



Whatcom County's forests, marshes, lakes and sea shores are home to a vast array of bird species, particularly waterbirds and birds of prey.

Bald Eagles are a favorite with visitors, although sometimes hard to find since they prefer to perch on tree tops in remote areas. Viewing is best in winter when hundreds migrate to this region to feed on salmon after they spawn. Popular viewing spots are along the Nooksack and Skagit rivers.

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# BIRD WATCHING

## **Chuckanut Mountain**

Connected to Bellingham via the Interurban Trail and Chuckanut Drive. The area offers a wide range of habitat including owls, sparrows, vireos, woodpeckers, chickadees, warblers, and kinglets. One could spend a week on Chuckanut Mountain and still not discover all the birds; nor all the trails.

## **Lake Padden**

Located on the southern boundary of Bellingham, this vast city park offers an abundance of birds. There are many trails that branch off the main trail around the lake. Several species of ducks are regulars on the south shore. A Bald Eagle is often seen perched on top of an old snag on the south shore. Search the forest for chickadees, Swainson Thrush, Brown Creepers, Winter Wrens, warblers, Hairy, Downy and Pileated Woodpeckers, Red Tail Hawks, Brown Headed Cowbirds, Kingfishers, Osprey, Pine Siskin, House Finches, Red Breast Sapsuckers, Spotted Towhees, swallows, sparrows and many more.

## **Lake Terrell**

Head west from I-5 on Slater Road and turn north on Lake Terrell Road. Good for ducks, blackbirds, swallows, and several marsh birds. The area is closed during hunting season mid-fall to midwinter.

## **Nooksack River**

There are several locations along the North Fork, Middle Fork, and South fork for viewing Bald Eagles, including Hovander Park in Ferndale, Nugents Corner, and Rutsatz Road (off Highway 9). They are easiest to find in Winter when they feed on salmon. A favorite spot is the bridge on Mosquito Lake Road. From Bellingham head east on the Mt. Baker Highway for 16 miles, turn right on Mosquito Lake Road. Drive about 1 mile to the bridge.

## **Red River Road**

Take I-5, Exit 260 (Slater Road) and drive west. Turn left on Haxton Way and right on to Red River Road. Drive slowly and look for hawks, harriers, eagles, kestrels and falcons scanning the fields for prey. The creek along the road usually has a heron or two, perhaps a river otter, and other shorebirds. Cross the creek and turn on the gravel road that heads south. Be patient, you just may spot a northern shrike.

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### **Sehome Hill Arboretum**

Situated in the heart of Bellingham next to Western Washington University, this city park offers a variety of birds, including Black-headed Grosbeaks, Pileated Woodpeckers, and Western Tanagers.

### **Tennant Lake**

Located next to Hovander Park in Ferndale (I-5, Exit 262). Good for ducks, blackbirds, marsh wrens, swallows, flycatchers, Swainson thrush, Warblers, Cedar Wax Wings and many marsh birds. The area is closed during hunting season mid-fall to midwinter. Several Hawks and Harriers can be seen as you walk along the trail toward the lake. A wood boardwalk meanders through the lily pads and marsh grass for great viewing. Several tree swallow boxes are along the path. A new viewing tower offers great panoramic views, and features a remote TV for handicap access.

### **Whatcom Falls Park / Scudder's Pond**

From Bellingham, follow Lakeway Drive east. This large city park has a variety of birds. Take the trail or drive (via Electric Ave.) northeast to Scudder's Pond. The pond is home to beavers, several duck species, blackbirds, herons, and many more.

### **North Cascades Audubon Society**

<http://northcascadesaudubon.org/birding>

This site features a Whatcom County map with birding locations.

## **Out of County**

### **Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve & Interpretive Center**

10441 Bay View-Edison Road just north of Bay View State Park in Skagit County.

More than 3 miles of trails provide access to beach, shoreline and upland areas.

Supports nearly 250 visiting bird species. Most trails open 24 hours, except beach access trail.

Interpretive Center is open Wed-Sun 10am-5pm. (360) 428-1558

### **Skagit Flats**

The "flats" is the farming area between the towns of Mt. Vernon and La Conner in Skagit County.

Great for viewing all types of raptors including falcons, osprey and hawks. In Winter there are

Trumpeter Swans and Snow Geese.

### **George Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary**

5191 Robertson Road on Westham Island in Delta, BC.

More than 240 species of fowl have been observed. The sanctuary is comprised of 850 acres of managed habitat and estuarine marsh. 2.5 miles of trails. 9am-4pm daily. \$3.25 Canadian.

(604) 946-6980.