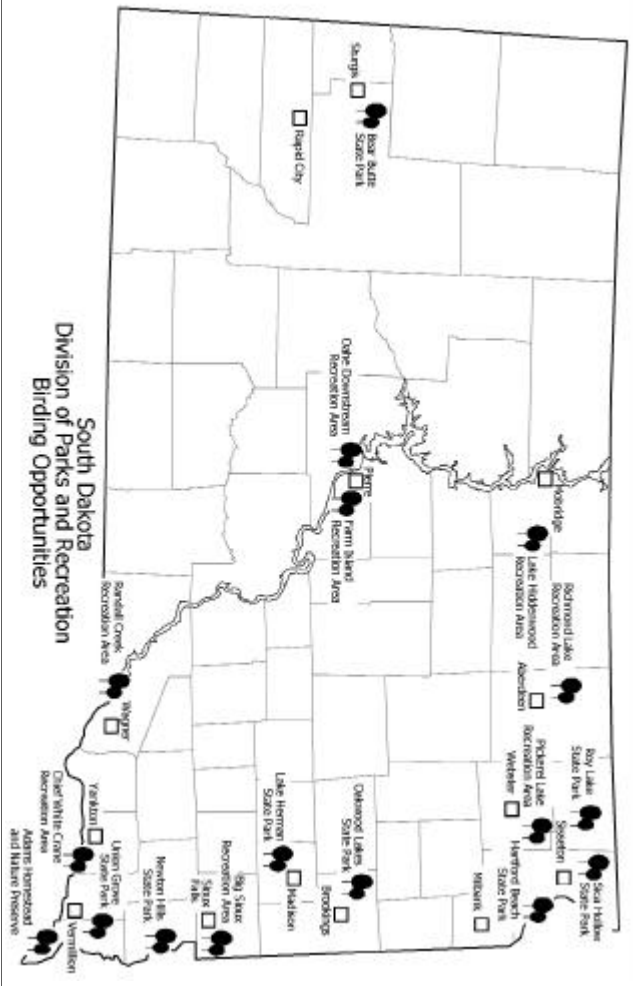


# ***Bird Watching Guide***

*for  
South Dakota State Parks  
and Recreation Areas*



*This publication is a cooperative project of the  
SD Department of Game, Fish and Parks,  
the SD Department of Health, and the  
Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program.*



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## Introduction

**B**ird watching is one of today's most popular and fastest growing outdoor activities. Some of the best places to enjoy birding are in South Dakota's state parks and recreation areas. Birders will find a variety of habitats to explore, including oak-basswood forests, native prairies, wetlands, glacial lakes and the tailwaters and reservoirs of the Missouri River.

While all the parks and recreation areas offer the birdwatcher opportunities to see some of the state's 414 species of birds, there are several parks that consistently produce those rare and uncommon sightings sought by the avid birder.

With this brochure, you'll learn of the birders' hotspots in SD state parks. You'll also find recommendations on when to visit, where to look and the rare and unique species you may spot.

## What to Expect

South Dakota lies squarely in the middle of where Eastern and western North American avifaunas (bird regions) meet.

Several eastern bird species reach the western limits of their breeding range in eastern South Dakota and are considered uncommon or very local summer residents. These include birds like the Whip-Poor-Will and Yellow-throated Vireo found in two of the state's birding hotspots - Newton Hills and Hartford Beach State Parks. Birdwatchers visiting parks located along the Missouri River will find a mix of both western and eastern avifaunas.

At Farm Island Recreation Area - located a few miles below the Missouri River dam at Pierre - the birder will find both the Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and its western counterpart the Black-headed Grosbeak.

## When to Visit

As the seasons change, so will birdwatching opportunities. The greatest number of species will occur in parks and recreation areas during spring and fall migration. However, it is the spring migration when male birds exhibit their colorful breeding plumage.

Union Grove State Park is known as one of the best areas to observe the spring migration of wood warblers and other Neotropical (from South America, the West Indies and/or tropical North America) migrants. During the summer breeding season, male birds will be actively singing from late May through early July.

Birding by ear becomes an important tool to finding and identifying birds in the dense forest canopies of parks like Sica Hollow, where species like the Veery are often heard before seen.

Open water found below Missouri River dams has attracted a number of rare and accidental waterfowl, gulls and terns during late fall and early winter.

Species like the Long-tailed Duck, Thayer's Gull and Black-legged Kittiwake, while uncommon, are often seen at or near Oahe Downstream, Randall Creek and Chief White Crane recreation areas.

Birders willing to brave cold winter winds can

find uncommon winter visitors like the Townsend's Solitaire attracted to the protection and food provided by several large shelterbelts of conifers and fruit bearing shrubs at Pickerel Lake Recreation Area.

The time of day is also important. Some species like the American Woodcock are active just before sunset. However, the peak period of activity for most species is from one hour before to two hours after sunrise.

## **What to Bring**

**B**irders should have a good field guide showing both eastern and western species. A spotting scope and advanced field guide showing juvenile, winter and non-breeding plumages of all North American gulls is required if birding the Missouri River recreation areas in late fall and winter.

*The SD Department of Health recommends that you bring the following:*

- Water - drink plenty of water before, during and after hiking
- Insect repellent - protect yourself from the bites of ticks and mosquitoes
- Sunscreen of 15spf or higher - protect your skin from the sun's rays
- Small first aid kit - be prepared for emergencies
- Healthy snacks - high energy foods (granola, fruits and energy bars)
- Appropriate clothing and footwear - weather conditions can change quickly

## **Reporting Your Observations**

If you see a rare or unusual bird, please report your observation to the park naturalist or manager. Note the dates and locations of your observations in the park.

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# Adams Homestead & Nature Preserve

**LOCATION:** 2 miles SW of McCook Exit 4 off I-29, no park entrance license required



**HABITATS:** Missouri River, cottonwood floodplain forest, Mud Lake, restored grassland

**RECOMMENDED SEASON:** Late spring - summer

**BEST AREAS IN PARK:** Lake Loop and River Loop Hiking Trails

<i>Species</i>	<i>When &amp; Where</i>
Summer Residents . . . . .	All late May - early July, Lake Loop, River Loop Trails
Northern Bobwhite . . . . .	Listen for males calling from open areas in May
Least Tern . . . . .	Missouri River Overlook
Whip-Poor-Will . . . . .	Males singing early evenings through May, wooded areas
Least Flycatcher . . . . .	Open areas in woods
Bell's Vireo . . . . .	Thickets along riverbank
Eastern Bluebird . . . . .	Meadows & grassland adjacent to woods
Yellow-breasted Chat . . . . .	Thickets along river & oxbow
Lark Sparrow . . . . .	Grassland
Black-billed Cuckoo . . . . .	Woods
Yellow-billed Cuckoo . . . . .	Woods
Northern Cardinal . . . . .	Woods
Red-bellied Woodpecker . . .	Woods
Eastern Wood-Pewee . . . . .	Woods
Great Crested Flycatcher . .	Woods



## South

Dakota is a great place to learn the basics of birdwatching. Our state has more than **400 species** of birds that nest, migrate through or winter within its boundaries - nearly half the number of species in North America.

**S**outh Dakota has many types of habitats, giving us a great diversity of bird life. No matter where you live in the state, many kinds of birds make their homes nearby. Don't consider the large number of birds a hurdle to find, since the diversity is part of what makes birdwatching fun.

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## ***Birding Tip ...***

**When birdwatching, how will I know if I'm harassing or disturbing the birds I'm viewing?**

If a bird appears agitated by your presence, leave the area. You may be disturbing a nesting pair or an adult with young nearby.

**V**iew birds from a distance with binoculars. Don't hike through nesting colonies or approach individual nests, since adults will likely abandon eggs or chicks if disturbed.

**K**eeep your distance from wintering wildlife, such as bald eagles, since they may already be stressed by severe weather or food scarcity.

**N**o sighting is worth the risk of a large penalty for disturbing wildlife or the danger you may pose to the individual animals.

from: *The Fledgling Birder: An Introduction to Birdwatching Basics*, South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks, 1999.



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# Bear Butte State Park

**LOCATION:** 6 miles NE of Sturgis off SD Hwy 79,  
park entrance license required



**HABITATS:** Bear Butte Lake,  
short grass prairie, ponderosa  
pine forest

**RECOMMENDED SEASONS:**  
Spring, late fall

**BEST AREA IN PARK:** Bear Butte Lake

***Species***

***When & Where***

Spring Migrants . . . . . April-May, Bear Butte Lake,  
Shorebirds . . . . . dependent on shore  
conditions and lake levels

Fall Migrants . . . . . November, Bear Butte Lake  
Waterfowl

***Rare or Accidental Species Observed:*** Clark's  
Grebe, Cinnamon Teal, Surf Scoter, White-winged  
Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, Whimbrel, Red Phalarope,  
Black-legged Kittiwake, Caspian Tern



***Cinnamon Teal pair.*** US Fish and Wildlife Service, image library.  
[www.images.fws.gov](http://www.images.fws.gov)

# Chief White Crane Recreation Area

**LOCATION:** 5 miles SW Yankton off SD Hwy 52, park entrance license required. Foot traffic only from Nov. 1 to March 31



**HABITATS:** Missouri River, sandbars, Lake Yankton

**RECOMMENDED SEASONS:** Late spring - summer, late fall - winter

**BEST AREA IN PARK:** Shoreline and sandbars along open water of Missouri River and Lake Yankton

## *Species*

Summer Residents . . . . .  
Piping Plover  
Least Tern

## *When & Where*

All April - August, along shore and on sandbars of river and lake

## Late Fall Migrants/Winter Visitors

Waterfowl . . . . . November - January, open water of river and lake  
Jaegers, Gulls and Terns  
Bald Eagle . . . . . November - February, roosting in cottonwoods along riverbank

## ***Birding Tip ...***

### **Where else in South Dakota can I view bald eagles?**

#### **In Central South Dakota:**

- Pierre and Fort Pierre, particularly on and near the Missouri River. LaFramboise Island Nature Area, Oahe Downstream and Farm Island Recreation Areas are popular.
- Lake Sharpe below Oahe Dam,

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*Rare or Accidental Species Observed:* Red-throated Loon, Brown Pelican, Greater Scaup, Surf Scoter, White-winged Scoter, Black Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, Red-breasted Merganser, Hooded Merganser, Pomarine Jaegar, Laughing Gull, Mew Gull, Thayer's Gull, Iceland Gull, Lesser Black-Backed Gull, Glaucous Gull, Sabine's Gull, Black-legged Kittiwake, Arctic Tern



***Mew Gull.*** US Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska image library.  
[www.images.fws.gov](http://www.images.fws.gov)

particularly in Oahe  
Downstream, campground #3. This  
area is open only to foot traffic Nov. 1  
through March 31.

**In Eastern South Dakota:**

- Karl Mundt National Wildlife Refuge in Gregory County.
- Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge (particularly migrating bald eagles)
- Anywhere East River during spring and fall migration, especially in cottonwood forests of the James and Big Sioux Rivers.



*Hooded Warbler.* US Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington DC library. [www.images.fws.gov](http://www.images.fws.gov)

***Did you know ...***

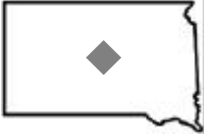
... that males often precede females by a week or so during spring migration?

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# Farm Island Recreation Area

**LOCATION:** 4 miles E Pierre off SD Hwy 34, park entrance license required

**HABITAT:** Missouri River, cottonwood floodplain forest, wetlands, meadow



**RECOMMENDED SEASON:** Late spring - early summer

**BEST AREA IN PARK:** Exploration Nature Trail

## *Species*

## *When & Where*

Spring Migrants . . . . .	Late April - early June,
Vireos, Thrushes,	Exploration Nature Trail
Warblers and Sparrows	

*Note: Twenty-six warbler species recorded in park, peak migration 1st half of May*

Summer Residents . . . . .	All late May - early July,
Black-billed Cuckoo	Exploration Nature Trail
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	
Least Flycatcher	
Great Crested Flycatcher	
Bell's Vireo	
Yellow-Breasted Chat	
Spotted Towhee	
Black-headed Grosbeak	
Blue Grosbeak	
Lazuli Bunting	
Indigo Bunting	
Green Heron	

*Rare or Accidental Species Observed:* Black Duck, Lesser Black-Backed Gull, Glaucous Gull, Blue-Winged Warbler, Golden-Winged Warbler, Black-Throated Blue Warbler, Townsend's Warbler, Bay-Breasted Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Connecticut Warbler, MacGillivray's Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Least Bittern

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# Hartford Beach State Park

**LOCATION:** 15 miles N of Milbank off SD Hwy #15, park entrance license required

**HABITATS:** Oak-Basswood riparian forest, tallgrass prairie, meadow, perennial streams, Big Stone Lake



**RECOMMENDED SEASONS:** Late spring - early summer

**BEST AREAS IN PARK:** Aspen Springs Hiking Trail, Campground to Beach Trail, Prehistoric Village Trail

## Species

## When & Where

Spring Migrants. . . . . Late April - early June, all park  
Vireos, Thrushes, Warblers and Sparrows

*Note: Twenty warbler species reported, peak migration first half of May*

Osprey . . . . . April -early May, swim beach

Summer Residents . . . . . All late May - early July  
unless noted otherwise

Cooper's Hawk . . . . . Woods, Prehistoric Village  
Trail, Campground to  
Beach Trail

American Woodcock . . . . . March - April, males singing  
early evenings in meadows

Black-billed Cuckoo. . . . . Woods, Aspen Springs and  
Yellow-billed Cuckoo . . . . . Robar Trails

Whip-Poor-Will . . . . . Males singing early  
evenings, woods on Aspen  
Springs Trail

Ruby-throated  
Hummingbird. . . . . July - August, stream  
adjacent to Aspen Springs  
Trail

Red-bellied Woodpecker . . . Woods throughout park

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

Eastern Phoebe

Great Crested Flycatcher

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Pileated Woodpecker . . . . .	Late March - April, drumming & calling in woods
Eastern Wood-Pewee . . . . .	Campground
Least Flycatcher . . . . .	Forest edges Aspen Springs and Robar Trails
Yellow-throated Vireo . . . . .	Campground
Eastern Bluebird . . . . .	Meadows, prairie adjacent to woods
American Redstart . . . . .	North loop of Aspen Springs and Robar Trails
Ovenbird	
Clay-colored Sparrow . . . . .	Prairie along Aspen Springs and Robar Trails
Field Sparrow	
Indigo Bunting. . . . .	Open areas along Aspen Springs and Robar Trails

*Rare or Accidental Species Observed:* Long-tailed Duck, Little Blue Heron, Mississippi Kite, Barred Owl, Philadelphia Vireo, Golden-winged Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler

*Additional Wildlife Viewing:* Rare Dakota Skipper butterfly found on park's prairie; uncommon mammals including Eastern Chipmunk, Red Squirrel, Southern Red-backed Vole



**American Redstart.** US Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington DC library. [www.images.fws.gov](http://www.images.fws.gov)

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# Newton Hills State Park

**LOCATION:** 6 miles S of Canton off County Hwy 135, park entrance license required



**HABITATS:** Oak-basswood forest, meadow, perennial stream, Big Sioux River, Lake Lakota

**RECOMMENDED SEASONS:** Spring, summer

**BEST AREAS IN PARK:** Sargent Creek from Big Sioux River to intersection with Blue Diamond Multi-Use Trail, Lake Lakota during waterfowl and shorebird migration

## ***Species***

## ***Where & When***

Spring Migrants

Waterfowl . . . . . March - April, Lake Lakota

Shorebirds . . . . . April - May, Lake Lakota

Vireos, Thrushes, . . . . . Late April - early June along

Warblers and Sparrows . . . . . Sargent Creek

*Note: Twenty-six warbler species recorded in park, peak first half of May*

Summer Residents . . . . . Late May - early June, unless noted

Turkey Vulture. . . . . March - July, soaring on ridge tops adjacent to Big Sioux River

Broad-winged Hawk . . . . . April-June, woods in park

Northern Bobwhite . . . . . Near Big Sioux River, sporadic sightings, listen for calling males

American Woodcock . . . . . Late March-April, lower meadows, males calling early evenings

Black-billed Cuckoo. . . . . Woods throughout park

Yellow-billed Cuckoo

Red-bellied Woodpecker

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

Eastern Wood-Pewee

Least Flycatcher



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Whip-Poor-Will . . . . .	Males singing early evenings, mornings wooded hillsides
Ruby-throated Hummingbird . .	July-August, on Sargent Creek
Eastern Phoebe . . . . .	Lower meadows in wooded areas
Great Crested Flycatcher . .	Wooded areas on Sargent Creek
Indigo Bunting	
Yellow-throated Vireo . . . . .	Sargent Creek from Horse Trail camp to Big Sioux River
Cerulean Warbler	
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. . . . .	Sargent Creek near Horse Trail camp
Wood Thrush . . . . .	Wooded draws on Blue Diamond Trail
Eastern Bluebird . . . . .	Meadows, open areas on Lake Lakota
American Redstart . . . . .	Thickets along Blue Diamond Trail
Kentucky Warbler . . . . .	Woods along Blue Diamond Trail
Scarlet Tanager. . . . .	Wooded areas near low picnic shelter
Spotted Towhee . . . . .	Thickets along Sargent Creek
Eastern Towhee	
Lark Sparrow . . . . .	Grasslands along Lake Lakota
Blue Grosbeak . . . . .	Highway power lines adjacent to park
Barred Owl . . . . .	September - January, wooded areas north of Lookout Tower to Big Sioux River

*Rare or Accidental Species Observed:* Red-shouldered Hawk, Western Wood-Pewee, White-eyed Vireo, Carolina Wren, Blue-winged Warbler, Golden-winged Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler

# Oahe Downstream Recreation Area

**LOCATION:** 5 miles N Ft. Pierre off SD Hwy 1806, park entrance license required. Foot traffic only from Oct. 1 to April 30.



**HABITATS:** Missouri River, cottonwood floodplain forest, sandbars

**RECOMMENDED SEASON:** Late spring - summer, late fall - winter

**BEST AREA IN PARK:** Shoreline and open water of Missouri River, Cottonwood Path Hiking Trail

## *Species*

## *When & Where*

Summer Resident

Chuck-Will's-Widow . . . . . May - June, calling along Cottonwood Path hiking trail. Only known breeding location of species in state

Fall Migrants/Winter Visitors

Bald Eagle . . . . . November - January, cottonwood trees along Cottonwood Path hiking trail.

Waterfowl . . . . . November - February, open water of river, stilling basin



***Barrow's Goldeneye.*** US Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington DC library. [www.images.fws.gov](http://www.images.fws.gov)

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Jaeger, Gull and . . . . . November - January  
Tern Species open water of river and  
stilling basin from T-Dike and  
Diver's Point

*Rare or Accidental Species Observed:* Pacific Loon, Greater Scaup, Long-tailed Duck, Barrow's Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, Pomarine Jaeger, Parasitic Jaeger, Long-tailed Jaeger, Little Gull, Mew Gull, Thayer's Gull, Iceland Gull, Lesser Black-Backed Gull, Glaucous Gull, Black-legged Kittiwake, Arctic Tern

## ***Did you know?***

### **Bald Eagle Facts**

- Females are larger than males. Wingspans can measure 8 feet for females and 7 feet for males.
- Eagles can fly 30 mph.
- Bald eagles may lived to be 30 years old or more in the wild.
- If people come too close, the eagle makes a guttural barking sound. Please leave the area if you hear this sound.
- Bald eagles can begin nesting in South Dakota as early as February.
- Both males and females are brown and black until about 5 years old. Then, the feathers on their heads turn white.
- Eaglets remain in their nests for approximately 75 days before flying.

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# Oakwood Lakes State Park

**LOCATION:** 10 miles NW of Volga off US Hwy 14,  
park entrance license required



**HABITATS:** Oak-basswood riparian forest, wetlands, grassland, meadow, Oakwood Lakes

**RECOMMENDED SEASON:** Spring

**BEST AREA IN PARK:** Tetonkaha Trail, Oakwood Lakes Prairie Trail

## *Species*

## *Where & When*

Spring Migration

Waterfowl . . . . . April - May, lakes and wetlands

Vireos, Thrushes . . . . . Late April - early June,

Warblers and sparrows Tetonkaha and Oakwood Lakes Prairie Hiking Trails

*Note: Twenty-one warbler species reported, peak migration 1st half of May*

*Rare or Accidental Species Observed:* Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, American Black Duck, Cinnamon Teal, Greater Scaup, Barred Owl, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Philadelphia Vireo, Cape May Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Pine Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Connecticut Warbler, MacGillivray's Warbler, Summer Tanager, Lazuli Bunting

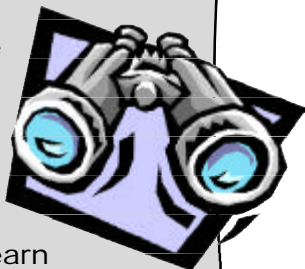


***Scissor-tailed Flycatcher.*** US Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington DC library. [www.images.fws.gov](http://www.images.fws.gov)

## ***Birding Tip ...***

### **Binoculars**

This is the most expensive investment you'll likely make in for birdwatching. What is good for one person may not work as well for another. Hence, the wide range of prices, styles and options available on the market.



**B**eginners should learn the basics of what the numbers and features on binoculars mean.

The power of the binoculars is expressed as two numbers, such as 7x35. The first number refers to the magnification provided. The larger the magnification, the larger the image.

The second number is the measurement in millimeters of the diameter of the outer, or "objective" lens. The larger the diameter, the brighter the image.

**B**uy binoculars with the numbers in a ratio of 1:5, such as 7x35 or 8x40. These are the best options for a beginner birdwatcher and will serve you well for many years.

*from: The Fledgling Birder: An Introduction to Birdwatching Basics, South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks, 1999.*

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# Pickrel Lake Recreation Area - West Unit

**LOCATION:** 10 miles N of Waubay off SD Hwy 12 on 446th Ave., park entrance license required

**HABITATS:** Conifer & fruit bearing shrub plantings, meadow, wetlands, intermittent stream



**RECOMMENDED SEASON:** Late fall through winter

**BEST AREAS IN PARK:** Ponderosa Hiking Trail, Outlet Creek (Species abundance tends to increase when Outlet Creek is flowing from lake)

## *Species Where & When*

Late Fall Migrants . . . . . All November - February  
and Winter Visitors . . . . . unless otherwise noted,  
Ponderosa Hiking Trail

Northern Goshawk . . . . . Conifers  
Purple Finch  
White-winged Crossbill

Red-shouldered Hawk . . . . . December - February, Outlet  
creek north of entrance road

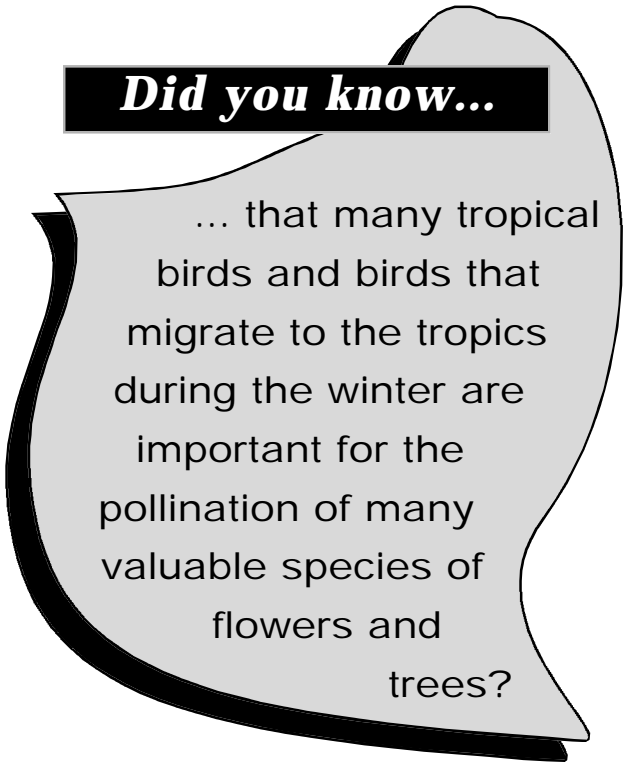


***Pine Grosbeak.*** US Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington DC library. [www.images.fws.gov](http://www.images.fws.gov)

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Merlin . . . . .	Tall Cottonwood trees along entrance road
Red-breasted Nuthatch . . . .	August - May, conifers
Townsend's Solitaire . . . . .	November - March, conifers
Bohemian Waxwing. . . . .	Thickets with fruit trees and shrubs
Pine Grosbeak	
Rusty Blackbird. . . . .	Outlet creek north of entrance road
Red Crossbill . . . . .	October - June, look for falling ponderosa seedlings
Common Redpoll . . . . .	Brushy areas, thickets

*Rare or Accidental Species Observed: Varied Thrush*



# Randall Creek Recreation Area

**LOCATION:** 1 mile W of Pickstown off US Hwy 281 & 18, park entrance license required. Foot traffic only from Nov. 1 to March 31

**HABITAT:** Missouri River, Cottonwood floodplain forest, sandbars



**RECOMMENDED SEASON:** Late fall through winter

**BEST AREA IN PARK:** Shoreline along Missouri River

## *Species*

## *Where & When*

Late Fall Migrants and Winter Visitors

Bald Eagle . . . . . November - January, cottonwood trees along river

Waterfowl . . . . . November - February, water, sandbars & shoreline

Gulls . . . . . November - January, sandbars and shoreline of the river

*Rare and Accidental Species Observed:* Pacific Loon, White-winged Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, Hooded Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Little Gull, Mew Gull, Thayer's Gull, Glaucous Gull, Black-legged Kittiwake

## **What**

### **can I do for bald eagles?**

- Join a conservation organization concerned with eagles and other vulnerable species.
- Be aware of legislation affecting wildlife conservation and contact your representatives at all government levels.
- Learn about wildlife species and what they need and inform others to enlist their help, particularly for endangered species.



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**NOTE:** The three South Dakota state recreation areas below the Missouri River dams close during the winter to allow roosting bald eagles to remain undisturbed. The following areas are open only to foot traffic during closure dates:

Oahe Downstream campgrounds: Nov. 1 - March 31

Randall Creek campgrounds: Oct. 1 - April 30

Chief White Crane Recreation Area: Nov. 1 - March 31



**Bald eagle chicks.** US Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington DC library. [www.images.fws.gov](http://www.images.fws.gov)

- Volunteer

your time and energy to groups trying to restore cottonwood forests for future bald eagles.

- If you know the location of a bald eagle nest or major roost sites, notify the US Fish and Wildlife Service or the SD Department of Game, Fish and Parks.
- Don't disturb eagles during the nesting season. Bald eagles are also sensitive to disturbance during the winter. Always observe these from a distance.

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# Sica Hollow State Park

**LOCATION:** 15 miles NW of Sisseton off SD Hwy 10, park entrance license is required

**HABITATS:** Oak-Basswood, maple-basswood forest, perennial stream, meadow, tallgrass prairie



**RECOMMENDED SEASON:** Late spring - summer

**BEST AREAS IN PARK:** Horse Trail through southwest corner of park, trails on park's north and south boundaries. *Note:* No snow removal from park roads late-fall through early spring

## *Species*

## *Where & When*

Summer Residents: . . . . .	Late May - early July unless otherwise noted
Cooper's Hawk . . . . .	April-June, woods along Horse Trail
Broad-winged Hawk . . . . .	April-June, Horse Trail, look for soaring birds over woods
American Woodcock . . . . .	Late March - May, males call evenings in meadows near horse camp & day-use area
Black-billed Cuckoo. . . . .	Woods along Horse Trail
Pileated Woodpecker . . . . .	March- May, drumming and calling males, wooded areas
Eastern Wood-Pewee . . . . .	Woods along Horse Trail
Indigo Bunting	
Least Flycatcher . . . . .	Woods, thickets through park
Eastern Phoebe . . . . .	Day use area
Yellow-throated Vireo . . . . .	Wooded areas along streams
Eastern Bluebird . . . . .	Trails along north and south boundaries of park
Veery . . . . .	North facing wooded slopes along Horse Trail
Scarlet Tanager. . . . .	Horse Trail and park road from Marshall Co. line west
Spotted Towhee . . . . .	Upland thickets along north and south boundaries of park

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Ovenbird . . . . . Wooded draws on Horse Trail  
American Redstart  
Clay-colored Sparrow . . . . . Upland prairie along parks  
north boundary

*Rare or Accidental Species Observed:* Red-shouldered  
Hawk, Long-eared Owl

*Additional Wildlife Viewing:* Spring wildflowers - Marsh  
Marigold, Yellow Lady's-Slipper, Nodding Trillium;  
Woodland butterflies including rare Compton Tortoiseshell  
and Canadian Tiger Swallowtail; Gray Tree Frog

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“ **A bird heard  
is as good as a bird seen.** ”  
- John Tory Peterson

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**Indigo Bunting.** US Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington DC  
library. [www.images.fws.gov](http://www.images.fws.gov)

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# Union Grove State Park

**LOCATION:** 11 miles S of Beresford off Interstate 29, park entrance license required



**HABITATS:** Oak-basswood forest, meadow, conifer wildlife shelterbelts, arboretum, perennial stream

**RECOMMENDED SEASONS:** Spring, summer

**BEST AREAS IN PARK:** Brule Creek, arboretum, horse camp

## *Species*

## *Where & When*

Spring Migrants . . . . . Late April -early June,  
Vireos, Thrushes, Warblers throughout park  
and Sparrows

*Note: Twenty-five warbler species reported, peak migrations first half of May.*

Summer Residents . . . . . May - early July unless  
otherwise noted

Northern Bobwhite . . . . . Calling males in meadows,  
sporadic occurrence in park



***Eastern Bluebird.*** US Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington DC library. [www.images.fws.gov](http://www.images.fws.gov)

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American Woodcock . . . . .	March - April, males calling early evenings from meadows
Black-billed Cuckoo . . . . .	Woods throughout park
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	
Eastern Wood-Pewee	
Least Flycatcher	
Wood Thrush	
Scarlet Tanager	
Indigo Bunting	
Whip-Poor-Will . . . . .	Males singing early evening from wooded hillsides
Rock Wren . . . . .	Steep banks on Brule Creek
Eastern Bluebird . . . . .	Edge of meadows, open areas
Spotted Towhee . . . . .	Wooded edges, thickets
Eastern Towhee	
Lark Sparrow . . . . .	Grassland
Blue Grosbeak . . . . .	Forest edges, open brushy areas

*Rare or Accidental Species Observed:* Chuck-Will's-Widow, White-eyed Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, Blue-winged Warbler, Golden-winged Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Pine Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, Connecticut Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Eastern Meadowlark



***The bluebird carries  
the sky on his back.***

**- Henry David Thoreau**

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## Other Notable Parks and Recreation Areas

### Big Sioux Recreation Area

*LOCATION:* 4 miles SW of Brandon off I-90 Exit 406, park entrance license required

*HABITATS:* Big Sioux River, oak-basswood forest, meadow, remnant tallgrass prairie

*RECOMMENDED SEASONS:* Spring migration April-May, fall migration August - October

*BEST AREA IN PARK:* Valley of the Giants Hiking Trail

*BIRDS TO WATCH FOR:* Migrating thrushes, warblers and sparrows

### Lake Herman State Park

*LOCATION:* 2 miles W of Madison off SD Hwy 34, park entrance license required

*HABITATS:* Lake Herman, Herman Slough, wetlands, riparian woods, grassland

*RECOMMENDED SEASONS:* Spring migration late April-May, fall migration August-October

*BEST AREA IN PARK:* Luce Hiking Trail

*BIRDS TO WATCH FOR:* Migrating waterfowl, shorebirds, thrushes, warblers and sparrows

### Lake Hiddenwood Recreation Area

*LOCATION:* 5 miles NE of Selby off US Hwy 12/83, park entrance license required

*HABITATS:* Lake Hiddenwood

*RECOMMENDED SEASON:* Spring migration late April - May

*BEST AREA IN PARK:* Riparian woods and thickets along shoreline

*BIRDS TO WATCH FOR:* Migrating thrushes, warblers and sparrows

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## **Richmond Lake Recreation Area**

*LOCATION:* 10 miles NW of Aberdeen off US Hwy 281, park entrance license required

*HABITATS:* Richmond Lake, conifer shelterbelts

*RECOMMENDED SEASON:* Spring migration late April - May

*BEST AREA IN PARK:* Quaking Aspen Hiking Trail

*BIRDS TO WATCH FOR:* Migrating vireos, thrushes, warblers and sparrows

## **Roy Lake State Park**

*LOCATION:* 3 miles SW of Lake City off SD Hwy 10, park entrance license required

*HABITATS:* Roy Lake, wetlands, riparian woods, grassland

*RECOMMENDED SEASON:* spring migration late April - May

*BEST AREA IN PARK:* Roy Island Hiking Trail, East Unit Campground

*BIRDS TO WATCH FOR:* Migrating waterfowls, thrushes, warblers and sparrows



**Kentucky Warbler.** US Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington DC library. [www.images.fws.gov](http://www.images.fws.gov)

# ***Bird Watching Guide***

*for*

## ***South Dakota State Parks and Recreation Areas***

### **Acknowledgements:**

Special thanks to the South Dakota Ornithologists Union (SDOU) and its members who have reported and published their observations and studies of birds in South Dakota state parks.

SDOU has been promoting the study of birds since 1949. This non-profit organization publishes a quarterly journal *South Dakota Bird Notes*, and the following two books:

- Peterson, Richard A. 1995. *The South Dakota Breeding Bird Atlas*
- Tallman, Dan A., David L. Swanson, and Jeffrey S. Palmer. 2002 *Birds of South Dakota*, 3rd Edition

For more information on SDOU:

- Visit the South Dakota Ornithologists website at [www.homepages.dsu.edu/palmerj/SDOU](http://www.homepages.dsu.edu/palmerj/SDOU)
- Or write SDOU, Box 740, Northern State University, Aberdeen, SD 57401

### **For More Information**

The South Dakota Division of Parks and Recreation offers several interpretive programs of interest to birdwatchers and other outdoor enthusiasts throughout the year including guided walks. For more information, check the calendar of events online at [www.sdgifp.info/Parks](http://www.sdgifp.info/Parks) or in the *South Dakota Park Times*.

The *South Dakota State Park Trail Atlas* provides information and locations of all hiking trails named in this brochure. Copies of this atlas can be purchased online at [www.sdgifp.info/Parks](http://www.sdgifp.info/Parks) or at several state parks and other locations.

For more copies of this brochure, contact your local SD state park, call (605) 773-3391 or visit [www.sdgifp.info/Parks](http://www.sdgifp.info/Parks).

*23,000 copies of this brochure were printed at a cost of .22 each*