

The Phantom Ridge Wilderness Guide

Vol.1

Tiberius
Glenwood

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Prologue

I have spent many years wandering the wilderness.

I can still recall with troubling clarity the risk I had taken as a young boy, wondering into the woods with nothing more than a journal and a pocket knife. I was dangerously curious. As most fools tend to be. It seemed fine to me then that I might blaze a trail of my own, cutting away brush and jumping across creeks, searching for a place to camp among the gloomy tall pines of the Forest of Souls.

Only now, nearly five decades later, do I finally understand the fear I must have made my mother endure. Now it is my own children who terrify me with their personal predilections. But the burden of a parent is to endure their children's transition from a state of unsustainable fragility into a life of hard fought devotion and self fortification. From nest egg into a soaring sultan of the sky. We must risk falling to learn to fly.

I was seven years old I was struck with an unrelenting clarity. After climbing to the peak of a Blackwood pine - a specific local varietal of tree that grow nearly 40 feet high - I looked out upon the vast landscape of The Ridge. As quickly as one draws breath and as assuredly as the sun

rises, I understood that my life must be spent in devotion of this majestic land. I have spent my entire life on this pursuit. I am proud to say that I have seen nearly every inch of earth there is to see across the Phantom Ridge.

While I can no longer climb a tree with the vigour of my youth, I can instead relay my findings to you. This book is not some encyclopaedia to sit starving on a shelf, collecting dust. It is a guide. A trusty guide, which I hope will inspire you dear reader, to see it all for yourself.

Safe Travels,

Tiberius Glenwood.

Volume 1

Avians

Birds. They are everywhere.

From the glib and superficial peacocks to the aloof and hardheaded Ostrich. Their majesty is unspoken and inherent, and no matter where you are in the ridge you are sure to hear something chirping about in the distance. To list every bird that has ever flown across the great blue sky of the ridge would be madness. Don't get me wrong, I am very fond of madness and mad people, but for the sake of my publishers strict word count, I will be limiting this section to only the most rare, beautiful, and beloved avians of the ridge.



The Revenant Woodpecker

This variation of the common woodpecker can be found, unsurprisingly, throughout the Revenant Canyon. However, due to the city's rapid expansion over the last four decades, these peculiar birds have migrated in mass. They now primarily reside in the northern regions of the canyon. Oddly enough these avians like to peck at the stone cliffs as apposed to the wooden trunks of trees. Where this peculiar habit originated I am unsure. However the sounds they create are unmistakable, like a nail rapidly tapping against hard rock.



The Pink Tail Ostrich

These large, flightless birds, are as aggressive as they are ugly. Records suggest that once upon a time they could be found all across the ridge. That is however, until “The Great Wrangling.” They were highly sought after by the original Barrowese Monarchy for their powerful and aggressive builds. They were captured, trained and served as the ideal mounts for their army of knights. Why not horses? Well they simply didn’t exist yet! Should you hear their deep booming mating call, I suggest you climb the highest tree you can, and try gaslighting it into thinking it is a flamingo.

The Red Crested Gargler

This perverted bird is - as my more infantile colleges would call it - a real “horny boi.” It’s mating call can only be described as someone gargling water in a manner that might invoke a very sensual or provocative image. Since they are semi-aquatic birds they are always found near water, most often in the southern regions of Diamond Straits but have been seen as far south as the river bend near Ghost Valley.

The Idiot Tourist Chicken

One of the most absurd creatures that I have observed in my life, this peculiar chicken has been renamed in recent years due to its vocal similarities to that of a tourist from “beyond the ridge.” While I, like most Ridgians, have never encountered one of these tourist, local Phantom Peak Ornithologist Bertrand B. Hazel insist the two sound the same. He has described it as a whiney high pitch squawk that resembles the words “Where?”, ”is-the?”, and “Jonagraph?”

It has been agreed upon by many ornithologist that a lower pitch bird call is more appealing or “sensual.” By this metric the Idiot Tourist Chicken might just have the most unattractive squawk of all time.

The Jade Kakapo

A personal favourite of mine, The Jade Kakapo is a delightful and cheerful animal. These parrots are so heavy they cannot fly. In order to find food they will climb trees in search of fruits and berries. Growing up I could often find them just north west of my home town. To this day every spring I go hiking just to hear their deep booming mating calls.

The Morning Bluejay

These beautiful avians have stunning blue, black and white plumage. Their delicate feathers are highly valuable and unsurprisingly hundreds have poached by greedy hunters. Over time however, they have showcased great intellect by outwitting hunters and predators alike. They can be heard typically in a noisy chorus of quick piercing squawks, a sound I can only compare to a squeaky dog toy.



Morning Bluejay

The Mega-Raven

These gargantuan carnivorous birds were once considered holy creatures by the ancient Diamar civilisation. It is easy to see why considering they have an average wingspan of 13ft. They are capable of grabbing large mammals like bovines or horses and flying them back to their remote nest. While they prefer to live at high altitudes they often fly over agricultural communities in order to find unprotected livestock. Most interesting of all, the Mega Ravens call seems to mimic it's own name. A deep a thunderous declaration of "MEGA RAVEN." This call is considered to be the most sensual of all due to it's deep and reverberating pitch.

The Brown-Noser Swan

Over the last several decades this species has become overly dependent on the resources of the surrounding lake side community. Refusing to forage for food anymore, they instead preform overwrought theatrical performances. They are usually paid by onlookers with beluga caviar or duck breast with apricot chutney. However, If they don't like what you offer as payment they will chase you down while aggressively honking like an untuned trumpet. Remember, the Brown-Noser Swan *always* gets what it wants.

The Belted Kingfisher.

This bird has a deep steel blue colouration with a white belly and black wing tips. Females can be identified by the addition of a burnt orange colouration along the chest. Their call is a rapid fire of high pitch chirps. It's almost like a cricket rubbing it's legs together with the speed of a machine gun. One could possibly compare it to a horribly rusty hinge clicking as it swings open. Fascinatingly, these birds grow a "shaggy crest" in adulthood which look like a "totally radical" Mohawk.

The Peacock

Words simply cannot describe the beauty and elegance of these creatures. With over two hundred tail feathers, each a sparkingly green with dazzling blue spots, the Peacock will strut around for hours, attracting multiple mates as well as enraptured onlookers. These birds are not afraid of people, and can be found quite commonly throughout Apparition Hills. You may spot them in the wild or even as domesticated pets!. However, do be warned, if you do adopt a peacock the chances of you falling deeply in love with it are dangerously high.



About the Author

Tiberius Glenwood is a 56 year old resident of the Forest of Souls. A self proclaimed naturalist since the age of seven, Tiberius has traveled across The Phantom Ridge in pursuit of witnessing the wonders of our natural world. As an avid conservationist and failed tween romance author, he has begun cataloging his life's work in hopes that readers like you will go out and touch some grass.