

BIRDING BONANZA – FLOCK TO THESE BIRDWATCHING HOT SPOTS



Horicon Marsh/Photo credit: RJ and Linda Miller

While Wisconsin's ecosystem offers prime birding opportunities year-round, spring is an excellent time to spot our feathered friends. Whether you're an ornithologist or you don't know the difference between a grouse and a goose, you can't go wrong with a trip to one of these birding hot spots.



Horicon Marsh Bird Festival/Photo credit: Donald S Abrams

Horicon Marsh State Wildlife Area – Horicon

From egrets to owls and hawks to herons, birds of all kinds thrive on Horicon's complex and rich ecological web. Enjoy numerous hiking trails and viewing areas, plus recreational opportunities like geocaching, fishing, paddling, bicycling and more. Time your visit with the annual Horicon Marsh Bird Festival May 12-15.

Crex Meadows Wildlife Area – Grantsburg

Crex Meadows is one of the largest state-owned wildlife areas and is home to 270 species of birds and 720 species of plants. Enjoy paved walkways, a boardwalk observation area, mapped driving tour, guided tours and more. Don't miss the Spring Bird Fest on May 20.

George W. Mead Wildlife Area – Milladore

This 33,000-acre state wildlife area is one of the best places in central Wisconsin for birding. Located in the marshes south of the Big Eau Pleine Reservoir and northwest of Stevens Point, the


property's checklist shows 248 species that can be found here throughout the year.

Spread Eagle Barrens State Natural Area – Florence

The 7,400-acre Spread Eagle Barrens represents the largest ecological community of its kind remaining in northern Wisconsin. Many rare or declining species requiring large open landscapes live here, including the northern harrier, upland sandpiper, northern raven, eastern bluebird and chestnut-sided warbler.

Wyalusing State Park – Bagley

Overlooking the Wisconsin and Mississippi Rivers, Wyalusing's 2,600+ acres include soaring river bluffs, hardwood forest, wetlands, waterfalls and backwater sloughs. More than 90 bird species live here during the summer and 100 more can be observed during spring and fall migration.

 Denotes Travel Green Wisconsin-certified businesses and attractions.

PICK YOUR PARK – 7 HIDDEN GEMS

Wisconsin has dozens of state parks and forests, so no matter where you find yourself, you can guarantee there's a park to explore nearby. To get you started, here's a list of hidden gems in each of Wisconsin's seven regions.

Added bonus: All seven parks are Travel Green Wisconsin-certified!

Northwest: Big Bay State Park – La Pointe

Located on Madeline Island, the largest of 22 Apostle Islands, this park features rugged

stop by the park's museum to view artifacts from these ancient people (open Memorial Day-Labor Day).

East Central: Point Beach State Forest – Two Rivers

Located along six acres of sandy Lake Michigan shoreline, Point Beach State Forest offers 17 miles of hiking trails, off-road and paved bicycling, and even a lighthouse that has been operated by the U.S. Coast Guard since 1853.

Central: Council Grounds State Park – Merrill

Native American encampments once

Mountain State Park offers more than 20 miles of hiking trails, 15 miles of horseback riding trails, 24 horse-friendly campsites and a canoe landing along the Kickapoo River.

South Central: Mirror Lake State Park – Baraboo

The park is named for its picturesque lake, often so calm that not a ripple marks its surface. Enjoy more than 19 miles of scenic hiking trails, nine miles of off-road bicycling trails, boat, canoe and kayak rentals and more.

Southeast: Aztalan State Park – Lake Mills

