

North Creek Park

My friend Linda and I enjoy birding far-flung Snohomish County hotspots. But we often end up saying, “We could have seen that at North Creek Park and saved the gas!”

Conveniently located off the Bothell-Everett Highway (HWY 527) just south of Mill Creek, North Creek Park has been my favorite birding spot since my college son was in preschool. A newly repaired boardwalk winds through a freshwater marsh in what was once the Bailey Farm. Conifers in the upper picnic area host sparrows, chickadees, and kinglets.

Whether it’s nesting Bald Eagles or tiny Rufous Hummingbirds, booming American Bittern or lilting American Goldfinch, secretive Wilson’s Snipe or show-off Red-winged Blackbirds, you can see it all here.

And the people are almost as interesting as the birds. Don’t be surprised if walkers spot your binoculars and ask to you to help ID a bird.

The fun of North Creek Park is that you never know what you’ll see. On a recent May visit, we saw two Solitary Sandpipers, Mallard and Cinnamon Teal ducklings, and a young Virginia Rail—looking like a puff of black cotton on stilts—with its mom. eBird lists 108 species here. How many will you see?

Birds. *Year-round:* Marsh Wren, Song Sparrow, Black-capped and Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Anna’s Hummingbird, Great Blue Heron, Red-tailed Hawk, Gadwall, Belted Kingfisher, Red-winged Blackbird, Northern Flicker.

Spring/Summer: Common Yellowthroat, Black-headed Grosbeak, Cedar Waxwing, Savannah Sparrow, American Bittern, Willow Flycatcher, Swainson’s Thrush, swallows (Barn, Violet-green, Tree, Cliff, and Northern Rough-winged).

Fall/Winter: American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintail, Bufflehead, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Fox Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Pine Siskin, Wilson’s Snipe.

Feeling lucky? Less common but on record here are: Short-eared Owl, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Solitary Sandpiper, White-fronted Goose, Northern Shrike, Blue-winged Teal, American Pipit, and Western Kingbird.

Getting there: From the Bothell-Everett Highway just south of Mill Creek, turn west onto 183rd St. SE. The main entrance is about a mile down on the right. You can also park at the trailhead on 9th Ave SE and enter the park from the north. Turn south onto 9th Ave SE from 164th St. SE; park at the trailhead sign on the left, and walk down 9th into the park.

Boardwalk Trail: Slippery in freezing weather. Otherwise, an easy walk. Main trail with two short spurs going off to the west. Despite what the sign shows, the trail is not a loop. You’ll need to walk to the end and then turn around and come back. Total distance, round trip, about 2 miles.

Habitat: Wetland, forest.

Amenities: Portapotty, picnic tables, and children's play area at the south entrance.

Access: Dawn to dusk, seven days a week. No fees or permits required.

More info: <http://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/Facilities/Facility/Details/North-Creek-Park-and-Water-Retention-Fac-103>

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