 94, turn left (east) on Beauty Creek Road (a.k.a. FR 438). Stay right at both Y intersections. In 0.6 mile you'll come to Beauty Creek Campground. Hike the well-marked Caribou Ridge Trail 79 to viewpoints in 1.8 and 4.6 miles, watching for Warbling Vireos, Hammond's Flycatchers, and Western Tanagers. Locally rare Pine Grosbeaks and American Tree Sparrows may be found in winter.

For good riparian birding, backtrack on ID 97 all the way to the north side of I-90, and turn right (east) on Wolf Lodge Road. Go one mile and turn left (north) on Marie Creek (a.k.a. Wolf Lodge Creek) Road (gravel/dirt). Follow it 1.2 miles and look for a road on the right (east), marked by a sign with two hikers, which is the trailhead. Marie Creek Trail 241 (moderate) goes over a ridge and down to Marie Creek in a mile, and then goes another five miles to its end. The first 0.5 mile can be very wet and muddy, especially before early June. The best birding is mid-June through July. Listen for Red-naped Sapsuckers, Pileated Woodpeckers, Olive-sided, Hammond's, and Dusky Flycatchers, Mountain and Chestnut-backed Chickadees, American Dippers, Veeries, Varied Thrushes, Cassin's, Warbling, and Red-eyed Vireos, Nashville, Townsend's, and MacGillivray's Warblers, Western Tanagers, and Black-headed Grosbeaks.

#### OTHER:

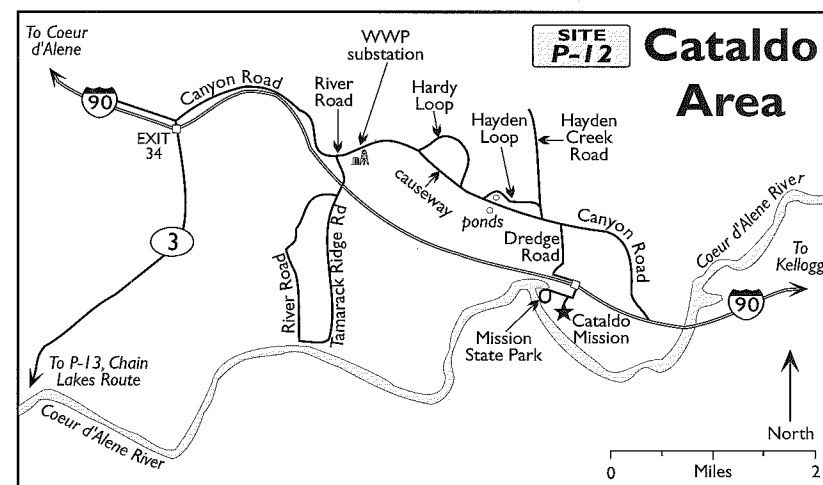
Additional fall/winter gull viewing might be available at the Fighting Creek Landfill, 14 miles south of Coeur d'Alene on the west side of US 95 (milepost 415.4). Call before visiting (Kootenai County Solid Waste Department, 208/769-4402), to receive permission and to find out if gulls are present. Past birding here has been wonderful, but a recent hazing program has reduced gull numbers.

Post Falls and Coeur d'Alene are full-service communities.

A map for Q'uemlin Trail can be picked up at the Post Falls Recreation Department, which is located next to City Hall on Spokane Street immediately south of I-90 (office hours, weekdays from 8 am to 5 pm; 208/773-0539). Coeur d'Alene Lake attractions include swimming, boating, tennis, playground

equipment, boat cruises, picnic tables, parasailing, and airplane (ponton) tours. You may obtain a pamphlet (with historical information about Tubbs Hill, a map of the trails, and a self-guided walk) from the Parks Department (221 South Fifth Street [three blocks east of the Tubbs Hill parking lot]; office hours: weekdays from 8 am to 5 pm; 208/769-2252). The BLM Mica Bay Boater Park (fee campground) includes boat docks, swimming beach, picnic tables, picnic shelters, a playground, a horseshoe pit, and vault toilets. A camp host is present during summer.

There's a KOA Campground at Wolf Lodge Bay, while the Wolf Lodge Campground and RV Park and the Wolf Lodge Bed and Breakfast are both on the north side of the interstate along Wolf Lodge Road. See also Hayden Lake Route (p. 43).



## CATALDO AREA

Authors: Susan Weller, Marie Jordan

### Site P-12 — Map P-12

**Highlights:** Black Tern, Wild Turkey

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

**Location:** Kootenai Co., 3 miles northeast of Rose Lake

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

*This 10-mile drive will circle you around Cataldo and various wetlands fed by the Coeur d'Alene River. Although the river system appears healthy at first glance, it has been contaminated by tons of mine tailings. This area is now considered one of the most contaminated in the country, but it is mending.*

### DIRECTIONS:

From I-90 Exit 34 (Rose Lake), head north to the T intersection, zero your mileage, then turn right (east) onto paved Canyon Road. *All land here is private.*

### BIRDING:

At mile 1.0 begin looking for American Kestrels and Mourning Doves on power-lines on the left (north) side of the road. At mile 1.9 turn right (south) onto River Road. After crossing over I-90, continue straight ahead on Tamarack Ridge Road and look for Bobolinks in the hayfields, in May and June. Tamarack Ridge Road turns to gravel in about 1.0 mile, loops right (west) back into River Road, and passes through flooded hayfields (April to June) where thousands of waterfowl congregate, before rejoining Tamarack Ridge Road just south of I-90. Turn left (north) onto River Road and return to Canyon Road. Turn right (east) onto Canyon Road, and in 0.1 mile you'll see a Washington Water Power (WWP) substation on the right (south). You may park here, but don't block the gates leading to the transformers. Watch and listen for Killdeer, Mountain Bluebirds, and Western Meadowlarks in fields behind the substation. The current (1997) homeowner across the road welcomes birders, and you need only follow the din of bird songs up the circular driveway to locate the front door. A tour of the property reveals Red-naped Sapsuckers, Tree Swallows, Black-capped, Mountain, and Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Veeries, Swainson's Thrushes, Cassin's and Warbling Vireos, Western Tanagers, Lazuli Buntings, and Spotted Towhees. Pileated Woodpeckers, White-breasted Nuthatches, Brown Creepers, and American Tree Sparrows are uncommon winter visitors.

Continue east on Canyon Road 0.4 mile, where a pull-out on the right (south) allows an opportunity to glass the meadow for Northern Harriers and enjoy the carpet of Common Camas in June. White-crowned Sparrows feed along the roadside in fall. Northern Pygmy-Owls are commonly seen in bushes and on power-lines in winter. Wild Turkeys are abundant year round. After another 0.2 mile east on Canyon Road you'll see some Kootenai County garbage dumpsters. Here you may park and walk along Canyon Road over the causeway into Cataldo Slough. *(Please don't park on the causeway.)* In late winter look for Buffleheads, Hooded and Common Mergansers, and Ring-billed Gulls. In late spring Great Egrets have been seen flying over the mudflats. In summer Common Snipe are abundant on both sides of the road, as are Pied-billed Grebes, Wood Ducks, Green-winged and Cinnamon Teal, and numerous other waterfowl species. A resident Bald Eagle helps to keep the ducks on their webbed toes. Black Terns grace the sky between nesting Ospreys on the wooden transmission towers on the right (south).

The graveled Hardy Loop Road heads left (north) just opposite the dumpsters and offers a nice one-mile-long diversion before connecting back to Canyon Road. In fall exposed mudflats offer a diversity of migrating shorebirds, including Semipalmated Plovers, Solitary and Spotted Sandpipers,

Marbled Godwits, Semipalmated, Western, and Pectoral Sandpipers, and Long-billed Dowitchers. Turkey Vultures might be seen lurking in trees, and Snow Buntings were seen here in the fall of 1995.

From where Hardy Loop Road rejoins Canyon Road, drive 0.3 mile to the base of a hill and two small ponds. The shoulder isn't very wide, and you may find it safer to turn left (north) onto graveled Hayden Loop Road to park. You can walk back to Canyon Road and glass the two small ponds just to the east. Red-winged Blackbirds may be found in the pond on the right (south) side of Canyon Road while Yellow-headed Blackbirds usually stay in the pond on the left (north). River Otters may be spied in either pond. Wood Ducks, Hooded Mergansers, Soras, Belted Kingfishers, House Wrens, and several species of warbler inhabit either side. Look for Vaux's Swifts mixed with the swallows, and for Western Wood-Pewees, and Eastern Kingbirds in the vicinity. Looking west, you can see the great expanse of Common Reed Grass planted by the Mine Operator's Association to help keep down tailings dust. Reed Grass offers cover and nesting sites for American Bitterns and Northern Harriers. Shrubs interspersed in the grass host Common Yellowthroats. Northern Shrikes are uncommon, but one or two might be seen hunting along the road during fall and winter.

If you parked on Hayden Loop Road, follow it 0.8 mile for a different perspective of the north pond—bear right as it becomes Hayden Creek Road. Turn left (east) onto Canyon Road.

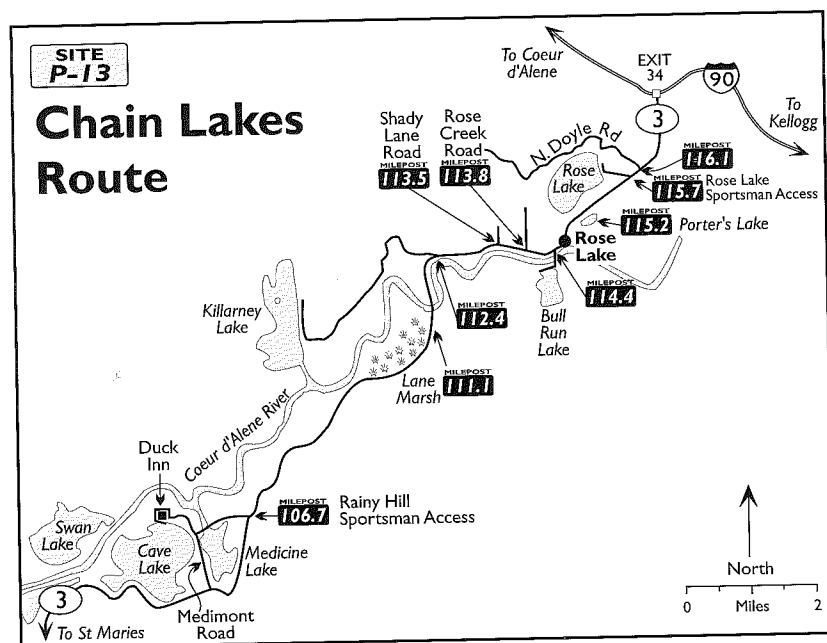
From the junction of Hayden Creek Road and Canyon Road go another 0.2 mile east to Dredge Road and turn right (south), keeping a wary look-out for logging trucks. Wild rice has been planted on the left (east) side of Dredge Road (private). Pied-billed Grebes, Wood Ducks, American Wigeons, and Ruddy Ducks may all be found here. Tundra Swans and Canada Geese feed here in spring, but this is a dangerous place for deep-feeders. Every year a few birds die from feeding in the contaminated muck. Dredge Road continues across Cataldo Flats, where one might be momentarily fooled by the Washington Water Power owls perched upon the power poles. After Dredge Road curves left (east) at the interstate, a series of long ponds is visible on the left. Few waterfowl are seen here, but in fall Solitary Sandpipers and American Pipits may be found. Follow Dredge Road until it curves right and passes over the freeway (1.3 miles from Canyon Road). On-ramps allow for easy access to Coeur d'Alene (westbound) or Kellogg (eastbound). Continuing on the road will lead you to the Cataldo Mission in 0.3 mile and Old Mission SP in 0.4 mile.

### OTHER:

Cataldo Mission (208/682-3814) was built in 1853 by Jesuit missionaries and Coeur d'Alene Indians, and is Idaho's oldest building. The mission and parish house have been lovingly restored, and tours are offered year round. The visitors center boasts an outstanding interpretive display on the history of the missionaries and Coeur d'Alene Indians. A nominal fee is charged.

Plenty of songbirds may be found on the mission grounds. August 15 is the Feast of the Assumption Pilgrimage. The public is welcome to join in the religious observance, including the feast on venison, corn, fry bread, and melon. The dancing is not to be missed.

A cafe, gas stations, and the Rose Lake General Store are all located just south of the interstate at Exit 34. Look there for Steller's Jay year round and for Violet-green Swallows and Orange-crowned Warblers during summer. See also Chain Lakes Route, the next site.



## CHAIN LAKES ROUTE

Author: Susan Weller

Site P-13 — Map P-13

**Highlights:** American Bittern, Least Flycatcher

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

**Location:** Kootenai Co., 3 miles northeast of Rose Lake

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

This 30-mile-long route follows the Coeur d'Alene River, visiting several lakes along the way. The main attractions are waterfowl and riparian birds. Except for ID 3, all roads are gravel of various quality. Unless otherwise specified, all land is private.

### DIRECTIONS:

About 20 miles east of Coeur d'Alene, take I-90 Exit 34 and head south on ID 3 toward Rose Lake.

### BIRDING:

In the first 0.3 mile, Elk may be seen grazing in enclosures on both sides of ID 3. Birders hoping to see Wild Turkeys and Varied Thrushes should turn right (west) at milepost 116.1 onto North Doyle Road—zero your mileage here. Flanked by private property and few pull-outs, this 2.8-mile-long road takes the traveler around the back of Rose Lake, and through habitat used by Wild Turkeys and Varied Thrushes. A pull-out at mile 0.8 offers an opportunity to view the lake. Set up your spotting scope to look for American Bitterns, Soras, and Common Snipe in the cattail marsh. Western Grebes may be seen playing the open water, along with Ring-necked Ducks and Hooded Mergansers. There is another pull-out at mile 1.6. Yellow-rumped and Townsend's Warblers may be seen and heard in the woods along the road, along with Cordilleran Flycatchers and Brown Creepers. In open meadows look for Common Snipe, Orange-crowned Warblers, and Western Meadowlarks. At mile 2.8 the road ends at a meadow with distant views of the backwaters of Rose Lake on the left. Check for Northern Harriers, Black Terns, and Mountain Bluebirds.

Returning to ID 3, continue south and look carefully for the easily-missed Rose Lake Sportsman Access, which is on the right (west) at milepost 115.7. Follow the graveled access road less than 0.5 mile to the restrooms, picnic tables, and public boat dock. Pied-billed, Horned, and Western Grebes are often seen here, and even a White-winged Scoter showed up once.

Farther south on ID 3, Porter's Lake is at milepost 115.2. A generous pull-out on the left (east) makes for safe and easy viewing of American Bitterns, waterfowl, and Black Terns.

Entering Rose Lake, turn right (west) at milepost 114.5 onto King Street. After one block stop at the intersection with Queen Street. The lucky birder may be able to hear the Blue Jays that visit this neighborhood almost every spring. Go around the block to return to ID 3. Turn right and continue south on ID 3.

At milepost 114.4 you'll see the sign for Bull Run Lake. Turn left (south) and cross the bridge over the Coeur d'Alene River. Just across the bridge bear right (west), pull over, and listen for Veeries on the left (south) side of the road. Continue driving west, cross the railroad tracks, and turn right (west), following the tracks along the western end of Bull Run Lake. Hiking down any of the roads here may reveal Ospreys, Tree and Violet-green Swallows, Wilson's Warblers, and Black-headed Grosbeaks.

Backtrack to ID 3 and turn left (southwest). A portion of the Coeur d'Alene WMA begins on the right (west) at Rose Creek Road (milepost 113.8). Pull in and park. Between Rose Creek Road and Shady Lane Road

(unmarked at milepost 113.5) is a cottonwood/Quaking Aspen grove that extends north about 0.25 mile. This piece of public property is your best chance for finding Least Flycatchers in Idaho, and is also good for species such as Veery, Red-eyed Vireo, and American Redstart.

Farther south on ID 3, the entrance road for Killarney Lake is on the right (west) at milepost 112.4. A boat launch and a picnic area will be found after driving the entrance road for 3.5 and 4 miles, respectively. Flooded hayfields on the left (south) side of the entrance road may hold a vagrant Great Egret in spring. The woods and meadow edges on the right (north) promise Lewis's (rare) and Pileated Woodpeckers. Vegetation along the lake is home to Cordilleran Flycatchers, Eastern Kingbirds, Gray Catbirds, Townsend's and MacGillivray's Warblers, and Western Tanagers. Barred Owls may be heard calling from across the lake on a summer's eve.

After returning to ID 3, turn right (south). The road soon crosses the Coeur d'Alene River. A large pull-out on the right (west) at milepost 111.1 affords an opportunity to glass Lane Marsh and view Ospreys nesting on power poles. American Bitterns and Soras (abundant) reside here. MacGillivray's Warblers and Common Yellowthroats may be found in the bushes. Look for nesting Bald Eagles across the railroad grade.

The next 4.5 miles of ID 3 offer great birding, but they have few safe pull-outs. Look for Bald Eagles, Rough-legged Hawks, Northern Pygmy-Owls, Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Northern Shrikes, and American Tree Sparrows in fall and winter, and for waterfowl in spring and summer.

At milepost 106.7 is the Rainy Hill Sportsman Access to Medimont and Rainy Hill. Zero your mileage and turn right (west). Stop at mile 0.4 and check for American Bitterns, then continue to mile 1.1 and the picnic tables and restrooms at Rainy Hill Boat Launch on Medicine Lake. Rainy Hill (across the road from the picnic area) boasts nesting Gray Catbirds and Bullock's Orioles. Common Loons may be found testing their voices on Medicine Lake in spring and early summer. At mile 1.4 Rainy Hill Road ends at a T intersection with Medimont Road. This is a great place to set up the spotting scope to view waterfowl. During winter, Cave and Medicine Lakes are host to thousands of clamoring waterfowl, including Barrow's Goldeneyes, Eurasian Wigeons, and perhaps a Red-throated Loon. Turn right (north) on Medimont Road, driving between Cave Lake and backwaters of the Coeur d'Alene River. Be sure to look for American Goldfinch flocks as you pass by the farms. At mile 1.8 stay left after crossing the railroad bridge and enjoy fields of blooming Common Camas on your right during May and June.

At mile 2.5 you'll reach Duck Inn, which provides a nice view of the river delta. Make a loop around Duck Inn by turning right and then making three left turns. Immediately after the last left turn, turn right and proceed downhill to the railroad tracks. Park the car and walk west along the railroad grade. This walk is not advisable during nesting season, but it yields a number of migratory species during spring and fall, including American Pipit and Lincoln's

and White-crowned Sparrows. Watch for Pectoral Sandpipers and vagrant Short-billed Dowitchers.

Backtrack to the T intersection of Rainy Hill Road and Medimont Road and continue straight 0.9 mile on Medimont Road to ID 3, and the end of this route.

#### OTHER:

Coeur d'Alene and St. Maries are both full-service communities. Fishing for bass, bullhead, perch, and Northern Pike makes the Chain Lakes popular with both humans and waterfowl. All the lakes are great for canoeing. Bait, lures, flies, and local fishing news may be obtained at the Rose Lake Store in Rose Lake. See also Cataldo Route, the previous site, and St. Maries to Harrison Route, below.

## ST. MARIES TO HARRISON ROUTE

Authors: Dan Svingen, Kas Dumroese

### Site P-14 — Map P-14

**Highlights:** Loons, Rusty Blackbird

**Major Habitats:** Wetland, Dry Conifer Forest, Farmland

**Location:** Benewah Co., St. Maries

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

*This 20-mile-long route offers some of Idaho's best birding, especially during fall and winter. Spectacular views of the St. Joe River and Coeur d'Alene Lake make the trip even more worthwhile. All land along this route is private, except at the WMA.*

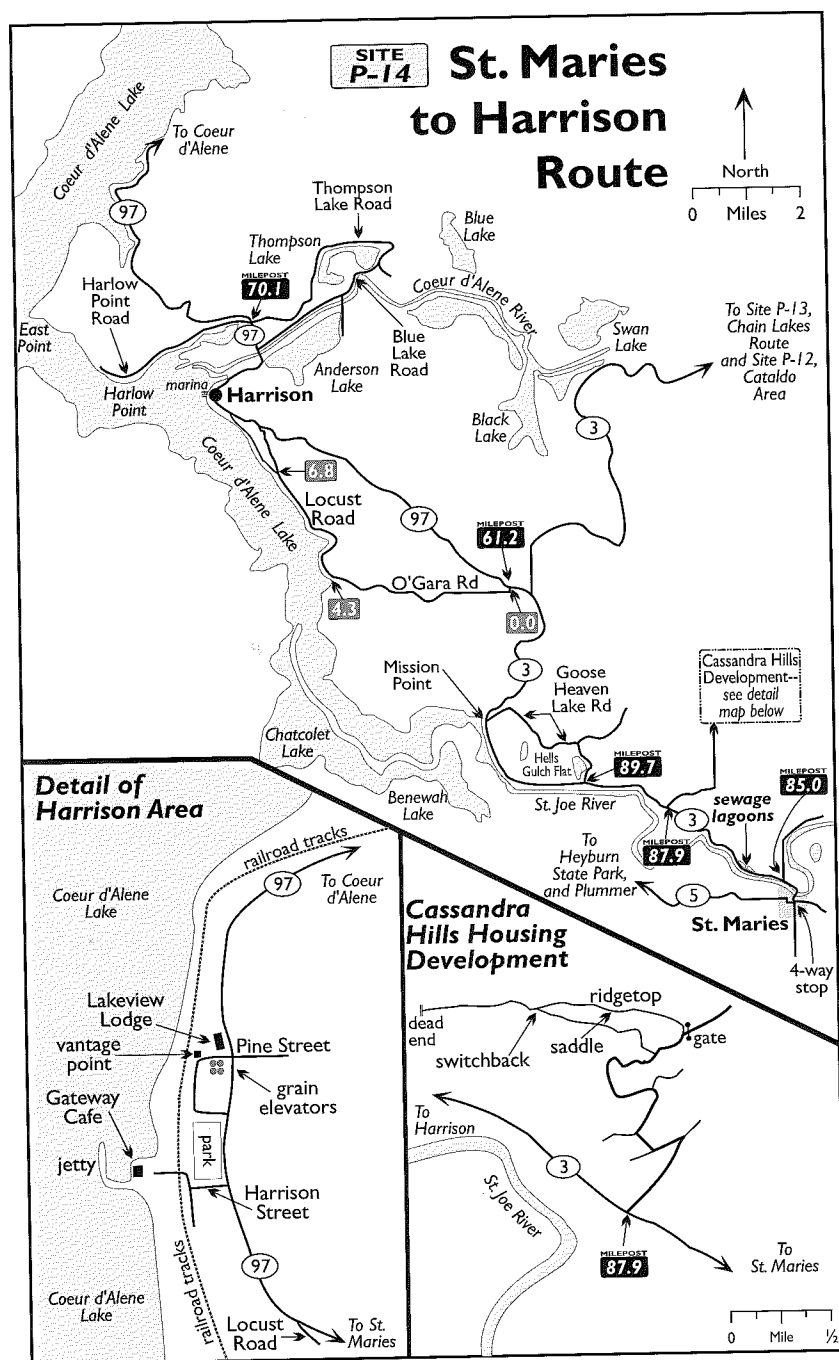
#### DIRECTIONS:

Start at the intersection of ID 3 and ID 5 in St. Maries, adjacent to the Exxon Station. Take ID 3 north across the St. Joe River.

#### BIRDING:

The St. Maries sewage lagoons are alongside ID 3 at milepost 86, about 1 mile northwest of the starting point. Good viewing is provided at pull-outs at each end. During summer look for breeding species such as Wood Duck, Northern Shoveler, Bufflehead, and Common Goldeneye. The lagoons have attracted vagrants such as Harlequin Ducks in May and Oldsquaws and Surf Scoters in November. Barrow's Goldeneyes are regular from October to freeze-up. Bonaparte's and Franklin's Gulls (both rare) can be present at any time from April to December. Cottonwoods lining the highway host breeding Gray Catbirds, Warbling Vireos, Northern Waterthrushes, Bullock's Orioles, and Black-headed Grosbeaks.





Approximately 3.5 miles northwest of St. Maries (milepost 87.9), a gravel road goes northeast into the Cassandra Hills Housing Development, an area of dry Ponderosa Pine habitat. It's the haunt of Dusky Flycatchers, Pygmy Nuthatches, Western Tanagers, Spotted Towhees, and Cassin's Finches. The best habitat is reached by driving 2 miles uphill to the ridgetop. The main road is the widest one; it's always headed up. Caution should be used whenever this steep road is wet or snow-covered, for it can be very slick. After 1.7 miles the main road is closed by a green metal gate. Turn left (northwest) onto the narrower road to reach the ridgetop in 0.2 mile. At the ridgetop you'll enter a small topographic saddle, where you can decide whether to walk or to brave further driving. Driving requires vehicles which can make sharp turns. Whether you walk or drive, go left (northwest) from the saddle on the graveled 2-track road. You'll have great views of the St. Joe River Valley and pass through the best birding area. After 1.3 miles, the 2-track trail enters a sharp switchback where you can go straight, through more Ponderosa Pine (that road dead-ends in 0.5 mile), or turn left (southeast) and return to the main road in 0.7 mile. When you reach the main road, turn right (southwest) and go downhill 1.6 miles to where you turned off ID 3, then continue right (northwest) on the highway. Future plans are to build a confusing road maze within the housing development area, but don't despair; you're welcome to drive any of the open roads, and good birding is available throughout the hillside.

At ID 3 milepost 89.7, graveled Hells Gulch Road begins on the right (north) and circles Hells Gulch Flat, a productive migrant trap. The three square miles of the flat support wheat, cattle, and sheep. After autumn harvest, the exposed rodent population attracts up to 30 raptors (mostly Rough-legged and Red-tailed Hawks). From October to April accipiters hunt brushy slopes ringing the flat. Brushy slopes may also hold Bewick's Wrens and Cordilleran Flycatchers in summer, and Pine Grosbeaks in winter.

To find the best birding sites around Hells Gulch Flat, zero out your mileage at the junction of Hells Gulch Road and ID 3. At mile 0.5 the road swings west past a small stockyard where Rusty Blackbirds wintered in 1992, 1993, and 1994. At mile 0.9 stay left at the Y intersection, and proceed onto Goose Heaven Lake Road (unmarked). A small pull-out at 1.7 miles (just north of the two barns) allows scoping of Goose Heaven Lake, a 25-acre wetland which attracts large swallow flocks in August and assorted waterfowl in migration. Idaho's first documented female Eurasian Wigeon was seen here in February 1995.

A second stockyard at 2.3 miles has been dependable for wintering blackbirds. Scan the large cottonwood tree and sheep feeders in the feedlot, but *please don't park in front of the farmer's home*. A pump-house is located below the road at mile 2.5, between two pole barns. Killdeer, Mourning Doves, blackbirds, and Northern Shrikes should be looked for in late fall. At mile 2.6, another stockyard should also be scoped for wintering blackbirds. If operating, the pump-house at mile 3.0 often attracts Winter Wrens. At mile 3.2 the road rejoins ID 3 at "Mission Point." Turn right onto ID 3 and continue north.



About 3 miles north of Mission Point, ID 3 intersects ID 97. Take the left fork onto ID 97 toward Harrison. At milepost 61.2 turn left onto O'Gara Road and zero out your odometer. O'Gara Road passes by Kootenai High School before running through open grassland that attracts wintering Rough-legged Hawks, Northern Pygmy-Owls, and Northern Shrikes, as well as an occasional "Harlan's" Red-tailed Hawk. Once through the grasslands (about 1 mile), the road descends into a wooded canyon where Ruffed Grouse, Barred Owls, Pileated Woodpeckers, and Wild Turkeys are resident. Black-capped, Mountain, and Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Red-naped Sapsuckers, and Varied and Swainson's Thrushes are common summer residents. After 4.3 miles, the road passes by a small riparian area stocked with cottonwoods containing breeding American Redstarts. At mile 6.8, turn left (northwest) onto graveled and oooh-so-narrow Locust Road, which allows good views of Coeur d'Alene Lake. After passing through 0.5 mile of broken forest where Orange-crowned and Nashville Warblers can be found and through 0.6 mile of broken suburbia where Idahoans can be found, Locust Road rejoins ID 97.

From the junction of ID 97 and Locust Road, take a left (northwest) and proceed 0.3 mile to the intersection of ID 97 and Harrison Street within the city of Harrison. You can go left here, cross the railroad, and drive to the Gateway Cafe, which marks the Harrison Marina. The rock jetty and docks allow vantage points from which to scan the lake.

An even better place to scope the marina is behind the grain elevators. Continue north on ID 97 for two blocks, then turn left (west) on Pine Street (by Lakeview Lodge) and park at road's end. This overlook provides good viewing of the marina and Coeur d'Alene River delta, but it requires a spotting scope. The marina and delta are worth looking over at any time of year, but they are especially productive from October to March. Yellow-billed Loons wintered here in 1991, 1993, and 1994. One or two Pacific Loons are regular October to November. Red-throated Loons and Red-breasted Mergansers (both rare) have been reported during the period of October to January.

The Coeur d'Alene WMA is located 1.4 miles northeast of Harrison on ID 97. Take the first right onto Blue Lake Road after crossing the Coeur d'Alene River bridge (see map). Follow Blue Lake Road east, watching for Tundra Swans, Golden Eagles, and Eurasian Wigeons amongst the large flocks of migrating waterfowl. Wintering Swamp Sparrows, American Tree Sparrows, and Northern Shrikes have been found near the junction of Blue Lake Road and ID 97. Canada Geese, Black Terns, Violet-green Swallows, and Yellow Warblers are common during summer.

Ospreys are abundant at this WMA, much to the annoyance of the local utility company. Repeated attempts at discouraging birds from nesting atop utility poles have failed. The birds quickly dealt with one past effort (twisting rebar over the pole crossarms), by incorporating the exclusion devices into their nests as a sort of "living-room chair"! The latest offerings, "guardian owls" (*Bubo virginianus plasticus*), have also been incorporated into nests.

To see all the WMA, continue east 2 miles along paved Blue Lake Road (which turns into graveled Thompson Lake Road along the way). Where Blue Lake and Thompson Lake Roads split (see map), go left (west) on Thompson Lake Road through the farmyard, where up to 80 Wild Turkeys winter. Follow the road as it turns back to the west and rejoins ID 97 in 3.9 miles. Keep an eye out for Pied-billed, Horned, and Red-necked Grebes, Trumpeter Swans (rare migrant), Willow Flycatchers, Eastern Kingbirds, and Cedar Waxwings along the way.

The last stop on this route is Harlow Point Road (ID 97 milepost 70.1). It begins at the junction of Thompson Lake Road and ID 97 and proceeds west along the lake. This 3-mile-long, paved/graveled road allows good viewing of the entire Coeur d'Alene River delta and is a good place to check for various loon, waterfowl, and gull species. The dry, open Ponderosa Pine forest above the road attracts wintering Bald Eagles, Clark's Nutcrackers, and an occasional vagrant Blue Jay.

#### OTHER:

St. Maries is a full-service community. Food and lodging are available in Harrison.

## HEYBURN STATE PARK

Authors: Dan Svingen, Kas Dumroese

### Site P-15 — Map P-15

**Highlights:** Eurasian Wigeon, Northern Waterthrush

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

**Location:** Benewah Co., 10 miles west of St. Maries

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

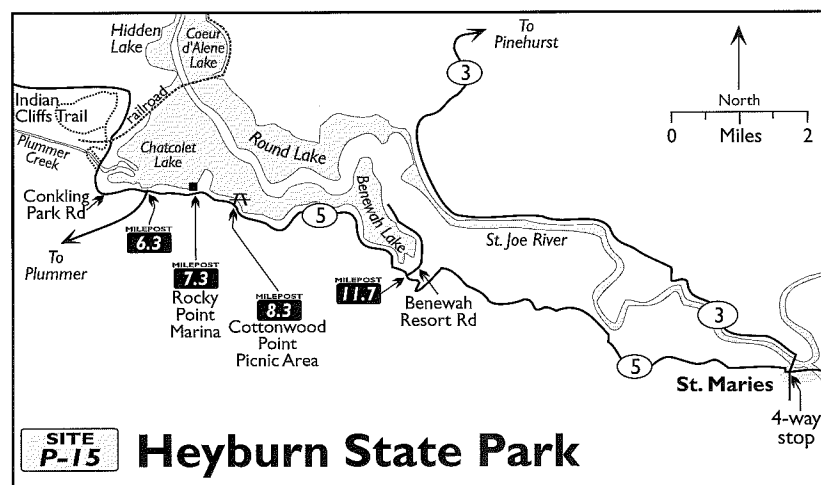
*Heyburn SP surrounds Chatcolet and Benewah Lakes, which border the southern end of Coeur d'Alene Lake. All this water divides the park into two main divisions: the west shore of Chatcolet Lake and the east shore of Benewah Lake. The 20-mile-long route described below will take you along the border of this wetland complex, from St. Maries to Plummer.*

#### DIRECTIONS:

This route's starting point is downtown St. Maries at the junction of ID 3 and ID 5 (the 4-way stop by the Exxon Station). Follow ID 5 west 7.4 miles, then turn right (north) at milepost 11.7 onto paved Benewah Resort Road.

#### BIRDING:

After 0.1 mile the resort road passes by a cottonwood and aspen stand (private), where Red-naped Sapsuckers, Veeries, American Redstarts, and



Northern Waterthrushes breed. When you reach the resort (in about 1 mile), walk down to the dock. A spotting scope can be of great help in finding Red-necked Grebes, usually present from April to November. Benewah Lake is one of this species' Idaho strongholds.

Backtrack to ID 5. Other views of Benewah Lake are possible at pull-outs along ID 5, at mileposts 10.7 and 10.6. Red-necked Grebes, Wood Ducks, and Ospreys can be seen here during summer, while large waterfowl flocks are present during migration and winter. Common Terns are possible during fall.

Cottonwood Point Picnic Area is at milepost 8.3 along ID 5. Watch for the sign pointing out this tiny public picnic ground on the right (north). Western Wood-Pewees, Winter Wrens, Northern Waterthrushes, and Fox Sparrows nest here. Interesting migrants have included Bewick's Wrens, Brown Creepers, and White-throated Sparrows. During migration and winter, Bald Eagles and waterfowl congregate at this spot, and it is usually possible to find a Eurasian Wigeon or two and a few Greater Scaup.

The best place from which to scope Chatcolet Lake is Rocky Point Marina (milepost 7.3). Scan the lake from docks at either end of the marina. Although productive during migration and winter, Chatcolet Lake supports few summer birds because of its heavy recreational boat traffic.

After leaving Rocky Point Marina, continue west on ID 5 about one mile to milepost 6.3. Turn right (north) on Conkling Park Road (a.k.a. Chatcolet Road), and go 0.9 mile to Plummer Creek bridge. Plummer Creek marsh, which borders the bridge, is used by breeding Red-necked Grebes, Ospreys, Soras, and Marsh Wrens, and attracted vagrant Swamp Sparrows in the winters of 1992 and 1994. The flat, 0.6-mile-long Plummer Creek Trail shadows Plummer Creek upstream from the bridge. Its terminus is on Conkling Park Road, 0.2 mile north of Plummer Creek bridge. Olive-sided,

Willow, and Cordilleran Flycatchers, Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Swainson's and Varied Thrushes, and Townsend's Warblers are common breeders. Barred Owls are often heard hooting. Bewick's Wrens, American Dippers, and American Tree Sparrows are among the more unusual winter birds occasionally found along the trail. The gated Fire Control Road next to the trailhead can also be walked, but its twisty path may get you lost!

Continuing north on Conkling Park Road, you'll cross railroad tracks 0.3 mile north of Plummer Creek bridge. On the left (west) side of the road, is Indian Cliffs Trailhead. This 3-mile-long hiking trail is classified as moderate-to-steep; it accesses open Ponderosa Pine habitat, which attracts Pileated Woodpeckers, Pygmy Nuthatches, Townsend's Solitaires, Pine Grosbeaks (winter), and Red Crossbills. Watch for Hammond's Flycatchers and MacGillivray's and Yellow-rumped Warblers along the trail's lower portion.

#### OTHER:

For more information, stop in at park headquarters, located 0.1 mile north of Indian Cliffs Trailhead. St. Maries is a full-service community. Heyburn SP (208/686-1308) has a full-service campground. See also St. Maries to Harrison Route, the previous site, and St. Joe Route, below.

## ST. JOE ROUTE

Authors: Dan Svingen, Kas Dumroese

Site P-16 — Map P-16

**Highlights:** Tundra Swan, Northern Pygmy-Owl

**Major Habitats:** Deciduous Forest, Wetland

**Location:** Benewah Co., St. Maries

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

*This 40-mile-long drive will take you up the Shadowy St. Joe, the highest navigable river in the world. Tugboats work the river weekly, pulling huge "brails" of timber down to sawmills in Post Falls, 80 miles away. This route's unique birding opportunities center around the deep, waterlily-filled wetlands and cottonwood forest associated with this historic river.*

#### DIRECTIONS:

The route begins in St. Maries, at the junction of ID 3 and ID 5 (the 4-way stop adjacent to the Exxon Station). From here, take ID 3 north across the St. Joe River and follow it as it curves west. At milepost 85, turn right (north) toward Avery on Forest Highway (FH) 50 (a.k.a. St. Joe Road).