

Wilderness.net's Caribou-Speckled Mountain Wilderness Fact Sheet



Credit:
Peter Smart

Introduction

The United States Congress designated the Caribou-Speckled Mountain Wilderness in 1990 and it now has a total of 11,236 acres. All of the wilderness is in Maine and is managed by the Forest Service.

Description

New Hampshire is home to most of the White Mountain National Forest but many of its acres cross into Maine. Within this expanse lies the Caribou-Speckled Mountain Wilderness. Encompassing both Caribou Mountain and Speckled Mountain, it is the state's largest Wilderness. It is an area of rugged terrain with deep notches, open ledges and numerous ridges covered by northern hardwoods. White pine, the official state tree of Maine, grows lower down on the slopes while spruce and fir dominate the forest higher up. Many cold mountain streams run out of this area headed for the Androscoggin River to the north and the Saco River to the south.

Dots or "specks" of hardwoods that color brilliantly in fall cover the flanks of Speckled Mountain (2906') giving the mountain its name. It is often confused with a number of other mountains in Maine that share similar names such as Old Speck (4170'), which is only twenty miles distant. The Wilderness' other namesake, Caribou Mountain, lies four miles north of Speckled Mountain. Slightly lower at 2840', its name reminds us of the giant relative of the reindeer that existed in the state until the first part of the twentieth century. Speckled Mountain rises near the center of a network of trails that provide access to its many superb vistas. Open ledges abound and a number of interesting geologic features such as slides, notches, and glacial potholes can be explored. The Bickford Brook Trail climbs from the west to the open summit of Speckled Mountain. It begins outside the Wilderness boundary at the Brickett Place Wilderness Information Center. The center is staffed seasonally and can provide information about trails and local history. Farther north, Caribou Mountain provides some of the most attractive ledges in the Wilderness on its open summit. Moose, bear, coyote and other animals inhabit the forest of the Caribou-Speckled Mountain Wilderness. Trails avoiding the summits and the areas off trails are the best bets if viewing wildlife is a primary goal of your visit. Trout can also be found in the many streams that carve their way through the hills. Bushwhacking may be difficult due to thick understory but it allows visitors to explore some of the wild trailless portions of the Wilderness. Winter access to the Wilderness is much reduced by the seasonal closing of Rt 113. This road provides the main access to Wilderness trailheads from the west and is usually closed from mid November through mid May though exact dates will depend on local conditions.

Leave No Trace

How to follow the seven standard Leave No Trace principles differs in different parts of the

country (desert vs. Rocky Mountains). Click on any of the principles listed below to learn more about how they apply in the Caribou-Speckled Mountain Wilderness.

1. [Plan Ahead and Prepare](#)
2. [Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces](#)
3. [Dispose of Waste Properly](#)
4. [Leave What You Find](#)
5. [Minimize Campfire Impacts](#)
6. [Respect Wildlife](#)
7. [Be Considerate of Other Visitors](#)

For more information on Leave No Trace, [Visit the Leave No Trace, Inc. website.](#)

Area Management

The Caribou-Speckled Mountain Wilderness is part of the 109 million acre National Wilderness Preservation System. This System of lands provides clean air, water, and habitat critical for rare and endangered plants and animals. In wilderness, you can enjoy challenging recreational activities like hiking, backpacking, climbing, kayaking, canoeing, rafting, horse packing, bird watching, stargazing, and extraordinary opportunities for solitude. You play an important role in helping to *"secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness"* as called for by the Congress of the United States through the Wilderness Act of 1964. Please follow the requirements outlined below and use Leave No Trace techniques when visiting the Caribou-Speckled Mountain Wilderness to ensure protection of this unique area.

General Wilderness Prohibitions

Motorized equipment and equipment used for mechanical transport is generally prohibited on all federal lands designated as wilderness. This includes the use of motor vehicles, motorboats, motorized equipment, bicycles, hang gliders, wagons, carts, portage wheels, and the landing of aircraft including helicopters, unless provided for in specific legislation.

In a few areas some exceptions allowing the use of motorized equipment or mechanical transport are described in the special regulations in effect for a specific area. Contact the Forest Service office for more specific information.

These general prohibitions have been implemented for all national forest wildernesses in order to implement the provisions of the Wilderness Act of 1964. The Wilderness Act requires management of human-caused impacts and protection of the area's wilderness character to insure that it is "unimpaired for the future use and enjoyment as wilderness." Use of the equipment listed as prohibited in wilderness is inconsistent with the provision in the Wilderness Act which mandates opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation and that wilderness is a place that is in contrast with areas where people and their works are dominant.

Wilderness-Specific Regulations

Wilderness managers often need to take action to limit the impacts caused by visitor activities in order to protect the natural conditions of wilderness as required by the Wilderness Act of 1964. Managers typically implement 'indirect' types of actions such as information and education measures before selecting more restrictive measures. When regulations are necessary, they are

implemented with the specific intent of balancing the need to preserve the character of the wilderness while providing for the use and enjoyment of wilderness.

The following wilderness regulations are in effect for this area. Not all regulations are in effect for every wilderness. Contact the Forest Service office for more specific information about the regulations listed.

ALL VISITORS

- Group size is limited to no more than 10 people per party.
- Campfires are prohibited within 1/4 mile of any hut, shelter, developed campsite, cabin, picnic area, or developed day use site (except at designated sites).
- Camping is prohibited within 1/4 mile of any hut shelter, cabin, picnic area, or day use site (except at designated areas).
- Do not store equipment, personal property, or supplies (caching) in the Wilderness (including geocaching and letterboxing).
- As with all designated Wilderness areas, mechanical transportation (including wagons, game carts, and other vehicles) is prohibited.

Contacts

Androscoggin Ranger District
300 GLEN ROAD
GORHAM, NH 03581

Phone: 603-466-2713

Links on Wilderness.net

[National, Regional and Local Wilderness Organizations \(NGOs\)](#)

A listing of societies, organizations, coalitions and other wilderness-related advocacy and stewardship groups.

[Career and Volunteer Opportunities](#)

A listing of sites providing information about wilderness- and environmentally-related career and volunteer opportunities.

Applicable Wilderness Law(s)

Law	Date	Acreage Change (in acres)
Public Law 101-401	September 28, 1990	12,000

Maine Wilderness Act of 1990 - Public law 101-401 (9/28/1990) To designate certain lands in the State of Maine as wilderness.

— [download 101-401](#)

