

OTHER:

Marsing offers food, fuel, and accommodations. The primitive BLM campground at Jump Creek parking lot has a few picnic tables but no toilets or water. Nampa/Caldwell is the closest full-service community. For maps and more information, contact the BLM (208/384-3300) in Boise. See also Marsing, the previous site.

NORTH FORK OF THE OWYHEE RIVER

Author: John F. Gatchet

Site SW-11 — Map SW-11

Highlights: Gray and Ash-throated Flycatchers, Bushtit

Major Habitats: Shrub-steppe, Juniper

Location: Owyhee Co., 80 miles southwest of Caldwell

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

This 32-mile drive provides spectacular scenery, good birding, and an opportunity to see Mule Deer and Pronghorn antelope. The North Fork also provides your best chance for finding Bushtit in Idaho. Owyhee County is arguably the most remote non-wilderness section of this remote state, so be sure that you're well-provisioned before heading out.

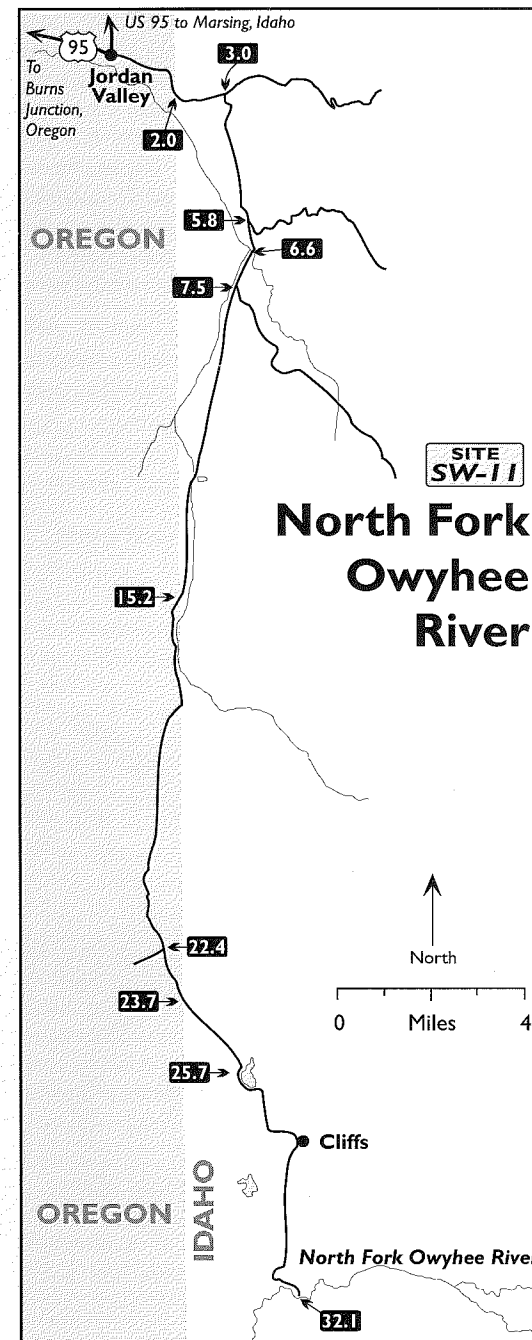
DIRECTIONS:

The route begins in Jordan Valley, Oregon. Zero your mileage at the intersection of Yuturri Boulevard and US 95 (next to the Chevron Station), then follow Yuturri Boulevard east out of town. At mile 2 you'll reenter Idaho (unmarked). At mile 3 the road forks. Turn right (south) toward South Mountain. Most of this route passes through public land (BLM).

BIRDING:

At mile 3.6 park by the BLM sign reading "Caution" and "North Fork Crossing 28." Although this spot looks similar to habitat which you just drove through, it's particularly birdy here. Watch for Gray Flycatchers in the scattered trees and large sage, and for Loggerhead Shrikes, Sage Thrashers, Rock Wrens, and Brewer's, Lark, and Vesper Sparrows. Northern Shrikes and Townsend's Solitaires are occasional in winter. In 1994 a vagrant Eastern Phoebe was found immediately behind this sign.

You'll reach another road fork at mile 5.8; stay right (south) on "Owyhee Upland BackCountry Byway" toward South and Juniper Mountains. At mile 6.6 you'll cross Jordan Creek on a single-lane bridge. Pull over to look for MacGillivray's and Wilson's Warblers, Yellow-breasted Chats, and Lazuli Buntings. You may also catch migrating passerines, such as Townsend's Warblers. At mile 7.5 stay right (south) toward Juniper Mountain. Pavement



ends at mile 7.9, and good gravel begins. Be aware that this road can get mighty greasy when wet.

Near mile 10, look in the tall sagebrush for Loggerhead Shrikes and Sage and Brewer's Sparrows. Black-throated Sparrows are a possibility, too. Swainson's Hawks, Golden Eagles, and Common Poorwills frequent this area in summer, as do Rough-legged Hawks in winter. You'll reach another good riparian area at mile 11.7, but the land there is private; please bird from the road.

The road sneaks into Oregon at mile 15.2. At the road fork at mile 22.4, stay left (south) toward Cliffs and Juniper Mountain. At mile 23.7 you cross back into Idaho. Dougal Ranch Reservoir at mile 25.7 is excellent for shorebirds and ducks, but you'll likely want to bird from the road because of intermingled private land. Cinnamon Teal, Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, Marbled Godwit, and Long-billed Curlew are among the species that have been found here. Barrow's Goldeneyes should be looked for in migration.

The real treat is the North Fork of the Owyhee River, which you reach at mile 32.1. As the road descends to the river, listen for Rock Wrens and watch for Mountain Bluebirds (summer) or Townsend's Solitaires (winter). Golden Eagles, Prairie Falcons, Chukars, Western Screech-Owls, Common Poorwills, Gray and Ash-throated Flycatchers, Juniper Titmice, Canyon Wrens, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Sage Thrashers, Plumbeous Vireos, Black-throated Gray Warblers, Yellow-breasted Chats, Black-headed Grosbeaks, Lazuli Buntings, and Green-tailed Towhees should be looked for in the junipers, cliffs, and sagebrush that cover this beautiful oasis. Look especially for Bushtits, which are resident but erratic. There is no one spot to bird here; just wander up and down the road and up and down the canyon.

OTHER:

Maps and more information can be obtained from the BLM (208/384-3300) in Boise. There are no services along this route. Jordan Valley offers food, fuel, and lodging. There is a primitive BLM campground (pit toilets, water) at mile 32. The closest full-service community is Nampa/Caldwell.



Black-throated Gray Warbler
Mike Denny

BLACKS CREEK RESERVOIR ROUTE

Authors: Mark Collie, Dave Trochlell

Site SW-12 — Map SW-12/SW-13/SW-14

Highlights: Ferruginous Hawk, Shorebirds, Sage Thrasher

Major Habitats: Shrub-steppe, Wetland

Location: Ada Co., 10 miles southeast of Boise

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

This 25-mile-long route has two parts: Blacks Creek Reservoir west of the interstate, and Blacks Creek to the east. The entire Blacks Creek area is locally famous for its bird diversity. In spring large numbers of passerines stage here before advancing into the nearby Danskin Mountains. The reservoir itself is popular with waders, waterfowl, and shorebirds.

DIRECTIONS:

From Boise follow I-84 southeast about 10 miles, take Exit 64, and turn right (south) on Blacks Creek Road, zeroing your mileage at this point. Follow Blacks Creek Road (which merges with Kuna-Mora Road) 2.4 miles west/southwest to the reservoir, watching for shy Burrowing Owls along the way. Most land here is public (BLM).

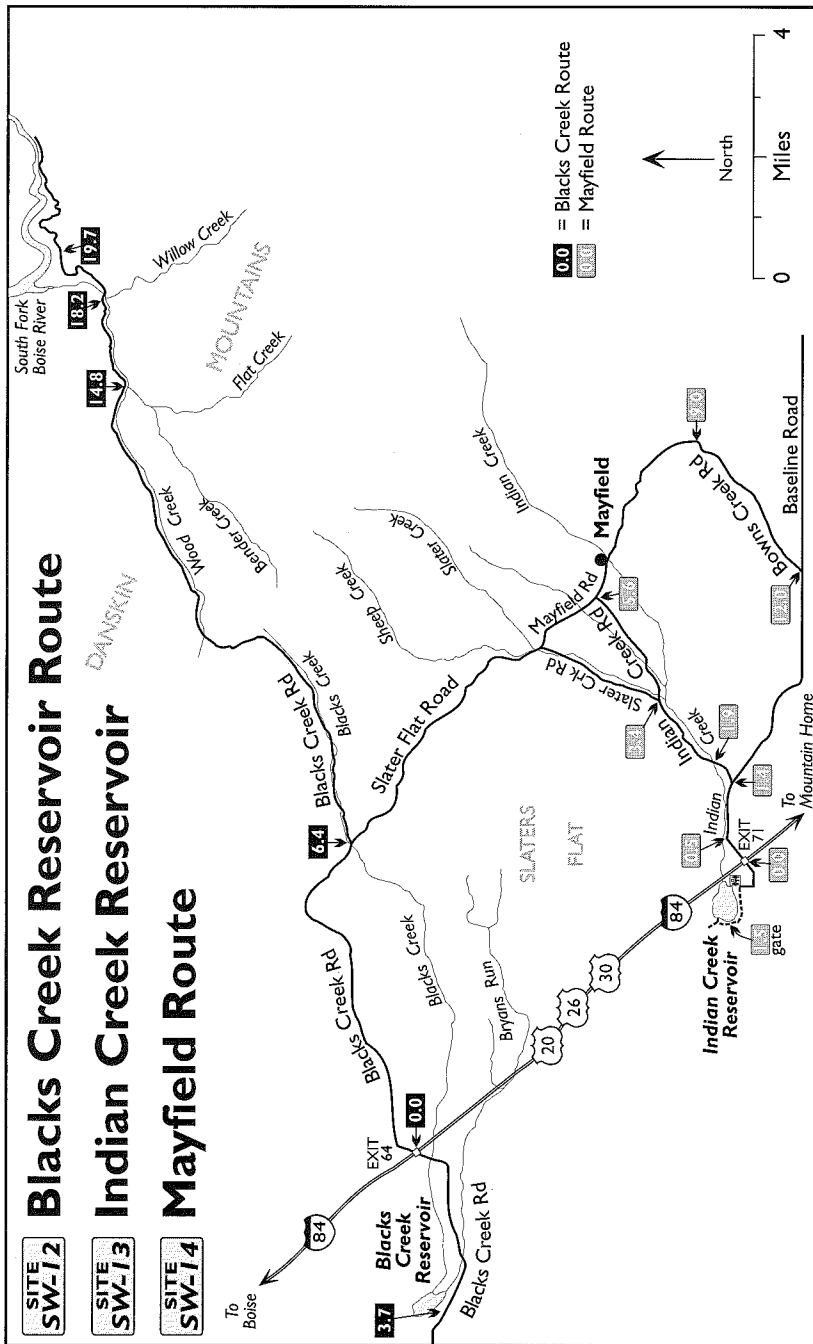
BIRDING:

BLACKS CREEK RESERVOIR

Although usually less than a mile long, Blacks Creek Reservoir varies greatly in size. You can scan most of the water by following Kuna-Mora Road along the south shore. A maze of side roads allows exploration of the north shore, *but drive prudently; even 4-wheel-drives are towed out every year.*

Birds to watch for include migrating Pacific and Common Loons, Tundra and Trumpeter Swans, Greater White-fronted Geese, and Sandhill Cranes. Western, Clark's, and Pied-billed Grebes, Great, Snowy, and Cattle Egrets, Double-crested Cormorants, and a variety of waterfowl summer at the reservoir, while Golden Eagles, Swainson's and Ferruginous Hawks, Short-eared Owls, and Long-billed Curlews nest nearby. In shrub-steppe habitat along the shoreline, look for Sage Thrashers and Brewer's, Vesper, Lark, and Savannah Sparrows. Grasshopper Sparrows are present but very local. Try listening near mile 3.7.

When available, the reservoir's mudflats are visited by shorebirds. Regular species include Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpiper, Willet, Long-billed Dowitcher, Common Snipe, and Wilson's and Red-necked Phalaropes. American Golden-Plovers (rare) have also been seen. During late fall and winter, watch along Kuna-



Mora Road for Rough-legged Hawks, falcons, Snow Buntings, Lapland Longspurs (rare), and American Tree Sparrows.

BLACKS CREEK

To explore more shrub-steppe and riparian habitat, backtrack to the Interstate and re-zero your mileage. Follow Blacks Creek Road as it passes under I-84 and then heads northeast along Blacks Creek. *Most land along this portion of the route is private.*

From the Interstate to about mile 2.8, watch for Ferruginous Hawks in spring and summer. This is one of the most dependable areas in Idaho for this species. You may also see Gray Partridge, Loggerhead Shrikes, and Sage Thrashers. At mile 5.0 scan the small, private pond on the left (north) for waterfowl, and check the trees for roosting Barn, Great Horned, and Long-eared Owls. Long-eareds have been found nesting in willows on the right (south) side of the road at mile 5.4.

At mile 6.4 turn left (northeast), staying on Blacks Creek Road, which turns to gravel at mile 7.4. Park here and walk up and down the road to investigate this birdy spot.

You may see Mountain Bluebirds in nest boxes around mile 9.8. At miles 10.5 and 11.2 stay left. Around mile 11.4 the grassland gives way to mountain brush. Stop anywhere to look for warblers, Lazuli Buntings, and Spotted Towhees.

At mile 14.0 there is a wide pull-off on the right (south). Stop and bird along the road toward Bender Creek Trailhead (mile 14.8). Look for Bald Eagles (winter), accipiters, Red-tailed Hawks, Golden Eagles, and Blue and Ruffed Grouse. In spring and early summer, watch for woodpeckers, flycatchers, Gray Catbirds, "Solitary" Vireos, Nashville, MacGillivray's, and Wilson's Warblers, Yellow-breasted Chats, Western Tanagers, and Black-headed Grosbeaks. Be sure to listen for Northern Pygmy-Owls and Common Poorwills. You have another shot at all of these species at mile 15.9.

At miles 16.3 and 16.5 check the burned forest patches for woodpeckers. You can explore more burned forest at the Willow Creek Trailhead, which is on the left (north) at mile 18.2. *Beware of falling trees.*

Swallows and Canyon and Rock Wrens are often found along the rocky hillside by mile 19. You will reach the top of the hill and the end of this route at about mile 19.7, where you have a beautiful view into the South Fork Boise River. (Watch for Golden Eagles and Prairie Falcons.)

OTHER:

Fuel and food are available at the truck-stop at I-84 Exit 71. For other services, try Mountain Home or Boise. See also Indian Creek Reservoir (the next site) and Mayfield Route (p. 177). For maps and more information, contact the BLM (208/384-3300) in Boise.

INDIAN CREEK RESERVOIR

Author: Mark Collie

Site SW-13 — Map SW-12/SW-13/SW-14

Highlights: Great Egret, Cinnamon Teal, Shorebirds

Major Habitats: Wetland, Shrub-steppe

Location: Ada Co., 17 miles southeast of Boise

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

Indian Creek Reservoir borders I-84 and is worth a quick stop if unfrozen. The best birding is during migration, since summer activities such as fishing, sailing, and windsurfing scare most birds away. Whenever you visit, be sure to bring a scope.

DIRECTIONS:

From Boise follow I-84 southeast about 17 miles, take Exit 71, and turn right (west), zeroing your mileage here. Drive slowly past the large truck-stop/restaurant complex and turn right (north) onto the single-lane dirt road at mile 0.3, signed for "Indian Creek Reservoir." Continue to the reservoir overlook at mile 1.0. From here the road is strictly "travel-at-your-own-risk." The best spot for shorebirding is along the northwest shoreline. You can access this area by following the single-track dirt road west-northwest to about mile 1.7 and then hoofing it along the shoreline. It's okay to drive through the barbed-wire gate at mile 1.5—just be sure to *leave it as you found it*. Indian Creek Reservoir is public (BLM, IDFG), so feel free to walk around.

BIRDING:

Indian Creek Reservoir attracts few passerines but is often good for loons, grebes, egrets, and waterfowl. Great and Snowy Egrets and Cinnamon Teal are regulars. Migrant Tundra Swans stage here in late fall, and Trumpeters are always a possibility. In spring and again in late fall, watch for wayward scoters or Red-breasted Mergansers.

Shorebirds have a tough time finding reliable habitat in southwest Idaho, making the predictable mudflats at Indian Creek Reservoir important. Although the extent of shorebird use here is poorly understood, rarities like Snowy Plovers, Black-bellied Plovers, American Golden-Plovers, Marbled Godwits, Sanderlings, and Dunlins should be watched for among the more-regular Black-necked Stilts, American Avocets, Greater and Lesser Yellow-legs, and Western, Least, and Baird's Sandpipers.

Species nesting near Indian Creek Reservoir include Swainson's and Ferruginous Hawks, Long-billed Curlew, Sage Thrasher (common), and Savannah, Brewer's, and Lark Sparrows. In winter Snow Buntings, Lapland Longspurs (rare), and American Tree Sparrows may be found in the general area.

OTHER:

Fuel and food are available at the truck-stop. A pit toilet is located at the reservoir overlook. All services are available in Boise. See also Blacks Creek Reservoir (the previous site) and Mayfield Route (the next site).

MAYFIELD ROUTE

Author: Dave Trochlell

Site SW-14 — Map SW-12/SW-13/SW-14

Highlights: Northern Mockingbird, Loggerhead Shrike

Major Habitats: Shrub-steppe, Deciduous Forest

Location: Elmore Co., 17 miles southeast of Boise

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

A 16-mile-long loop from I-84 to Mayfield will take you through some of Idaho's most productive shrub-steppe habitat. Loggerhead Shrikes are common here, an increasingly rare situation for this declining species. The tiny "town" of Mayfield has hosted nesting Northern Mockingbirds several times, making it Idaho's hotspot for this erratic visitor.

DIRECTIONS:

From Boise follow I-84 southeast 17 miles, take Exit 71, and turn left (east) onto paved/graveled Indian Creek Road, zeroing your mileage. At mile 0.5 and 1.4 stay left. Private and public (BLM) land is intermingled along this route.

BIRDING:

The road crosses Indian Creek at mile 1.9. Stop for common riparian summer species such as California Quail, Western Wood-Pewee, Warbling Vireo, Yellow Warbler, Black-headed Grosbeak, Lazuli Bunting, and Bullock's Oriole. At mile 2.0 the road parallels basalt-rimrock, where you may find Say's Phoebes, Rock Wrens, Northern Mockingbirds (rare), Loggerhead Shrikes, and Lark Sparrows. In pastures to the right (southeast), watch for waterfowl in spring and for Red-tailed and Swainson's Hawks, Northern Harriers, American Kestrels, and Short-eared Owls in summer. At mile 3.0 look for nesting Swainson's Hawks in willow trees to the right (southeast).

Stay right at mile 3.4, birding along the road for Gray Partridge, Sage Thrashers, Loggerhead Shrikes, and Brewer's, Vesper, Lark, and Grasshopper Sparrows. At mile 5.6 turn right (southeast) on Mayfield Road and follow it into Mayfield at mile 6.1. Stop at the old abandoned buildings in town to look for Barn and Great Horned Owls.

The tall bitterbrush/sagebrush rangeland between mile 7.6 and 9.0 is particularly good for Loggerhead Shrikes, Sage Thrashers, and Brewer's, Vesper, and Lark Sparrows. At mile 9.0 turn right (southwest) on Bowns

Creek Road, watching for raptors (including Ferruginous Hawks and Burrowing Owls) and Gray Partridge. Grasshopper Sparrows have been heard between mile 9.5 and 11.1. At mile 12.0 turn right (west) on Baseline Road and return to I-84 in another 5 miles or so.

OTHER:

Fuel and food are available at the truck-stop at Exit 71. For other services try Mountain Home or Boise. See also Indian Creek Reservoir (the previous site) and Blacks Creek Route (p.173). For maps and more information, contact the BLM (208/384-3300) in Boise.

SNAKE RIVER BIRDS OF PREY AREA

Authors: John Doremus, John F. Gatchet, Kas Dumroese

Site SW-15 — See Southwestern map, page 146

Highlights: Swainson's and Ferruginous Hawks, Prairie Falcon

Major Habitats: Shrub-steppe, Deciduous Forest, Wetland

Location: Ada Co., 17 miles south of Kuna

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

Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area (BLM) encompasses 80 miles of the Snake River. Several hundred Prairie Falcons nest here. Swainson's, Red-tailed, and Ferruginous Hawks, Golden Eagles, American Kestrels, and Barn, Great Horned, Burrowing, and Long-eared Owls are all common. The best time to visit "Birds of Prey" is March into June, before various raptors complete nesting and move on. To fully experience the Conservation Area, you'll have to do lots of hiking, driving, and exploring on your own, since large portions of the reserve have yet to be investigated by birders. A boat trip through the canyon (see below for details) will provide an additional perspective.

DIRECTIONS:

Zero your mileage at the railroad tracks in Kuna, and head south on Swan Falls Road. At mile 16 is Dedication Point Overlook.

BIRDING:

A sample of birding possibilities for the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area is presented here for two well-known sites. As noted, there are other places for the adventurous birder to explore.

DEDICATION POINT OVERLOOK

As you drive south along Swan Falls Road, look for Swainson's Hawks, April to September. Watch power poles, fence posts, and rocky outcroppings for other raptors, including Northern Harriers, Red-tailed, Ferruginous, and

Rough-legged (November to April) Hawks, Golden Eagles, American Kestrels, Prairie Falcons, and Burrowing and Short-eared Owls.

Dedication Point provides a great view of the Snake River Canyon. From the parking lot take the graveled path 0.25 mile to the overlook. During spring Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks and an occasional Northern Goshawk might be glimpsed moving north with migrant songbirds. In early summer one is likely to see Red-tailed Hawks, Golden Eagles, Prairie Falcons, White-throated Swifts, Cliff Swallows, Common Ravens, Say's Phoebes, and Rock Wrens. Look for Sage and Brewer's Sparrows and Western Meadowlarks in shrub-steppe habitats.

SWAN FALLS DAM

From Dedication Point parking lot, continue south on Swan Falls Road. About 0.25 mile south of Dedication Point, watch and listen for Black-throated Sparrows (uncommon to rare) in sagebrush. In winter look for Northern Shrikes, Snow Buntings, and Gray-crowned and Black Rosy-Finches along the road. You'll start to descend into the Snake River Canyon about 4 miles south of Dedication Point. Listen for Rock Wrens in the scree slopes along the road. About 5 miles southeast of Dedication Point, you'll reach Swan Falls Dam. Park and investigate the trees and lawns for Common Nighthawks, Western Wood-Pewees, Say's Phoebes, Common Yellowthroats, Yellow-breasted Chats, Black-headed Grosbeaks, Lazuli Buntings, and Bullock's Orioles. Lesser Goldfinches (rare) have occasionally summered here. In migration look for Olive-sided Flycatchers, "Solitary" Vireos, and numerous warblers including Nashville, Wilson's, MacGillivray's, and American Redstart. In winter Northern Saw-whet Owls, Long-eared Owls, Northern Shrikes, Brown Creepers, and Varied Thrushes are among the species which sometimes visit the area.

On the river look for migrating or wintering loons, grebes, waterfowl, and gulls. The Snake River is a major migration route, and this small treed oasis no doubt attracts many rarities. To see more of the area, follow the dirt road (by car or on foot, depending on whether the gate is closed or not) that follows the river downstream. This area is especially productive during migration and winter, when large flocks of White-crowned Sparrows can be found. Careful searching may reveal White-throated and Harris's Sparrows as well.

OTHER:

For more information contact the BLM (208/384-3300) in Boise. Primitive camping is available at the BLM's Cove Recreation Site on C.J. Strike Reservoir (p. 182). Potable water and restrooms are available at Swan Falls Dam. The closest services are in Kuna. All services are available in Boise. For Snake River float outfitters which cater to birders, try Whitewater Shop River Tours (208/922-5285) in Kuna or for alternatives call the Peregrine Fund /World Center for Birds of Prey (208/362-8687) in Boise.

SILVER CITY AREA

Author: John F. Gatchet

Site SW-16 — See Southwestern map, page 146

Highlights: Green-tailed Towhee, Sage Sparrow

Major Habitats: Shrub-steppe

Location: Owyhee Co., 48 miles south of Caldwell

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

Silver City is an old mining town full of fascinating history. It also provides excellent spring and summer birding. Tucked away in the remote Owyhee Mountains, this area is well off the beaten path. Be sure to be fully provisioned before leaving civilization.

DIRECTIONS:

From Murphy follow ID 78 southeast 4.7 miles. At milepost 34.1 turn right (south) onto Silver City Road and follow this rough, winding graveled road 23 miles to Silver City. Silver City Road is open from mid-May to October and occasionally into November. Although Silver City can be reached by passenger car, a 4-wheel-drive, high-clearance vehicle makes for a more comfortable trip.

BIRDING:

Along the first half of Silver City Road, watch for nesting Gray Flycatchers, Sage Thrashers, Loggerhead Shrikes, and Sage Sparrows. In evening listen for Common Poorwills in the juniper areas. If you're lucky, you may find Black-throated Sparrows.

The latter half of Silver City Road follows Reynolds Creek. Look for Western Screech-Owls, Northern Saw-whet Owls, Lewis's Woodpeckers (which nest in old cottonwoods along the creek), Red-naped Sapsuckers, Dusky Flycatchers, Western Wood-Pewees, Mountain Bluebirds, MacGillivray's and Wilson's Warblers, Yellow-breasted Chats, Western Tanagers, Black-headed Grosbeaks, and Lazuli Buntings.

When you reach Silver City, walk through town and enjoy the old buildings and the omnipresent history. Although the number of Green-tailed Towhees fluctuates from year-to-year, the species is often common, singing from any bush or running around any corner! A special treat in early and late summer is the presence of four species of hummingbirds: Broad-tailed (common), Calliope, Black-chinned, and Rufous (migrant only).

A particularly productive spot is the old cemetery at the south end of town. You may find nesting Red-naped Sapsuckers, Mountain Chickadees, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Mountain Bluebirds, Hermit Thrushes, Warbling Vireos, Black-throated Gray, MacGillivray's and Wilson's Warblers, Western

Tanagers, Black-headed Grosbeaks, Green-tailed Towhees, and Fox Sparrows (which nest along the stream).

Fall birding in Silver City has been largely ignored. It seems probable, however, that this "sky island" is a productive migrant trap. Let others know what you find!

OTHER:

Silver City's Idaho Hotel has accommodations, but you must bring your own towel and bedding. A BLM campground is also available. For maps and information, call the BLM (208/384-3300) in Boise.

TED TRUEBLOOD WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

Author: John F. Gatchet

Site SW-17 — See Southwestern map, page 146

Highlights: Trumpeter Swan, Long-eared Owl, Swamp Sparrow

Major Habitats: Wetland, Shrub-steppe

Location: Elmore Co., 1 mile north of Grandview

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

Ted Trueblood WMA covers only 320 acres, but it still manages to cram in thousands of wintering and migrating waders, waterfowl, and shorebirds. The attraction is three shallow ponds surrounded by dense cattail and brush growth.

DIRECTIONS:

From the intersection of ID 78 and ID 67 in Grandview, follow ID 67 (Roosevelt Avenue) north 1.4 miles, then turn left (west) into the WMA's primary parking lot.

BIRDING:

The ponds just west of the parking lot hold nesting Cinnamon Teal, Black-necked Stilts, and American Avocets and a wide variety of migrant waterfowl. Burrowing and Long-eared Owls are common nesters in open sage and isolated tree groves, respectively. In winter look for Trumpeter Swans and Swamp Sparrows (rare).

Another viewing area can be reached by continuing north on ID 67 another 0.5 mile, then turning left (west) onto graveled Shaw Lane. In 0.6 mile there is a wildlife viewing area on the left (south). The large pond is particularly popular with fall shorebirds. American Golden-Plovers, Black-necked Stilts, American Avocets, Marbled Godwits, Long-billed Curlews, Dunlins, and Solitary, Baird's, and Pectoral Sandpipers have all been found here. American White Pelicans, White-faced Ibises, Great and Snowy Egrets, Franklin's and Herring Gulls, and Caspian, Forster's, and Black Terns may also

be present. If you continue down this road, you'll pass additional opportunities to bird wetland, shrub-steppe, and riparian habitats before the road dead-ends in a mile. Watch for Swainson's (summer) and Rough-legged (winter) Hawks, Peregrine and Prairie Falcons, Bald and Golden Eagles, Sage Thrashers, Loggerhead and Northern (winter) Shrikes, Western Tanager, Black-headed Grosbeaks, Lazuli Buntings, and White-throated Sparrows (rare, winter).

OTHER:

Fuel and food are available in Grandview. For other services, try Mountain Home. For a map and more information, contact IDFG (208/845-2324) in Grandview.

C.J. STRIKE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

Authors: John Doremus, John F. Gatchet

Site SW-18 — Map SW-18/SW-19

Highlights: Waterfowl, Wintering and Migrating Songbirds

Major Habitats: Wetland, Deciduous Forest, Shrub-steppe

Location: Owyhee Co., 4 miles west of Bruneau

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

Huge, convoluted C.J. Strike WMA covers 13,225 acres along the shore of C.J. Strike Reservoir. Access points are abundant at this popular hunting and fishing destination. The best spots for birding are highlighted below. Be aware that much of the WMA is closed from February 1 to July 31.

DIRECTIONS:

This route begins in Bruneau, 21 miles south of Mountain Home along ID 51. At the Sportsman Access sign in Bruneau, zero your mileage and head northwest on Belle Road. At mile 1.6 turn left (west) onto a rough, graveled single-lane road. At mile 2.1 turn left (south) and follow the farm-lane-type road southwest to its end at about mile 2.5.

BIRDING:

Park and walk the access roads into the WMA to investigate the wet brush habitat for migrating and wintering passerines. Regular species include Virginia Rail, Sora, Western Screech-Owl, Marsh Wren, Common Yellowthroat, Lincoln's Sparrow (winter), and Bullock's Oriole. When you have finished exploring, backtrack to Bruneau.

Re-zero your mileage in Bruneau and head west on ID 78. At mile 1.3 turn right (north) into the parking lot signed "Bruneau River Wildlife Area." Use the stile to cross the fence, then follow the road north into riparian and

marsh areas, watching for Black-crowned Night-Herons, Virginia Rails, Western Screech-Owls, Willow Flycatchers, Eastern Kingbirds, Marsh Wrens, Yellow Warblers, Common Yellowthroats, Yellow-breasted Chats, and Black-headed Grosbeaks. In winter search for American Tree Sparrows. There is another parking area, with similar birding, at mile 1.5.

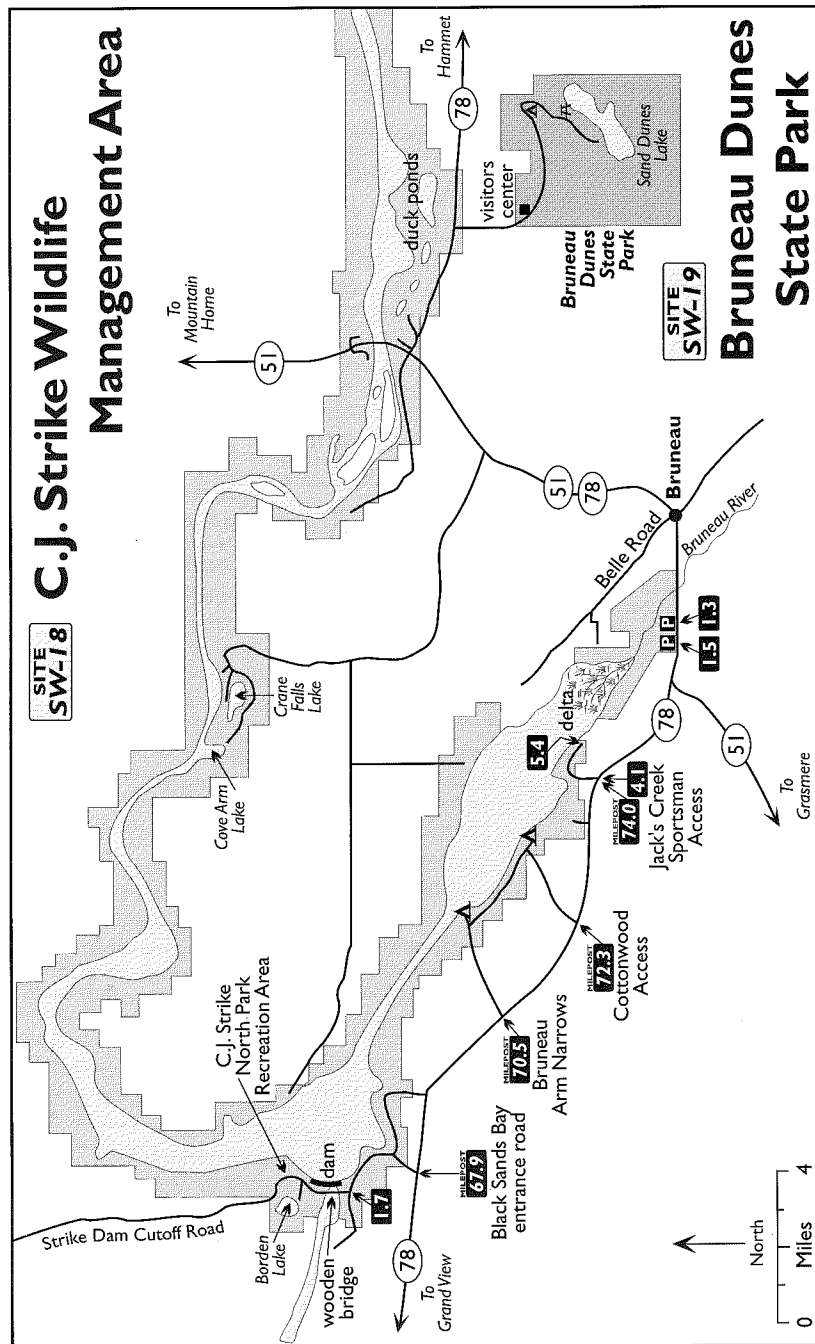
At mile 4.1 (milepost 74), turn right (north) into Jack's Creek Sportsman Access. This is the WMA's single best birding spot. Watch roadside trees between miles 4.1 and 4.4 for huge flocks of wintering sparrows. As you approach the reservoir at mile 4.6, look for waterfowl, coots, and rails in the cove to the left (west). Open water near mile 4.8 is a good place to see both Clark's and Western Grebes in spring and summer.

There is a closed road on the right (south) at mile 5.1 that leads to a Russian-olive thicket. The thicket is a gathering place for wintering songbirds and raptors. Rough-legged Hawks, all three accipiters, Prairie Falcons, and Northern Shrikes are frequently seen in or near the Russian-olives, as are Cedar Waxwings (sometimes with Bohemians mixed in), American Robins, Varied Thrushes, Yellow-rumped and Orange-crowned Warblers, and Fox Sparrows.

From the end of the road at mile 5.4, use a spotting scope to scan the Bruneau River Delta for spring or summer American White Pelicans, Double-crested Cormorants, California and Ring-billed Gulls, Forster's and Caspian Terns, Great Blue Herons, Black-necked Stilts, American Avocets, and Yellow-breasted Chats. Migrant Franklin's, Bonaparte's, and Herring Gulls and Black Terns should also be looked for. Rarer possibilities include Pacific Loons, Great Egrets, Ross's Geese, Red-breasted Mergansers, Eurasian Wigeons, Black-bellied Plovers, American Golden-Plovers, Marbled Godwits, Short-billed Dowitchers, Stilt and Solitary Sandpipers, Parasitic Jaegers, Thayer's, Western, and Sabine's Gulls, and Common and Arctic Terns. After exploring this birdy spot, backtrack to ID 78 and continue west.

At ID 78 milepost 72.3 turn right (north) onto Cottonwood Access. The entrance to Cottonwood Campground is in 1.3 miles. Park here and look for unusual migrant species, such as Lewis's Woodpecker, Olive-sided, Dusky, and Gray Flycatchers, Say's Phoebe, Mountain Chickadee, Hermit and Varied Thrushes, and Townsend's, MacGillivray's, and Wilson's Warblers. For another view of the reservoir, turn right (north) at ID 78 milepost 70.5 and follow Sportsman Access to Bruneau Arm Narrows in about 1.4 miles.

Farther west on ID 78, turn right (north) at milepost 67.9 onto the paved entrance road to Black Sands Bay, and re-zero your mileage. Russian-olive thickets at mile 1 are excellent for wintering passerines, while the small marsh at mile 1.1 held a rare Swamp Sparrow in December 1993. At mile 1.5 stop at the dam and look for loons, grebes, ducks, gulls, and terns. This is an excellent place to see Pacific Loons (rare), Red-breasted Mergansers, and Bonaparte's Gulls in late fall, and Oldsquaws (rare) in winter. At mile 1.7 turn right (north) and cross the wooden bridge below C.J. Strike Dam. At mile 2.5 turn right into the C.J. Strike North Park Recreation Area and look for



migrant songbirds, as well as the odd vagrant, such as a Herring Gull or a Common Grackle.

OTHER:

Camping is allowed at the WMA, but there is no electricity. Potable water is available at the Cottonwood Campground Recreation Site and at C.J. Strike North Park Recreation Area. Fuel and food are available in Bruneau. Try Mountain Home for other services. For more information, call IDFG (208/845-2324) in Grandview. A helpful brochure is available. See also Bruneau Dunes State Park, the next site.

BRUNEAU DUNES STATE PARK

Author: John F. Gatchet

Site SW-19 — Map SW-18/SW-19

Highlights: Waterfowl, Black-throated Sparrow

Major Habitats: Wetland, Shrub-steppe

Location: Owyhee Co., 18 miles south of Mountain Home

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

This pretty little park is centered around the continent's highest single sand dune—470 feet tall! The park also encompasses a few small lakes and an expanse of dry sage-desert. Bird-wise the attraction is the park's lure to migrants and vagrants alike.

DIRECTIONS:

From Mountain Home follow US 51 south for 15 miles and cross the Snake River. (Look for waterfowl, shorebirds, and songbirds by the bridge.) At milepost 76.6 turn left (east) on ID 78. After 1.7 miles turn right (south) and follow the road to the park headquarters in 1 mile. Stop for a map, information, and a bird checklist.

BIRDING:

Along the park's entrance road in summer, watch for Sage Thrashers and Lark, Sage, and Black-throated (rare) Sparrows. You can access the 5-mile-long Sand Dunes Hiking Trail behind park headquarters. Even a one-mile walk down this path will bring you additional marsh and shrub-steppe birding.

The campground is along the main park road, 1.7 miles east of headquarters. Look around the campground trees for resident Great Horned Owls and migrant passerines. You may also find roosting Western Screech-Owls or Long-eared Owls.

About 0.8 mile east of the campground the main park road turns to gravel, and there you might hear courting Long-billed Curlews in spring and early

summer. The park's two main lakes (actually, it's one big interconnected lake) are to the southeast, encircled by trails. Scan the water for migrating or wintering Pacific Loons, American White Pelicans, Great and Snowy Egrets, White-faced Ibises, Trumpeter Swans, Canvasbacks, Barrow's Goldeneyes, Hooded Mergansers, Bald Eagles, Bonaparte's and Herring Gulls, and Caspian, Forster's, and Black Terns.

In summer check trees around the lakes for Yellow-breasted Chats, Western Tanagers, Black-headed Grosbeaks, Lazuli Buntings, and Yellow-headed Blackbirds. In migration look for Hermit and Varied Thrushes, Townsend's Solitaires, and Nashville, Black-throated Gray, Townsend's, MacGillivray's, and Wilson's Warblers. Vagrant species found here have included Northern Mockingbird, American Redstart, and Northern Water-thrush. During winter look for Rough-legged Hawks, Long-eared Owls (once common but absent for the last several years), Northern Shrikes, and American Tree, White-throated, and Swamp Sparrows (the latter two being rare).

OTHER:

The park has a developed campground and is popular with both fishermen and astronomers. A few supplies (fuel, food) can be found in Bruneau or Hammett, but Mountain Home is the closest full-service community. For more information, call the park (208/366-7919). See also the C.J. Strike WMA, the previous site.

TRINITY RECREATION AREA

Author: Win Shaughnessy

Site SW-20 — Map SW-20

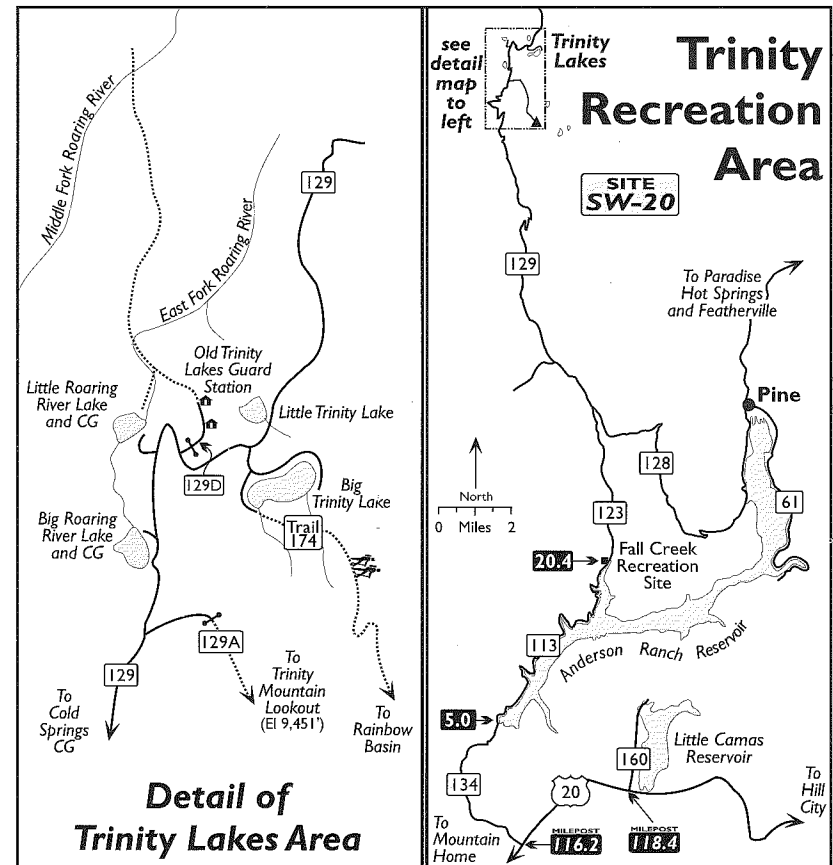
Highlights: Olive-sided Flycatcher, Pine Grosbeak

Major Habitats: Mixed Conifer Forest, Wetland

Location: Elmore Co., 40 miles north of Mountain Home

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

Trinity Recreation Area is a rugged, remote expanse of high-elevation forest, lakes, and tundra. Because the birding is around 8,000 feet in elevation, the area is accessible by car only between late June (some years late July) and mid-September. It is best to avoid the recreation area during the busy July 4th and Labor Day weekends.



DIRECTIONS:

From Mountain Home head northeast on US 20 for 24 miles. At US 20 milepost 116.2 zero your mileage and turn left (northwest) on FR 134 (toward Anderson Dam and Fall Creek). At mile 5 cross Anderson Reservoir Dam, turn right (northeast) on FR 113, and follow the road along the reservoir. At mile 20.4 turn left (north; by Fall Creek) onto FR 123 and drive another 12 miles to Trinity Recreation Area (FR 123 will turn into FR 129 on the way). This route is steep and is mostly over unimproved, dusty graveled roads without guard rails. Allow at least 2.5 hours traveling-time from Mountain Home. Most land here is public (FS).

BIRDING:

On the way to Trinity Recreation Area, you'll pass through a variety of rewarding habitats. Ospreys, Swainson's Hawks, Spruce Grouse (most likely along FR 129), Sage Grouse, Red-naped Sapsuckers, Western and Mountain