



Northern Forest Canoe Trail Connecticut River Valley Wildlife Watch *One-Day Itinerary*



Trip Summary

Maps and Guidebooks

- [NFCT Map 7: Great North Woods](#)
- [NFCT Guidebook](#)
- [Connecticut River Joint Commission Maps](#)
- [AMC River Guide \(NH and VT\)](#)
- [Google Maps directions](#)

Activities

- Paddling and wildlife viewing on the Connecticut River

Places to Stay

- [Big Rock Campground and Store](#)
- [Connolly Cabins](#)
- [The Blueberry Hill Inn- Cafe and Campground](#)
- [Trailside Lodge](#)

Where to Eat

- [Debanville's General Store](#)
- [Everybody's Place](#)
- [North Country Family Restaurant](#)
- [Stratford Market](#)
- [Stone's Pizza](#)
- [The Blueberry Inn Cafe](#)

Outfitters and Guides

- [Kingdom Guide Service](#)
- [L.L. Cote](#)
- [Osprey Fishing Adventures](#)
- [Outdoor ESCAPES New Hampshire](#)

Local Events

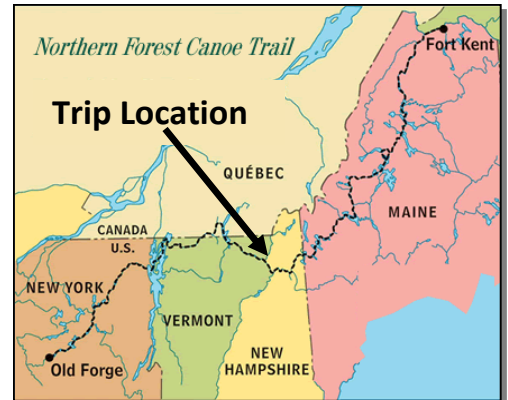
- [NFCT Events Calendar](#)

NFCT Package Specials

- [Inn to Inn on the Connecticut](#)

~Last Updated-June 16, 2011~

The section of the Northern Forest Canoe Trail spanning between **Stratford and Groveton, NH** threads its way past rolling hills and farmland. The lazy current of the Connecticut River allows for a peaceful paddle through osprey, Canada goose and bank sparrow nesting grounds. The nearby Nulhegan Basin Division of the [Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge](#) provides protected habitat for these animals. This itinerary describes a full day paddling trip (11 miles) highlighting some of the best lodging, dining, shopping and guides in the area.



Day 1: Connecticut River Paddle

Wake up in your comfortable room at the [Blueberry Hill Inn - Cafe and Campground](#), an Early Colonial farmhouse surrounded by 55-acres of wild blueberry fields and woods in Stratford, NH. Downstairs, you can treat yourself to one of the Café's specialty omelets and a muffin with blueberries picked in on the property.



The [Trailside Lodge](#), [Connolly Cabins](#), and the [Big Rock Campground and Store](#) are also terrific options for lodging and camping in the area.

If you still need to buy gear and supplies for your paddling trip, drive north to Colebrook and look through the wide variety of boating, fishing and camping supplies at [Ducret's Sporting Goods](#). Consider picking up a copy of the CT River Watershed Council's [Connecticut River Boating Guide](#) or the [AMC's River Guide for Vermont and New Hampshire](#). You can also go online to view the Connecticut River Joint Commission's [maps](#) of the river and to see the river's [flowage](#) which is greatly affected by rain fall and dam releases. If you need to rent a boat, arrange to have [L.L. Cote](#) deliver one to your lodging.

While in Colebrook, stop in at [Le Rendez-Vous Bakery](#), a Yankee Editor's pick, for delicious fresh bread and French pastries. You also might enjoy browsing through [Creative Natives](#), [Fiddleheads](#) and the [Colebrook Farmers' Market](#) (Saturdays) for crafts, gifts and clothing made by local, regional and national artisans.

While you prepare for your paddling adventure, consider hiring a guide from [Kingdom Guide Service](#) or [Outdoor ESCAPES New Hampshire](#) to assist you with logistical preparations and shuttle services. Along the river, guides also reveal the subtleties of the river's natural ecosystems and tell stories of both the Native and non-Native people who have inhabited the landscape through history. For those interested in fishing, [Osprey Fishing Adventures](#) offers drift boat tours, fishing equipment and expert advice on the Upper Connecticut's renowned wild brook trout and landlocked salmon populations.



When you are ready to begin your paddle return south to Stratford, NH where you can pick up fresh deli sandwiches and other picnic supplies at the [Stratford Market](#) or across the river at [Debanville's General Store](#). Consult your NFCT [Map 7](#) to find the NFCT kiosk at "Debanville's Landing" on the Connecticut River in Bloomfield, Vermont. Your map and the [NFCT Guidebook](#) will highlight significant natural and cultural sites along your journey such as Brunswick Springs, a sacred place long considered by the Abenaki to have healing powers. In the late 1800's and early 1900's, several hotels were built on this site. Legend suggests that the hotels of Brunswick Springs, all of which burned down, were cursed because they attempted to profit from the sacred waters.

Along the Connecticut River, you will observe great stretches of working farmland. Although it may not strike you as prime wildlife habitat, black bear can sometimes be observed feeding in the ripened corn fields. Many different species of birds including bald eagles, Canada geese and osprey are also active along this river corridor in the summer months. Keep your eyes peeled for riverbanks riddled with holes; evidence of nesting bank swallows. Please practice Leave No Trace techniques and give all wildlife plenty of room as you pass.

If you would like to return to the [Blueberry Hill Inn - Cafe and Campground](#) for the night, you can arrange to be picked up 11 miles into your journey at the Maidstone Bridge. If you would prefer to camp on the river, pull off on the Vermont shore at the granite pier (an old railroad trestle) and stay at NFCT's Maine Central Railroad Trestle Campsite.

For dinner, head south to Groveton's [North Country Family Restaurant](#) for a delicious home-cooked meal or return to Colebrook for a juicy steak or roasted chicken dinner at the [Wilderness Restaurant and Lounge](#).

This route can easily be turned into a two-day adventure by carrying on downstream, past the Fort Hill Wildlife Management Area and taking out in Guildhall, Vermont upstream of the breached Wyoming Dam (a hazard to paddlers) and the RT 102 bridge.



You might also extend your visit by planning your trip around one of the local summer [events](#) and by including a visit to the [Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge](#) headquarters. The headquarters are in a beautiful location and offer interpretive information about the natural and cultural history of the region.

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