

Birds of the Upper Mississippi River

Follow the Great River Road to Great Birding!

Imagine how the bird habitat and bird life along the Mississippi River must change as the river changes from a small stream running through the pine forests of northern Minnesota, then through what was once tall-grass prairie and oak savanna of central Minnesota. Then it changes again as it cuts through the bluffs of southern Minnesota, northeast Iowa, southwest Wisconsin and northwest Illinois. Finally, the river habitat and bird life reflects the big, wide river of southern Illinois and Missouri, where the Missouri and Illinois rivers join in.

You can now take a self-guided birding tour on the northernmost reaches of what is likely one of America's longest birding trails. The "Great River Birding Trail" parallels both sides of the Mississippi River from the headwaters, down 1,366 miles to the confluence with the Ohio River at Cairo, Illinois. The trail is named after the already well known federally-designated scenic drive called the Great River Road that goes from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico.

The Upper Mississippi River: A Globally Important Bird Area and Migratory "Flyway" for Birds

The mighty Mississippi flows through the heart of our nation. It draws millions of visitors each year from all over the world, who come to experience the mystery and magnificence of this old river valley, rich in history, culture, habitat, and recreation. But they aren't the only visitors passing through – 40% of all North American waterfowl use the river as a migratory flyway, and 326 bird species (35% or about 1/3 of all species in North America) use the river corridor as a globally important flyway in their spring and fall migrations.

The Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge stretches southward for 261 miles along the Mississippi River from just above Wabasha, Minnesota, nearly to Rock Island, Illinois. This refuge and the entire Upper Mississippi River offer fabulous opportunities for birding among extensive marshlands, wooded bottom lands, open water, sand prairie, and wooded bluffs.

The river environment serves as a migration corridor not only for waterfowl, but also for numerous other birds such as raptors, shorebirds, and neo-tropical migratory songbirds. In the spring and summer, the river provides important nesting habitat for many species. Even in the coldest months, the area serves as a wintering ground for northern bird populations, in addition to year-round residents.

Success Stories

Conservation and reintroduction efforts have benefited several bird species in the Upper Mississippi River. The Bald Eagle is one of the greatest success stories in the recovery of an endangered species. While a few hundred eagles used to winter along the Mississippi River, there are now thousands. Peregrine Falcons, once extirpated from their entire eastern range the U.S., have been successfully reintroduced and now nest on cliffs, towers, and bridges along the river. They were recently removed from the endangered species list, but are still endangered in Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. Red-shouldered Hawks nest in large tracts of mature or medium-aged, floodplain forests along the Mississippi River. Their diet varies but includes frogs, crayfish, salamanders, snakes, small mammals, and birds. They are listed as endangered in Iowa and Illinois, and a species of concern or threatened in Wisconsin and Minnesota. Red-shoulders are still uncommon in many parts of the Upper Mississippi River, but research has indicated relatively stable populations between McGregor, IA and Cassville, WI, and on the Illinois side from East Dubuque to Savanna, IL.

Species of Concern

Neo-tropical migrants such as the Cerulean Warbler and the Prothonotary Warbler breed along the Upper Mississippi River while wintering in more suitable climates such as Central America and the northern rim of South America. Populations for both of these warblers have been in decline, but are still common along the Upper Mississippi. Red-headed Woodpeckers bore nest cavities in dead trees, fence posts, or utility poles in open woods, savannas, farmlands, and bottomlands. They feed on acorns, nuts, and berries, storing them in caches they defend vigorously. This widespread and common woodpecker's numbers have declined in the past decade due to loss of woodlands and competition with the European Starling. The Upper Mississippi River area is an important refuge for these and other bird species of concern.

Connecting People to the Mississippi River

The Great River Birding Trail was developed to help educate citizens about the ecological significance of the Upper Mississippi River as an important flyway for birds and to encourage citizens to explore the Upper Mississippi River region through a form of hands-on, low-impact, and non-consumptive recreation. The Great River Birding Trail is a project of the Audubon - Upper Mississippi River Campaign. To learn more about the Audubon - Upper Mississippi River Campaign and the Great River Birding Trail, go www.audubon.org/campaign/umr.

IBA's Take Flight: Identifying and Conserving Essential Habitat for Birds

Important Bird Areas, or IBAs, are defined as sites that provide essential habitat for one or more species of birds that are a high priority within a state, such as birds that are threatened, endangered, or have been in population decline. The IBA Program helps birds by setting science-based priorities for habitat conservation and promoting positive action to safeguard vital bird habitats. In 1995, Audubon launched an IBA initiative in the United States, working to establish IBA programs in all 50 states. IBAs include sites for breeding, wintering, and/or migrating birds, and are selected using standardized, science-based criteria. You can help identify and conserve Important Bird Areas in your state or region. For more information on the Audubon IBA Program, go to: www.audubon.org/bird/iba/. This site includes the addresses of state IBA coordinators as well as information about many other Audubon bird conservation projects.

Birds of the Upper Mississippi River Refuge Checklist

Provided below is a checklist highlighting the 302 species of birds that can be found within the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge. It is not a comprehensive checklist for the entire Upper Mississippi River. Be sure to bring a birding book along for reference, or contact the state Department of Natural Resources or state Ornithological Union for a more specific birding list to the region you are visiting. Season, abundance and nesting status for each bird's suitable habitat along the Mississippi River corridor are coded as follows:

Season:

Spring – March through May
Summer – June through August
Fall – September through November
Winter – December through February

Abundance and Nesting Status:

A – abundant
C – common
U – uncommon
R – rare
* – Nests on the refuge

Common Name	Sp	Su	F	W	Common Name	Sp	Su	F	W	Common Name	Sp	Su	F	W
Common Loon	u		u		Herring Gull	c	u	c	u	Blackpoll Warbler		c		c
Horned Grebe	u				Glaucous Gull	r		r		Cerulean Warbler*		c	u	
Pied-billed Grebe*	c	c	c		Caspian Tern	u	u	u		Black-and-white Warbler		c	a	c
Red-necked Grebe	r		r		Common Tern	u	u	u		American Redstart*		a	a	c
American White Pelican	c	u	c		Forster's Tern*	c	u	u		Prothonotary Warbler*		c	c	
Double-crested Cormorant*	c	c	c		Black Tern*	c	c	c		Ovenbird*		c	u	u
American Bittern*	u	u	u		Rock Dove*	c	c	c	c	Northern Waterthrush		c	u	u
Least Bittern*	u	u	u		Mourning Dove*	u	c	c	u	Louisiana Waterthrush		u	u	u
Great Blue Heron*	a	a	a	r	Black-billed Cuckoo*	u	c	c		Kentucky Warbler*		r	r	
Great Egret*	a	c	a		Yellow-billed Cuckoo*	c	c	u		Connecticut Warbler		r	r	
Snowy Egret	r				Eastern Screech-Owl*	u	u	u	u	Mourning Warbler		r	r	u
Little Blue Heron					Great Horned Owl*	c	c	c	c	Common Yellowthroat*		a	a	c
Cattle Egret	u	r	u		Snowy Owl	r		r		Hooded Warbler		r	r	
Green Heron*	c	c	c		Barred Owl*	c	c	c	c	Wilson's Warbler		u	u	u
Black-crowned Night-Heron*	u	u	r		Long-eared Owl*	u	r	u	u	Canada Warbler		r	u	
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron*	u	r	u		Short-eared Owl	u	u	u	u	Yellow-breasted Chat*		r	r	
Tundra Swan	a		a	u	Northern Saw-whet Owl*	u	u	u	u	Scarlet Tanager*		c	u	u
Trumpeter Swan	r	r	u		Common Nighthawk*	c	c	u		Northern Cardinal*		a	a	c
Mute Swan	r	r	r	r	Whip-poor-will*	u	u	u		Rose-breasted Grosbeak*		c	c	c
Greater White-fronted Goose	a		r		Chimney Swift*	c	c	u		Indigo Bunting*		c	c	c
Snow Goose	u				Ruddy-throated Hummingbird*	u	c	u		Dickcissel*		c	c	
Canada Goose*	a	c	a	c	Belted Kingfisher*	c	c	u	u	Eastern Towhee*		u	u	r
Wood Duck*	a	c	a	r	Red-headed Woodpecker*	c	u	u	u	American Tree Sparrow		c	a	a
Green-winged Teal	c	r	c	r	Red-bellied Woodpecker*	c	c	c	c	Chipping Sparrow*		a	c	a
American Black Duck*	c	u	c	r	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker*	c	c	c	r	Clay-colored Sparrow		u	u	u
Mallard*	a	c	a	c	Downy Woodpecker*	c	c	c	c	Field Sparrow*		u	c	c
Northern Pintail	c	r	c	r	Hairy Woodpecker*	c	c	c	c	Vesper Sparrow*		u	u	u
Blue-winged Teal*	a	c	a		Northern Flicker*	c	c	c	u	Lark Sparrow*		u	u	u
Northern Shoveler	c	u	c		Pileated Woodpecker*	r	u	u	u	Savannah Sparrow*		c	c	u
Gadwall	a	u	a		Olive-sided Flycatcher	c	u	u		Grasshopper Sparrow*		c	c	u
American Wigeon	a	u	a		Eastern Wood Pewee*	c	c	c		Henslow's Sparrow*		r	r	
Canvasback	a	r	a	u	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	r	r	r	r	Le Conte's Sparrow		r	r	r
Redhead	c	r	c	w	Acadian Flycatcher*	r	r	r	r	Fox Sparrow		c	c	c
Ring-necked Duck	a	r	a		Alder Flycatcher	r	r	r		Song Sparrow*		a	a	u
Greater Scaup	u		u		Willow Flycatcher*	u	u	u		Lincoln's Sparrow		u	u	u
Lesser Scaup	a	r	a	u	Least Flycatcher*	c	c	c		Swamp Sparrow*		c	c	c
Oldsquaw	r		o	r	Eastern Phoebe*	c	c	u		White-throated Sparrow		c	c	r
Black Scoter					Great Crested Flycatcher*	c	a	u		White-crowned Sparrow		u	u	r
White-winged Scoter	r		u		Eastern Kingbird*	c	c	u		Harris Sparrow		u	u	u
Common Goldeneye	a	a	r		Horned Lark*	r	r	u		Dark-eyed Junco		a	a	a
Bufflehead	a	a	c		Purple Martin*	u	u	u	u	Lapland Longspur		r	r	r
Hooded Merganser*	c	c	c	r	Tree Swallow*	a	a	c		Snow Bunting			r	u
Common Merganser	r	r	r	c	Northern Rough-winged Swallow*	c	c	u		Bobolink*		u	u	u
Red-breasted Merganser	c	u	u		Bank Swallow*	c	u	u		Red-winged Blackbird*		a	a	a
Ruddy Duck	c	r	c	r	Cliff Swallow*	u	r	u		Eastern Meadowlark*		c	c	u
Turkey Vulture	u	c	c	r	Barn Swallow*	c	c	c		Western Meadowlark*		r	r	r
Osprey*	u	u	c		Blue Jay*	a	a	a	c	Yellow-headed Blackbird*		u	u	u
Bald Eagle*	c	c	a	c	American Crow*	a	a	a	c	Rusty Blackbird		c	c	u
Northern Harrier*	u	u	u		Black-capped Chickadee*	c	c	c	c	Brewer's Blackbird*		u	u	r
Sharp-shinned Hawk	c	u	a	u	Tufted Titmouse*	u	u	u	u	Common Grackle*		a	a	u
Cooper's Hawk*	u	u	c	u	Red-breasted Nuthatch	u	u	u	u	Brown-headed Cowbird*		a	a	u
Northern Goshawk	u		r	u	White-breasted Nuthatch*	c	c	c	c	Orchard Oriole*		u	u	
Red-shouldered Hawk*	u	u	u	r	Brown creeper*	c	u	u		Baltimore Oriole*		c	a	
Broad-winged Hawk*	c	u	a		Carolina Wren*	r	r	r	r	Pine Grosbeak			r	r
Swinson's Hawk			r		Bewick's Wren	r	r	r		Purple Finch		u	u	u
Red-tailed Hawk*	c	c	a	c	House Wren*	a	a	c		House Finch*		c	c	c
Rough-legged Hawk	u	u	u	u	Winter Wren*	u	u	u	r	Red Crossbill		r	r	r
Golden Eagle	r	u	u		Sedge Wren*	u	u	u		White-winged Crossbill		r	r	r
American Kestrel*	c	c	c	u	Marsh Wren*	c	c	c		Common Redpoll		u	u	u
Merlin	u	u	u		Golden-crowned Kinglet	u	u	u	r	Hoary Redpoll		u	u	r
Peregrine Falcon	u	u	u		Ruby-crowned Kinglet	c	c	c		Pine Siskin		u	u	u
Gray Partridge*	u	u	u	u	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher*	c	c	u		American Goldfinch*		a	a	a
Ring-necked Pheasant*	u	u	u	u	Eastern Bluebird*	c	c	c	r	Evening Grosbeak				r
Ruffed Grouse*	c	c	c	c	Veery*	u	r	u		House Sparrow*		a	a	a
Wild Turkey*	u	u	u	u	Gray-cheeked Thrush	u	u	u						
Northern Bobwhite*	u	u	u	u	Swinson's Thrush	u	u	u						
King Rail*	r	r			Hermit Thrush	u	u	u						
Virginia Rail*	c	c	c		Wood Thrush*	c	u	u						
Sora*	c	c	c		American Robin*	a	a	a	u					
Common Moorhen*	c	u	u	u	Gray Catbird*	c	c	c						
American Coot*	a	r	a	u	Northern Mockingbird	r	r	r						
Sandhill Crane*	u	u	u		Brown Thrasher*	c	c	c						
Black-bellied Plover	u	u			American Pipit	r	r	r						
Am. Golden-Plover	u	u	u		Bohemian Waxwing			r						
Semipalmated Plover	u	u	u		Cedar Waxwing*	c	c	c	u					
Killdeer*	c	c	c	r	Northern Shrike	u	u	u	u					
American Avocet	r	r	r		Loggerhead Shrike*	r	r	r						
Greater Yellowlegs	u	u	u		European Starling*	a	a	a	c					
Lesser Yellowlegs	c	c	c	c	White-eyed Vireo	r	r	r						
Solitary Sandpiper	r	r	r		Bell's Vireo*	r	r	u						
Willet	r	r	r		Blue-headed Vireo	u	u	u						
Spotted Sandpiper*	c	c	c		Yellow-throated Vireo*	u	u	u						
Upland Sandpiper*	r	r			Warbling Vireo*	a	a	a						
Hudsonian Godwit	r				Philadelphia Vireo	u	u	u						
Marbled Godwit	r				Red-eyed Vireo*	a	a	a						
Ruddy Turnstone	u	r	u	w	Blue-winged Warbler*	u	u	u						
Sanderling	u	u	u		Golden-winged Warbler	u	u	u						
Semipalmated Sandpiper	c	c	c	c	Tennessee Warbler	c	c	c						
Least Sandpiper	c	c	c	c	Orange-crowned Warbler	r	r	r						
White-rumped Sandpiper	u	u	u		Nashville Warbler	c	c	c						
Baird's Sandpiper	u	u	u		Northern Parula	r	r	u						
Pectoral Sandpiper	c	c	c		Yellow Warbler*	a	a	u						
Dunlin	u	u	u		Yellow-throated Warbler*	r	r							
Stilt Sandpiper	u	u	u		Chestnut-sided Warbler	c	c	u						
Short-billed Dowitcher	u	u	u		Magnolia Warbler	u	u	u						
Long-billed Dowitcher	u	u	r		Cape May Warbler	u	u	u						
Common Snipe	u	u	c	u	Black-throated Blue Warbler	r	r							
American Woodcock*	u	u	u		Yellow-rumped Warbler	a	a	a						
Wilson's Phalarope	c	u	c		Black-throated Green Warbler	u	u	u						
Red-necked Phalarope	r	r			Blackburnian Warbler	c	c							
Franklin's Gull	u	u	u		Pine Warbler	r	c	u						
Bonaparte's Gull	u	u	u		Palm Warbler	c	c	c						
Ring-billed Gull	c	c	c	u	Bay-breasted Warbler	r								

American Birding Association Code of Ethics

- Birders must always act in ways that do not endanger the welfare of birds or other wildlife.**
 - Observe and photograph birds without knowingly disturbing them in any significant way.
 - Avoid chasing or repeatedly flushing birds.
 - Use recordings and similar methods of attracting birds sparingly.
 - Keep an appropriate distance from nest and nesting colonies.
 - Refrain from handling birds or eggs unless engaged in recognized research activities.
- Birders should do their best to not cause harm to the natural environment.**
 - Whenever possible, stay on existing roads, trails, and pathways to avoid disturbing fragile habitat. Leave all habitat as found.
- Birders must always respect the right of others.**
 - Respect the privacy and property of others by observing "No Trespassing" signs and by asking permission to enter private or posted lands.
 - Observe all laws and the rules and regulations which govern public use of birding areas.
 - Practice common courtesy in contacts with others.
 - Always behave in a manner that will enhance the image of the birding community in the eyes of the public.

Audubon



Follow the Great River Road to Great Birding Along the Upper Mississippi River



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Tundra Swans, © Hope Rutledge



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Audubon Great River Birding Trail Map Section 3 of 15 Minnesota St. Cloud, MN Area Little Falls to Anoka, MN



For Questions about the Great River Birding Trail or to order additional maps: Audubon - Upper Mississippi River Campaign 1707 Main Street, Suite 105 La Crosse, WI 54601 Phone: (608) 784-2992 Email: bkroep@audubon.org

For More

Great River Birding Trail

St. Cloud, Minn., Map — from Little Falls, Minn. to Anoka, Minn. (River Mile 970 to 870)

1. Charles A. Lindbergh State Park 🦅 🦉 🦋
Where: The park entrance is located one mile southwest of Little Falls on Lindbergh Drive south.
Birds: Watch for waterfowl such as: Mallards, Teals, Wood Ducks, Mergansers and Goldeneyes. Also watch for Bald Eagles in fall, winter and spring.
Note: The historic home of Charles A. Lindbergh, Sr., father of the famous aviator, Charles A. Lindbergh, Jr. The home is operated by the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) and is adjacent to the park.

2. Hwy. 26 Wayside Rest 🦋
Where: South of Little Falls, Hwy. 26 along the river.
Birds: Possibility of Red-shouldered Hawks, Yellow-billed Cuckoos, Eastern Screech-Owls, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Cerulean Warblers and Northern Cardinals.

3. Stearns County Park 🦅 🦉 🦋
Where: Located 8 miles north of Sartell on Cty. Rd. 1
Birds: Many spring neotropical migrants, including many warblers and flycatchers. Various woodpecker species, waterfowl and birds of prey.

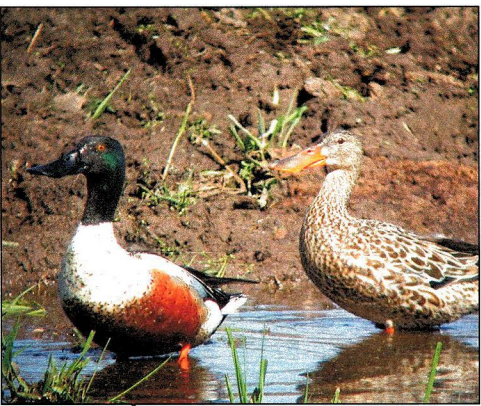
4. Pine Point 🦋
Where: From Sartell, follow Hwy. 1 for 4 miles north. Turn east on Pine Point Rd. This road dead ends after a mile at the river.
Birds: Watch for owls, Bohemian Waxwings and other coniferous woodland songbirds.

5. Patch Woods Scientific and Natural Area 🦅 🦉 🦋
Where: Drive west of St. Cloud to St. Joseph. Proceed 4.5 miles north on Cty. Rd. 3.
Birds: Watch for passerines such as: flycatchers, vireos, warblers, sparrows, orioles. Wading birds such as: Virginia Rails, American Bitterns, sandpipers, terns, ducks and gulls; and raptors such as Broad-winged Hawks, Red-shouldered Hawks, Northern Harriers, Ospreys, Great-horned Owls and Barred Owls.
Note: 115 species can be found here! This is a very diverse site, with wetlands, restored prairie, open water, conifer plantations and deciduous forests.

6. Riverside Park, Talahi Natural Area and Beaver Islands Trail 🦅 🦉 🦋
Where: Riverside Park is located on the east bank of the Mississippi River, south of the 10th Street Bridge and across the river from St. Cloud State University. Parking is available in the pavillion lot 0.2 miles south off of Killian Blvd. The entrance to Talahi is by foot to the south and on a lower terrace. The Beaver Islands Trail is located along the west bank of the Mississippi River. Start at St. Cloud University campus and follow trail south about two miles.
Birds: Peregrine Falcons, Cooper's Hawks, Eastern Bluebirds, Scarlet Tanagers, Catbirds and Cedar Waxwings.
Note: These areas make up three river terraces, formed during the aftermath of the great Ice Age.

7. Quarry Park Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) 🦅 🦉 🦋
Where: Located in Waite Park. From MN Hwy. 23, go south on 10th Ave. South. Turn west on 7th Street (also called Cty. Rd. 137). The SNA is at the south border of Quarry Park.
Birds: Watch for breeding populations of Red-Shouldered Hawks, which are listed as a special concern in Minnesota. They are difficult to find.

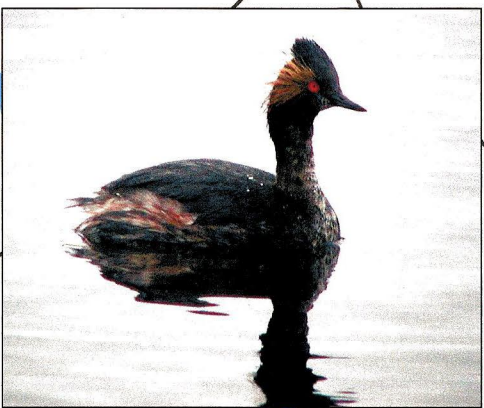
8. Lake Maria State Park 🦅 🦉 🦋
Where: Located between Hasty and Monticello, about 35 miles northwest of the Twin Cities and just south of I-94. The park may be reached from the east from Cty. Rd. 39.
Birds: Nesting Cerulean and Blue-winged warblers. It is a good place to find Veery in the spring. Look for Great Blue Herons, Green Herons, Great Egrets, Double-crested Cormorants, Common Loons, Pied-billed Grebes, American Bitterns, soras, Barred Owls, Ospreys, Broad-winged Hawks, Red-shouldered Hawks, Thrushes, ovenbirds and migrant warblers.
Note: The park is known for Blanding's Turtles, a state-threatened species. Park has a 300 ft. boardwalk, observation deck and 27 miles of hiking trails. Nature Center offers seasonal programs.



Northern Shovelers
photo by Gary Krogman



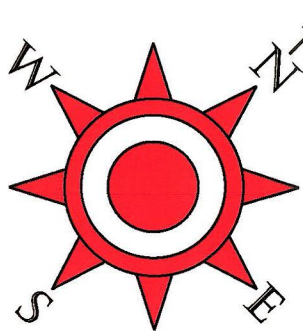
Red-tailed Hawk
photo by Gary Krogman



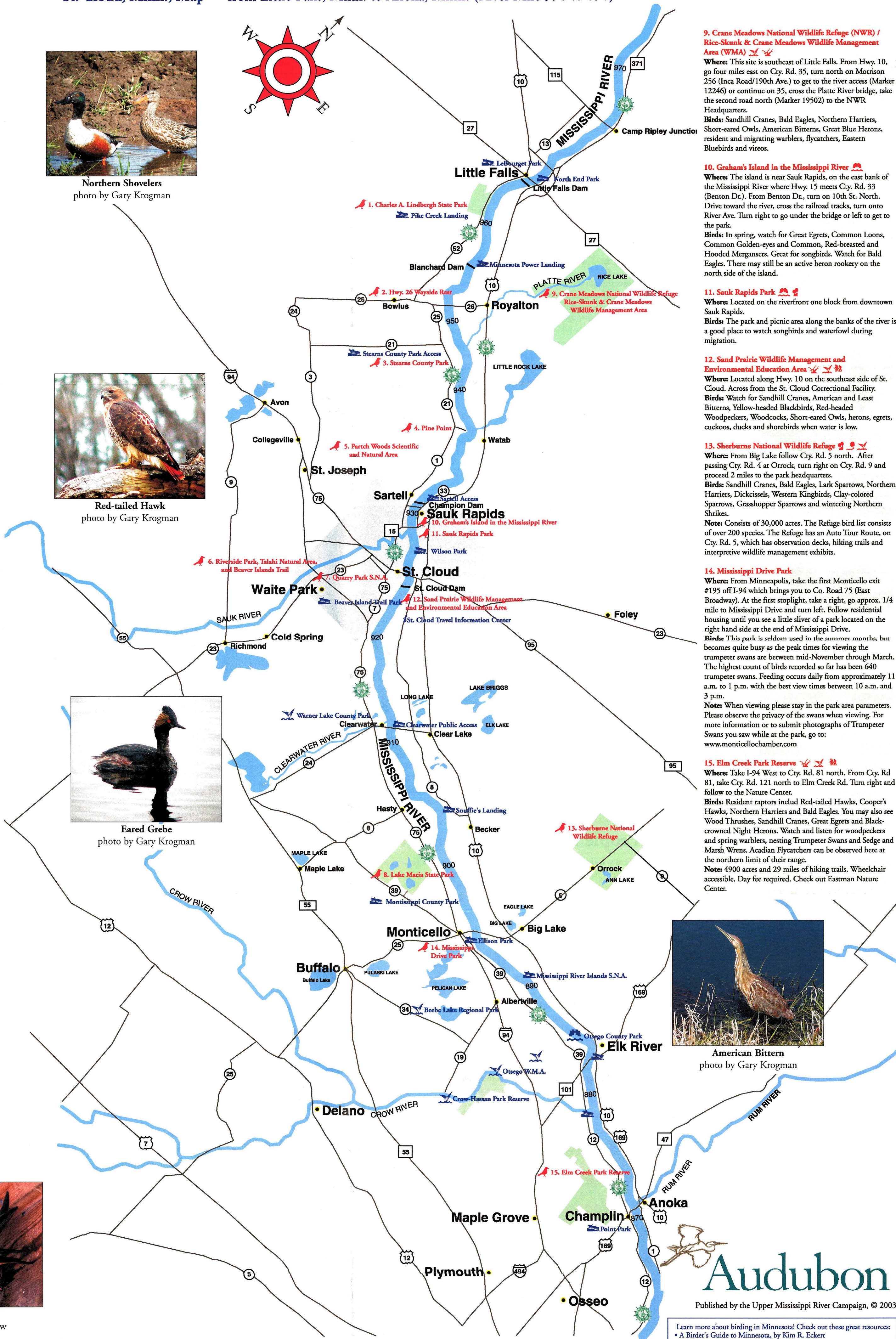
Eared Grebe
photo by Gary Krogman



Barn Swallow
photo by Kay Shaw



- KEY**
- River View
 - Blufftop View
 - Open Water
 - Bottomland Forests
 - Open Fields
 - Upland Forests
 - Lock & Dam
 - Great River Road
 - Boat Landing
 - Canoe Trail
 - Hiking Trail
 - Information
 - Restrooms
 - Bike Trail
- 1" = 4.3 miles
- 0" .25" .5" .75" 1"



9. Crane Meadows National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) / Rice-Skunk & Crane Meadows Wildlife Management Area (WMA) 🦅 🦉 🦋

Where: This site is southeast of Little Falls. From Hwy. 10, go four miles east on Cty. Rd. 35, turn north on Morrison 256 (Inca Road/190th Ave.) to get to the river access (Marker 12246) or continue on 35, cross the Platte River bridge, take the second road north (Marker 19502) to the NWR Headquarters.
Birds: Sandhill Cranes, Bald Eagles, Northern Harriers, Short-eared Owls, American Bitterns, Great Blue Herons, resident and migrating warblers, flycatchers, Eastern Bluebirds and vireos.

10. Graham's Island in the Mississippi River 🦅 🦉 🦋
Where: The island is near Sauk Rapids, on the east bank of the Mississippi River where Hwy. 15 meets Cty. Rd. 33 (Benton Dr.). From Benton Dr., turn on 10th St. North. Drive toward the river, cross the railroad tracks, turn onto River Ave. Turn right to go under the bridge or left to get to the park.
Birds: In spring, watch for Great Egrets, Common Loons, Common Golden-eyes and Common, Red-breasted and Hooded Mergansers. Great for songbirds. Watch for Bald Eagles. There may still be an active heron rookery on the north side of the island.

11. Sauk Rapids Park 🦅 🦉 🦋
Where: Located on the riverfront one block from downtown Sauk Rapids.
Birds: The park and picnic area along the banks of the river is a good place to watch songbirds and waterfowl during migration.

12. Sand Prairie Wildlife Management and Environmental Education Area 🦅 🦉 🦋
Where: Located along Hwy. 10 on the southeast side of St. Cloud. Across from the St. Cloud Correctional Facility.
Birds: Watch for Sandhill Cranes, American and Least Bitterns, Yellow-headed Blackbirds, Red-headed Woodpeckers, Woodcocks, Short-eared Owls, herons, egrets, cuckoos, ducks and shorebirds when water is low.

13. Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge 🦅 🦉 🦋
Where: From Big Lake follow Cty. Rd. 5 north. After passing Cty. Rd. 4 at Orrock, turn right on Cty. Rd. 9 and proceed 2 miles to the park headquarters.
Birds: Sandhill Cranes, Bald Eagles, Lark Sparrows, Northern Harriers, Dickcissels, Western Kingbirds, Clay-colored Sparrows, Grasshopper Sparrows and wintering Northern Shrikes.
Note: Consists of 30,000 acres. The Refuge bird list consists of over 200 species. The Refuge has an Auto Tour Route, on Cty. Rd. 5, which has observation decks, hiking trails and interpretive wildlife management exhibits.

14. Mississippi Drive Park 🦅 🦉 🦋
Where: From Minneapolis, take the first Monticello exit #195 off I-94 which brings you to Co. Road 75 (East Broadway). At the first stoplight, take a right, go approx. 1/4 mile to Mississippi Drive and turn left. Follow residential housing until you see a little sliver of a park located on the right hand side at the end of Mississippi Drive.
Birds: This park is seldom used in the summer months, but becomes quite busy as the peak times for viewing the trumpeter swans are between mid-November through March. The highest count of birds recorded so far has been 640 trumpeter swans. Feeding occurs daily from approximately 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. with the best view times between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.
Note: When viewing please stay in the park area parameters. Please observe the privacy of the swans when viewing. For more information or to submit photographs of Trumpeter Swans you saw while at the park, go to: www.monticellochamber.com

15. Elm Creek Park Reserve 🦅 🦉 🦋
Where: Take I-94 West to Cty. Rd. 81 north. From Cty. Rd. 81, take Cty. Rd. 121 north to Elm Creek Rd. Turn right and follow to the Nature Center.
Birds: Resident raptors include Red-tailed Hawks, Cooper's Hawks, Northern Harriers and Bald Eagles. You may also see Wood Thrushes, Sandhill Cranes, Great Egrets and Black-crowned Night Herons. Watch and listen for woodpeckers and spring warblers, nesting Trumpeter Swans and Sedge and Marsh Wrens. Acadian Flycatchers can be observed here at the northern limit of their range.
Note: 4900 acres and 29 miles of hiking trails. Wheelchair accessible. Day fee required. Check out Eastman Nature Center.



American Bittern
photo by Gary Krogman

Audubon

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Learn more about birding in Minnesota! Check out these great resources:

- A Birder's Guide to Minnesota, by Kim R. Eckert
- A Traveler's Guide to Wildlife in Minnesota, Minn. DNR
- Birding Minnesota, by Jay Michael Strangis
- A Guide to Minnesota's Scientific and Natural Areas, Minn. DNR
- Minn. Ornithologists' Union, www.cbs.umn.edu/~mou/