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## **Six Ways to Find the Wild Side of Carson Valley, Nevada** *From Wildlife Watching to Springtime Blooms, Get Outside in Carson Valley*

**CARSON VALLEY, Nev. (Feb. 21, 2023)** – Nevada is lucky enough to lay claim to plenty of brag-worthy features – think dark skies and more natural hot springs than just about anywhere else. The Silver State is also one of the sunniest and driest places in America with more than 300 days of sunshine. The area known as Carson Valley, situated in the foothills of the eastern Sierra Nevada and Lake Tahoe, feels miles away from the rush of bigger cities. With less noise, less light and less people, the area beckons visitors and wildlife to relish some of the most spectacular high desert landscapes in the entire country. From wildlife watching to trekking through springtime blooms, here are six ways to celebrate all things wild in Carson Valley, Nevada.



### **A wildlife oasis awaits.**

As one of the driest climates in America, nearly all of Nevada's seven National Wildlife Refuges involve and conserve whatever water has remained in a landscape with no outlets to the ocean offering critical habitats for migratory birds who stop at the Great Basin to rest, refuel, and sometimes settle in for the long haul. Carson Valley is certainly no exception, where birds following the Pacific Flyway flock to the area's lush wetland meadows, flowing creeks, streams and reservoirs and sprawling irrigation canals 12 months of the year.

But it's not just the birds who are drawn to Carson Valley. From Topaz Lake to Gardnerville, Minden, and Genoa, this northwestern Nevada region is nothing short of a textbook oasis for wildlife of all kinds attracting mule deer, black bears, jackrabbits, bobcats, eagles and hundreds of other bird species—as well as bands of wild horses. Intermixed with wetland meadows and wildflower abundant trails, with jaw-dropping and some of the most ruggedly accessible vistas in the West, world-class photography tours, wildlife sightings and more are easily found.

### **Book a wildlife photography tour.**

Budding and professional photographers alike can experience Carson Valley's high desert terrain with a tour from one of several local guides. Operating photography tours in and around Carson Valley, local guides bring expertise and encourage photography as a form of engagement.

The tours take visitors from the steps of hotels and motels, along a dirt road into the Pine Nut Mountains. From there, unblemished views of Jobs Peak and the surrounding Sierra Nevada make the perfect backdrop for bands of wild mustangs. All the guides encourage a wildlife-first approach focused on safety and respect for the wildlife first. To learn more, [click here](#).

### **Take a walk at the River Fork Ranch for a personal and immersive experience.**

Located just minutes from Genoa, Nevada, the first permanent settlement in the state, is 800 acres of lush meadows, wetland habitats, access to Carson River, and of course, those picture-perfect views Carson Valley is known for. Thanks to the preservation efforts of the Nature Conservancy and private landowners, wildlife conservation is first here.

The River Fork Ranch is located at the confluence of the east and west forks of the Carson River, and through careful planning and conservation work, is at the heart of a network of ranch lands and pastures, wetlands and meadows that support a dynamic ecosystem of creatures including eagles, owls, monarch butterflies, sandhill cranes, mule deer, leopard frogs, pond turtles and much more. While spring and summer are the wettest for the habitat, there's no bad time to visit the preserve with a myriad of walking trails complete with information about the fragile ecosystems, park benches at scenic overlooks and 360-views valley and mountain views.

### **Discover a world of wildlife, and a bounty of fish, at Topaz Lake.**

Unlike most other alpine lakes in the eastern Sierra which are typically frozen over in the winter and even late into spring, Topaz Lake's trout-filled waters remain flowing and accessible year-round making it a favorite respite for outdoorsmen. Straddling the California-Nevada state line, Topaz Lake is 40 minutes south of Gardnerville on U.S. 395 in the high desert hills. The lake draws mule deer, desert bighorn sheep, jackrabbit, kit fox, osprey, pelican and more that rely upon its always-available waters. Off the water, walking trails provide for hiking around the Topaz Lake Recreation Area's tiny peninsula leading to scenic overlooks especially eye-catching during spring when wildflowers are blooming.

### **Pack a picnic for a family adventure at Jake's Wetland and Wildlife Meadow.**

Situated within Minden at the junction of U.S. Highway 395 and Highway 88, Jake's Wetland and Wildlife Meadow provide unbelievably easy access and an ideal way to get outside, especially for families with small children. Paved pathways allow for easy exploration to the properties of eight acres of natural wetlands brimming with resident and migrating birds, wildflower blooms and plenty of areas to discover.

Part of the Martin Slough, which funnels water from the Carson River through Gardnerville and Minden for ranching irrigation, water for hundreds of trees and shrubs, better water quality for area residents, and now a beautiful man-made lake supports Jake's Wetland & Wildlife Meadow. Before hitting the

trail, grab a sandwich and other treats and stretch out for a picnic lunch.

### **Jack's Valley Wildlife Management Area**

Situated on the northern edge of Carson Valley along one of the region's most wildlife-packed routes, discover hundreds of birds, mule deer and more at Jack's Valley Wildlife Management Area. Made possible thanks to many land managers coming together in the name of wildlife conservation, founding groups include the Nevada Land Trust, Conservation Fund, tribal landowners and USFS (United States Forestry Service) working together to protect more than 3,000 acres of land from development along the Carson Front. Keep those binoculars and cameras handy and look to the skies for birdwatching the likes of black-billed magpie, western meadowlark, sage sparrow, brewer's sparrow, sage thrasher, loggerhead shrike and more – all of whom seek refuge here.

The Clear Creek Trail System can also be accessed along Jack's Valley Road and the Wildlife Management Area, which unites the Clear Creek Trail, Jacks Valley Loop, and Clear Creek Connector for Carson Valley's longest multi-use trail system. Keep an eye out for mule deer, bobcats, jackrabbit and coyote, along with red-tailed hawks, golden eagles and other raptors riding the Carson Valley's world-renowned thermals.

### **About Carson Valley:**

Nestled at the base of the Sierra, Carson Valley begs visitors to not just drive through it, but to it. Located 45 miles south of Reno-Tahoe International Airport and 12 miles east of South Lake Tahoe, the region's natural beauty is legendary: wide-open farms, ranches, bands of wild horses and birds of prey dot the landscape. Outdoor recreation enthusiasts follow all points of the compass with more than 65 miles of hiking, mountain biking or walking trails along with world class road biking. The valley's museums, arts, antiquing, Basque dining, historic watering holes and more add to the destination's authentic culture. The region includes the communities of Minden, Gardnerville, Topaz Lake and Genoa, Nevada's first settlement dating back to 1851. Explore the land of everyday legends at

[VisitCarsonValley.org](http://VisitCarsonValley.org).

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