

Scenic Byways

ADIRONDACK NORTH COUNTRY

Explore Adirondack North Country Wildlife and Habitat



Explore



This map contains a sampling of wildlife viewing areas along the Adirondack North Country Byways. It is meant to be a guide to the types of habitats and wildlife in the area and to specific wildlife viewing opportunities in this region. The map is meant to orient travelers to the region, point out places to look for wildlife, and explain how to look for signs of wildlife.

While this is not meant to be a trail guide, it provides information on some short hikes and nature trails where you may see wildlife. If venturing off the roadway, please consult a guidebook or map. If you seek more detailed information, please visit a local guide, outfitter, local Chamber of Commerce, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, or adirondackscenicbyways.org.

Simple tips to keep in mind when looking for wildlife.

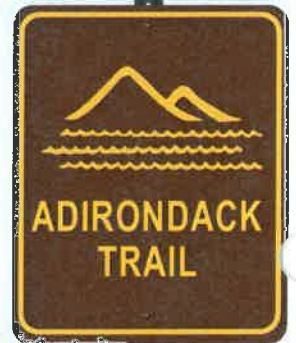
Most animals are aware of oncoming traffic. While you may not get a full view of an animal, consider yourself lucky to simply catch a glimpse of one. Look for a swoop of wing or listen for a call from a loon.

Many animals spend their time sleeping or resting. The best time to see wildlife is early in the morning or at dusk when they are moving or looking for food or water, or during their migration season.

Vegetation and landscape features are important parts of wildlife habitat. Look for signs of wildlife near water bodies, in naturally open corridors, and in open wetlands.

Don't ever feed wildlife, approach animals, or use anything to attract them. All animals are wild and can be unpredictable. Animals that are used to human food may become conditioned to and eventually lose fear of humans and/or vehicles, putting them at risk. Feeding animals hurts them more than it helps them.

Higher speeds, heavier traffic and wider roads make crossing roads more dangerous for animals. Birds are often killed as they fly into passing cars while chasing prey or are hit while eating road kill. New York State is beginning to install more wildlife friendly culverts and other structures to help wildlife cross roads safely. Look for the turtle crossing at the north end of the causeway on RT 30 in the Village of Tupper Lake. It directs turtles to safer locations and less dangerous nesting sites. You can help by driving the speed limit and paying attention to wildlife sharing the byways.



WILDLIFE



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NORTHERN LEOPARD FROG

There are 14 species of frogs and toads in New York State. For much of the year they are hard to see, as they spend time in trees, underground or in water. On warm nights in the spring, you may see many frogs and toads as they cross roads while moving to ponds to mate. Leopard Frogs live in river shore meadows where they can breed in shallow water and hunt. They are great singers and jumpers but are one of our less common frogs.



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MOOSE

Moose, a giant ungulate of the boreal forest, were killed off in NYS in 1850, and returned to the Adirondacks in the 1980s. They live around swamps and lakes in the summer, and in conifer stands in the winter. During the "rut", or the fall breeding season, moose travel and can be aggressive. Salt applied to roadways in the winter attracts moose into roads. Because of their dark color, they are difficult to see at night in the roads.



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COMMON LOON

A big, northern diving bird found on lakes and large ponds during its breeding season. Loons are boldly patterned black and white, with long necks, and distinctive red eyes. They dive to eat fish and nest on shorelines. They dance on the water and call to each other at night. They return to the same breeding sites each year. In the winter they live on open waters off the ocean coast and lose the black and white breeding pattern. Look for solitary birds, or with a mate or chicks. Loons float low in the water and you may only see the profile of their long bills.



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WOOD DUCK

More than 30 waterfowl species are commonly seen throughout NYS. Wood ducks, like this, prefer shallow marshes and rivers. "Diving ducks", like mergansers, are found on larger water bodies and need to run along the surface of the water to gain speed for flight. Male wood ducks are one of the most recognizable birds with over six different colors on their bodies. They are small pretty ducks with green heads with swirling white lines. They live in small forest ponds and nest in holes in trees or in man-made duck boxes. Wood ducks dance and bob their heads when they are courting, and take off quickly if you come too close. In the fall they gather in big open marshes and fly in lines at dusk.



©Ed Vorisek

BLACK BEAR

There are few large predators left in the northeastern US. The most common is the black bear. Our largest carnivore, black bears are shy and hard to see. They are found in forests mixed with open areas and wetlands. In spring they are skinny and hungry as they come out of hibernation. In the fall they look for high calorie foods, like beech nuts, to help prepare them for the long winter. Bears that are fed by humans or raid coolers and garbage cans become dependant on people for food and get labeled as a "nuisance" wildlife species.

WILDLIFE



©Larry Master

SNAPPING TURTLE

Snappers are one of 11 freshwater turtles in NYS. They are big, heavy-bodied turtles with long necks, mean tempers, and saw-tooth edges on their shells. They spend most of their time underwater, and eat both plants and animals. A turtle's shell is an important defense against most predators. However it won't protect it against cars and trucks that crush many turtles each year, especially females looking for nest sites in gravel along the roadways.



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RIVER OTTER

A big, sleek, fish-eating, weasel with a powerful tail for swimming, otters live along river corridors and nest in stream banks. Otters are nocturnal but can be seen playing in the daytime during winter months. They make trails like bobsled runs where they slide down banks or travel in the snow. They move around constantly and are hard to see. River otters are at the top of the food chain, and can be exposed to mercury and other heavy metals consumed by fish.



©Larry Master

WHITE-TAILED DEER

Perhaps the most widely recognized animal, this species lives on the forest edges, is scarce in the deep woods and abundant around farms and settlements. It is most well-known for its "white flag" tail, seen as it bounds away. Its main predators, mountain lions and wolves, were overhunted and are now gone from New York State. Today, deer are managed through hunting. If you see a deer along the roadway, slow down and be prepared for 2-3 more to follow.



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SNOWSHOE HARE

The white rabbit of the northern forests, the hare shares its habitat with the moose, lynx, and martin. They are adapted to deep snow and cold. Big feet allow them to walk on top of thick snow. In the winter they have a heavy white coat and in the spring they turn brown. They live in varying elevations and in forests or fields with plenty of undergrowth for food and protection. They tend to avoid open spaces. Consider yourself lucky to catch a glimpse of one.



Habitat

hab-i-tat [hab-i-tat] **noun** 1. the natural environment of an organism; place that is natural for the life and growth of an organism



©Leslie Karasin/WCS

Mixed northern forests are the most common forests that you will see during your travels. They contain hardwoods like maple, yellow birch and beech; and softwoods like hemlock and spruce. Forest canopy birds, particularly warblers and vireos are common. Cavity-nesting birds like woodpeckers live in forests with older trees, and ground-nesting birds such as thrushes and ovenbirds in undisturbed forest. Salamanders are abundant and live just below the surface, under leaves and logs. All mixed forests have small mammals like grey squirrels. Deer like clearings and undergrowth, porcupines like ledges and hemlock. Weasels, black bears, moose and bobcats go everywhere, but rarely stay in one place.



©Larry Master

Lowland boreal forests are our most northern forests. They occur in low-lying areas and contain spruce, tamarack, and balsam forests. Some forest stands are dense and dark, others open and patchy. Some have large old trees, but far more have been logged. Here you will find moose and snowshoe hare, and the gray jay, black-backed woodpecker, and boreal chickadee. Spruce grouse used to live here, but now are almost gone. Marten still do, but perhaps not as many as in the high mountains. Boreal forests may also be our most endangered forests. They, and the creatures in them, are adapted to long winters and deep snow and as the winters warm, many of these species may vanish from here.



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Beaver flows are the ponds that beavers make, and the meadows and thickets around them. Beaver flows are excellent wildlife habitat. Flycatchers and swallows live in the dead trees, and blackbirds and sparrows in the meadows. Forest birds visit them to find insects and moose and deer to forage. Muskrats, turtles, otters, and frogs live with the beaver in the ponds. Voles make runways in the grass, and moles tunnel in them. Watershrews, one of our hardest-to-see animals, hunt in the streams, and may sometimes, perhaps once or twice in a lifetime, be seen running across the ponds on a bright night.

Habitat continued...



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A bog is a cold, infertile wetland where plants have small leaves and grow slowly, and where dead plants accumulate as peat. Bogs are surprisingly good places for animals. Many forest animals--deer, moose, coyotes, and all sorts of birds--visit them and are often easy to see. Other species, often harder to see, live in them. Lincoln's sparrows and palm warblers are characteristic birds of bog shrubs, and the merlin is the characteristic raptor. Several northern dragonflies live around bog pools, and wood frogs and peepers breed in them. Red-backed voles tunnel in bog mats and eat the roots of sedges; the tiny bog lemming lives near bog streams and eats grasses, snails and slugs.



©Larry Master

Old-growth forests have never been cut, or lightly cut over 100 years ago and have had time to regrow. Logging, storms, acid rain, and diseases have removed most of the old trees but there is still more old growth here than anywhere else east of the Mississippi. The biggest trees, often maples or birches, are over three feet in diameter, over 100 feet high and usually over 200 years old. Old growth forests typically have a sparse understory. Mice and voles live on the forest floor, or in dead logs. Most of the birds live high in the canopy. Red-backed salamander and wood frog are characteristic animals of the forest floor. The scarlet tanager and warblers are among the most characteristic canopy birds.



©Larry Master

Alpine zone. The high mountains contain two special habitats. The **krummholz** (crooked wood) is a zone of small spruces and firs. It typically starts around 4,000 feet where the trees get lower and denser, and extends upwards to the base of the tundra, where trees can no longer survive in the open. The **alpine tundra** is a zone of low vegetation, with some small trees, but only in sheltered places. Many rare plants live here on open rock, often on popular summits where plants risk getting trampled by hikers. The alpine zone is at the edge of the forest, and has many forest species. The most visible wildlife on the open summits are the birds, some of whom are only found in these high-elevation habitats.

Eye on the sky

Looking at a bird's shape and size are often easy ways to identify it. This guide provides some of the more common or easily identifiable birds you may see in the skies along the byways. You are most likely to see a bird's silhouette, where it perches, and how it flies. If you are lucky you may notice color or other characteristics.

RAVEN – Massive black bird, thick neck, shaggy throat feathers, tail is long and wedge-shaped in flight.



OSPREY – Large, white breast, long wings, wingtips angled backwards, dark eyestripe. Eats fish.



BALD EAGLE – Larger than most other raptors, holds wings flat in flight. Often seen soaring or perched in trees. Adult has characteristic white head.



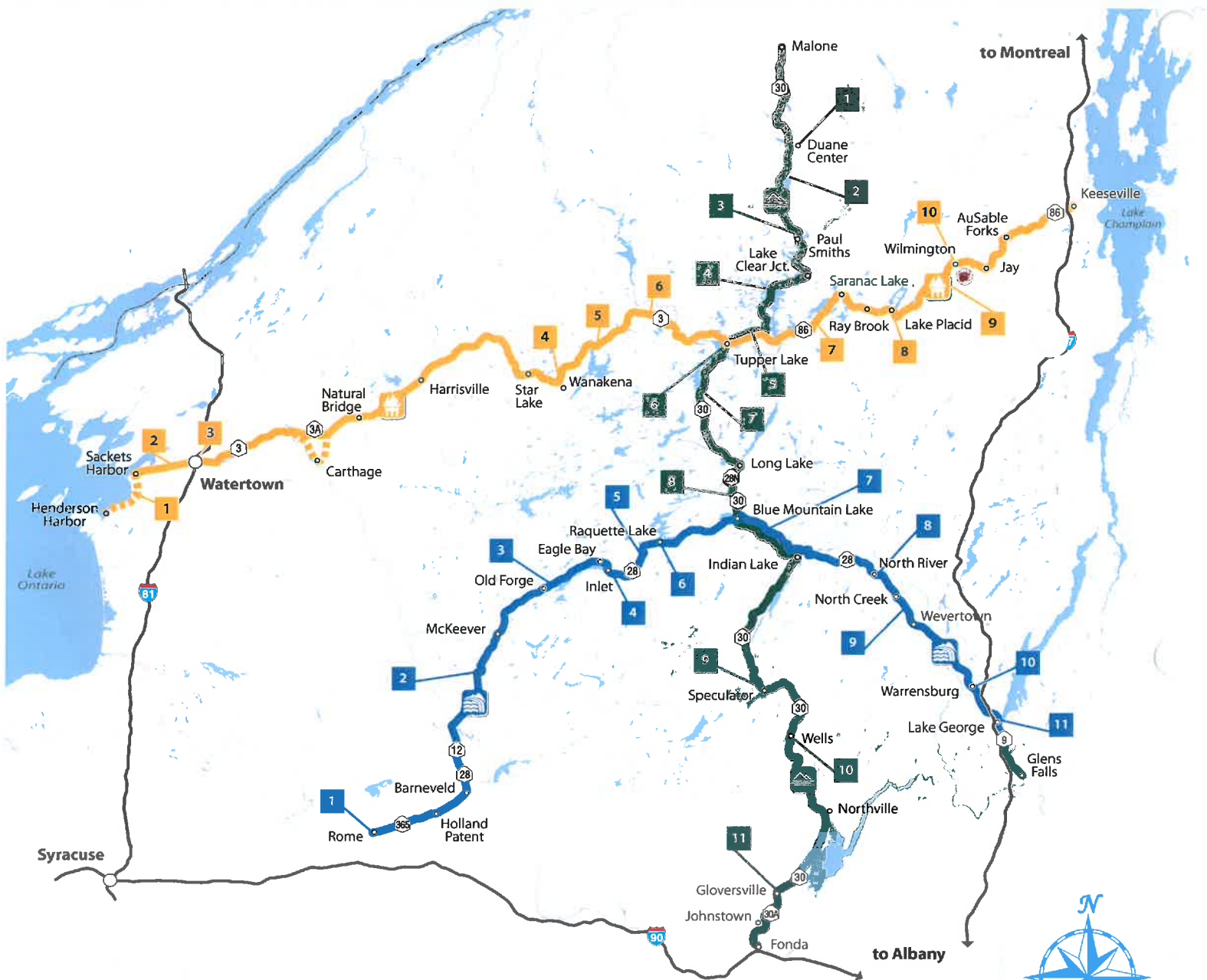
FLICKER – Large woodpecker, slim rounded head, long tail that tapers to a point, flies in an up-and-down path alternating flaps and glides, white rump patch conspicuous in flight.




GREAT BLUE HERON – Tall gray bird, long legs, neck held in an "S", white crown stripe. Walks slowly in shallow water.



Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways



LEGEND

- Rivers, Streams
- Lakes and Ponds
- Interstate Highways
-  Wildlife Rehabilitation Center
- Olympic
- Proposed
- Adirondack Trail
- Central Adirondack Trail

0 10 Miles 25 Miles 50 Miles
0 10 KM 25 KM 50 KM



Scan this
QR Code
with your
smart phone



Olympic Scenic Byway

From the shores of Lake Ontario through the Adirondack Park, this 170-mile route takes you to the Olym Village of Lake Placid, past Whiteface Mountain, and along the Ausable River to Lake Champlain.

1

Westcott Beach State Park — Great spot for incredible bird viewing along the shores of Lake Ontario. Scenic viewing along the bluffs, sheltered by Henderson Bay, a former Olympic sailing training site. Located south of **Sackets Harbor** off RT 3. Visit www.nysparks.state.ny.us

2

Dexter Marsh Wildlife Management Area — A 1,350-acre marsh 7 miles west of the **City of Watertown** off RT 180. Look for ducks, black terns, shore birds, and marsh waders. Canada geese migrate through and bald eagles are often seen over the marsh. Visit www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/40663.html

3

New York State Zoo at Thompson Park — The only Zoo in the world dedicated to NY's wild animals. See wolverine, bobcat, black bear, elk, grey wolf and other native species. The Zoo is located in the **City of Watertown** in a park designed by the sons of Frederick Law Olmsted, the "father of landscape architecture". Visit www.nyszoo.org.

4

James F. Dubuar Memorial Forest — Enjoy nature trails on this 2,800-acre outdoor classroom run by *SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry Ranger School's Campus*. Trails open for hiking and x-c skiing. Access .3 miles east of County RT 61 on RT 3 or from the Ranger School in **Wanakena**. Trail information available at Ranger School.

5

Five Ponds Wilderness Area — Just south of **Cranberry Lake** sits one of the largest, most remote areas remaining in NYS. This 100,000-acre wilderness is home to black bear, moose, boreal species, and beaver. Look for brown and yellow DEC access signs along RT 3. Hike the Cranberry Lake 50-mile trail. www.cranberrylake50.org.

6

Massawepie Mire — At 900 acres, it is one of the largest boreal peatlands in the eastern US with extensive wetlands and northern boreal forests. Breeding area for spruce grouse and other boreal birds, loons and ospreys. Open to the public most of the year except July and August, access through Boy Scout Camp on RT 3 west of **Tupper Lake**.

7

Saranac Lake Wild Forest — This 79,000-acre tract has abundant lakes, ponds, streams and mountains. Great paddling and excellent habitat for loons, eagles, bear, moose, otter, marten and more. Access to easy walking trail to Middle Saranac Lake beach 5 miles west of RT 30/3 junction across from Ampersand Mt. trailhead on RT 3.

8

Adirondack High Peaks — A region with a high concentration of Adirondack mountains higher than 4,000'. Many are visible from the byway on RT 86 in **Lake Placid**. These summits contain rare alpine lakes, meadows, wetlands, streams, and forests. Visit NYS DEC Headquarters in **Ray Brook** or Adirondack Mountain Club for access info.

9

Wilmington Notch — Follow the world famous flyfishing destination, on the West Branch of the Ausable River, through a narrow pass with a 2,000' cliff. Look for peregrine falcons nesting and hawks migrating. Roadside pull-offs along RT 86 between **Lake Placid** and **Wilmington** make for easy viewing.

10

Whiteface Mountain — The "Olympic Mountain". This fifth highest peak in NYS is located just outside the hamlet of Wilmington on RT 86. The summit offers views of alpine tundra, the breeding habitat for high elevation boreal birds such as the rare Bicknell's thrush. Access the summit via the Whiteface Mountain Veterans Memorial Highway from the 4-way intersection in **Wilmington** for amazing views of the Champlain Valley. At the summit parking area, take a short hike to the very top or ride the in-mountain elevator for a truly amazing 360-degree view of the surrounding region. Gondola rides available to the summit from the ski area on RT 86. In 2013, look for the Whiteface Mountain Alpine Summit natural history exhibits.



Adirondack Trail Scenic Byway

This 188-mile route travels from Malone, just 10 miles south of the Canadian border, through the heart of the Adirondack Park, south to the Mohawk River Valley.

1

Town of Duane Pond -- A short 3/4-mile hike along a walking path brings you to an observation deck overlooking a remote 25-acre pond with interpretative sign describing the pond's plants and animals. In **Duane**, travel west on County RT 136. Look for white church and parking area ~1 mile on the left.

2

Debar Mountain Wild Forest and Meacham Lake -- Just off RT 30, this 1,000-acre lake has an undeveloped shoreline. Enjoy a public campground and picnic area. Home to loons, eagles, and other bird species. This stretch of the Adirondack Trail Scenic Byway is often a hot spot for moose, usually seen during the fall breeding season.

3

Paul Smiths College Visitor Interpretive Center (VIC) -- Enjoy nature viewing along well maintained walking trails through forests, wetlands, and marshes. Great habitat for boreal chickadee, grey jay, moose, loons, otter, and coyote. Visit the butterfly house and nature center. Located 1 mile north of *Paul Smiths College* on RT 30.

4

St. Regis Canoe Area -- The only designated Canoe Area in NYS, this 18,400-acre tract offers a network of small ponds and lakes for paddling, hiking and x-c skiing. Habitat for loons, eagles, fisher, marten, mink, muskrat, beaver and more woodland species. Look for brown and yellow DEC access signs to lakes and ponds along RT 30.

5

Raquette River Blueway -- The 2nd longest river in NYS and part of the 740-mile Northern Forest Canoe Trail that runs from Old Forge, NY to Port Kent, ME. This waterway is part of a racecourse for the annual 90-mile Canoe Classic. Look for river otter playing along shore in the winter. Access at boat launch east of **Tupper Lake**.

6

The Wild Center -- Learn about nature in the Adirondacks with hands on activities and exhibits with live animals including river otters. Wildlife viewing on 31 acres of trails, interpretive programs, trail to the Raquette River oxbow with observation deck. Hosley Ave. off RT 30 in the **Village of Tupper Lake**. www.wildcenter.org.

7

Moody Marsh -- Stop for birding and wildlife viewing along the RT 30 bridge south of the **Village of Tupper Lake**. Look for loons, bitterns, herons, ducks, ospreys, eagles, beaver, fisher, otter and the occasional moose. Several roadside pulloffs and parking, interpretive signage, panoramic landscapes, and special turtle crossings.

8

Blue Ridge Wilderness Area -- More than 47,000 acres of protected wilderness, home to many northern species like the bobcat, moose, river otter, and marten. Popular but strenuous hike up Blue Mountain reveals high elevation habitat for species like the rare Bicknell's thrush. Along the way visit the famous *Adirondack Museum*.

9

Sacandaga Pathway and Picnic Area -- Take a short interpretive walk along the Kunjamuk River. Wheelchair accessible boardwalks and trails wind through wetland habitat. Signage describes logging history and geology. Located in downtown **Speculator**, left of the Pavilion across from Lake Pleasant on RT 30.

10

Lake Algonquin Overlook, Town of Wells -- Formed by a dam on the Sacandaga River, this scenic overlook provides a fishing platform and views of aquatic habitat. Near the RT 30 bridge, this is accessible to persons with disabilities. Watch for the occasional moose.

11

Willie Marsh -- This easy 1.5-mile walk along a nature trail system explores a wetland. Viewing platform and boardwalks traverse the marsh and open water. Trail guide and map available at the trailhead. From **Gloversville**, follow RT 29A northwest 5.2 miles, left at Willie Rd. 2 miles to parking lot. www.carogalake.com.



Central Adirondack Trail Scenic Byway

Beginning at the historic Erie Canal town of Rome, this crescent route travels 153 miles through the south-central Adirondack Park along the Hudson and other scenic rivers and ends in Glens Falls.

1

Rome Sand Plains -- One of only a handful of inland pine barrens in the nation. At 16,000 acres, this area contains high sand dunes and low peat bogs, pine barrens and hardwood forests, meadows and wetlands. See unique birds, butterflies and plants. Located northwest of the **City of Rome** off RT 69. Call 315-866-6330.

2

Black River Valley -- The southern end of the Black River's path serves as an important wildlife corridor connecting the forests of the Adirondack Park and the Tug Hill Plateau. Used by large, wide-roaming species like black bear, moose, deer, and bobcat. Look for brown and yellow DEC access signs along RT 28.

3

Bald Mt/Rondaxe Fire Tower - This popular hike is just under 2 miles round trip. At the top, enjoy views of the Fulton Chain of Lakes and surrounding wildlife habitat. Climb the historic 35 ft. fire tower, once used by Forest Rangers to observe and report forest fires. Go 3.5 miles north of **Old Forge** on RT 28, and left on Rondaxe Rd.

4

Fulton Chain of Lakes -- One of the oldest canoe routes in the east, this connected waterway (First Lake to Eighth Lake) provides habitat for aquatic birds like Canada geese, many species of ducks, and loons. Access at **Inlet's** Arrowhead Park, and via brown and yellow DEC marked boat launches and campgrounds.

5

Cathedral Pines -- This short, easy 0.1 mile hiking loop takes you through a magnificent stand of old growth pines. Look for the small brown and yellow DEC access sign on the north side of RT 28, 0.5 miles south of 8th Lake Campground and 5 miles north of South Shore Rd. and RT 28 in **Inlet**.

6

Moose River Plains Wild Forest -- Over 80,000 acres of wild forest contain habitat for white tailed deer, ruffed grouse, wild turkey, and the rare spruce grouse. Look for wetland areas near the hamlet of **Raquette Lake** on RT 28. While here, visit historic *Great Camp Sagamore*, once the summer home of the Vanderbilt family.

7

Lake Durant -- Just 4 miles south of the hamlet of **Blue Mountain Lake**, Lake Durant was created to impound water used to raft logs to downstream sawmills on the Hudson River. A picnic area on RT 30 provides views of nearby mountains and aquatic wildlife such as the common loon. Look for eagles, osprey, Canada geese and an occasional moose.

8

Hudson River Ice Meadows -- **North River** is a start point for some of the best whitewater rafting in the eastern US. Created by several feet of ice pack, the ice meadows run along the upper Hudson River's shoreline and are one of the few natural grasslands in the state. Look for numerous roadside pull-offs along the river on RT 28.

9

Gore Mountain -- This popular ski area in **North Creek** offers gondola rides in the summer to the mountain summit where you can enjoy boreal habitat and stunning views of the High Peaks and Southern Adirondacks. Take a short hike to the summit fire tower. Visit www.goremountain.com.

10

Warrensburg Fish Hatchery -- Try a self-guided tour or feed the fish at the display pond. See how brook trout, rainbow trout, and Atlantic salmon are raised and released in area lakes and ponds. Canoe access to the Hudson River is available here. Located at 145 Fish Hatchery Rd. in **Warrensburg**. Call (518) 623-2877

11

Prospect Mountain Veteran Memorial Highway, Lake George -- The approximately 6-mile drive up this roadway offers breathtaking views of the Champlain Valley and an important wildlife corridor connecting the forests of the Adirondack Mountains and the Green Mountains in Vermont. Starts at RT 9/9N overlap.

The byways on this map take you to some of the most spectacular natural areas in the Adirondack North Country including the shores of Lake Ontario and Lake Champlain, up and over the Tug Hill Plateau, and into the heart of the Adirondack Park.

This region is one of the last great intact wild areas in the northeastern United States with millions of acres of protected forests and waterways. It is home to iconic wildlife species of the north woods and thousands of people who call this place home.

The Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways are the vital lifelines that connect the region's natural resources and human communities. We hope you will appreciate the region's diverse habitats and wildlife species as well as the small towns and villages that share this landscape.



This interpretive brochure is a New York State Scenic Byways Program project managed by Adirondack North Country Association, funded by the Federal Highway Administration, and administered by the New York State Department of Transportation. Research and Design from the Wildlife Conservation Society.
Design by Jason W Smith design.

www.adirondackwildlife.org
www.adirondackscenicbyways.org
www.bikethebyways.org
www.adirondack.org
www.wcsadirondacks.org

