

Crook County, Oregon



Crook County Birding Locations

[Open a Map That Shows All Crook County Locations](#)

IMPORTANT!! THIS TABLE IS MEANT TO BE READ LEFT TO RIGHT (ROWS), NOT UP AND DOWN (COLUMNS)!!

<u>GENERAL INFORMATION</u>	PRINEVILLE AREA	Prineville
Prineville Cemetery	WEST OF PRINEVILLE	Powell Butte
Houston Lakes	Prineville Sewer Ponds	Crooked River Wetlands
O'Neil Valley	Elliott Lane	NORTH OF PRINEVILLE
Grizzly Mountain	Barnes Butte Reservoir	Woodward Marsh
McKay Creek Loops	EAST OF PRINEVILLE	Ochoco Reservoir
Mill Creek	Wildcat Campground	Ochoco NFR 33 Loop
Ochoco Ranger Station	Walton Lake	Independent Mine
Big Summit Prairie	SOUTH OF PRINEVILLE	Eagle Rock
North Shore Road	Paulina & Paulina Valley	Maury Mnts & Antelope Res.
Prineville Reservoir State Park	Rimrock/ Crooked R. Parks	Hwy 27

Commented [CG1]: Currently Closed To The Public

SEASONAL HOTSPOTS			
If you have only a short time in our county, try these locations first!			
SPRING	Crooked River Wetlands	North Shore Road	Prineville Sewer Ponds A
SUMMER	North Shore Road	Ochoco NFR 33 Loop	Paulina & Paulina Valley
FALL	Crooked River Wetlands	North Shore Road	Prineville Sewer Ponds A
WINTER	Crooked River Wetlands	Prineville Sewer Ponds A	Elliott Lane

Authors/Editors: Chuck Gates, Marcia Marvin, David Trochlell

County Seat: Prineville

County Size: 2,987 square miles

High Elevation : 6,926 ft. Lookout Mnt.

Rarities : Brant, Yellow Rail , Upland Sandpiper, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone, Parasitic Jaeger, Long-tailed Jaeger, Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Blue Jay, Northern Mockingbird, Brown Thrasher, Purple Martin, Clay-colored Sparrow, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Common Grackle, Pine Grosbeak, Common Redpoll

Top County Lister : Chuck Gates 278

Year List Record : Chuck Gates 239 (2013)

County Contact Person: email Chuck Gates

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PRINEVILLE AREA

Prineville [return to the top](#)

DeLorme (copyright 2001);Pg 80 C-1 DeLorme (copyright 2008) Pg 76 E-2

geographic coordinates Prineville Chamber of Commerce

44°18'33.5"N 120°50'48.2"W ([44.309304, -120.846719](#))

[View A Google map](#)

[City Information](#)

Location: Prineville is located 18 miles east of Redmond on Hwy 126. It is 36 miles from Bend, 144 miles from Albany, 148 miles from Portland, 148 miles from Eugene, 151 miles from Salem, 175 miles from Klamath Falls,

and 208 miles from Medford. Prineville is the largest community in Crook County and is the only community with a variety of services. Two city parks in particular offer very nice birding in migration. Crooked River Park is on Main Street just one block south of town ([44.293320, -120.846789](#)). Drive south on Main until you see the baseball diamonds. Park and walk along the creek or drive to the far south end of the park and bird the river. Ochoco Creek Park is in the heart of the city between Elm and Juniper Streets ([44.304897, -120.836436](#)). This park straddles Ochoco Creek and has lots of attractive trees and riparian areas for migrants. To reach Ochoco Park, travel on North 3rd Street east past Main Street to Juniper Street. Turn north and park at the parking area. Ochoco Creek runs through most of the town of Prineville and it is flanked by a bike path so accessing it at any point could be productive during migration.

Habitat and Birds: The town of Prineville can be productive as a birding location. The neighborhoods between N. 3rd and Lynn Blvd on the south side of town have plenty of fruiting trees for waxwings and birches for the finches. The north side of town, near the hospital, is another good neighborhood for city birds. In winter, expect good finch numbers and a few Merlin, Sharp-shinned Hawk, and Cooper's Hawk. In migration, Black-headed Grosbeak, Lazuli Bunting, Cassin's Finch, Western Tanager, Evening Grosbeak and Bullock's Oriole can be found along with a nice variety of warblers, vireos and flycatchers. Summer residents include Rufous Hummingbird, Wood Duck, Osprey, and Cedar Waxwing.

Prineville Juniper Haven Cemetery [return to the top](#)

DeLorme (copyright 2001) Pg 80 C-1 DeLorme (copyright 2008) Pg 76 E-2

geographic coordinates 44°18'51.2"N 120°50'50.0"W

([44.314230, -120.847233](#))

[View A Google Map](#)

[eBird Hotspot Checklists for Prineville Juniper Haven Cemetery](#)

Location: Leave Prineville north on Main Street. Travel just under one mile from the junction of N. Main and N. 3rd St. A short distance after the railroad tracks, the entrance to the cemetery can be seen on the west side of the road.

Habitat and Birds: This area is full of mature conifers and fruiting deciduous trees. Flowering crabapple trees attract a wide variety of migrants in the spring and the resulting fruit entices birds here in the fall and winter. Fall and spring migrants can be abundant at this location and Purple Finches can sometimes be found in winter. This is the best place in Prineville to find waxwings in winter. In winter, watch for Downy Woodpecker, Red-naped Sapsucker and Red-breasted-sapsucker. Birch trees have produced Pine Siskins, both goldfinches, and even Common Redpolls.

WEST OF PRINEVILLE

Powell Butte [return to the top](#)

DeLorme (copyright 2001) Pg 51 B-8 DeLorme (copyright 2008) Pg 76 E-1
geographic coordinates 44°14'51.3"N 121°01'04.5"W

([44.24759, -121.01792](#))

[View A Google Map](#)

Location: hwy 126 between Redmond and Prineville (eight miles east of Redmond or 10 miles west of Prineville). Many roads leave the highway and cross through the agricultural fields. Parish Lane has had a nesting pair of Golden Eagles for years. Williams Road has several pairs of Osprey nesting on platforms in summer. Reif Road can be very productive in winter as it goes through farmland. Take all the side roads to get a feeling for the wide variety of raptors found here, especially in winter.

Habitat and Birds: The agricultural fields hold high numbers of wintering raptors, flocks of blackbirds and sparrows. Drive the farmlands in winter for a nice mix of raptors. In spring and summer, patches of sagebrush will provide good birding (Brewer's Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Sage Thrasher, California Quail, and even an occasional Sagebrush Sparrow). Great Horned Owls are very common at night and Barn and Western Screech-Owls are here as well.

Houston Lakes [return to the top](#)

DeLorme (copyright 2001) Pg 80 C-1 DeLorme (copyright 2008) Pg 76 E-1
geographic coordinates 44°17'28.0"N 120°59'32.7"W

([44.291107, -120.992418](#))

[View A Google Map](#)

[eBird Hotspot Checklists for Houston Lakes](#)

Location: From Powell Butte (see above), travel north on SW Williams Road for three miles and the road makes a right angle turn to the east. Stay on this road which now becomes Houston Lake Road. Go east for 1.25 miles and you will see the lake. This is actually referred to as "Little Houston Lake" by the locals. "Big Houston Lake" is completely surrounded by private land and not viewable. "Little Houston Lake" is a private irrigation pond so please bird only from the road. There is a pull-off near the west side of the lake.

Habitat and Birds: In summer this is a great place to see Yellow-headed Blackbird, Marsh Wren, American Bitterns (maybe the only place in Central Oregon that hosts this species annually), Virginia Rails, and Sora. Fall migrant waterfowl are abundant and this is a good spot for fall shorebirds (scope needed). Winter raptors are abundant. White-faced Ibis are annual and a regular flock of American White Pelicans reside here every summer. Black, Caspian and, occasionally, Forster's Terns are found in migration. Waterfowl numbers, including Canada, Cackling, Ross's, Snow, and White-fronted Geese and swans build up here in early spring. This may be the best place in the county to find Blue-winged Teal. Depending on water levels, there may be shorebirds present. Some of Crook County's most unusual bird sightings have come from this little pond. Unusual species seen here include Whimbrel, American Golden-plover, Black-bellied Plover, Marbled Godwit, Trumpeter Swan, Eurasian Wigeon, Horned Grebe, Great Egret, Black-crowned Night-heron, Red-shouldered Hawk, Sanderling, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Franklin's Gull, Common Tern, Short-eared Owl, Purple Martin and Tricolored Blackbird.

Prineville Sewage Ponds (Old Ponds) [return to the top](#)

DeLorme (copyright 2001) Pg 80 C- DeLorme (copyright 2008) Pg 76 E-2
geographic coordinates 44°18'24.0"N 120°52'16.8"W

([44.306669, -120.871328](#))

[View A Google Map](#)

[eBird Hotspot Checklists for Prineville Sewage Ponds \(old\)](#)

Location: On the very western edge of Prineville, Hwy 126 crosses the Crooked River on a big bridge. The road to the sewer ponds (Hwy 370) heads NW just on the west side of the bridge. Leave Prineville on the O'Neil Hwy 370 and the main entrance to the (old) ponds is on the north side of the road about 0.5 miles from Hwy 126. (Click on "[View A Google Map](#)" for a very good view of both ponds.) Birders are welcome to visit during business hours (Mon-Fri 8:00 to 2:00) but make sure you don't block the road and make sure you are out before 2:00 so you don't get locked in. You must have permission to visit this site in off hours. You can obtain permission by emailing [Chuck Gates](#). A keypad lock restricts access to the ponds.

Habitat and Birds: Several large ponds here normally have some open "water", even in the coldest months. These ponds support large numbers of ducks and a variety of shorebirds in the spring and fall. The habitat close to the river is excellent for migrants, sparrows and Black-crowned Night-Herons. Winter flocks consist of hundreds of Ring-necked Duck, American Wigeon, Common and Barrows Goldeneye, Ruddy Ducks, Buffleheads and Mallards. Look for both Cinnamon Teal and Blue-winged Teal in early to mid-summer. There is an active heron rookery near the first pond and herons are here year-round. Shorebirds use these ponds in spring and fall. Common shorebirds include Killdeer, Wilson's Snipe, Western Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher and Red-necked Phalarope. Common waders include American Avocet, Black-necked Stilt, both yellowlegs and an occasional White-faced Ibis. Riparian woodlands produce good warbler flocks along with Lazuli Bunting and Western Tanager to name a couple. Wood Ducks nest here as do Common Yellowthroat, Tree Swallows, Barn Swallows, Cliff Swallows and Killdeer. There is a large Banks Swallow colony here and Common Nighthawk feed here nightly in summer. Many rare birds have been reported from this location. Eurasian Wigeon, Surf Scoter, White-winged Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, Harlequin Duck, Red-breasted Merganser, Red-necked Grebe, Horned Grebe, Green Heron, Peregrine Falcon, Sanderling, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Red Phalarope, Sabine's Gull, Franklin's Gull, Short-eared Owl, Red-eyed Vireo and Purple Martin have all been recorded.

Crooked River Wetlands [return to the top](#)

DeLorme (copyright 2001) Pg 80 C- DeLorme (copyright 2008) Pg 76 E-2

geographic coordinates 44°18'58.9"N 120°53'52.7"W

([44.316359, -120.897983](#))

[View A Google Map](#)

[eBird Hotspot Checklists for Crooked River Wetlands](#)

[Crooked River Wetlands Checklist](#)

[Crooked River Wetlands Map With Numbered Ponds](#)

Location: Leave Prineville north on the O'Neil Hwy 370 (leaves Hwy 126 just west of the bridge over the Crooked River) and travel NW for 2.1 miles to the Wetlands entrance.

Habitat and Birds: These ponds (opened in the spring of 2017) are part of the Prineville Sewage Treatment complex and are open to the public. Great lengths were taken to design ponds that would be bird friendly. There are big ponds, small ponds, deep ponds and shallow ponds. Some ponds have vegetation and some do not. This variety promises to make this location one of the best in Central Oregon. Shorebirds and waterfowl are the main attractions here but as the area matures, other species may be attracted to its diverse set of habitats.

O'Neil Valley [return to the top](#)

DeLorme (copyright 2001) Pg 80 C-1 DeLorme (copyright 2008) Pg 76 D-1

geographic coordinates 44°19'49.6"N 121°05'17.3"W

([44.330442, -121.088145](#))

[View A Google Map](#)

Location: Leave Prineville north on the O'Neil Hwy (leaves Hwy 126 just west of the bridge over the Crooked River). The entire valley is visible from this road to the east up to the junction with Lone Pine Road. Heavy truck traffic means there are few choice pull-outs that offer safe viewing opportunities but there are enough to make it worth the trip out (Especially try the area just east of Milepost 7 [44.333805, -121.045159](#)). This road will eventually take you to Redmond or Terrebonne, depending on which fork you take in the road.

Habitat and Birds: This valley is covered with agricultural fields, marshy lands and rough ground. Wintering raptors hunt this area and large flocks of Canada Geese group throughout the area (occasionally with Tundra Swans and Snow Geese). Golden Eagles are often seen soaring over the rim rock. When flooded, large numbers of ducks and the occasional Great Egret use the temporary pools. Tricolored Blackbirds nest near milepost 7 most years and can be found in winter flocks of mixed blackbirds.

Elliott Lane [return to the top](#)

DeLorme (copyright 2001) Pg 80 C-1 DeLorme (copyright 2008) Pg 76 D-1
geographic coordinates 44°19'49.9"N 120°55'37.0"W

[\(44.330523, -120.926954\)](#)

[View A Google Map](#)

Location: Leave Prineville north on the O'Neil Hwy (leaves Hwy 126 just west of the bridge over the Crooked River). Travel 4.0 miles to Elliott Lane. Turn right (north) to the main intersection. Turn left (west) and take this road to the gate and turn around.

Habitat and Birds: This farmland is famous for raptors and tricolored blackbirds. There is a big marsh here that should be scoped. When you get to the end of the road going west, check the marsh on your left for Tricolored blackbirds and the large rimrock in front of you for White-throated Swift. Bald Eagles nest here too. **The natives can be a little hostile here so be careful not to leave the road (no public land here beyond the road) and don't block the farmer's access to their property. This is a detour road for the local gravel company so watch for gravel trucks.**

NORTH OF PRINEVILLE

Grizzly Mountain [return to the top](#)

DeLorme (copyright 2001) Pg 80 C-1 DeLorme (copyright 2008) Pg 76 D-1
geographic coordinates 44°26'13.1"N 120°57'17.4"W

[\(44.436960, -120.954821\)](#)

[View A Google Map](#)

Location: Between Madras and Prineville on Hwy 26. From Prineville (junctions of 126 and 26), travel 8.8 miles north on Hwy 26. Turn east on Grizzly Mountain Road. This becomes a graded and well-maintained dirt road leading to the communication towers at the summit. The distance to the top is roughly 3.5 miles. **This road is often impassible in the winter and early spring.** Passenger cars are adequate in summer (bumpy but you can make it) but 4-wheel drive is recommended if there is any chance of snow. This location offers one of the most stunning views in all of Oregon. Any summer visit to Prineville should include a trip up to the top of Grizzly.

Habitat and Birds: Often with the first real snow fall of the autumn, a few Gray Crowned Rosy-Finches can be located close to the summit. On the East side there are extensive pine and fir forests with Northern Pygmy-Owl. The cleared area at the summit is an excellent vantage spot to look for migrating raptors in the spring and fall and holds Mountain Bluebirds and Rock Wrens in the summer. Watch for Calliope Hummingbird, Gray Flycatcher, Ash-throated Flycatcher, and Green-tailed Towhee on the way up. Other forest species sometimes seen here include Mountain Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Townsend's Solitaire, Cassin's Finch, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Hairy Woodpecker, Bushtit, Gray Flycatcher and many more. Rare birds seen here include Gray Partridge, Chukar, Sooty Grouse and Snow Bunting.

Barnes Butte Reservoir [return to the top](#)

DeLorme (copyright 2001) Pg 80 C-1 DeLorme (copyright 2008) Pg 76 D-2
geographic coordinates 44°20'02.2"N 120°49'26.8"W

[\(44.333946, -120.824109\)](#)

[View A Google Map](#)

[eBird Hotspot Checklists for Barnes Butte Reservoir](#)

Location: Leave Prineville north on Main St. Go 2.2 miles north of 3rd and Main Street in Prineville, turn east on Barnes Butte Road. Travel one mile east and the reservoir will be on the south side of the road. The main reservoir is viewed from the south side of the road at the base of the butte.

This is private land. There is no access and viewing must take place from the road.

Habitat and Birds: A private fishing lake surrounded by marsh, agricultural fields and juniper. The cattail area to the north of the road offers fantastic views of breeding Yellow-headed Blackbird, Virginia Rail, Sora, Northern

Harrier, and Marsh Wren. The lake holds good numbers of wintering ducks along with Bald Eagle, Prairie Falcon, and other raptors. Check the marsh to the north side of the road for Tricolored Blackbird in May (not seen every year). On the road east of the lake, check the fence lines in winter for wintering sparrows (Harris's Sparrow and White-throated Sparrow have been seen here).

Woodward Marsh [return to the top](#)

DeLorme C-1 DeLorme (copyright 2008) Pg 76 D-1 **geographic coordinates** 44°22'09.3"N 120°55'36.7"W
([44.369243, -120.926861](#))

[View A Google Map](#)

Location: From the Junction of 26 and 126 in Prineville, travel 5.1 miles NW on Hwy 26. Turn north on Woodward Road. The marsh is a 0.25 mile down this road. **This is private land. There is no access and viewing must take place from the road.**

Habitat and Birds: This marsh is one of the largest in the county. Marsh birds like Marsh Wren and Harrier are common. Virginia Rail nest here as do Wilson's Snipe. The main attraction is the Tricolored Blackbird. They nest here nearly every year in late may and early June.

McKay Creek Loops A and B (Hwy 33 and 27) [return to the top](#)

DeLorme (copyright 2001) Pg 80 B,C-2 DeLorme (copyright 2008) Pg 76 D-2,3 **geographic coordinates** 44 22' 05" N 120 50' 47" W (Beginning of the loop)

[View A Google Map](#)

Location: Leave Prineville north on Main St. Travel three miles from the edge of town and N. Main becomes McKay Road (Forest Road 33). Stay on Hwy 33 and follow it until the pavement ends (the paved road becomes Hwy 27 just after entering the National Forest). This is approximately 25 miles. This road takes you into the Ochoco Mountains and stops can be made at your leisure. There are two big loops you can take here. Consult the link above and carry a good U.S. Forest Service map so you don't get lost. It's easiest just to go up this road until the pavement ends and then turn around

and return the same way. There are many areas of insect-killed forest and forest clear-cuts. Side roads are abundant but a forest service map is necessary if you get too far off the pavement.

Loop A McKay Creek - Zero your odometer at the [Cemetery](#) on Main Street in Prineville. Travel north on Main/McKay/FR 33 for 13.8 miles and turn right on the dirt road (this is still FR 33). Travel east for 4.8 miles to the Green Mt Trailhead and hike the trail if you feel like it ([44.468010, -120.628518](#)). Continue east on FR33 for 5.9 miles to Mill Creek Road ([44.458762, -120.596515](#)). You can detour here to the nearby [Wildcat Campground](#). Turn south on Mill Creek Road and travel 10 miles to Hwy 26 (stop and check out [Ochoco Reservoir](#)) and head west back to Prineville.

Loop B Little McKay Creek - Zero your odometer at the [Cemetery](#) on Main Street in Prineville. Travel north on Main/McKay/FR 33 for 13.8 miles where FR 33 splits off and becomes a dirt road. Stay on the pavement (now FR 27) and take this road north and east for 10.3 miles. Turn south on FR 3320 ([44.500177, -120.582818](#)) and drive 5.0 miles to the Green Mt. Trailhead. Turn east on FR33 for 5.9 miles to Mill Creek Road ([44.458762, -120.596515](#)). You can detour here to the nearby [Wildcat Campground](#). Turn south on Mill Creek Road and travel 10 miles to Hwy 26 (stop and check out [Ochoco Reservoir](#)) and head west back to Prineville.

Habitat and Birds: Pine forest, that includes mixed conifer forest and some riparian areas. Mountain birds are abundant here. Northern Pygmy-Owl, Northern Saw-whet, and Flammulated Owl are here in summer. Mountain Quail can be found infrequently along with Ruffed and Dusky Grouse. There is a large burn at the top (although it produces some woodpeckers, it is getting old and is not as productive as it once was). This is often the most productive Crook County mountain route in the summer.

EAST OF PRINEVILLE

Ochoco Reservoir [return to the top](#)

DeLorme (copyright 2001) Pg 80 C-2 DeLorme (copyright 2008) Pg 76 E-2
geographic coordinates Ochoco Dam on west side of the lake
44°17'58.9"N 120°43'22.3"W ([44.299691, -120.722869](#))

[View A Google Map](#)

[eBird Hotspot Checklists for Ochoco Reservoir](#)

Location: Start from the center of Prineville (N. 3rd and N. Main). The reservoir dam is off Hwy 126 on the south side of the road 6.1 miles from N. 3rd and N. Main in Prineville. It can be viewed from several pullouts. Check out the county park that offers views of the lake, restrooms, and an area of juniper forest that often has Red-breasted Sapsucker in the winter. The best viewing is on the eastern end of the reservoir. Spring brings water levels right up to the road. Fall water levels drop and allow for good shore-birding.

Habitat and Birds: A large lake with surrounding rim rock. The reservoir can hold good numbers of waterfowl, including Common Loon and Western Grebe. Clark's Grebes occasionally nest. In the summer, California Gull numbers build up, along with Caspian Terns, Great-blue Herons, and American White Pelicans. As water levels drop, shorebirds can be seen (at some distance) on the mud flats. Scan the rimrock for Golden and Bald Eagles. Black, Caspian and Forster's Terns are annual. Unusual birds seen here include Cackling Goose, Ross's Goose, Trumpeter Swan, Eurasian Wigeon, Long-tailed Duck, Red-breasted Merganser, Mountain Quail, Red-throated Loon, Pacific Loon, Horned Grebe, Red-necked Grebe, Great Egret, Red-shouldered Hawk, Ruddy Turnstone, Black Turnstone, Red Knot, Sanderling, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Sabine's Gull, Franklin's Gull, Herring Gull, Lapland Longspur and Bobolink.

Mill Creek Road [return to the top](#)

DeLorme (copyright 2001) Pg 80 C-2 DeLorme (copyright 2008) Pg 76 D-3
geographic coordinates 44°19'04.5"N 120°40'01.1"W
([44.31792, -120.66696](#))

[View A Google Map](#)

[eBird Hotspot Checklists for Mill Creek Road](#)

Location: Nine miles east of Prineville on Hwy 26 and 2.9 miles east of the Ochoco Reservoir Dam (see directions above), is Mill Creek Road. This road is flanked by private property on all sides but transitions into the Ochoco National Forest and is good for forest birds. This road is 10 miles long and ends at Wildcat Campground. If you travel the whole length of this road, you can't miss Stein's Pillar. This rock formation is one of the most spectacular in Central Oregon. A good side road runs west just as the pavement ends at 5.3 miles. A good loop can be made if, instead of going back into Wildcat

Campground, you continue on the main road into the mountains. This is Forest Road 33 and will take you back to Prineville after a productive 20-mile drive.

Habitat and Birds: The road follows Mill Creek as it comes out of the Ochoco Mountains. Farmland straddles the river for several miles and junipers can be found to the west. The pavement ends after a few miles but the dirt road is well maintained. Bushtits and Ash-throated Flycatchers like the junipers near the beginning of this road. Pygmy Nuthatches and Western Bluebirds prefer the middle sections. White-headed Woodpecker, Red Crossbill, Winter Wren, and Cassin's Finch are common. Check the bridges for American Dipper. Northern Pygmy-Owl can often be found with a little "tooting". This is one of the best places in the county to find Calliope Hummingbird.

Wildcat Campground [return to the top](#)

DeLorme (copyright 2001) Pg 80 C-2 DeLorme (copyright 2008) Pg 76 D-3

geographic coordinates 44°26'29.4"N 120°34'34.4"W

[\(44.4415, -120.57623\)](#)

[View A Google Map](#)

Location: At the end of Mill Cr. Road 10 miles north of the Junction of Hwy 26 and Mill Cr. Road (see directions for Mill Cr. Road above).

Habitat and Birds: This is one of the most accessible locations for birding the Ochoco Mountains. This campground is primitive with no electrical hookups. Well ventilated pit toilets are present and the birding is good. From the north end of the campground, you can take a trail into the Wildcat Wilderness. Mountain Quail can sometimes be found here and the riparian area along the trail is good for passerines like Black-headed Grosbeak and MacGillivray's Warbler. Veery and Swainson's Thrush have been seen here and just about any Central Oregon woodpecker could show up. Winter Wrens sing from inside the campground and American Dipper are often nesting under the bridge.

Ochoco NFR 33 Loop [return to the top](#)

DeLorme (copyright 2001) Pg 80 C-2 DeLorme (copyright 2008) Pg 76 D-3
geographic coordinates 44°26'23.5"N 120°34'56.1"W
(44.439849, -120.582255)

[View A Google Map](#)

Location: Near the end of Mill Cr. Road 10 miles north of the Junction of Hwy 26 and Mill Cr. Road (see directions for Mill Cr. Road above), NFR 33 veers west (left) and climbs into the deeper mountains. Take this road west for 4.3 miles to Harvey Gap. Continue west on NFR 33 for 4.8 miles to the pavement on NFR 27. You can turn left at the pavement and return to Prineville.

Habitat and Birds: This is mainly a summer route. The first half of this route follows the west fork of Mill Creek through riparian habitat and mixed forest. After Harvey Gap, the road follows McKay Creek through similar habitat. Warbling and Cassin's Vireos are abundant along with the normal chickadees and nuthatches. This can be the best place in the county to find Pacific-slope Flycatcher. Woodpeckers are plentiful and Western Tanagers are abundant. Just about any forest bird found in the county can turn up here.

Ochoco Ranger Station [return to the top](#)

DeLorme (copyright 2001) Pg 80 C-3 DeLorme (copyright 2008) Pg 76 D-4
geographic coordinates 44°23'49.0"N 120°25'30.1"W
(44.396957, -120.425021)

[View A Google Map](#)

[eBird Hotspot Checklists for Ochoco Ranger Station](#)

Location: Leave Prineville east on Hwy 26. Go 10.3 miles past the dam at Ochoco Reservoir. Turn right on the 23 Road and go east nine miles and follow the signs to the ranger station. Though the ranger station itself has closed, the campground is still open. and camping is available at about \$10 per night. Sites are limited. Birding along the creek and in the big grassy area between the creek and the paved road is especially good.

Habitat and Birds: The Ranger Station has been dismantled but the habitat remains in and around the campground. Riparian areas and mixed conifers.

This area holds all the common forest birds. Hammonds and Dusky Flycatchers can both be found here and the meadow near the station is good for Lazuli Bunting and Calliope Hummingbird Northern Pygmy-Owls frequent the pines as do White-headed Woodpeckers and Red-naped Sapsuckers. Listen for the chattering of Red Crossbills. This location was famous for having nesting Veery for several years, but that species has not nest at this location since 2005. In 2012, the USFS closed the ranger station, and it is now mostly just a campground.

Walton Lake [return to the top](#)

DeLorme (copyright 2001) Pg 80 C-3 DeLorme (copyright 2008) Pg 76 D-4
geographic coordinates 44°26'05.5"N 120°20'15.6"W

[\(44.434855, -120.337653\)](#)

[View A Google Map](#)

Location: From Prineville, go 25 miles east to Ochoco Ranger Station (see above). Just past the ranger station, turn left (north) and go seven miles NE of Ranger Station on Forest Road #22. Look for the signs.

Habitat and Birds: Lake surrounded by forest. This is an excellent area for woodpeckers, Northern Pygmy-Owl and Grouse (both Ruffed and Dusky). All the forest birds are present here. Hermit Thrushes nest here and Townsend's Warblers are abundant. The campground can be good but is often full of humans. The roads adjacent to the lake provide the best birding. County listers beware: this lake is right on the border with Wheeler County.

Independent Mine and Lookout Mountain Trail [return to the top](#)

DeLorme (copyright 2001) Pg 80 C-3 DeLorme (copyright 2008) Pg 76 D-4
geographic coordinates 44°20'32.5"N 120°21'19.3"W

[\(44.342376, -120.355368\)](#)

[View A Google Map](#)

Location: From Prineville, go 25 miles east to Ochoco Ranger Station (see above), from Ochoco Ranger Station, take Road 42 6.5 miles to the mine entrance. Watch for the sign on your right. Turn onto the dirt road that

accesses the mine. This road is closed in winter. The mine is an old cinnabar mine and the road is blocked to the mine itself. A 0.25-mile hike to the mine can be productive and there is a short trail that runs out and back east of the mine. Continue on birding past the mine on the road and you will come to the Lookout Mountain Trailhead. This 4-mile trail leads to the highest parts of the Ochocos and has produced Pine Grosbeaks (only once), Dusky Grouse, and Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch (look for snow fields).

Habitat and Birds: Many forest birds are common here. Lincoln's Sparrow and Macgillivray's Warbler nest here as does Warbling Vireo. Woodpeckers and finches can be found. Pileated Woodpecker and Ruffed Grouse are often heard at the junction of road 42 and the Independent Mine Road. Northern Saw-whet Owls and Flammulated Owls have been heard from this location.

Big Summit Prairie [return to the top](#)

DeLorme (copyright 2001) Pg 80 C-3 DeLorme (copyright 2008) Pg 76 D-5

geographic coordinates 44°19'41.1"N 120°10'48.8"W

([44.328083](#), [-120.180213](#))

[View A Google Map](#)

[eBird Hotspot Checklists for Big Summit Prairie](#)

Location: Take Hwy 26 East from Prineville, approximately 18 miles and turn right onto County Road 123. Continue another eight miles to Ochoco Ranger Station, then just past the station, bear right at the "Y" on FS Road 42. Continue on Road 42 to Big Summit Prairie (about 6 miles). The map looks pretty confusing but just stay on the pavement and you will come to Big Summit Prairie. Most of the prairie is private land but it can be viewed from the road. Don't cross any fences and you should be fine. With a good Forest Service map, you can take several good side roads and explore. Make sure you take the Round Prairie Road south of Big Summit Prairie. This road has several Aspen groves that are great for woodpeckers in late spring and early summer (Williamson's and Red-naped Sapsucker are easy to find in these groves as are Mountain Bluebirds and others).

Habitat and Birds: Forest and grassland. This is an excellent area for butterflies, wildflowers, and birds. The prairie blooms in spring and the wildflower show is spectacular. Sandhill Cranes can be scoped from the road and several species of woodpeckers can be found along the prairie edges. Many pine-loving bird species are abundant. Upland Sandpipers used to

frequent this prairie but have not been seen for decades. Listen for the ubiquitous Brown Creeper. The surrounding forest is great for woodpeckers and flycatchers.

SOUTH OF PRINEVILLE

Eagle Rock [return to the top](#)

DeLorme (copyright 2001) Pg 80 D- DeLorme (copyright 2008) Pg 76 E-3
geographic coordinates 44°11'46.5"N 120°38'58.9"W

[\(44.196261, -120.649705\)](#)

[View A Google Map](#)

Location: Leave Prineville south on Combs Flat Rd at the east end of Prineville. This becomes the Paulina Hwy 380. After about 12 miles the road descends down a hill toward the Crooked River. Midway down, look for the large crag/ pinnacle on the west side of the road. This is Eagle Rock.

Habitat and Birds: Rocky crag and juniper forest. White throated Swifts breed here. Bullock's Orioles and Canyon Wrens are vocal in summer, and Mountain Quail are sometimes heard here year round. Between March and October, you can almost always find a Say's Phoebe here. Both Red-tailed Hawks and Great Horned Owls nest in the cracks in this rock. While descending along the Paulina Hwy toward Eagle Rock, stop and listen for Green-tailed Towhee on the hillsides. You can hear Common Poorwill here in the evenings (especially upslope from this rock around milepost 10).

North Shore Rd and Prineville Reservoir [return to the top](#)

DeLorme (copyright 2001) Pg 80 D-2 DeLorme (copyright 2008) Pg 76 E-3
geographic coordinates **North Shore Road** 44 10' 42" N 120 37' 32" W
[\(44.17912, -120.62619\)](#)

Prineville Reservoir State Park 44°07'49.6"N 120°43'23.0"W

[\(44.130436, -120.723055\)](#)

[View A Google Map](#)

[eBird Hotspot Checklists for North Shore Road](#)

[eBird Hotspot Checklists for Prineville Reservoir](#)

Location: Leave Prineville south on Combs Flat Road at the east end of Prineville. This becomes the Paulina Hwy380. From the junction of Combs Flat Road and Hwy 126, it's 16.3 miles to North Shore Road. After about 12 miles the road descends down a hill. Past [Eagle Rock](#), at the base of the hill, an un-graded road takes off to the right (west). This is North Shore Road. **It can become impossible to cross after heavy rains due to mud.** The road is closed from mid Nov – mid April. Prineville Reservoir State Park, further to the west, can be accessed either by following North Shore Road or by taking the Juniper Canyon Road off Combs Flat Road just south of Prineville (follow the signs). Take the paved road to Jasper Point State Park and Prineville Reservoir State Park. Both can yield good birds in winter.

Habitat and Birds: Open water, riparian scrub and juniper. This is simply one of the best places to bird in Crook County (except in winter and early spring until the willows leaf out). The riparian area close to the Crooked River is excellent for migrants, and often has a few Blue-gray Gnatcatchers in early August. Large numbers of warblers and flycatchers can be found along the river (North Shore Road). In the fall, Long-eared Owls roost in the willows (they are actually here year-round), and you might find Black-crowned Night-Herons, White-faced Ibis, American White Pelican, and many shorebirds. In spring, both Chukar and Mountain Quail can be found along this road. In October large numbers of Sparrows and American Pipits can be found. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers are seen here annually in August and early September. The lake often hosts Common and Pacific Loons and good numbers of ducks in late fall. Check with the camp host at Prineville Reservoir and they will tell you about the nesting Great Horned Owls. Prineville Reservoir is good for waxwings and Red-breasted Sapsuckers in winter. Pinyon Jays and Clark's Nutcrackers can be found anytime. Summer nesters include Yellow-breasted Chat, Bullock's Oriole, Spotted Sandpiper, Western Grebe, Bushtit, Canyon and Rock Wren, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Lazuli Bunting and many more. Unusual birds seen at this location include Blue-winged Teal, Greater Scaup, Wild Turkey, Horned Grebe, Great Egret, Red-shouldered Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Sanderling, Bewick's Wren, Black-and-white Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Clay-colored Sparrow.

Paulina and Paulina Valley [return to the top](#)

DeLorme (copyright 2001) Pg 81 D-5 DeLorme (copyright 2008) Pg 77 E,F-6

geographic coordinates Paulina 44°07'58.4"N 119°57'49.8"W

([44.132877, -119.963826](#))

Paulina Valley 44° 09' 39" N 119° 59' 23" W

([44.159686, -119.986707](#))

[View A Google Map](#)

Location: This is located in the far eastern part of the county. However, if you want a big Crook County list, you have to come to this part of the county. From Prineville, take Combs Flat Road SE out of town. This road becomes Oregon Road 380 but the locals call it the Paulina Highway. Travel 57 miles to Paulina. To access Paulina Valley, go north out of Paulina (there's only one dirt road) from the Paulina Store. Cross Road 380 and continue on the dirt road as it swings to the east. This road will climb up over a bluff. From the top, you can see Rabbit Valley Reservoir to the west and Paulina Valley Reservoir to the north. Rabbit Valley Reservoir is inaccessible (see Gutierrez Ranch). Take the dirt road down into Paulina Valley. This road is a public road but it travels through a private ranch and the reservoir is on private property. Please bird from the road.

Habitat and Birds: Check out the small community of Paulina for migrants and winter sparrows. Paulina Valley is the main destination here. The habitat and birds are similar to Gutierrez Ranch in the spring. On both sides of the road, the land is private so you must stay on the road. Black Terns are common in summer and Burrowing Owls can occasionally be seen. Shrikes are found year round and waterfowl are abundant in spring. Early spring finds plenty of Long-billed Curlew to the flooded fields. Take a spotting scope for Paulina Valley Reservoir. This is a great spot in the spring and early summer for waders and Bald Eagles. The reservoir dries up in mid- summer and early fall, so it is not productive until spring.

Rager Ranger Station [return to the top](#)

DeLorme (copyright 2001) Pg 81 C-5 DeLorme (copyright 2008) Pg 77 E-7

geographic coordinates 44°14'01.1"N 119°44'04.8"W

([44.23363, -119.73466](#))

[View A Google Map](#)

Location: From Paulina, continue on Road 380 to Beaver Creek Road for 3.5 miles. Turn left on Beaver Creek and carefully survey this area for raptors including Golden Eagle and, in summer, Burrowing Owl. Drive 7.5 miles to a fork in the road. Take the right fork (Road 58) and follow the signs to Rager. This Ranger Station is now abandoned and provides fewer birding opportunities than before. There are many access points and trails to the forest from here. It is possible to make a circular trip back to Paulina via the 135 Road along the north fork of Bear Creek (Puett Road). From Puett Road about three miles east of Beaver Creek Road, you will come across farmland ([44.163564, -119.756901](#)) that historically holds Bobolink.

Habitat and Birds: The area close to the ranger district has forested areas and riparian vegetation. In 2011, the USFS closed this ranger station and its human inhabitants were forced to leave. This meant local bird feeders were no longer stocked and that reduced the value of this location as a birding spot. It is still good for forest birds and is accessible year round. Check the riparian areas for MacGillivray's Warbler and listen for Sora in the cattails. Make sure you take Puett Road on your return trip. Puett Road is very good in spring with lots of waterfowl and good sagebrush associated species. Greater Sage-Grouse are sometimes seen from the road and sage species like Brewer's Sparrow and Sage Thrasher are common. Bobolink is the big draw here so check out the exact location mentioned above.

Maury Mountains and Antelope Reservoir [return to the top](#)

DeLorme (copyright 2001) Pg 81 D-3 DeLorme (copyright 2008) Pg 77 F-4

geographic coordinates Pine Creek Road Access To Maurys

44°08'07.5"N 120°23'24.2"W ([44.135421, -120.390060](#))

Antelope Flats Reservoir

44°00'12.8"N 120°23'32.2"W ([44.003570, -120.392270](#))

[View A Google Map](#)

Location: Leave the Paulina Hwy between Post and Paulina and turn south on Pine Creek Road (Road 17). Travel 11.5 miles and turn left on Forest Road 1700-600. Then go 0.5 mile to Antelope Reservoir (following the signs). Return to Road 17 and backtrack to the junction of Roads 17 and 16. Take Road 16 (Drake Creek Road) east as it winds along the top of the Maurys. Stop frequently at clearings, aspen groves and ponds to sample the local

avifauna. Road 16 eventually curves north and will return you to Hwy 380 (Paulina Hwy). Before getting to the highway, don't miss the scattered campgrounds that can be very productive.

Habitat and Birds: The Maury Mountains are a truncated part of the Ochoco Mountains. They have been separated from the rest of the Ochocos by the Crooked River. These "island mountains" offer some diversity of habitat not found in the rest of the Ochocos. The north facing slopes are wetter and are dominated by a mixture of ponderosa pine and Douglas fir. The south facing slope is very dry and is dominated by ponderosa pine and western juniper. Conifer forest birds can be found at every stop. Northern Pygmy-Owls and Northern Goshawks are here as well as all three nuthatches and lots of woodpeckers. Wild Turkeys are more common here than just about anywhere else in the Ochocos. Pockets of aspen groves provide habitat for Red-naped Sapsucker, Western Wood Pewee and Warbling Vireo. Townsend's and Yellow-rumped Warblers are most common but this location has produced at least one of the few records of Hermit Warbler for the county. Antelope Reservoir can be productive for waterfowl and shorebirds in the spring and fall. Wild Turkeys have done well in the Maurys so watch for them.

Prineville Reservoir State Park [return to the top](#)

DeLorme (copyright 2001) Pg 80 D-1 DeLorme (copyright 2008) Pg 80 D-1
geographic coordinates

Main Park Entrance 44°08'09.8"N 120°44'00.2"W
([44.136061, -120.733400](#))

Jasper Point 44°08'07.7"N 120°41'38.3"W
(44.135475, -120.693961)

North Shore Road 44°08'07.9"N 120°41'44.5"W
(44.135522, -120.695687)

Prineville Reservoir Resort 44°07'24.4"N 120°41'14.2"W
(44.123447, -120.687271)

[View A Google Map](#)

Location: On the east side of Prineville, turn south on Combs Flat Road (Hwy 380). Travel 1.3 miles to the edge of town and turn right on Juniper Canyon Road (follow signs to Prineville Res. S.P.). Travel south for almost 17 miles to the entrance of the state park. Visit the park and return to the

entrance. Continue up the hill and to the east to access North Shore Road and Jasper Point Park (about 2.5 miles from the state park entrance) and the resort marina (the end of the road and about a mile past Jasper Point Park). The marina is private but check in at the store and they will let you check the boat docks for loafing gulls and terns.

Habitat and Birds: This is one of the best places to bird in late fall and winter. The lake attracts sea ducks, loons and grebes during that part of the year. The parks attract wintering flocks of waxwings, Townsend's Solitaire and Mountain Chickadees . Prineville Res. State Park campground is probably the best place in the county to find Red-breasted Sapsuckers in winter. In spring, summer and fall, look for Canyon Wren, Gray Flycatcher and Black-throated Gray Warblers near the parks. Take North Shore Road (AKA Juniper Canyon Rd.) for 14 miles for the best birding in the county (**closed in winter and not recommended if wet**). Don't miss the beach just west of the resort. It has produced rarities such as jaegers and Red Phalarope. It's a good place to scope the middle of the lake.

Rimrock and Crooked River Parks [return to the top](#)

DeLorme (copyright 2001) Pg 80 D-1 DeLorme (copyright 2008) Pg 76 E-2
geographic coordinates

Rimrock Park (44°17'36.0"N 120°50'48.1"W
[44.293325, -120.846695](#))

Crooked River Park 44°17'25.1"N 120°50'36.9"W
(44.290311, -120.843570)

[View A Google Map](#)

Location: Leave Prineville south on Main Street. Just 0.1 miles south of the big church (First Assembly of God) on your right and Lynn Blvd on your right, look for a parking area near a foot bridge. This is the parking area for Rimrock Park. Cross the foot bridge to access riparian habitat and a small pond. Return to your car and travel 0.2 miles farther south. Turn into the baseball complex called Crooked River Park. You can start at the bridge over the canal. Walk along the canal until you reach the Crooked River. Follow the river around the park and return to your car.

Habitat and Birds: **Rimrock Park** is mainly a migration spot in the spring and fall. Migrating passerines can be thick here as they feed along the

Crooked River. In summer, look for nesters like Common Yellow-throat, Western Wood-pewee, Violet-green Swallow, Bullock's Oriole and Lazuli Bunting. In winter, search the sparrow flocks for White-throated Sparrow and Harris's Sparrow. **Crooked River** Park provides large trees, marsh, riparian vegetation and rimrock. Check the canal for Virginia Rail. The large trees sometimes harbor perching raptors and nesting passerines. Yellow-breasted Chat sometimes nest in the riparian zone. Turkey Vultures, raptors, swallows and swifts often cruise the rimrock.

Crooked River Hwy 27 [return to the top](#)

DeLorme (copyright 2001) Pg 80 D-1 DeLorme (copyright 2008) Pg 76 E-2
geographic coordinates Bowman Dam 44°06'42.4"N 120°47'12.9"W
([44.111789, -120.786908](#))

[View A Google Map](#)

Location: Leave Prineville south on Main Street. This becomes the Crooked River Hwy 27 and joins with Highway 20 45 miles to the south. The road becomes gravel after about 30 miles but is well maintained.

Habitat and Birds: Juniper forest and canyons. The first leg of this road (from Prineville) travels through the spectacular Crooked River Canyon. Canyon Wren, Chukar, and Rock Wren are found here. The riparian areas along this river can be very productive during migration. Lazuli Bunting and Yellow-breasted Chat nest in these areas and Golden Eagles nest on the cliffs above. Prairie Falcons and Western Screech-Owls also nest here. In winter, the canyon is a good place to find Northern Saw-Whet Owls that use the canyon for shelter. Lazuli Bunting and Yellow Warblers are everywhere in the summer months. Prineville Reservoir can be seen from the dam producing views of waterfowl. Once you climb out of the canyon, you will enter sagebrush-juniper steppe. Gray Flycatchers, Black-throated Gray Warblers, and Ash-throated Flycatchers are here in summer. Townsend's Solitaires and American Robins are the dominate birds in winter. Near the junction of Hwy 20, look and listen for sagebrush-associated species like Sage Thrasher and Sagebrush Sparrow.