



PONDEROSA PINE SCENIC BYWAY WILDLIFE VIEWING GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

The Ponderosa Pine Scenic Byway (along Highway 21 from Boise to Stanley) traverses a variety of landscapes from foothills & high elevation forests to scenic river canyons & majestic mountain peaks. The diversity of plant communities along the route provides habitat for hundreds of wildlife species including moose, black bear, elk, snowshoe hare, coyote, red fox, songbirds, eagles & more.

This guide features sites where you can explore the region's unique wildlife habitats & enrich your appreciation of nature. A variety of wild places awaits you.

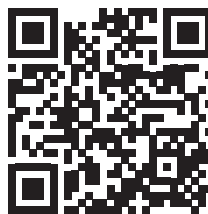
Remember: Tread lightly, stay on trails, & leave what you find. Pack out what you bring in. Be aware of changing road & weather conditions. Be considerate of other visitors & please be careful with fire.

Enjoy the journey!

WILDLIFE VIEWING TIPS

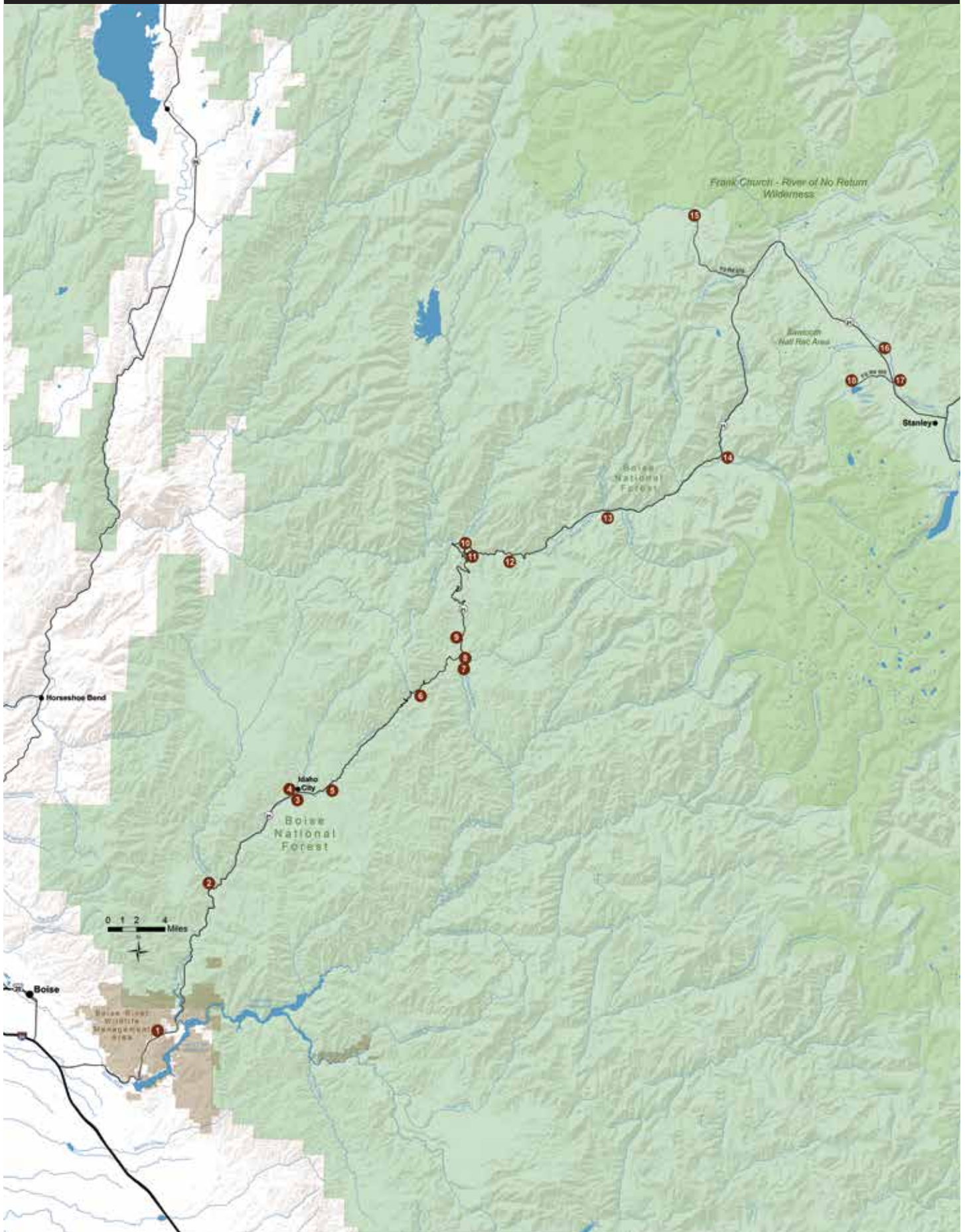
- *Observe wildlife from a distance. Use binoculars or a camera with zoom lens for a closer look.*
- *Use your senses of hearing, sight, & smell to spot animal sign such as tracks, nests, trails, & scat.*
- *Wildlife watching requires patience. Move slowly & quietly.*
- *Plan your visit according to the season & time of day. Mammals are generally more active at dawn & dusk while birds may be observed throughout the day.*
- *Take photos, notes & drawings of your observations.*
- *Use field guides to learn more about wildlife & plants.*
- *For more information on wildlife viewing use the QR Code below or visit:*

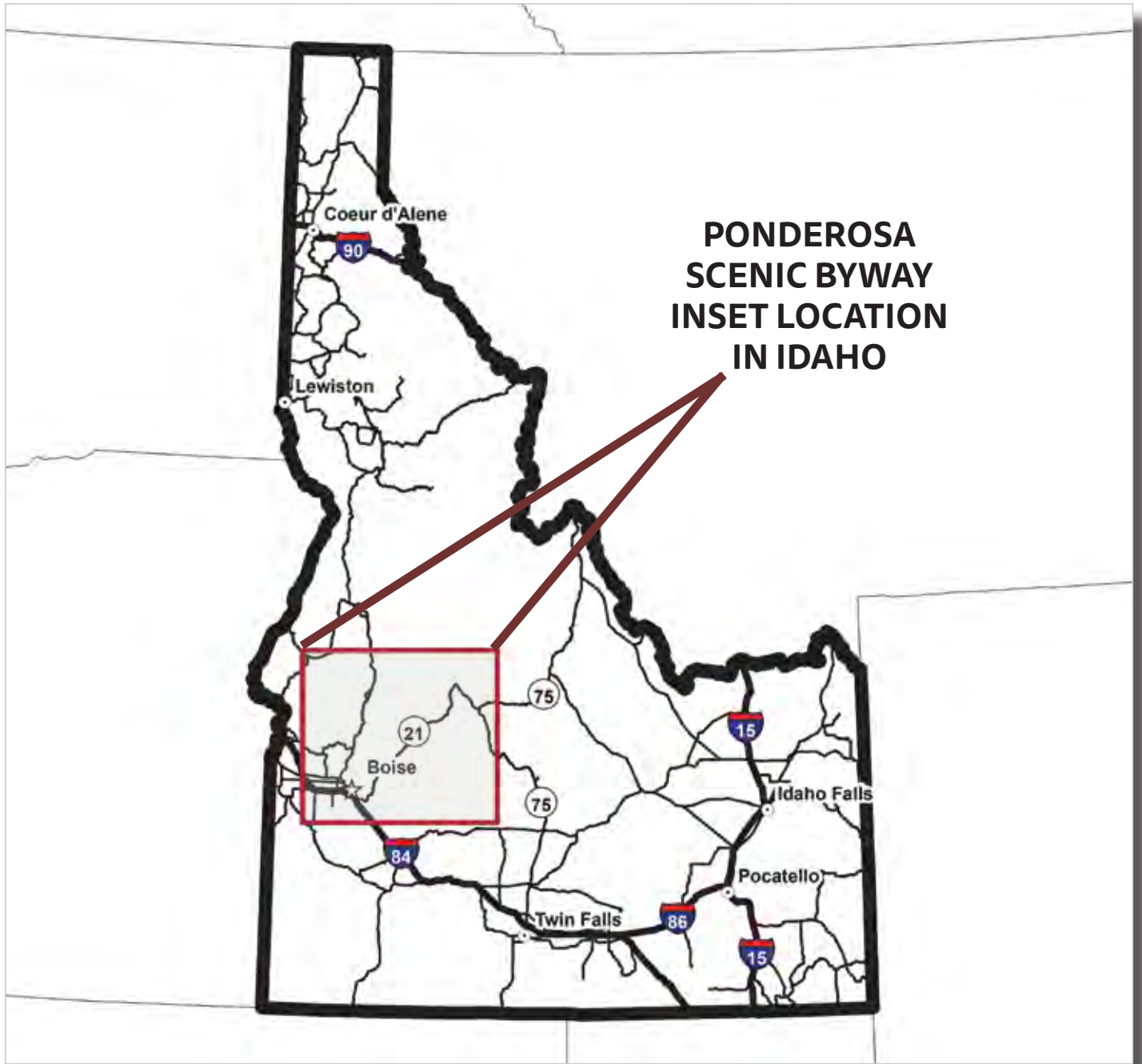
fishandgame.idaho.gov/explore



Nature viewing along Highway 21 from Boise to Stanley




PONDEROSA SCENIC BYWAY MAP OVERVIEW





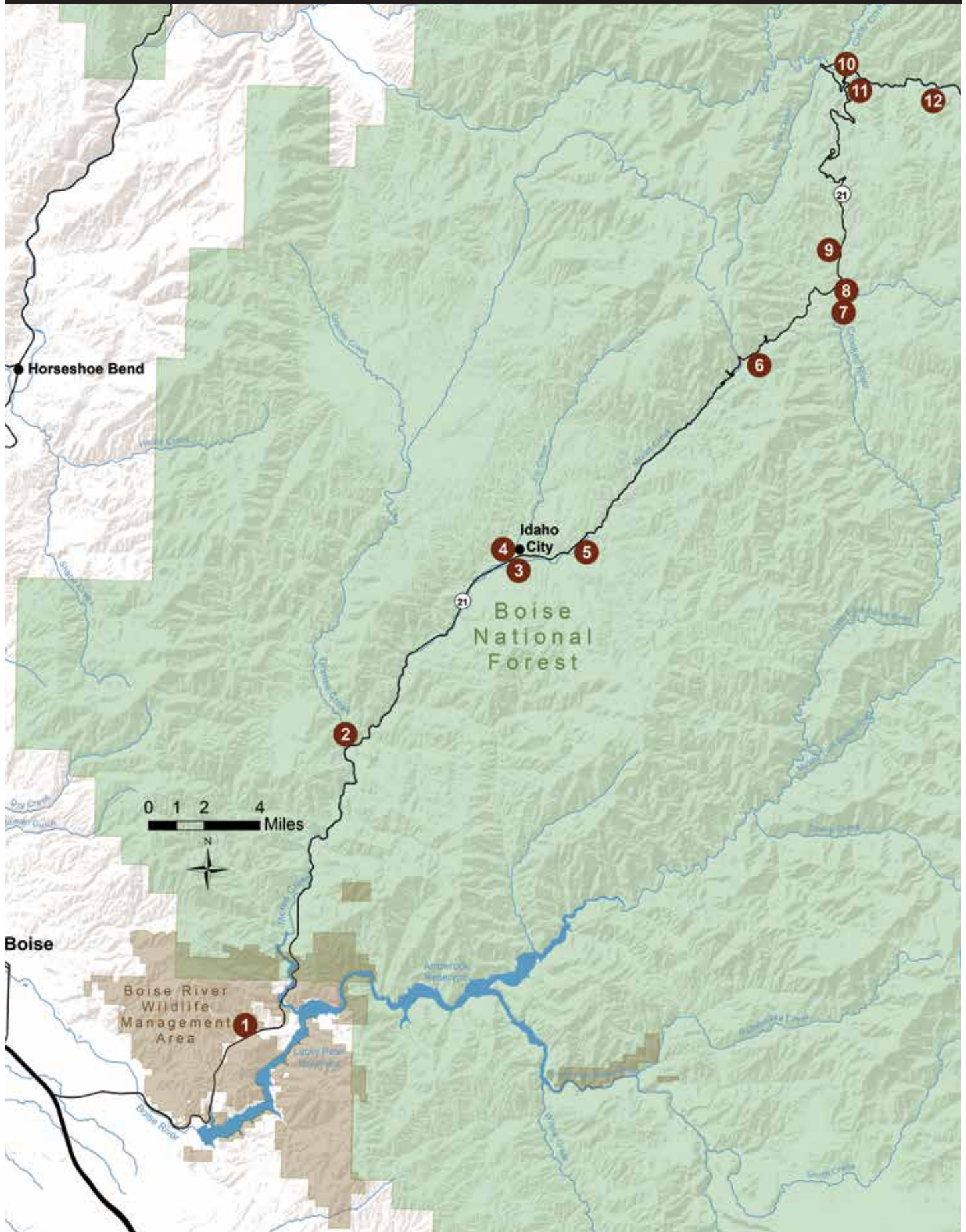
**PONDEROSA
SCENIC BYWAY
INSET LOCATION
IN IDAHO**

LEGEND

 Restrooms	 Camping
 Fees	 Interpretive Trail
 Trailhead	 Fishing
 ADA Access	 Picnicking
 Hiking	 Snowshoeing
 Visitor Center	 Cross Country Skiing

 Idaho Birding Trail

PONDEROSA SCENIC BYWAY MAP: SITES 1 - 12



1 BOISE RIVER WMA

Milepost 15



SEASON: Year-round.

HABITAT: Sagebrush-bitterbrush steppe, annual grassland, basalt cliffs, & coniferous forest.

WILDLIFE: Double-crested cormorants, bald & golden eagles, dippers & mink. Cliff swallows nest on the cliffs across the highway from the Discovery Park entrance. Highland Valley Road transects many habitats & leads up to Lucky Peak, an important migration corridor for birds & field location for the Intermountain Bird Observatory.

VIEWING: From December to March, approximately 7,000 mule deer & 500 elk inhabit the Wildlife Management Area (WMA) - browsing, resting & waiting out the long, cold winter season.

ACCESS: Just after cresting the Highland Valley Summit, look for the Boise River WMA headquarters sign at MP 15. Big game, upland bird & small game hunting are all available on Boise River WMA lands. To minimize disturbance to wildlife, some areas within the WMA are closed to the public during winter.

BONUS: (MP 18.2) Idaho's first wildlife underpass connects Idaho Department of Fish & Game property & Forest Service land to allow mule deer, elk, & pronghorn a safe migratory pathway. Stop & take a look for yourself!

2 GRIMES CREEK

Milepost 28.8



SEASON: Year-round.

HABITAT: Riparian habitat & low elevation forest; stream banks are lined with willows, red-osier dogwood & cottonwoods.

WILDLIFE: Look for osprey nests & osprey fishing along river; mink, riparian birds, Stellar's jays; brook & rainbow trout; search for animal tracks in sand near creek.

VIEWING: Grimes Creek enters Mores Creek here; river meanders are framed by basalt cliffs & stately ponderosa pine & Douglas-fir trees; wear polarized glasses for fish viewing to reduce glare from water's surface.

ACCESS: Located 27 miles from Boise & 10 miles from Idaho City; parking area & restroom just off Hwy 21 (to west of highway) near historical marker; Grimes Creek Rd (FS Rd 364) follows Grimes Creek 15 miles to New Centerville & other historic mining towns.

BONUS: With a wing-span over 5 feet, osprey are one of Idaho's largest birds of prey. These fish eaters travel to Central & South America for the winter & migrate back to Idaho in early spring. By May, they can be found along forested streams, rivers & lakes throughout the state. There's a large osprey nest on power pole along highway (after MP 30).

OTHER: Trout Unlimited & volunteers helped restore floodplain habitat impacted by historic mining; riparian (streamside) plants help stabilize soil & provide food, shade & shelter for fish & wildlife.



3 IDAHO CITY RANGER STATION

Milepost 38.3



SEASON: Open year-round; Mon-Fri 8:00-4:30 (closed weekends & holidays).

ACCESS: Ranger Station is on east side of Hwy 21 approx. ½ mile south of the Idaho City Visitor Center.

HABITAT: The pollinator-friendly native plant garden features western columbine, arrowleaf balsamroot, sticky cinquefoil, yarrow, & other wildflowers. In summer, look for hummingbirds & butterflies including swallowtails, hairstreaks, & fritillaries.

BONUS: Stop at the Ranger Station to find out about trails, camping, & yurts that are available for rent. The Buena Vista trailhead is a 5 minute drive from the Ranger Station.



Red fox
© Mike Morrison

4 BUENA VISTA TRAIL

Milepost 38.8



SEASON: Hiking from spring to fall; Nordic skiing & snowshoeing in winter.

HABITAT: Wetland/riparian habitat & conifer forest.

WILDLIFE: Mule deer, red fox, nuthatches, mountain bluebird, meadowlark, & golden-mantled ground squirrels.

ACCESS: From Hwy 21 north, turn Left (west) on Montgomery, go two blocks & turn Left (south) on Wall St, follow Wall St about ½ mile until it ends at parking area with restrooms adjacent to Idaho City airstrip.

VIEWING: South of the airstrip, the trail is close to ponds with yellow pond lily & riparian habitat along Mores Creek. Look for scarlet gilia in open areas from June to September; hummingbirds frequent the striking red flowers. Bitterbrush & snowbrush ceanothus are common on dry slopes. Bright yellow sagebrush buttercups are one of the first species to bloom in spring.

BONUS: You can hike (or jog) along this non-motorized 2.5-mile trail that loops around the Idaho City airstrip; managed as a fitness trail in summer & cross-country ski (or snowshoe) trail in winter.



5 GRANITE CREEK REC. AREA

Milepost 41



SEASON: Late spring to fall.

HABITAT: Ponderosa pine forest; restored riparian habitat.

WILDLIFE: Spring to fall: look for songbirds along creek, chipmunks, juncos, elk & mule deer tracks; redband trout; kokanee in late summer.

VIEWING: Learn about Mores Creek riparian restoration at interpretive kiosk located next to bridge just off highway; some young cottonwoods have fences to protect them from wildlife browsing.

ACCESS: From Hwy 21 North, turn right at Granite Creek turnoff then quick left into large parking area with restrooms & picnic shelters.

BONUS: Explore short 0.4 mile trail that starts from parking lot between restrooms & picnic shelter. Trail ascends gentle slope into ponderosa forest with penstemon, antelope bitterbrush, serviceberry, & elk sedge. Douglas-fir & lodgepole pine are also present. An important component of big game winter range, bitterbrush provides food, shade & cover for many wildlife & bird species.

OTHER: This area is rich in Chinese mining history. During the gold rush in the late 1800's, nearly half the local residents were Chinese immigrants. Check out the Idaho City Visitor Center for more info on the region's fascinating history.

6 MORES CREEK SUMMIT

Milepost 52.3



SEASON: Spring to fall.

HABITAT: High-elevation subalpine fir & whitebark pine forest; in summer, abundant wildflowers include false hellebore (corn lily), Lewis' monkeyflower, columbine, Indian paintbrush, & fireweed.

WILDLIFE: Clark's nutcracker, gray jays, chickadees, mountain bluebirds, wolverine, red squirrel, coyote, chipmunks, ermine, & red fox.

VIEWING: May to October: watch for butterflies such as blues, swallowtails, parnassians, mourning cloaks, & tortoiseshells. Female tortoiseshell butterflies lay groups of eggs on snowbrush & buckbrush.

ACCESS: Parking area & restrooms just off Hwy 21; FS Rd 316 goes to Sunset Mountain lookout/Upper Rabbit Creek trailhead & FS Rd 380 climbs steeply to Pilot Peak; high clearance vehicles recommended for both roads.

BONUS: A keystone species of subalpine environments, whitebark pine supplies food & shelter for hundreds of species. This 5-needle pine is threatened by blister rust, mountain pine beetle outbreaks & encroachment by fir & spruce trees. Its large nutritious seeds are prized by Clark's nutcrackers, bears, & squirrels.



7 CROOKED RIVER TRAIL

Milepost 56.7



SEASON: Summer to fall.

HABITAT: Ponderosa & lodgepole pine forest and riparian habitat; the Crooked River is high quality habitat for bull trout.

WILDLIFE: Forest provides habitat for northern goshawk, pine marten, bobcat, black bear, northern flying squirrels, Stellar's & gray jays, & raccoons.

VIEWING: Look for mink, beaver, & neotropical migrant birds (bobolink, rufous-sided towhee, willow flycatcher, & warblers) near the river.

ACCESS: From Hwy 21, take FS Road 384 (Edna Creek Rd) approx. 1 mile to the Crooked River trailhead parking area (no restrooms).

BONUS: Non-motorized trail follows the Crooked River for several miles with scenic views of riparian habitat & surrounding forest.



8 BEAVER CREEK TRAILHEAD

Milepost 57.9



SEASON: Summer to fall.

HABITAT: Wet meadow surrounded by lodgepole & ponderosa forest.

WILDLIFE: Beaver, amphibians, neotropical migratory birds; black bear, goshawks; native white & sulfur butterflies.

VIEWING: Forest & meadow edges are good places to spot wildlife & birds especially during early morning & late afternoon hours.

ACCESS: FS Road 362; approx. 1/2 mile off Hwy 21, just past Beaver Creek cabin.

BONUS: You may hear wolves howling in the distance at dusk or evenings during summer.



Mountain bluebird



9

GOLD FORK PARK'N SKI

Milepost 59.2



SEASON: Hiking in summer & fall; snowshoeing & Nordic skiing in winter.

HABITAT: Lodgepole forest & riparian.

WILDLIFE: White-headed woodpecker, pine marten, beaver, & songbirds.

VIEWING: Gold Fork Park n' Ski trails are found on either side of Hwy 21. One trail tours the Gold Fork area; the other loops the Skyline area & connects to the greater Banner Ridge/Beaver Creek trail systems.

ACCESS: Parking area with restrooms.

BONUS: Skyline yurt is available for rent; for Gold Fork area trail maps & to make yurt reservations visit: parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/activities/nordic.

OTHER: Park n' Ski permit required for parking
November 15 – April 30.



Bull elk

© Mike Morrison

10

LOWMAN OVERLOOK

Milepost 70.1

SEASON: Year-round.

HABITAT: Mature ponderosa pine, mixed conifer, & large snags.

WILDLIFE: Woodpeckers (hairy, downy, pileated), northern pygmy owl, Stellar's jay, red-breasted nuthatch & red squirrel.

VIEWING: Audubon's warblers, western tanagers, & ruby-crowned kinglets can be seen or heard in spring & summer. Listen for flammulated owls from dusk to midnight from May to July.

ACCESS: Pullout is plowed in winter. The town of Lowman & South Fork Payette River are located below the overlook.

BONUS: Large diameter ponderosa pines display bark shaped like puzzle pieces. On a warm day, the fragrant bark smells like vanilla. They have few lower branches & heavy upper limbs that reach horizontally or droop downward. Thick branches provide good support for wildlife as do rounded or flattened tops of older trees.

OTHER: The 1989 Lowman fire burned 47,600 acres in the South Fork Payette River drainage.



11

LOWMAN RANGER STATION

Milepost 73.5



SEASON: Ranger Station open year-round Mon-Fri 8:00-4:30 (closed weekends & holidays).

HABITAT: Mature ponderosa pine, mixed conifer, large snags, & riparian.

WILDLIFE: River otter, red squirrel, deer, elk, bald eagle (Nov-March), Canada geese, American dipper, Clark's nutcracker, woodpeckers (white-headed, pileated, hairy, downy, Lewis's, northern flicker), osprey (April-September), western tanager, & Audubon's warbler.

VIEWING: Goose nesting platform on river island west of the Ranger Station (late March to early May).

ACCESS: Walk along Lick Creek Road (FS Rd 588), located across the highway from the Ranger Station. Look & listen for woodpeckers, song sparrows, winter wrens, warblers, & other songbirds including common redpolls. Look for elk, deer, coyote, wolf, fox, mountain lion, snowshoe hare, ermine, & ruffed grouse tracks in winter. Wear safety orange in fall as this is a popular hunting access road.

BONUS: Native plant garden, picnic table; Mountain View campground (1/2 mile west of the Ranger Station) provides opportunities for camping along the river in summer.

12

KIRKHAM CAMPGROUND

Milepost 77



SEASON: Campground open from late May to September 1.

HABITAT: Hot springs, open ponderosa pine forest, & bitterbrush.

WILDLIFE: Mule deer, elk, bald eagles, golden eagles, & ravens.

VIEWING: Watch for eagles & hawks perched on snags along the ridgeline; elk & deer on the open slopes.

ACCESS: Campground & hot springs are adjacent to South Fork Payette River. Access road crosses bridge to reach campground & hot springs.

BONUS: Viewing platform, interpretive signs & short (0.2 mile) trail. Much of this area burned in the 1989 Lowman fire.

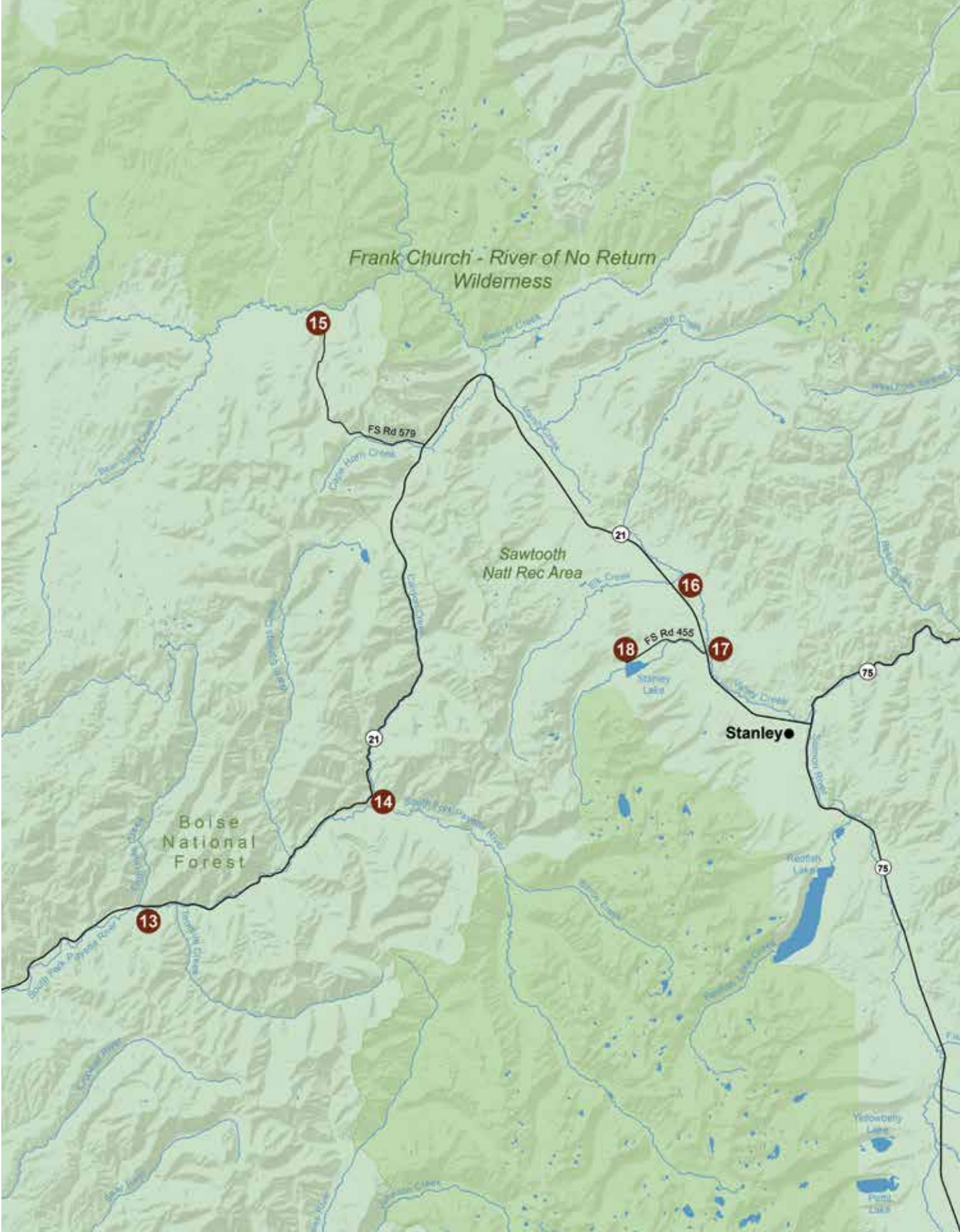
OTHER: Use caution since hot springs water can be scalding; keep dogs on leash & away from hot water.



Thimbleberry



PONDEROSA SCENIC BYWAY MAP: SITES 13-18



13 LOWMAN NATURE PONDS

Milepost 85.5



SEASON: Spring to fall.

HABITAT: Wetland, pond, riverine, & ponderosa pine forest.

WILDLIFE: Western toad, long-toed salamander, & Pacific chorus frog; bats, osprey, & otter.

VIEWING: Look for geese on the nesting platforms in spring. Ducks (mallards, common merganser, redhead, & others) visit the ponds during spring & fall migration. River otter & osprey may be seen fishing the ponds. Search for amphibian eggs, larvae, tadpoles, & adults in nearby wetlands.

ACCESS: The nearby South Fork Payette River is migratory habitat for bull trout. Walk through pine forests along closed roads that parallel the river east & west of the ponds. Watch for dippers & kingfishers foraging on the river.

BONUS: You may see hummingbird nests in the shrubs & trees adjacent to the wetlands. Calliope, black-chinned, rufous, & broad-tailed hummingbirds are found in the Lowman area. Watch for their courtship displays in summer.

OTHER: Restrooms; picnicking; trailheads for Jackson Peak (lookout) & Tenmile trails are accessed from roads in the vicinity.

14 GRANDJEAN OVERLOOK

Milepost 95.1

SEASON: Summer-fall.

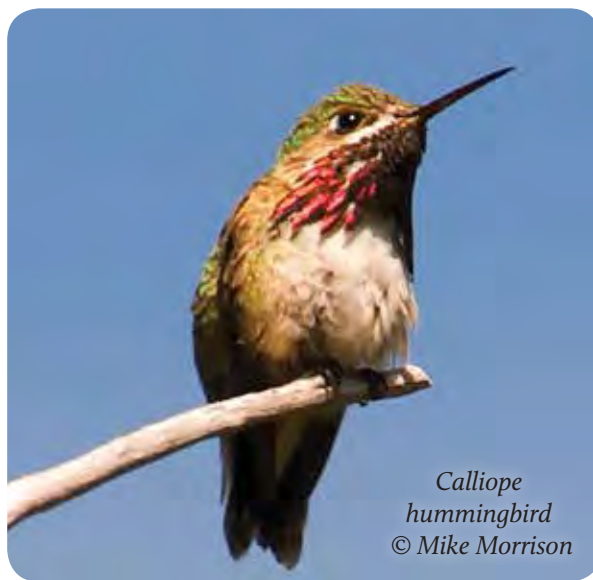
HABITAT: Mature ponderosa pine & mixed conifer forests; open sagebrush slopes.

WILDLIFE: Elk, deer, black bear, northern goshawk, & pine marten.

VIEWING: Views of upper South Fork Payette River & Sawtooth Range.

ACCESS: Overlook is located in area closed to public parking/stopping during winter months due to avalanche danger. Highway 21 may be closed in winter between Grandjean & Banner Summit.

BONUS: Grandjean historical marker.



*Calliope
hummingbird
© Mike Morrison*



15 BRUCE MEADOWS/BEAR VALLEY

Milepost 109.3



SEASON: Summer-fall; this area is several miles from the highway (see Access below).

HABITAT: Mountain meadows, lodgepole pine, subalpine fir, & whitebark pine on high ridges.

WILDLIFE: Mule deer, elk, sandhill crane, northern harrier, Swainson's hawk, mountain bluebird, great gray owl, salmon, wolverine, & waterfowl.

VIEWING: July to September: look for mule deer & elk in the meadows in early morning & evening hours. Waterfowl frequent the ponds at the upper end of Bear Valley Creek. Salmon may be seen spawning in the creek in July & August.

ACCESS: From Hwy 21, turn west onto FS Rd 579 at the Boundary Creek Boat Launch sign (at MP 109.3), then go 9 miles to Bruce Meadows airstrip. Bear Valley includes a series of meadows that extend for several miles past the airstrip along FS Rd 579 with numerous wildlife viewing opportunities along the way.

BONUS: In summer, meadows are filled with wildflowers including penstemon, camas, elephant heads, sego lilies & shooting stars.

16 PARK CREEK OVERLOOK

Milepost 123.5



SEASON: Year-round.

HABITAT: High mountain wet meadow (6,900 feet elevation) surrounded by lodgepole pine forest.

WILDLIFE: Elk & deer especially in June & July; sandhill cranes in spring & summer; great gray owls, Swainson's & red-tailed hawks, mountain bluebird, mountain chickadee, dark-eyed junco, & red-breasted nuthatch.

VIEWING: Stunning views of Sawtooths year-round with abundant wildflowers in spring & summer.

ACCESS: Milepost 123.5; west of Stanley; short access drive to overlook area.

BONUS: Park Creek has picnic tables, interpretive sign, vault toilet; popular Nordic ski & snowshoeing trailhead in winter.



Arrowleaf Balsamroot



17 STANLEY CREEK

Milepost 125.5



SEASON: Stanley Creek Wildlife Interpretive Area is open spring through late fall (until parking area is snowed in).

HABITAT: Riparian area with abundant willows & wet meadows along confluence of Stanley, Stanley Lake, & Valley Creeks.

WILDLIFE: The Stanley Creek area is a fabulous site for birding! You might see sandhill cranes, common snipe, spotted sandpiper, cliff swallows, red-winged blackbirds, yellow warbler, song sparrow, common yellowthroat & many other species.

VIEWING: Observe a wide variety of birds in a relatively small area; short trail with interpretive signs & a bench at the overlook; also look for beaver & mule deer along the creeks.

ACCESS: Milepost 125.5; west of Stanley on Hwy 21; parking area adjacent to road.

BONUS: Listen for distinctive song of the willow flycatcher (“fitz-pew”) in riparian areas.

18 STANLEY LAKE OVERLOOK

Milepost 126



SEASON: Spring through late fall (road closed Nov 30 to May 1).

HABITAT: Large alpine lake created by glacial moraines.

WILDLIFE: Waterfowl & water birds in spring, summer & fall; look for tundra swans, loons, & bald eagles during spring & fall migrations; songbirds include olive-sided flycatcher, mountain chickadee, dark-eyed junco; ospreys, goshawks, & great gray owls; pine marten, red fox, & black bear.

VIEWING: Watch for moose along the road between the highway & the lake; enjoy beautiful views of the Sawtooths across Stanley Lake.

ACCESS: Milepost 126; from Hwy 21, take paved road (FS Rd 455) three miles west to overlook.

BONUS: Interpretive signs, picnic tables & vault toilet at overlook; Stanley Lake area offers camping, trails, & lake-based recreation.



Although the Ponderosa Pine Scenic Byway ends in Stanley, if you wish to make a loop you can head south to Ketchum on Hwy 75 and return to Boise via Hwy 20/Interstate 84.

CONTACT INFORMATION

BOISE NATIONAL FOREST SUPERVISOR'S OFFICE

1249 S. Vinnell Way
Suite 200, Boise, ID 83709
(208)373-4100
www.fs.usda.gov/boise

INTERAGENCY VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER

1387 S. Vinnell Way
Boise, ID 83709
(208)373-4007

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH & GAME

600 S. Walnut
Boise, ID 83712
(208)334-3700
www.fishandgame.idaho.gov

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION

5657 Warm Springs Ave.
Boise, ID 83716
(208)334-4199
www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov

IDAHO CITY RANGER DISTRICT

Hwy 21, Milepost 38.5
P.O. Box 129
Idaho City, ID 83631
(208)392-6681

IDAHO CITY VISITORS CENTER

Hwy 21 & Main Street
P.O. Box 350
Idaho City, ID 83631
(208)392-6040

LOWMAN RANGER DISTRICT

Hwy 21, HC-77
Box 3020, Lowman, ID 83637
(208)259-3361

SAWTOOTH NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

STANLEY RANGER STATION

HC 64, Box 9900
Stanley, ID 83278
(one mile south of Stanley on Hwy 75)
(208)774-3000

SAWTOOTH NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

HEADQUARTERS & VISITOR CENTER

5 North Fork Canyon Road
Ketchum, ID 83340
(8 miles north of Ketchum on Hwy 75)
(208)727-5000
www.fs.usda.gov/sawtooth



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