West of Yellowstone Park

SCENIC AND WILDLIFE ROUTES

The locations indicate where wildlife has been spotted . We recommend bringing binoculars or a spotting scope to see wildlife located away from roads or in higher locations.

N
W E
S

1 in = 2 miles

To Big Sky 45miles

To Ennis • 71miles

To Big Sky

Beaver Cr
Cabin Cr
Tepee Cr
Kirkwood Cr
Red Canyon Cr
Duck Cr
Cougar Cr
Madison River
Quake Lake
Hebgen Lake
Denny Cr
W Fk Denny Cr
S Fk Madison River
Henry's Lake
Henry's Fork

Refuge Point
Cabin Creek Scarp
Ghost Village
Earthquake Lake Overlook
EARTHQUAKE LAKE V.C.
West Portal Historic Display
The Lake That Tilted
Red Canyon Fault
East Portal Historic Display
Fish Hatchery
Frome Park
Howard Springs
WEST YELLOWSTONE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
West Yellowstone
Big Springs

22miles
17.5miles
13 miles
8.5 miles

287
191
87
20
291
6954
509
959

Road to Horse Butte Lookout opens May 1st

Madison Arm Road opens May 1st

Red Rock Pass opens late June (snow)

Red Rock Road may open early June (snow)

Big Springs Loop plowed mid to late April (snow)

Madison Arm Rd
Rainbow Rd
Henry's Lake Dr
Red Rock Rd
Big Springs Loop Rd

MONTANA
IDAHO

To Yellowstone National Park

To Red Rock Lakes Wildlife Refuge

To Mesa Falls • 34 miles
To Idaho Falls • 105 miles

- Owl
- Bear
- Elk
- Pronghorn Antelope
- Bison
- Bighorn Sheep
- Deer
- Mountain Goat
- Moose
- Eagle
- Crane
- Ospray
- Trumpeter Swan
- Herons
- Cutthroat Trout
- Wolves
- Coyotes
- Fox
- Muskrat

WEST YELLOWSTONE MONTANA

www.DestinationYellowstone.com

Note: Spring weather is unpredictable and can affect road access. See the back for important contact information.

Popular Scenic Routes

"Around the Block" West Yellowstone Wildlife Tour

(64 miles round trip)

This 64-mile round trip, called 'the block' among local residents, travels through two states, over two mountain passes and winds around three lakes. It also features gorgeous scenery and the best wildlife spotting opportunities. Depart from West Yellowstone on Highway 191 heading north towards Bozeman, Montana. Highway 191 straddles the western boundary of Yellowstone National Park.

Approximately 9 miles north of West Yellowstone, watch for junction with Highway 287. Turn left (west) on Hwy 287 towards Ennis and Virginia City, Montana, which runs along Hebgen and Quake Lakes.

Turn left (south) at the junction with Idaho Highway 87, and drive for nine miles to Raynold's Pass. This pass straddles the Continental Divide. At Raynold's Pass, you will enter Idaho. Continue another 9 miles along Henry's Lake until the junction with Hwy 20. At the junction with Hwy 20, turn north to West Yellowstone about 12 miles away. This road climbs up and over Targhee Pass and then back down into Montana.

Areas to watch:

Hwy 191: Bison, moose, osprey, eagles, coyotes, and foxes near the Madison River and Cougar Creek areas.

Hwy 287: near mile marker 22: Osprey nest south side of Grayling Creek. Also bison (spring), hawks and eagles.

Hwy 287: mile markers 18-10: moose and elk on the hillsides. Waterfowl along the lakeshore.

Hwy 287: mile markers 6-3 (Quake Lake): bighorn sheep (spring). Migratory cormorant ducks and eagles. Cliffs to the north, behind Visitor Center are home to mountain goats. Deer can be seen along the river.

Idaho Hwy 87 to Raynold's Pass: Deer, elk, black bear & antelope.

Raynold's Pass to Hwy 20: Moose, elk, deer, antelope, coyotes, foxes, and wolves.

Hwy 20 - mile markers 402-406: Moose among the willows and aspen trees.

As the Hwy 20 returns to West Yellowstone, watch for black and grizzly bears (near trees and trails), moose, and elk.

West Yellowstone to Ennis

(145 miles round trip)

Follow the same directions for the "around the block" tour paralleling Hebgen and Quake Lakes. Once past the Earthquake Visitor Center, continue on Hwy 287 past the junction with Idaho Hwy 87. You will see a sign for Ennis, another 41 miles to the northwest. After leaving the canyon area, you will climb to some vast grazing lands, large Montana ranches, majestically ringed by snow-capped mountains. This is the winter location for three large herds of elk. At times, in the spring, you can see thousands at once. This is also one of the best locations for spotting antelope, deer, coyotes and on rare occasion, wolves. Drive carefully through this area, especially early morning and dusk when these animals are on the move.

West Yellowstone to Big Sky

(90-120 miles round trip)

Leave West Yellowstone and head north on Hwy 191. Continue past the junction with Hwy 287, over a large hill, and down around a steep curve and bridge over Grayling Creek. Continuing north, this stretch of road runs through twenty miles of the extreme northwestern section of Yellowstone Park (55 mph speed limit). This is truly a scenic corridor as the road parallels Grayling Creek and then the Gallatin River. Mountains rise on each side in elevations from 6,300 to 10,000 feet. Black Butte, with its steep jutting peak, is just one of the interesting geological features along the road. Sparkling creeks amid colorful willows, lowland sages and grasses, dense lodgepole pine forests, high elevation meadows and rugged peaks create a postcard-perfect view.

Areas to watch:

Bordered to the west, by the Lee Metcalf Wilderness Area, the Gallatin National Forest and the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forests, this area is also known for its wildlife. You can spot bald eagles, black and grizzly bears; deer, elk and moose; otters, foxes, and coyotes, at different times through the year.

After leaving Yellowstone Park, watch for moose, deer, and elk in the springs area to your west; then moose along the river for the next ten miles. Elk and deer frequently travel across the highway, especially in early mornings and late afternoons, to reach the river. As you approach the 320 Ranch area, begin watching the ridges for bear and mountain lion sightings, often spotted each spring.

When nearing the Big Sky turnoff, watch for more bighorn sheep, especially on sunnier slopes. Turn left onto Montana Hwy 64 (Lone Peak Trail) to travel into the Big Sky area, Watch for sheep and wildlife along hillsides and near stream areas.

West Yellowstone to Red Rock Lakes Wildlife Refuge

(90-120 miles round trip)

(This route may not be fully accessible until late May-early Jun depending on snow and weather conditions. The Lower Lake Road is open May 15 through December 1.)

Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge is located in the scenic and isolated Centennial Valley of southwestern Montana, approximately 50 miles west of Yellowstone National Park. The refuge has a vast array of habitats, ranging from high elevation prairie at 6,600 feet, to the harsh alpine habitat of the Centennial Mountains at 10,000 feet above sea level.

Take Hwy 20 south from West Yellowstone Montana to Island Park, Idaho. Turn right (west) at the Hwy 87 Junction (13.1 miles) and drive another 5.1 miles to Henry's Lake Drive, taking a left and driving towards Henry's Lake. These roads are gravel and not paved. After another 5 miles, Henry's Lake Drive becomes Red Rock Pass Road and you will enter back into Montana (11.6 miles). Red Rock Pass Road becomes MT-509 after another 9.4 miles, you will drive through Lakeview, Montana and then another two miles to Lower Lake Road which drives into the Refuge. (Alternative route: follow Hwy 20 past Henry's Lake to the Red Rock Road (509). Turn right and continue to Red Rocks Wildlife Refuge.)

Highlights:

One of the most important trumpeter swan breeding areas in North America. Sandhill cranes can be seen on the refuge from April to September. The refuge is also home to a variety of mammals native to the region.

West Yellowstone to Big Springs, Island Park, Idaho *(50 miles round trip)*

(This route may not be fully accessible until late May-early June depending on snow and weather conditions.)

Leave West Yellowstone on Hwy 20 heading south to Island Park, Idaho. (See wildlife spotting tips in the "Around the Block Tour" above.) After 12 miles, you leave Montana for Island Park, Idaho which has the longest "main street" of any town in the U.S., over 30 miles! Seven miles later, in the Mack's Inn Area, you will want to turn left (east) on Big Springs Road (Forest Rd. 59). Drive east for another five miles and you will be at Big Springs.

Areas to Watch:

Hwy 20: Antelope and elk grazing in the fields, eagles and hawks sitting on fence posts, and ospreys on specially constructed nests. Moose and elk near marshy areas and small ponds along the highway. Big Springs: Enormous rainbow trout can be viewed from both sides of the bridge. (Be sure to bring some bread to feed the fish, mallard ducks and the resident muskrat.) Look downstream to see a moose feeding in the water. Watch for osprey, bald eagles, waterfowl and the occasional moose, white-tailed deer, and muskrat.

Photo credits: Mike Pokowski Photography, Fox Den Images, Holly Scholl Photography

West Yellowstone Montana

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DestinationYellowstone.com

More Information

West Yellowstone Visitor Center	406.646.7701
Hebgen Lake Ranger District Headquarters	406.823.6961
Yellowstone Park Road Conditions	307.344.2117
Montana Road Conditions	800.226.7623
Montana Road Conditions (dialing in MT)	511
Wyoming Road Conditions	888.996.7623
Idaho Road Conditions	888.432.7623

National Weather Service forecast for Yellowstone: National Weather Service forecast for Yellowstone and Grand Teton: www.crh.noaa.gov/riw/?n=ynp_gtnp

Travel Tips

Weather is unpredictable, especially in the Spring and Fall, and can change quickly, even during the summer months. Visitors are advised to be prepared for a range of conditions. We recommend checking on road and weather conditions through the numbers below before departing.

Opening Dates for Roads & Activities

Yellowstone National Park roads open to motorized, wheeled vehicles on a staggered schedule each spring. Once an Entrance/Road opens, it is open 24 hours a day. The only exceptions are caused by road construction and weather-related restrictions.

First Week of April – Weather permitting, roads from West to Canyon and Mammoth open to bicycle only travel. Services are limited and travelers must be self-contained.

Third Weekend in April - Weather permitting, west-side roads open to motor vehicles. Visitors will be able to travel by car through the park's North & West Entrances to Norris, Madison, Canyon, & Old Faithful.

First Week of May - Weather permitting, the road linking Canyon, Fishing Bridge, & the East Entrance opens to wheeled vehicles.

Second Week of May - Travel from the South Entrance to Grant, West Thumb, Fishing Bridge, & Lake over Craig Pass to Old Faithful open to wheeled vehicles. Also, Tower Junction to Tower Fall opens to wheeled vehicles. The road from Cooke City over Colter Pass to the Chief Joseph Scenic Highway intersection to the Long Lake gate shall open as soon thereafter as possible.

Late May - Dunraven Pass (Tower to Canyon); Long Lake Gate over the Beartooth Highway to Red Lodge, Montana.

For current dates and road conditions visit www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/parkroads.htm

National Forest roads generally open mid-to-late May depending on weather conditions. For specific road openings check with the Hebgen Lake Ranger District Headquarters of the Gallatin National Forest located in West Yellowstone.

The General Fishing Season opens in Montana the third Saturday in May. There are areas outside of West Yellowstone that are open year-round. The Montana Fishing Regulations contain specific details. (fwp.mt.gov/fishing/regulations/)

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