

Tour 9 - Birding and Wildlife Viewing



The Sierra Valley is an Audubon Society nationally designated Important Bird Area.

Spot and observe a variety of birds and wild creatures on a three-day tour of pristine Northern Sierra habitat.

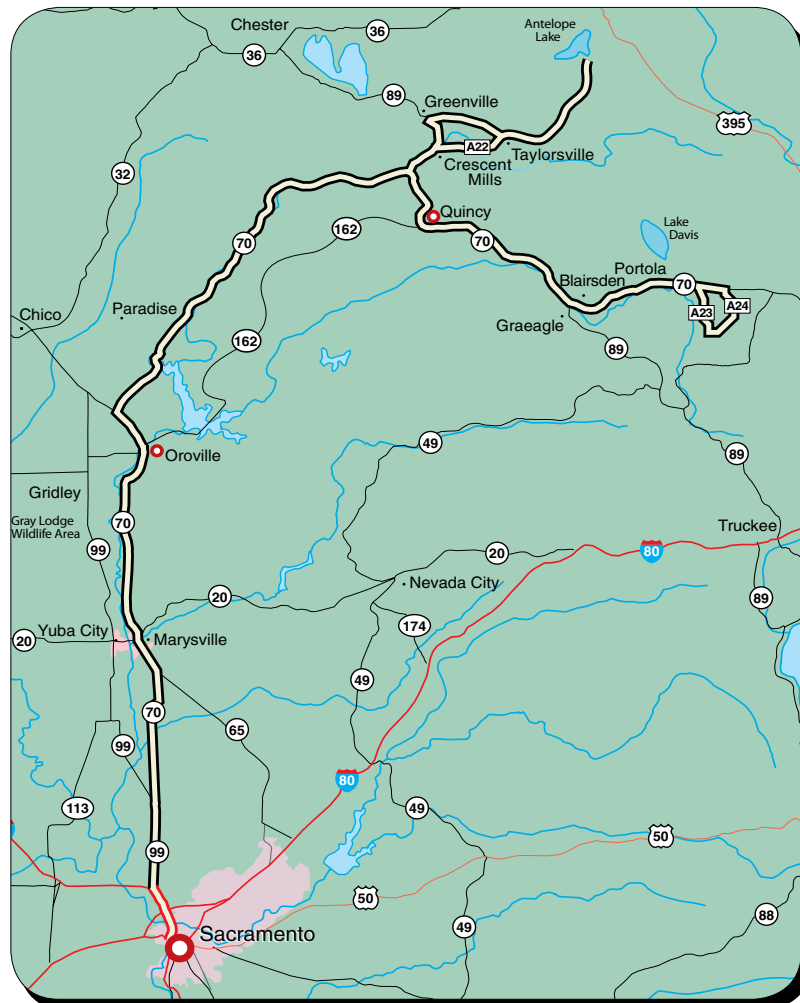


Great Blue Heron are among the waterfowl that reside in Plumas County.

With 1.2 million acres of national forest and a sparse population of only nine people per square mile, Plumas County provides wonderful habitat for nearly 300 different bird species and a variety of wildlife species. The thrill of spotting these animals in their natural habitat is one of the area's top attractions. Deer, beaver, bobcats, mountain lions, bear, coyotes, fox, skunks and raccoons are among some of wild creatures that inhabit Plumas County, as well as numerous species of raptors, waterfowl, songbirds, and woodpeckers.

The tour begins with a stop in neighboring Butte County at the Gray Lodge Wildlife Area and continues along the Feather River National Scenic Byway into Plumas County. Two of Plumas County's most popular viewing areas are included in the Watchable Wildlife national network of outstanding natural viewing sites. The Antelope Lake/Indian Creek site is located on County Road 112, 27 miles out of Taylorsville. The Lake Davis site is located 10 miles north of Portola. A free Plumas County bird list is produced by the Plumas Audubon Society and is available at visitor centers around the county or at www.plumascounty.org.

Many annual events and live concerts are held throughout the year. See the events page at www.plumascounty.org for information on events scheduled during the time of your visit.



Day 1
Sacramento to Quincy

- Gray Lodge Wildlife Area
- Birding near Quincy

Day 2
Quincy to Indian Valley

- Antelope Lake
- Birding in Indian Valley
- Snake Lake

Day 3
Quincy to Sierra Valley

- Sierra Valley
- Lake Davis



Snow geese at Gray Lodge Wildlife Area





Look for osprey and their nests near lakes and waterways.



Eagles and osprey are commonly sighted in the Feather River Canyon along Hwy. 70.

Day 1 - Sacramento to Gray Lodge Wildlife Area to Quincy

 **From Sacramento, travel north on Hwy. 99** to Gridley. Turn left onto Sycamore Road, proceed six miles, and turn left onto Pennington Road. Turn right at the entrance. Allow 1 1/2 hrs. drive time.


 **Gray Lodge Wildlife Area** (530-846-7505), southwest of Gridley, is one of the most extensively used wetlands in the entire Pacific Flyway. The Sutter Buttes serve as the backdrop to this 9,182 acres of wetlands. As many as 2 million waterfowl have been observed during peak periods, November through January. Greater White-fronted, snow and Ross' geese are abundant, along with many species of duck. Pheasants, herons, egrets and hawks of numerous species are also abundant. Fall/winter guided walks are available on weekends along many miles of trail, in addition to an auto tour loop. Open daily, dawn to dusk. Entry fee is \$2.50 per person over 16 years. Allow 1 1/2 hours.

The three-mile auto loop provides excellent car viewing. There are also 54 miles of walking and biking trails (available February-September.) A small exhibit room displays a variety of bird species. Docents can guide groups with advance appointment. The weekend guided walks during October through January begin at 10am Saturday and 1pm Sunday.


As you exit Gray Lodge turn left (north) onto Pennington Road and continue to the end (2 miles) where Pennington intersects Colusa Hwy. to the left and Sycamore Street to the right. Turn right onto Sycamore Street, continue to Hwy. 99 and make a right. Continue two blocks and turn left onto East Gridley and travel 12 miles to Hwy 70. Continue north on Hwy.70 for 15 minutes to Oroville.


 **From Oroville, drive northeast** through the **Feather River National Scenic Byway** (Hwy. 70) to Quincy (2 hours, 80 miles).

NOTE: Use extreme caution when pulling off Hwy. 70 to stop at rest stops and viewpoints. The road has frequent curves and blind spots and there are no guard rails in many locations.

 **The Feather River National Scenic Byway** offers spectacular views of the canyon and the river. Eagles and osprey are commonly sighted along the drive. Fall colors and spring wildflowers make these seasons especially good for touring the byway.

The canyon is an awesome gorge carved by river through granite, continuing up into forests and meadows. The human additions of highway, railroad and powerhouses are amazing feats of engineering in their own right. Notable attractions along the byway include three drive-through tunnels, the Tobin Twin Bridges, the Bucks Creek Powerhouse, the Eby Stamp Mill and the famous Keddie Wye – the only train trestle of its kind in the world.

 **Arrival in Quincy**

 **Lunch in Quincy:** See restaurant listings

 **Motel check-in:**

Ada's Place (530-283-1954)

Gold Pan Motel (530-283-3686)

Lariat Lodge (530-283-1000)

Pine Hill Motel (530-283-1670)

Quincy Courtyard Suites (530-283-1401)

Ranchito Motel (530-283-2265)

The Feather Bed B & B (530-283-0102)

 **Quincy is home to the following attractions:**

Plumas County Museum 500 Jackson St. (530-283-6320) Open 8am - 5pm Tuesday - Saturday year-round. Admission \$2 adults, \$1 for ages 12-17, free to children under 12 (allow 1 hour.)

Historic 1878 Variel Home 137 Coburn St., next to Plumas County Museum. Advance arrangements can be made for entrance and a guided group tour by contacting the museum (530-283-6320, allow half hour.)



Tour the Historic Variel Home in Quincy while visiting the Plumas County Museum.



Western Tanager, one of many songbirds found in the Plumas National Forest.



Deer can be easily seen off roadways, in yards and even golf course fairways.

Self-Guided Walking tour of Quincy's historic buildings (4 blocks) (allow half hour.) A free tour and guide map is available at the Plumas County Museum.

Plumas County Courthouse 520 Main St. (allow 20 minutes) Open 8am - 5pm Monday - Friday. Advance arrangements can be made for a guided group tour by contacting the museum (530-283-6320.)

Shopping in Quincy - W. Main St. and adjacent side streets, Plumas Pines Shopping Center at Hwy. 70 and Quincy Junction Rd. and East Quincy along Hwy. 70. Art galleries, antique and thrift shops, gift shops, and stores selling books, clothing, candy, toys and more are located along this route.

Birding - Take a five-minute drive from downtown to a popular bird watching and wildlife viewing spot. Starting in Quincy at the stoplight at the junction of Hwy. 70 and Quincy Junction Road, set your odometer to "0." Drive north on Quincy Junction Rd. to Chandler Rd. and turn left. At mile 3.3 cross the one lane bridge to an unpaved parking area on your left. Waterfowl are often seen from the bridge. The meadow on the east side of the bridge (south of Chandler Rd.) is often visited by fox, deer, skunk and bear. From the parking area you can also walk west on Chandler Rd. 1/4 mile and look south to across American Valley to spot geese, ducks, eagles, hawks, red-winged blackbirds, jays, magpies, tanagers, and a variety of other birds.

Birding at the sewer ponds at the Quincy Community Services District (QCSD) can be very rewarding. Over 100 species have been spotted there and on the open airport lands and grazing fields adjacent to the QCSD complex. One mile west of downtown Quincy, on the east side of Hwy 70, is the Visitors Bureau. From there take Spanish Creek Rd. east 3/4 mile to the QCSD. The access gates to the ponds are open year round Mon-Fri. 8am - 12 noon and 1pm-5pm. Check in at their office before walking out to the ponds.

Workshops and slide presentations on birds and wildlife given by local experts from the Plumas Audubon Society can be arranged with advance notice by contacting: david@plumasaudubon.org

Dinner in Quincy Area: See restaurant listings

Evening entertainment can also include a movie at the historic Town Hall Theatre on Main St. or a community concert or show (depending on schedule.) Athletic and other events are often available at Feather River College and Quincy High School. You can also workout at the Feather River Fitness Center, or try out your skill at the bowling alley.

The Town Hall Theatre is open Thurs-Mon and offers a movie starting at 7pm, with a matinee at 4pm on Sunday only. (530-283-1140)

La Sierra Lanes bowling alley is open evenings seven days a week. (530-283-1633)

Quincy Library is open until 8pm on Thursdays. (530-283-6310)

Feather River College schedules evening events. (530-283-0202)

Feather River Fitness and Recreation Center is open until 9pm seven nights a week. One-day passes are available. (530-283-2255)

Plumas Arts schedules evening concerts and art exhibits. (530-283-3402).

Quincy Jr. Sr. High School hosts evening events. (530-283-6510)

Day 2 – Quincy to Indian Valley

Breakfast in Quincy: See restaurant listings

Depart Quincy driving west on Hwy. 70. At nine miles, take Hwy. 89 north (right) toward Greenville. Drive seven miles on Hwy. 89 to the Taylorsville turnoff and turn right toward Taylorsville. Drive five miles, passing through town. Turn right on County Road 112 and drive 27 miles to Antelope Lake.

NOTE: This trip depends on time of year and snow conditions as County Road 112 is not plowed.



You're sure to spot several Canada geese.



Red Tailed Hawk are among the resident raptors.



Sandhill cranes can be heard and seen in the wetlands of the Sierra Valley.

Birding/Wildlife Viewing at Antelope Lake/Indian Creek - The road to the lake borders Indian Creek, which provides good wildlife viewing. Pines, firs and protected coves line the shoreline, attracting migratory waterfowl, including mallards, cinnamon teals, gadwalls and common mergansers. Western and Clark's grebes build floating nests on water milfoil at Long Point Cove. Canada geese and spotted sandpipers nest on several islands. Birds of prey are spotted all year. Meadows along the creeks that feed the lake stay wet most of the year and provide excellent viewing of wood ducks, great blue herons, warblers, and black bear. Follow Little Antelope Creek upland to view several brushy beaver dams.

Drive 27 miles back on County Road 112 toward Taylorsville but continue straight ahead on North Valley Road. After passing through Taylorsville continue on North Valley Road 15 miles around the east and north edge of Indian Valley to Greenville.

Birding in Indian Valley around the eastern and northern edges of Indian Valley to Greenville. This valley provides many wildlife viewing opportunities.

Lunch in Greenville:

Anna's Cafe (530-284-1998) 300 Main St.

Shopping along Main St. in Greenville

Return to Quincy via Hwy. 89/70

Birding at Snake Lake - a 20 minute drive from Quincy

NOTE: This trip depends on time of year and snow conditions as Snake Lake Road is not plowed.

Travel to Snake Lake. Begin at the corner of Hwy.70 (Main Street) and Bucks Lake Road at the west end of downtown Quincy. Drive west on Bucks Lake Rd. for 5.1 miles. Turn right and cross the bridge. Continue on this road for 7.5 miles to the "Y". Take the left fork and drive 1.5 miles to Snake Lake. Waterfowl, osprey and bald eagles are frequently seen. Look for wood ducks along the west shore.

Dinner in Quincy Area: See restaurant listings

Day 3 – Quincy to Sierra Valley

For the best bird watching experience today an early morning start is advisable. You may want to process your motel check-out the night preceding your departure.

Drive 24 miles east on Hwy. 70 to Hwy. 89 to Blairsden or continue 10 miles to Portola.

Breakfast in Blairsden or Portola: See restaurant listings

Birding in Sierra Valley From Portola, continue east four miles on Hwy 70 to County Road A23 and turn right (south). Continue five miles to Marble Springs Road (shown as Dyson Lane on some maps). Turn left (east) on Marble Springs Road and travel three miles to the end. This three-mile unpaved road offers wonderful opportunities for birding, especially where it crosses the streams. Continue north five miles on County Road A24 to Hwy. 70.

Birding and Wildlife Viewing at Lake Davis. Turn left (west) on Hwy. 70 and drive to Lake Davis Road, on the east side of Portola. Turn right and travel north 10 miles to Lake Davis, one of the Watchable Wildlife viewing sites. Waterfowl can be seen year-round. Bald eagle viewing is excellent from March to May and again in October & November. Watch snags on the east shore for a nesting pair of eagles. Deer are common in this area.

Lunch in Portola: See restaurant listings

Shopping along Commercial Street and Hwy. 70 in Portola

From Portola take Hwy 70 west 10 miles to Hwy. 89. Turn left on Hwy 89 and continue 50 miles to Truckee, then take Interstate 80 west to Sacramento. This concludes the tour.

NOTE: Off-season business hours vary. Contact the businesses prior to planning your tour to ensure a positive travel experience.

For more information on this tour, visit www.plumascounty.org



Plumas County Restaurant Guide for Tour Groups

Call to verify off-season hours.

Quincy

Breakfast

- Courthouse Cafe (530-283-3344) 525 W. Main St.
- Patti's Thunder Cafe (530-283-3526) 557 Lawrence St.
- Plumas Cafe (530-283-0591) 40 E. Main St.

Lunch

- Courthouse Cafe (530-283-3344) 525 W. Main St.
- Moon's (530-283-9900) 497 Lawrence St. (Groups only.)
- Patti's Thunder Cafe (530-283-3526) 557 Lawrence St.
- Pangaea (530-283-0426) 461 W. Main St.
- Pizza Factory (530-283-4545) 490 W. Main St.
- Plumas Cafe (530-283-0591) 40 E. Main St.
- Roundtable Pizza (530-283-2320) 60 E. Main St.

Dinner

- Moon's (530-283-9900) 497 Lawrence St.
(Groups of 20 or less, weekday only.)
- Pangaea (530-283-0426) 461 W. Main St.
- Pizza Factory (530-283-4545) 490 W. Main St.
- Plumas Cafe (530-283-0591) 40 E. Main St.
- Sweet Lorraine's (530-283-5300) 384 W. Main St.

Chester/Lake Almanor

Breakfast

- Kopper Kettle Cafe (530-258-2698) 243 Main St., Chester
- St. Bernard Lodge (530-258-3382) Hwy. 36, west of Chester

Lunch and Dinner

- Knotbumper (530-258-2301) 274 Main St., Chester
- Kopper Kettle Cafe (530-258-2698) 243 Main St., Chester
- Locker Room Sports Grill (530-258-5010) 300 Main St., Chester
- Luciano's Cucina Di Pasta (530-596-4133) 449 Peninsula Dr., Lake Almanor
- Maria's Mexican Restaurant (530-258-2262) 159 Main St., Chester
- Red Onion Grill (530-258-1800) 303 Peninsula Dr., Lake Almanor
- St. Bernard Lodge (530-258-3382) Hwy. 36, west of Chester
- Tantardino's Pizzeria and Pasta (530-596-3902) 401 Ponderosa Dr., Lake Almanor

Portola

Breakfast

- Alpine Grill (530-832-1200) 448 W. Sierra Ave.
- Sharon's Cafe (530-832-4874) 270 Commercial St.

Lunch and Dinner

- Alpine Grill (530-832-1200) 448 W. Sierra Ave.
- Lena's Cantina (530-832-5360) 165 E. Sierra Ave.
- Log Cabin (530-832-4400) 64 E. Sierra Ave.
- Pizza Factory (530-832-0430) 197 Commercial St.
- Sharon's Cafe (530-832-4874) 270 Commercial St.

Graeagle

Breakfast/Lunch

- Bontaful Gardens (530-836-1619) 190 Bonta St., Blairsden
- Coyote Bar & Grill (530-836-2002) Hwy. 89
- Gumba's Pizzeria & Grill (530-836-1212) 350 Bonta St., Blairsden
- Mountain Cuisine (530-836-4646) 250 Bonta St., Blairsden
- Nakoma Golf Resort (530-832-5067) 348 Bear Run, Clio

Dinner

- Coyote Bar & Grill (530-836-2002) Hwy. 89
- Cuccia's Pasta-Pizza-Wine Bar (530-836-2121) 1228 Johnsville Road
- Grille at Chalet View Lodge (530-832-5528) 72056 Hwy. 70, between Graeagle and Portola
- Grizzly Grill (530-836-1300) 250 Bonta St., Blairsden
- Gumba's Pizzeria & Grill (530-836-1212) 350 Bonta St., Blairsden
- Longboards Bar & Grill (530-836-1111) 402 Poplar Valley Rd., Plumas Pines Estates
- Mt. Tomba Dinner House (530-836-2359) 10 minutes west of Graeagle on Hwy. 70 in Cromberg

Greenville

Breakfast/Lunch

- Anna's Cafe (530-284-1998) 300 Main St.

Dinner

- Main Street Dinner House (530-284-6888) Hwy. 89