

ST. CLAIR - MACOMB BIRDING TRAIL

HOT SPOT LOCATIONS

"Sterling Heights Clinton River Park Trail System"

5a Dodge Park

Birders are advised to walk from the parking lot to the bridge that crosses the Clinton River to access the paved Clinton River Park Trail System. The wide, paved trail runs through wooded and open areas. Several dirt trails branch off from the main trail. There are a variety of resident waterfowl, woodpeckers and other woodland species. The trail is good for warbler and other songbird migration in spring. Continuing northwest on the trail will take users to Farmstead Park, Donovan Park and the Sterling Heights Nature Center.



5b Farmstead Park

This is a good place for spring migrants. Twenty-eight species of warblers have been recorded here, including Prothonotary, Hooded and Cerulean Warblers. It is a reliable spot for Baltimore Orioles, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and Indigo Buntings.



5c Gerald N. Donovan Park

Formerly called Jaycee Park, this location was renamed after the first mayor of Sterling Heights. It is one of the newer eBird Hot Spots. This park has a variety of resident species such as Canada Goose, mallards, woodpeckers, Blue Jays, Black-capped Chickadees, Northern Cardinals, and more.



5d Sterling Heights Nature Center

Beside the building are bird feeders. The woods surrounding the center are very good for migrating birds in spring. Thirty species of warblers have been recorded here, including a Kirtland's Warbler in May 2016. Eastern Screech-Owls and Great Horned Owls have nested here as well.



6a Holland Ponds

More than 150 bird species are attracted to this site because it accepts flowing water from a wastewater treatment plant. These ponds and marshlands attract geese and ducks - particularly marsh ducks - but it also acts as a safe haven for one of southeast Michigan's largest Great Blue Heron rookeries. The herons are sensitive to nearby human activity and may abandon their nests if they feel threatened.



6b River Bends Park Burgess-Shadbrush Nature Center

The Burgess Shadbrush Nature Center is located in the much larger River Bends Park. The nature center regularly hosts family nature programs and regular nature walks. In addition, there is a nature garden and lots of room for kids to run around. Although the trails can sometimes be muddy/soft/mushy, some are flat and easy for grandparents to negotiate with grandchildren. More than 70 species of birds have been identified here.



6c River Bends Park

The lowlands along the Clinton River are filled with shadbrush plants and other mixed vegetation that provide cover and food for migrating birds. There are more than six miles of trails here, including an easy-to-navigate paved trail. A mountain bike trail

overlaps pedestrian trails in several locations, which causes interaction with bikers on busy days. More than 120 species have been identified here. In order to reach the trail, enter from 22 Mile Road or walk from the Burgess-Shadbrush Nature Center by following the trail that crosses the Clinton River on the pedestrian bridge.



7 Stony Creek Metropark

Park with 4,461 acres of hilly woodlands, meadows and prairie and a 600-acre lake. Nature Center has extensive trails with a river floodplain, rolling hills of prairie with shrub edges and woodlands.



8a Wolcott Mill Metropark

Spring and fall migration brings warblers, flycatchers, thrushes and gnatcatcher species to Wolcott Mill. During the summer, visitors can find nesting Eastern Phoebe and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, as well as kingfishers, swifts and swallows along the river. Winter species can include Common Redpolls, Snow Buntings, nuthatches and chickadees.



8b Wolcott Mill Metropark North Branch Trails

In this section of Wolcott Mill, visitors can find a variety of resident species such as warblers, Baltimore and Orchard Orioles and various blackbirds in season. The open grassland areas provide habitat for Eastern Meadowlark and Savannah Sparrows. Fox and Vesper Sparrows have been recorded at this location as well.



9 Wetzel State Recreation Area

This area is known for waterfowl as well as grassland sparrows and the occasional Bobolink. A wide variety of species including shorebirds, terns and gulls have been seen in the various ponds and along the trails of this park. The wetlands attract several species of special concern such as Marsh Wrens, Common Gallinules, Least Bitterns and Forester's Terns.



10 Brandenburg Park

From late fall through early spring, the pier, shoreline and breakwaters of the park attract massive numbers of resting gulls. This is a great place to find ducks, rare gulls and the occasional pelagic species. Scanning the lake with a scope may reveal special species among the ring-billed and herring gulls.



11 Ruedisale Park

More than 120 species have been observed at this park. It is best known for gulls and other waterfowl. A variety of terns, swallows and herons can be seen in the park during the summer months.



Scarlet Tanager | Joan Bonin

21b Lakeside Park

A wooded beach park on lower Lake Huron offers good viewing of open water. Plenty of parking is available however, large crowds gather here in the summer when a parking fee is required for non-residents. Migration and winter viewing of gulls, waterfowl, and raptors offer this parks best birding opportunities.



22 Lakeport State Park Day Use

Located just south of Lakeport, this area includes secluded areas of grassland, mature forest, and a narrow creek that drains into Lake Huron. The shoreline can be reached via a pedestrian overpass at M-25. Along with waterfowl, warblers, and thrushes, this area is located on an active raptor migration path with its proximity to the lake.



23 Fort Gratiot Nature Preserve

The ponds here are home to a large variety of waterfowl and provide a safe resting place during migration as no hunting is allowed. This is also a great warbler migration hot spot and provides a habitat for, woodpeckers, swallows, raptors, marsh, and wading birds.



24 Port Huron State Game Area

This site's diverse habitats attract a large variety of bird species, and the area is best known for nesting wood warblers, including Blue-winged and Golden-winged (plus their hybrids), Mourning, and Cerulean warblers. Visitors can also expect to see many species of woodpeckers, flycatchers, shorebirds, swallows, and raptors.



25 Pine River Nature Center

This staffed nature center near Goodells offers many trails through gently rolling woodlands through which flows the scenic Pine River. The habitat draws sandpipers, woodpeckers, vireos, owls, and warblers, including Waterthrush and Yellow-throated. The river trails offer viewing platforms at the water's edge. A handicapped accessible treethouse on the trail offers great canopy views.



26 Columbus Park

This 291-acre park offers a variety of bird-friendly habitat. It includes a well-groomed two-mile looped trail on the north side of the Belle River and a rustic nature trail through wetlands and maple forest on the south side of the river. Parking and trail access is available at the park lodge. The park is a haven for woodland, prairie, and wetland birds including woodpeckers, sparrows, grosbeaks, warblers, vireos, wrens, marsh birds, and wading birds.



Macomb County sites

1 The Ford House

Edsel and Eleanor Ford tasked renowned landscape architect Jens Jensen with having the 87-acre estate blend nature and spaces designed for sports and relaxation, family time and gatherings with friends. The result is one of the best birding spots in southeastern Michigan. The mixture of habitats attracts a wide variety of birds, particularly during migration. More than 200 species have been recorded here.



2 Lake St. Clair Metropark

Features nearly 500 acres of coastal marshlands and one mile of shoreline along Lake St. Clair. The nature trails in the park take visitors through cottonwood trees, wetland meadows and a boardwalk through the marshland. The park is a good place for all types of migrant species, including waterfowl, songbirds, shorebirds, terns, rails, bitterns and herons, Tundra Swans and Snowy Owls. It is also home to many nesting wetland species such as Marsh Wren, Least Bittern, Common Gallinule, Sora and Virginia Rail.



3 Harley Ensign Memorial Boat Access

At the mouth of the Clinton River, this site includes a public boat launch and a DNR research station. The easternmost portion of the access is managed to create a quality coastal habitat, including emergent marsh, sedge meadow and a limestone-cobble shoreline.



4 Tomlinson Arboretum

Many species of birds nest in the arboretum, such as Mallards, Blue Jays, House Wrens, Eastern Bluebirds, American Robins, House Finches, Song Sparrows, Baltimore Orioles, Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackle. The wildflower gardens are a treat for hummingbirds, butterflies and photographers, while Kukul Creek and the adjacent woods attract migrating warblers.



St. Clair County sites

12 St. Johns Marsh

This land is part of the St. Clair River delta and provides critical nesting areas for shorebirds and waterfowl with vast numbers of ducks, geese, and swans during spring and fall migration. Viewing is best from kayak or canoe or along M-29. A trail leads into the marsh from the DNR boat launch parking area. Be sure to wear hunter orange during open hunting seasons.



13 North Channel DNR Boat Launch & County Park (park in development)

The park features access to the river and its large variety of waterfowl including several gull species and many local diving and dabbling ducks, including abundant populations of Redhead and Canvasback ducks.



Harsens Island

14a Harsens Island -- Ames Boat Launch

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources parking area is bordered on one side by a large natural woodlot that harbors warblers and woodpeckers. Behind the parking area and woodlot is a large DNR-managed field with shrubs, tree-lined edges that has several canals drain the area. Viewing is enhanced by a large dike that places you above the action. Expect to see Sandhill Cranes, Bald Eagles and other raptors, and many waterfowl, especially during migration.



14b Harsens Island Nature Park

The waterway includes several large pools and marshy areas that hold waterfowl, marsh birds, and many shorebirds. Marsh wrens, Swamp sparrows, herons, bitterns, egrets, raptors, swallows, and other passerine birds are plentiful.



14c M-154 and South Channel Drive

Marshland birds and raptors can be seen and heard. The route ends at the end of M-154 with an expansive view of Lake St. Clair with its many species of gull, tern, and waterfowl best viewed with spotting scopes.



15 Algonac State Park

The park offers a wide variety of bird species in its 1,200 acres of various natural habitats that include mature oak forest, wetlands, plains prairie, and St. Clair River shoreline. Much of the park is readily accessed by a network of well-managed trails. The park is inhabited by several woodpecker species, thrushes, warblers, waterfowl, gulls, terns, and raptors.



16 Mariner Park/Beach Pavilion

The main draw is abundant waterfowl, and several species of gulls. Redhead and Canvasback ducks and Swans are abundant, especially during winter and spring migration. Bald Eagles are regularly sighted as they soar along the shoreline in search of a fish dinner.



17 East China Township Park

The open areas adjacent to mature woods provide an edge environment making good habitat for Eastern Bluebirds and several swallow species. Expect to see vireos, warblers, buntings, and shorebirds. Parking is available year-around but is limited to the sledding hill parking area in winter.



18 Marysville Shoreline/Chrysler Beach/Marysville

The shoreline park has recently been restored from the Chrysler Beach Park and southward to include a soft shoreline and native plantings that add to the St. Clair River's draw for many waterfowl species. The Marysville City Park is directly across M-29 west of the shoreline and includes mature trees and a variety of bird habitat that draws woodpeckers, raptors, Killdeer and a variety of passerine birds. Viewing is good year-round but especially in the winter when close viewing is common for species like Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Redhead, Canvasback, and gulls including Iceland and Great-black backed.



19 Blue Water River Walk

Year-round sightseers enjoy watching the big freighters ply the St. Clair River and watching many birds including waterfowl, shorebirds, swallows, gulls, terns, and raptors. The confluence of the two rivers is a major winter feeding site for diving ducks and up to six gull species.



20 Blue Water Bridges/Pine Grove Park

The area is well known for drawing species like Long-tailed Ducks, scoters, and Harlequin Ducks visit almost every year. The bridges host a breeding pair of Peregrine falcons and other raptors. Seeing Bald eagles is common in the winter.



Port Huron Beaches

21a Lighthouse Park

The park has many mature trees that draw passerine birds, but the main draw is the shore and open water. Shorebirds, waterfowl, gulls, terns, and raptors are abundant and common, with the greatest draw being regular sightings of scoters, jaegers, and winter flocks of Long-tailed ducks, Redhead and Canvasback ducks can congregate in the thousands here.



Financial assistance for this project was provided, in part, by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy Water Resources Division, Michigan Coastal Management Program.



THE PARTNERS



Check out scmtrails.org or scan the QR code for more information.

Good luck, and enjoy your time birding!

This guide provides important information on 38 different bird viewing sites in St. Clair and Macomb counties. Each site lists the bird species you are likely to see, the best time of the year for viewing them, amenities, costs (if there are any), and other information.



BIRDING TRAIL

St. Clair and Macomb counties are home to a wide variety of resident and migrating birds thanks to a diverse habitat and access to large lakes, rivers and streams. The area is at the confluence of branches of the Atlantic and Mississippi flyways, which bring birds from the east coast and the central U.S. into our region.



ST. CLAIR - MACOMB BIRDING TRAIL

MAP GUIDE

This trail highlights the remarkable habitat in the Heart of the Great Lakes in Southeast Michigan

KEY

- P** **PARKING**
Site has a parking lot or suitable area for vehicles.
- \$** **FEE**
Site requires an entrance fee or park pass.
- ♿** **RESTROOMS**
Site has a port-a-toilet or more formal facilities available for public use.
- T** **UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY**
Site has universally accessible features to gain access to areas.
- 👣** **PAVED TRAIL**
Site has fully paved trails for hiking to the interior areas of the site. Some sites may be unpaved.
- 🌿** **FALL SEASON**
Fall is an optimal viewing period for site.
- ❄️** **WINTER SEASON**
Winter is an optimal viewing period for site.
- 🚗** **PICNIC TABLES**
Site has picnic areas.
- 🚤** **BOAT LAUNCH**
Site has an access suitable for launching motorized watercraft.
- 🚣** **KAYAK/CANOE ACCESS**
Site has an access suitable for kayaks and canoes.
- 🍷** **CONCESSIONS**
Site has food or drink available.

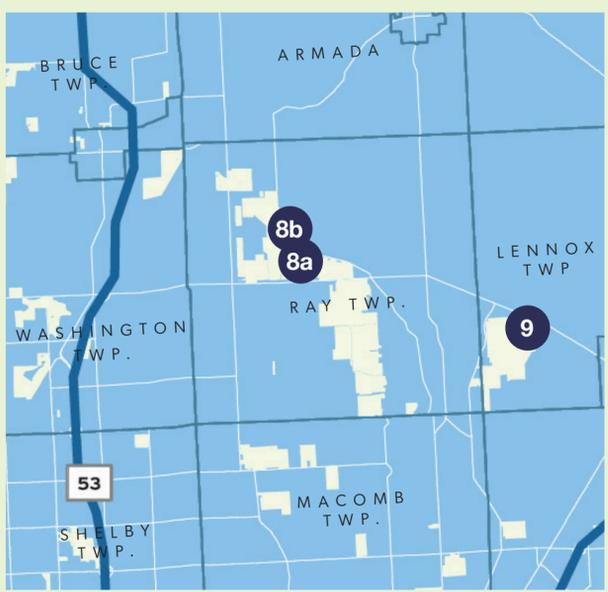
ADDITIONAL SITES

- Joseph Delia Park**
This park has 119 acres offering picnic areas, nature trails, playground, dog park, lighted baseball fields, soccer field, tennis courts and a sled hill.
- Nicholson Nature Center**
The natural areas in the Nicholson Nature Center serve as a floodplain for the Clinton River making it quite muddy in spring. Boots are recommended.
- Walter and Mary Burke Park**
This park on Anchor Bay offers a playground, picnic tables, swimming and sand volleyball.
- Spillway Park**
This Michigan Nature Association Sanctuary is a wooded oasis amidst suburban development and open agriculture providing important habitat for various flora and fauna.
- Clinton Township Canal Parks**
Remnants of the Clinton-Kalamazoo Canal run north of the parking lot. A wide path allows views of a Great Blue Heron rookery across the Clinton River. The Don Green Nature Trail is a 2.7-mile woodchipped path to the adjoining Budd Park.
- Webber Paddle Park**
This park, located on Jefferson Avenue in Chesterfield Township, features a parking lot and accessible canoe and kayak launch. This location also provides access to the Salt River and Lake St. Clair.





WEST MACOMB REGION



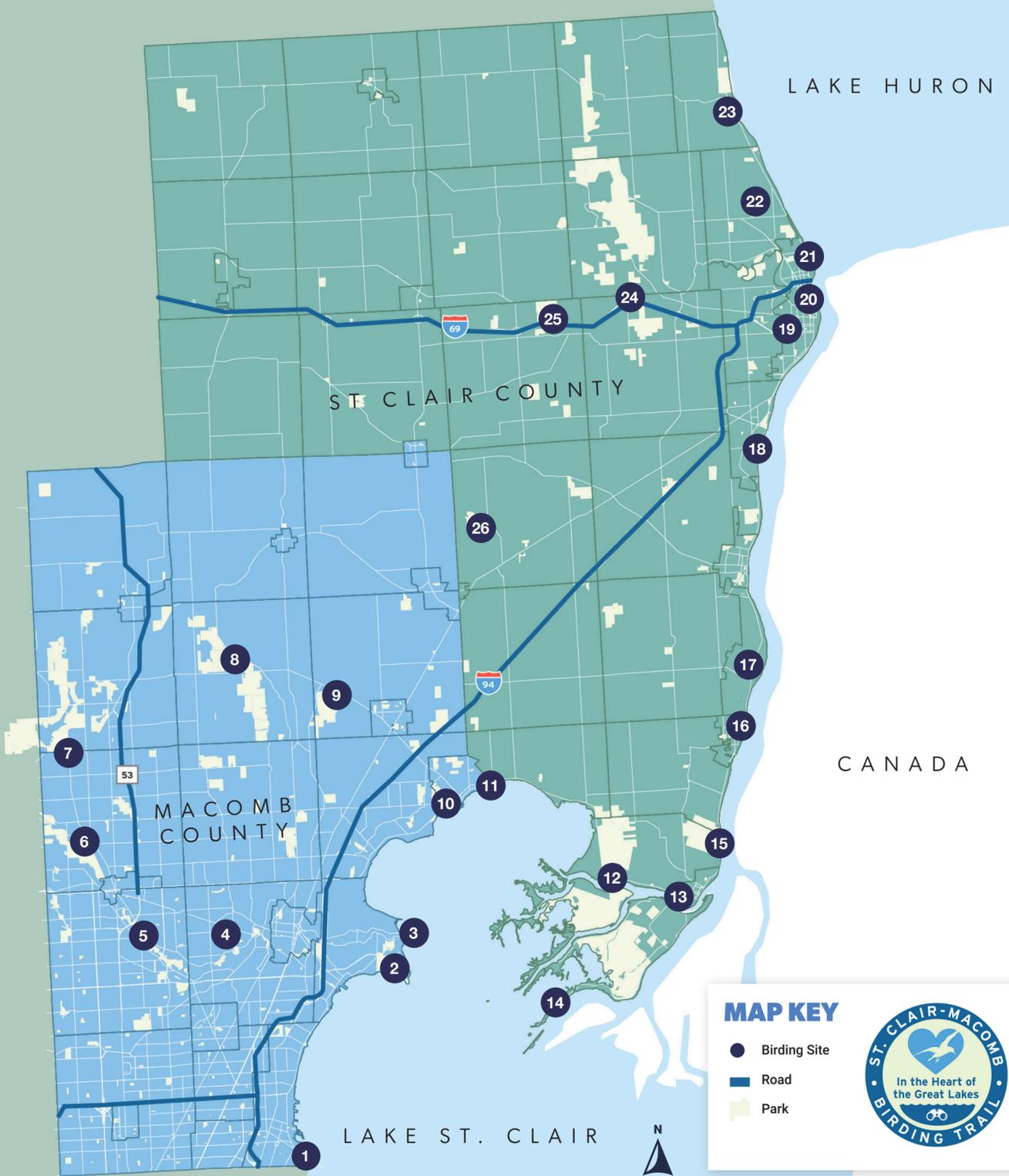
CENTRAL MACOMB REGION



NORTH ST. CLAIR REGION



SOUTH ST. CLAIR REGION



MAP KEY

- Birding Site
- Road
- Park



ST. CLAIR - MACOMB BIRDING TRAIL

This trail highlights the remarkable habitat along the Heart of the Great Lakes in Southeast Michigan

Check out scmbirdtrail.org or scan the QR code for more information.



ETIQUETTE TIPS FOR BIRDERS

A polite birder is courteous not only to the birds but also to other birders and individuals who share the same trails and paths. Courteous behavior is contagious, and by following good birding etiquette, birders can share their love of birds in a polite and enthusiastic way.

KEEP QUIET: Turn off cell phone ringers and hold quiet conversations. Excessive noise can scare off nearby birds.

STEP ASIDE: When birding on a trail, step off the path to observe a bird so that hikers, joggers, bikers and other birders are not forced to go around you.

SHARE: Be willing to share field guides, scopes, and other birding equipment.

OFFER A BIRD'S EYE VIEW: Don't walk in front of others to improve your own vantage point. If you do have a good view of a shy bird, offer to move aside.

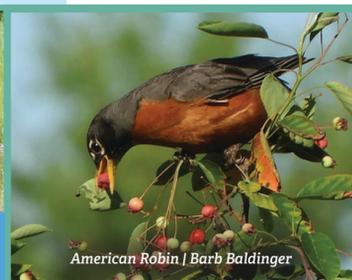
BE PATIENT: Expect birders of all experience levels. When a bird is spotted that you are familiar with, do not assume that everyone else also knows the bird well. Be patient with new birders so they have the opportunity to see even everyday birds well.

SMALL GROUPS: Many organized birding field trips have limited participation numbers for good reason: the more people there are in the group, the more likely the birds will be disturbed and difficult to see.

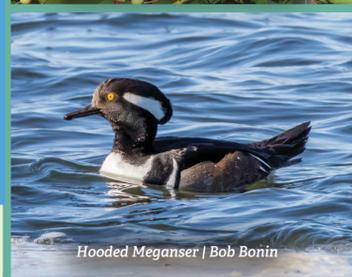
SHARE RIDES: Carpooling is not only environmentally conscious, but it also ensures a smaller caravan of birders that will be less likely to disturb birds in each area.

PAY ATTENTION: Most birding field trips are organized by one or two guides who are familiar with the area and its birds. Guides may offer tips about nearby birding locations or warnings about restricted areas or local dangers.

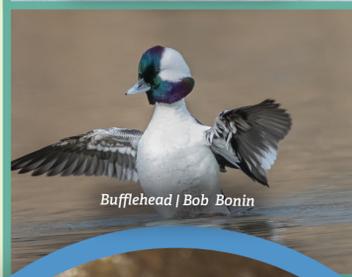
SHARE SIGHTINGS: More pairs of eyes focused on the area means more birders ready to contribute to the bird's identification. When you see a bird, offer clues to its location based on surrounding trees, brush, or other landmarks.



American Robin | Barb Baldinger



Hooded Merganser | Bob Bonin



Bufflehead | Bob Bonin



Least Bittern | Mike Dee



Belted Kingfisher | Rob Weir



Barred Owl | Bob Bonin

