

# Greater Parkersburg **BIRDING** Trail Guide



Twelve birding  
sites throughout the  
Mid-Ohio Valley



Kentucky warbler

## Did you know?

More than 250 species of birds have  
been recorded in Wood County!

Least sandpiper



### PHOTO CREDITS

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# About This Guide

From mature forests to open meadows, from mighty rivers to quiet marshes, this region offers both locals and visitors extensive and diverse birding opportunities throughout the seasons.

Whether you're just visiting or have long called this region home, we invite you to grab a pair of binoculars and explore the Greater Parkersburg area's diverse birdlife.

## Using eBird

As you look through this guide, look for the eBird symbol. This popular website lists recent sightings reported by visiting birders at birding hotspots. Click on the eBird link to see the hotspot's latest birding reports.



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## McDonough Wildlife Refuge

McDonough Wildlife Refuge is located in Wood County, in the city of Vienna, directly across from Jackson Memorial Park on Rosemar Road.

[Get Directions](#)

### Site Description

This 277-acre wildlife area includes six miles of trails through deciduous forests, around ponds and marshes, along streams, and across open meadows and other clearings. Trails vary from easy to moderate; all are clearly marked and easy to navigate. A half-mile, wheelchair-accessible loop is paved. Restrooms are conveniently located near the parking area near the main trailhead. Many area birders consider McDonough to be one of the best birding sites in the Greater Parkersburg region for its overall species diversity and accessibility.

### Habitat Information

McDonough features a nice mix of deciduous forest, open meadow, and wetland. Consequently, the site attracts a diverse sampling of the region's birdlife. Two ponds attract Canada geese, mallards, pied-billed grebes, and the occasional hooded merganser, blue-winged teal, or other migratory duck. Non-avian wildlife includes white-tailed deer, eastern gray squirrel, red and gray foxes, and coyote.

[Learn more »](#)

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# McDonough Wildlife Refuge

## Birds of Interest

Worm-eating and cerulean warblers, two birds highly sought by birders, breed here and can usually be found from the trails from April through July. Other breeding warblers include yellow, yellow-throated, Kentucky, hooded, northern parula, American redstart, ovenbird, and Louisiana waterthrush. Other birds found here include wood duck, pied-billed grebe, great blue and green herons, Cooper's and red-shouldered hawks, solitary sandpiper, yellow-billed cuckoo, belted kingfisher, yellow-bellied sapsucker, Acadian flycatcher, eastern kingbird, white-eyed and yellow-throated vireos, tree swallow, ruby-crowned kinglet, gray-cheeked and Swainson's thrushes, scarlet tanager, Lincoln's and white-crowned sparrows, rose-breasted grosbeak, indigo bunting, and orchard and Baltimore orioles.

Louisiana waterthrush



## Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge: Visitor Center

The Ohio River Islands NWR Visitor Center is located in Wood County, just outside the city of Williamstown, at 3982 Waverly Road.

[Get Directions](#)

### Site Description

The Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1990 to protect, conserve, and restore habitat for wildlife native to the river's floodplain. The refuge consists of twenty-two islands along 392 miles of the Ohio River from Pennsylvania to Kentucky. The visitor center near Williamstown includes a viewing area overlooking the Ohio River and a feeding station that attracts a variety of feeder birds. Optics and field guides are provided for visitors' use. The site features several hiking trails through riparian forests. Knowledgeable staff are available to brief visitors on recent sightings and regional birding advice.

### Habitat Information

The refuge headquarters/visitor center features views of the Ohio River, a feeding station, brushy areas throughout but especially along the river edge, and several acres of deciduous forests. The diverse habitat attracts a nice mix of bird species throughout the year.

[Learn more »](#)





## Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge: Visitor Center

### Birds of Interest

Several sparrow species are regularly found here, especially near the feeder area. In fall and winter, birders can usually see American tree, fox, song, Lincoln's, white-throated, and white-crowned sparrows. Bald eagles are typically seen flying along the river. Wood ducks, hooded mergansers, and other waterfowl pass through. Kentucky and hooded warblers breed here. Other birds found at this site include great blue heron, yellow-billed and black-billed cuckoos, yellow-bellied sapsucker, pileated woodpecker, American kestrel, eastern wood-pewee, Philadelphia vireo, golden-crowned kinglet, Nashville and magnolia warblers, common yellowthroat, yellow and black-throated green warblers, indigo bunting, red-winged and sometimes rusty blackbirds, orchard oriole, and purple finch.

Fox sparrow



## Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge: Middle Island

Middle Island is located in Pleasants County, near the city of St. Marys, on the Ohio River. Accessible by bridge from George Street in St. Marys.

[Get Directions](#)

### Site Description

The Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1990 to protect, conserve, and restore habitat for wildlife native to the river's floodplain. The refuge consists of twenty-two islands along 392 miles of the Ohio River from Pennsylvania to Kentucky. Middle Island is one of the twenty-two islands that make up the refuge. The 235-acre island features multiple hiking trails through beautiful habitat, allowing for ample birding opportunities. Please note that this is a public hunting area. Check with the refuge for seasons and affected areas.

### Habitat Information

Middle Island features an impressive mix of woodlands and open fields. The wet, marshy areas attract a variety of waterfowl and shorebirds, and the woodland areas provide nesting habitat for warblers, tanagers, and other songbirds. Open water on all sides brings in bald eagles, ospreys, gulls, and various diving ducks. Non-avian wildlife includes beaver, cottontail, white-tailed deer, and red fox.

[Learn more »](#)

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# Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge: Middle Island

## Birds of Interest

Bobolinks, a locally uncommon bird, make a regular appearance each spring, and Wilson's snipes can be found throughout the island's wet areas. In April American woodcocks perform their elaborate breeding displays over the island. Other birds found here include wood duck, blue-winged and green-winged teal, pied-billed and red-necked grebes, osprey, bald eagle, red-shouldered and red-tailed hawks, peregrine falcon, Bonaparte's gull, great horned and eastern screech-owls, great crested flycatcher, white-eyed and warbling vireos, purple martin, golden-crowned and ruby-crowned kinglets, prothonotary warbler, common yellowthroat, American redstart, yellow and palm warblers, Savannah and white-crowned sparrows, scarlet tanager, eastern meadowlark, and orchard and Baltimore orioles.



**Bobolink**

## Williamstown Wetlands

The Williamstown Wetlands are located in Wood County, in the city of Williamstown, near the intersection of Highland Avenue and East 4th Street/Waverly Road, behind da Vinci's restaurant.

[Get Directions](#)

### Site Description

This five-acre wetland area is small but provides a modest mix of marsh-loving birds throughout the year. A 3/8-mile, wheelchair-accessible loop trail meanders around the marsh. Parts of the trail are boardwalk and other parts are paved. Several benches and an observation platform are located along the path. Because the site is relatively small, most birds are at close range for easy observation.

### Habitat Information

This site consists of about five acres of marshland situated about a mile from the Ohio River. At few herons and ducks are usually present, and sometimes the water is low enough to attract migrating shorebirds. Because of the site's close proximity to the river, bald eagles and ospreys are sometimes seen flying over the Williamstown Wetlands. Plants here include purple loosestrife, virgin's bower, hedge bindweed, bittersweet nightshade, and broad-leaved cattails.

# Williamstown Wetlands

## Birds of Interest

This is a good site to check from time to time for migratory shorebirds and waterfowl. Some of the birds found here are wood duck, gadwall, mallard, pied-billed grebe, great blue and green herons, great egret, red-shouldered hawk, killdeer, solitary and semipalmated sandpipers, common nighthawk, belted kingfisher, northern rough-winged and tree swallows, eastern bluebird, cedar waxwing, yellow warbler, common yellowthroat, song and swamp sparrows, red-winged blackbird, and American goldfinch.

**Gadwall**



## **Williamstown and Marietta:** The Confluence of the Muskingum and Ohio Rivers

The confluence of the Ohio and Muskingum Rivers can be viewed from Williamstown, West Virginia (Front Street), and Marietta, Ohio (Ohio Street).

[\*\*Get Directions\*\*](#)

### **Site Description**

The confluence of the rivers can be accessed from several sites, but the two best access points are at the Williamstown Boat Ramp and Ohio Riverfront Park. From either site, bird watchers can set up and scan for migrating waterfowl and bald eagles. At Ohio Riverfront Park, the Marietta River Trail runs along both the Muskingum and Ohio Rivers, providing additional access for birding.

### **Habitat Information**

The confluence of the Muskingum and Ohio Rivers forms a wide, open space that attracts numerous ducks, geese, gulls, and other water birds, especially in winter. Shorebirds occasionally stop along the riverbanks during spring and fall. Songbirds congregate in the trees and brushy habitat along both rivers, but especially north along the Muskingum. Downtown Marietta attracts common nighthawks, which can be seen and heard from the confluence area from May through August.



## **Williamstown and Marietta:** The Confluence of the Muskingum and Ohio Rivers

### **Birds of Interest**

A nice mix of waterfowl passes through from fall through spring. Local rarities, including black terns, have been documented here. Prothonotary warblers are sometimes found along the Muskingum during spring and summer. Other birds seen throughout the year include snow goose, gadwall, American black duck, green-winged teal, canvasback, redhead, ring-necked duck, lesser and greater scaup, surf scoter, bufflehead, common goldeneye, common and red-breasted mergansers, ruddy duck, common loon, pied-billed and horned grebes, double-crested cormorant, great blue heron, black vulture, bald eagle, osprey, American coot, ring-billed and Bonaparte's gulls, common and Caspian terns, belted kingfisher, and peregrine falcon.

**Common tern**



## Johnson T. Janes City Park

Johnson T. Janes City Park is located in Wood County, in the city of Parkersburg, at the end of 27th Street.

[Get Directions](#)

### Site Description

One of Parkersburg's newest parks, Johnson T. Janes City Park is a 100-acre park with about four miles of hiking and biking trails through deciduous forest, across streams, and through brushy areas. Each trail is named after a mayor of Parkersburg. Some of the land that now makes up Johnson T. Janes City Park was first donated in 1970; later, additional land was added, trails were developed, and the park was opened to the public in 2013. There is a small parking area near the trailhead, but no restroom facilities. Trails vary from easy to moderate.

### Habitat Information

Johnson T. Janes City Park features a nice mix of habitat types, including deciduous woodlands, wet lowlands, streams, and brushy edges. The park attracts a diverse sampling of the region's birdlife, from owls to warblers to woodpeckers. About 100 species have been recorded here.

[Learn more »](#)



## Johnson T. Janes City Park

### Birds of Interest

A nice mix of woodland and water birds are found here, including green and great blue herons, blue-winged teal, wood duck, belted kingfisher, Cooper's and red-shouldered hawks, wild turkey, yellow-billed cuckoo, great horned and barred owls, common nighthawk, ruby-throated hummingbird, northern flicker, pileated woodpecker, great crested and Acadian flycatchers, white-breasted and red-breasted nuthatches, brown creeper, golden-crowned and ruby-crowned kinglets, blue-gray gnatcatcher, eastern bluebird, wood thrush, gray catbird, brown thrasher, cedar waxwing, white-eyed and red-eyed vireos, hooded and yellow warblers, ovenbird, American redstart, American tree and white-throated sparrows, rusty blackbird, Baltimore oriole, and scarlet and summer tanagers.

Great crested flycatcher



## Kroger Wetlands

Kroger Wetlands is located in Washington County, Ohio, in the city of Marietta, at 80 Acme Street.

[Get Directions](#)

### Site Description

14 acres of marsh and woodland make up the Kroger Wetlands. Features a one-mile trail loop, several small bridges, and an observation platform overlooking the main pond. The trail is relatively flat and easy to navigate.

### Habitat Information

Marshland surrounded by mixed woodlands; a tiny oasis in the city of Marietta. When the water level is low enough, this site attracts a nice mix of migrating shorebirds and herons, and serves as a migrant trap for a variety of warblers, vireos, and other songbirds. One of the most reliable places in the region for willow flycatcher. Listen for these small flycatchers' harsh *FITZ-bew* songs from May through July.

[Learn more »](#)



# Kroger Wetlands

## Birds of Interest

Red-shouldered hawks are present year-round, as are great blue herons, pileated woodpeckers, and many of the expected woodland species. In winter watch for yellow-rumped warblers, which are often numerous. Spring and fall migrants include black-billed cuckoo, rose-breasted grosbeak, Wilson's warbler, rusty blackbird, and a modest mix of shorebirds, herons, and ducks. In summer the wetland comes alive with green herons, willow flycatchers, yellow warblers, common yellowthroats, house wrens, and gray catbirds. More than 120 bird species have been recorded here, including northern shoveler, great egret, solitary sandpiper, greater and lesser yellowlegs, dunlin, Wilson's snipe, willow flycatcher, mourning warbler, American redstart, magnolia and Wilson's warblers, and yellow-breasted chat.

Yellow-rumped warbler



## Newell Run Backwater

The Newell Run backwater is located in Washington County, Ohio, just southwest of Newport, off State Route 7. The backwater is best viewed from the two pull-offs along Newells Run Road.

[Get Directions](#)

### Site Description

This backwater is arguably one of the best birding spots in southeastern Ohio. Newells Run Road wraps around the backwater, and features two pull-offs and two small bridges, allowing for convenient access to the habitat here. Scan the open water for ducks and gulls; check the wooded hillsides around the backwater and the brushy, lower areas for warblers, sparrows, and other songbirds. Newells Run Road, which follows the creek north into rural fields, and woodlands, is a great road from which to bird, especially in spring. The warblers and wildflowers are spectacular in April and May.

### Habitat Information

This eight-acre backwater along the Ohio River attracts a nice variety of ducks, grebes, herons, gulls, and other water birds. Watch for belted kingfishers perched on the various snags sticking up out of the water, and for spotted sandpipers and other shorebirds along the water's edges. Bald eagles are frequently seen here, and on nearby Broadback Island, especially in winter.



## Newell Run Backwater

### Birds of Interest

Just about every expected waterfowl species has been recorded here. Local rarities often turn up at Newell Run; recent sightings have included red-necked grebe, lesser black-backed gull, willet, and American avocet. Bald eagles are commonly seen, especially in winter, and ospreys are present in spring and summer. A nice variety of warblers and other songbirds inhabit the surrounding woodland and brushy areas. Other birds found here throughout the year include mute swan, gadwall, American black duck, northern shoveler, green-winged teal, canvasback, redhead, ring-necked duck, lesser scaup, bufflehead, common goldeneye, hooded merganser, common loon, pied-billed and horned grebes, double-crested cormorant, great egret, American coot, spotted sandpiper, greater and lesser yellowlegs, Bonaparte's and ring-billed gulls, and Caspian and common terns.

American avocet



## Broughton Nature and Wildlife Education Area

The Broughton Nature and Wildlife Education Area is located in Washington County, Ohio, just outside the city of Marietta, at 619 State Route 821.

[Get Directions](#)

### Site Description

The Broughton Nature and Wildlife Education Area consists of 500 acres of woodlands, meadows, and creeks, with about five miles of marked hiking trails. Before visiting Broughton, be sure to familiarize yourself with the trails via the link below. Trails vary from easy to moderate, and several go up steep hills. There are multiple trailheads and parking areas accessible from both OH-60 and OH-821.

### Habitat Information

Mostly deciduous forest, with some mixed forest, open meadows, running streams, a waterfall, brushy edges, and a few ponds. The diverse habitat attracts a nice mix of birds, from Louisiana waterthrushes and eastern phoebes along the streams, to ruffed grouse and scarlet tanagers in the forested areas, to indigo buntings and eastern meadowlarks in the more open areas. Winter wrens can be heard singing from the tangles.

[Learn more »](#)





## Broughton Nature and Wildlife Education Area

### Birds of Interest

Broughton is a great place to observe breeding warblers in spring and summer. Kentucky, hooded, and worm-eating warblers; American redstart; ovenbird; and Louisiana waterthrush are easily found from the trails. Summer and scarlet tanagers both breed at this site as well. Barred owls can be heard at dusk. Other birds encountered here include ruffed grouse, red-shouldered and red-tailed hawks, yellow-billed cuckoo, ruby-throated hummingbird, yellow-bellied sapsucker, eastern wood-pewee, Acadian flycatcher, white-eyed and yellow-throated vireos, purple martin, brown creeper, winter wren, golden-crowned and ruby-crowned kinglets, hermit and wood thrushes, blue-winged and black-and-white warblers, common yellowthroat, black-throated green warbler, field sparrow, indigo bunting, rose-breasted grosbeak, eastern meadowlark, and pine siskin.

**Barred owl**



## French Creek Backwater

The French Creek backwater is located in Pleasants County, just outside the city of Belmont, off State Route 2.

[Get Directions](#)

### Site Description

Public access to Ohio River for canoeing/kayaking/boating, fishing, and birding. Features a small, gravel parking area.

### Habitat Information

Quiet backwater on the West Virginia side of the Ohio River, which attracts a nice variety of ducks, grebes, herons, and other water-loving birds. Bald eagles are typically perched in the trees or seen flying over, especially from November through January. Peregrine falcons nest under the nearby St. Marys bridge. Non-avian wildlife includes snapping, painted, and musk turtles.



## French Creek Backwater

### Birds of Interest

Bald eagles are frequently seen here, and on nearby Broadback Island, especially in winter. The backwater attracts a nice variety of ducks, grebes, gulls, and other water birds. West Virginia's first-of-state little gull was recorded here, in 1998. Other birds found here throughout the year include tundra swan, wood duck, gadwall, American wigeon, American black duck, blue-winged teal, northern pintail, canvasback, redhead, ring-necked duck, greater and lesser scaup, white-winged scoter, bufflehead, common goldeneye, hooded, common, and red-breasted mergansers, ruddy duck, pied-billed, horned, and red-necked grebes, double-crested cormorant, great blue heron, great egret, osprey, American coot, killdeer, Bonaparte's and ring-billed gulls, belted kingfisher, American kestrel, peregrine falcon, white-eyed vireo, common yellowthroat, yellow-rumped and magnolia warblers, and white-throated and white-crowned sparrows.

*Northern pintail*



## Point Park: The Confluence of the Little Kanawha and Ohio Rivers

Point Park is located in Wood County, in downtown Parkersburg, at 113 Ann Street.

[Get Directions](#)

### Site Description

Point Park features ample parking, biking and walking paths, and a great view of the Little Kanawha and Ohio Rivers. From here birders can set up and scan for bald eagles, peregrine falcons, and wintering waterfowl.

### Habitat Information

The confluence of the Little Kanawha and Ohio Rivers provides open water which attracts a variety of diving ducks and other birds, including loons and grebes. Nearby Blennerhassett and Neal Islands provide nesting habitat for ospreys and bald eagles. Downtown Parkersburg has attracted peregrine falcons in recent years—the falcons have nested under the Parkersburg-Belpre Bridge.

[Learn more »](#)



## Point Park: The Confluence of the Little Kanawha and Ohio Rivers

### Birds of Interest

Peregrine falcons are often perched on the Parkersburg-Belpre Bridge, visible from Point Park. A nice variety of waterfowl and gulls can be seen from fall through spring. Unusual sightings have included harlequin and long-tailed ducks, black scoter, and glaucous and great black-backed gulls. Other birds found here include snow goose, gadwall, American black duck, northern pintail, green-winged teal, canvasback, redhead, ring-necked duck, lesser and greater scaup, white-winged scoter, bufflehead, common goldeneye, hooded merganser, ruddy duck, common loon, pied-billed and horned grebes, osprey, Cooper's hawk, bald eagle, American coot, killdeer, ring-billed and herring gulls, and belted kingfisher.



Peregrine falcon

## North Bend State Park

North Bend State Park is located in Ritchie County, near the town of Cairo.

[Get Directions](#)

### Site Description

North Bend State Park is named for the horseshoe curve of the North Fork of the Hughes River. The park features multiple trails through a variety of habitat types, including a lake surrounded by trees full of red-headed woodpeckers: Nearly 100 red-headed woodpeckers may be seen here in late summer. The lake and trails provide ample opportunity for kayaking, biking, and hiking. North Bend also features the 72-mile North Bend Rail Trail, which runs from Parkersburg to Clarksburg.

### Habitat Information

2,459 acres of deciduous forests, open meadows, running streams, and a 304-acre lake provide habitat for a nice variety of bird species at North Bend State Park. Dead trees standing in the lake provide important nesting cavities for northern flickers, tree swallows, eastern kingbirds, great crested flycatchers, and of course, red-headed woodpeckers. The deciduous forests host many warblers, including the declining and highly sought cerulean warbler.

[Learn more »](#)

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# North Bend State Park

## Birds of Interest

Red-shouldered hawks are present year-round, as are great blue herons, pileated woodpeckers, and many of the expected woodland species. In winter watch for yellow-rumped warblers, which are often numerous. Spring and fall migrants include black-billed cuckoo, rose-breasted grosbeak, Wilson's warbler, rusty blackbird, and a modest mix of shorebirds, herons, and ducks. In summer the wetland comes alive with green herons, willow flycatchers, yellow warblers, common yellowthroats, house wrens, and gray catbirds. More than 120 bird species have been recorded here, including northern shoveler, great egret, solitary sandpiper, greater and lesser yellowlegs, dunlin, Wilson's snipe, willow flycatcher, mourning warbler, magnolia and Wilson's warblers, and yellow-breasted chat.

Red-headed woodpecker



This bald eagle nest in  
Parkersburg was photographed by  
Danny Carpenter in April 2016.



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Text by Kyle Carlsen  
Design by Mollee Brown