

Eagle's Beak

Length: 7 Miles (Kelly Bridge Road to Old Federal Road)

Class: I

Time: 3-5 hours

Minimum Level: This section of river is runnable except in the most severe droughts. Anything above 60 cfs at the Hwy. 9 gauge should provide sufficient flow.

River Gauge: The nearest upstream river gauge is located at Ga. 9 near Dawsonville:

http://waterdata.usgs.gov/ga/nwis/uv?site_no=02389150

Launch Site: A privately-owned boat ramp, there is a nominal fee for the privilege of using the site (paid on the honor system at a drop box located on the gate into the parking area). The site includes a paved boat ramp, ample parking and a portable toilet.

Directions: The launch is located on Kelly Bridge Road, west of Ga. 9. From the intersection of Ga. 400 and Ga. 369 north of Cumming, turn left on Ga. 369 (Browns Bridge Road) and proceed one mile to Ga. 9. Turn right and proceed 6.2 miles to A.T. Moore Road on left. Turn left on A.T. Moore Road and proceed 0.7 mile where A.T. Moore merges with Govan Road to become Kelly Bridge Road. Proceed from here 5.5 miles to Etowah River. Launch area will be on your right after the bridge.

Take Out Site: The take out is located on river left just before reaching the Old Federal Road Bridge. It is possible to take out beneath the bridge although strainers pinned against the bridge piers often make this difficult. The take out is up steep banks. There is no developed launch or parking area at this location.

Directions: From the Kelly Bridge Road Launch Site, turn left on Kelly Bridge and proceed 2.2 miles to Needham Road on the right. Turn right and proceed 0.4 mile to Nicholson Road. Turn right on Nicholson Road and proceed 3.3 miles to Old Federal Road and take out site on the right.

Descriptions: Though the river leaves behind the protected corridor formed by the Dawson Forest Wildlife Management Area, the seven miles from Kelly remains rural and the river banks undeveloped. Perhaps for that reason it and the land surrounding it are the play places for some unique recreational pursuits, including gold mining, gun clubs and remote control airplanes clubs. The river runs calm with no significant shoals or rapids, though occasionally strainers can block all, or a portion, of the river.

Outfitters:

Appalachian Outfitters (Dahlonega) is the nearest canoe/kayak outfitter.

Points of Interest:

Mile 49.1—(34°21'22.05"N 84°12'49.42"W)—Georgia Gold Prospectors Association—Just below Kelly Bridge, you'll find land owned by Georgia Gold Prospectors Association which operates two claims on the Etowah River. The group of 250 recreational prospectors holds regular outings on numerous claims in Georgia, including this one. One of the common techniques for finding gold in the river is the use of a small floating dredge. The dredge sucks sand and gravel from the river bottom and sends it through a sluice that contain horizontal ridges or bars that catch the heaviest particles in the slurry. Gold, being the densest metal known to man, stays in the sluice box because of its weight. Usually, the contents of the sluice are then transferred to a gold pan where the fine particles of gold can be collected by hand.

Mile 51.4—(34°20'21.36"N 84°14'13.04"W)—Powerlines

Mile 51.5—(34°20'19.34"N 84°20'19.34"N)—Yellow Creek/Lathem Reservoir—About two miles upstream on Yellow Creek sits the Cherokee County Water & Sewer Authority's (CCWSA) 411-acre Hollis Lathem Reservoir. The project is considered a "drought contingency" reservoir and was built when CCWSA needed to increase its water withdrawal downstream on the Etowah in the early 1990s. Water from the reservoir is released downstream when the Etowah dips below a certain level, allowing the CCWSA to keep the water flowing to homes and businesses in Cherokee County. It is one of two water supply reservoirs built since 1990 to supply water for Cherokee County residents. Increased water demands and the proliferation of water supply projects like Lathem are among the biggest threats to the health and biodiversity of the Etowah. Lathem, and Hickory Log Reservoir downstream,

both destroyed critical habitat for the federally protected Cherokee darter, a fish found in the Etowah River basin and no where else in the world.

Mile 52.1—(34°20'10.22"N 84°14'43.83"W)—Riverbend Gun Club—This private shooting range caters to some 1600 gun enthusiasts who pay annual membership dues of \$300 for the privilege of using the Club's ten firing ranges. Originally located on the Chattahoochee River in North Fulton County, the history of the club tells the story of Atlanta's sprawl since the 1980s. In Fulton County, upscale neighbors pushed their noisy neighbors north to Forsyth County. As that county grew, the Club sought out more secluded surroundings, bringing them to this location in Dawson County. As you paddle past this facility, you will undoubtedly hear gun shots. Don't fret; you'll have no bullets flying overhead. All the shooting is on controlled ranges.

Mile 54.7--(34°18'49.11"N 84°13'42.64"W)—Remote Control Airplanes—First guns, now planes! On river right here is the home of the Georgia Model Aviators, a private club that maintains 66 acres along the river as an airfield for remote control flying machines. You'll often see the planes flying over the river and will certainly hear their motors.

Mile 55.4—(34°18'34.90"N 84°13'17.59"W)—Eagle's Beak—So called because the route the Etowah takes here resembles a bird's beak and body. At this location, you'd be on the top of the beak and the stretch that runs parallel to Old Federal Road below the take out forms the bottom of the beak. The tip of the beak is the river's sharp bend at Old Federal Road. Forsyth County owns the property on river right below the bridge and has plans to develop the land as a public park. The park will include canoe and kayak launches on the river.