

Soda Lake

● Big and Little Soda Lakes lie surrounded by arid desert sandhills and are a magnet for shorebirds, gulls and other birds. It is not unusual to find large numbers of grebes and phalaropes during migration on Big Soda Lake attracted by large masses of invertebrates composed of brine flies and brine shrimp. In addition, it is a good place to study shorebirds, including Western and Least Sandpipers, Wilson's and Red-necked Phalaropes, and Snowy Plovers. Fresh enough to support fish, Little Soda Lake is a good place to look for loons, grebes, diving ducks and terns. Keep an eye out for rarities. Pacific Golden Plover, Curlew Sandpiper and Sabine's Gulls have been seen at Big Soda Lake.

Directions from Fallon: From the corner of Williams Ave (Hwy 50) and Allen Road in Fallon, go west 3.1 miles to Soda Lake Road. Take a right (north) and go 2 miles to Cox Road. Take a left onto Cox Road and go 1.3 miles and take a right onto a dirt road.



Carson River Diversion Dam

● Carson River Diversion Dam is one of the valley's best migratory songbird sites. Visitors should check the area just below the dam for song birds, particularly warblers and sparrows. In addition, a walk along the south side of the river upstream of the diversion dam will yield a most enjoyable search for passerines in the cottonwoods and Russian olives, as well as water birds in the wetlands created by the diversion dam.

Directions: From the corner of Williams Ave (Hwy 50) and Allen Road go 7 miles west of Fallon and turn south onto Pioneer Way. At 4.1 miles turn left just before the ditch crossing. Follow this gravel road and you will reach the river crossing at 4.4 miles. The river crossing may be impassable during high runoff releases. Go left, cross the bridge and turn immediately right after the bridge. Follow this unimproved dirt road upstream along the river. Park and walk.

S-Line Reservoir

● S-Line Reservoir is usually worth a brief visit, particularly during migration when grebes, ducks, small numbers of shorebirds, and other water birds will roost and feed here. There is a heron and egret colony in the cottonwoods on the northern half of S-Line and Osprey have nested in this area as well. During winter months, there is often a gull roost at S-Line, and Bald Eagles are sometimes present.

Directions: From the corner of Williams Ave (Hwy 50) and Maine Street in Fallon head east on Hwy 50 out of Fallon. In 1.1 miles turn north (left) on Rio Vista Drive and go 0.4 miles before bearing right on Indian Lakes Road (the cemetery will be on your right). Follow Indian Lakes Road 0.7 miles and then take a right on Reservoir Road. S-Line Reservoir will be on your left after going an additional 0.5 miles.

Carson Lake Wetlands

● The Carson Lake wetlands provide some of the best birding in northern Nevada. This large wetland complex is a mecca for waterbirds of all sorts.

Shorebird migration peaks in April and August with thousands of American Avocets, Black-necked Stilts, Long-billed Dowitchers and many other species comprising a spectacle unrivaled in the state. More than 30 species of shorebirds have been sighted here, including rare vagrants such as Ruff, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Red Phalarope and Stilt Sandpiper.

Carson Lake also hosts large numbers of herons and egrets and is home to one of the West's largest White-faced Ibis colonies. Carson Lake also provides important migratory and breeding habitat for thousands of geese and ducks, including Cinnamon Teal, Gadwall and Redheads. Winter brings large numbers of raptors, including Rough-legged Hawk, Short-eared Owl and Bald Eagle.

The Holmes Levee, Lott Freeway and Madsen Levees provide excellent viewing opportunities, depending on water conditions. There are three viewing towers - one on the Holmes Levee and two on the Madsen Levee.

Carson Lake is open from sunrise to sunset most days of the year. During waterfowl hunting season, vehicles are restricted from certain areas. The caretakers can be reached at 775-423-3071. Visitors to Carson Lake should check in with the caretakers at the gate.

Directions: From the corner of Williams Ave (Hwy 50) and Taylor Street (Hwy 95) in downtown Fallon go 8.8 miles south to Pasture Road. Turn east (left) on Pasture Road and go 2 miles to an entrance marked with a "Greenhead Hunting Club" sign.

Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge

● Along with Carson Lake, the Stillwater Marshes are the core of the Lahontan Valley wetlands. Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) provides outstanding birding opportunities and is scenically located at the foot of the Stillwater Mountains.

Stillwater NWR attracts more than 250,000 swans, geese and ducks annually, including more than 10,000 Tundra Swans and large numbers of Canvasbacks. Shorebird migration is also spectacular with numbers rivaling those at Carson Lake. Stillwater NWR has attracted its share of rare birds, including Brown Pelican, Surf and White-winged Scoter, Pomerine Jaeger and Silt Sandpiper.

If you are unfamiliar with Stillwater NWR, visit the website www.fws.gov/refuge/Stillwater to learn more about water conditions and the wetland locations. Enjoy the Overlook and the new Tule Trail, Millen Pond Water Trail, Foxtail Auto Loop and the Paiute Path. Stillwater NWR is open year round. The Stillwater NWR headquarters is located at 1020 New River Parkway #305. Call 775-423-5128 for more information.

Directions from Fallon: From the corner of Williams Ave (Hwy 50) and Maine Street in Fallon head east on Hwy 50 out of Fallon. At 4.6 miles turn left onto Stillwater Road. Follow Stillwater Road 12.3 miles to a sign marking the entrance to the refuge.

Harmon Reservoir

● On the road to Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge, Harmon Reservoir, another regulatory reservoir, provides a good combination of open water and wetlands. Harmon attracts large numbers of grebes, waterfowl, pelicans, gulls, terns, and a smaller assortment of shorebirds and marsh dwelling birds, including rails and bitterns (Least Bittern has been recorded here). The reservoir's Russian olives and tamarisks also attract passerines, including migratory warblers.

Directions: From the corner of Williams Ave (Hwy 50) and Maine Street in Fallon head east on Hwy 50. In 4.6 miles turn left onto Stillwater Road. Follow Stillwater Road 1.1 miles and where Stillwater Road curves north (left) go straight onto Stuart Road. In 1.1 miles Harmon will be on your right. At the east end of Harmon Reservoir turn south (right) onto a dirt road that takes you to the back side of reservoir.

NAS Fallon Nature Trail

● The Fallon Naval Air Station has developed a short nature trail complete with ponds, agricultural fields and riparian habitat. During migration and nesting, this is a good area to look for songbirds such as Bullock's Oriole and Black-headed Grosbeaks in the summer. When the fields are being irrigated, look for White-faced Ibis, Gulls and other water birds. During winter it is worth checking out the sparrow flocks for rarities.

Directions: From the corner of Williams Ave (Hwy 50) and Maine Street in Fallon head east on Hwy 50 out of Fallon. At 2.2 miles turn right onto Crook Road. Follow Crook Road 1.4 miles and just before you reach the Wildes Road intersection turn left into the parking area. Look for the trail marker.

Legend

- Paved Road
- Un-paved Road