

birding TIPS

Birding is a little like fishing – it takes a lot of patience. Here are a few tips to help make your birding experience fun and worthwhile.

Birding is best early in the morning and late in the afternoon. Staying quiet is crucial for getting good looks at birds

A good pair of binoculars and one or two bird field guides are good investments.

When you find a bird, make sure you fix it in your field of vision before trying to locate it with your binoculars.

When you are trying to identify a bird, study some of its key features, such as its size, behavior, and distinctive field marks like its shape, plumage and markings.



Directions to the Roanoke Canal Museum and Trail access: In Roanoke Rapids, follow Roanoke Avenue (NC 48) past 1st Street. Turn left on the Jackson Street extension and the museum is on the hill.

Please contact us if you have any unusual sightings or see any bird species that are not included on this list.

For more information, including a trail map, visit www.roanokecanal.com or call the Roanoke Canal Museum at 252-537-2769.

SOURCES

Frank Enders, J. Merrill Lynch, NC Birding Trail

Design: Brinkley Design

Project management: www.nichepress.com

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birding THE ROANOKE CANAL TRAIL



The lower Roanoke River Region in North Carolina is becoming a birding hotspot. More and more birders are flocking to this region that boasts the greatest diversity of birdlife in North Carolina's coastal plain: 214 species have been recorded here, including 88 breeding species, of which 44 species are neotropical migratory birds.

The 7.8-mile Roanoke Canal Trail in Halifax County now offers birders a novel entryway into a once inaccessible wildland. This natural-surface trail parallels the Roanoke River from Roanoke Rapids to Weldon and passes through a variety of habitats, including mature bottomland forest and floodplain forest, which are home to at least 168 species of birds.



The flat terrain, well-maintained foot trail, convenient parking areas and nearby amenities make the Canal Trail a wonderful destination for birders and outdoor enthusiasts of all ages.

The Trail is open to the public, seven days a week, from sunrise to sunset throughout the year. There are five access points with parking and interpretive signs.

What birds will you see? The canal trail offers great birding throughout the year. Birds associated with aquatic habitats such as belted kingfisher, osprey, great blue heron, killdeer, spotted sandpiper, wood duck and hooded merganser may be seen in the appropriate season. Woodpeckers are common year round and up to seven species can be seen on a single hike. Barred owls can be seen and heard throughout the year.

Springtime brings an abundance of birdlife. Black-throated blue and Blackpoll warblers may be seen during spring migration. Migratory songbirds that nest in forests along the trail include wood thrush, yellow-throated vireo, hooded warbler, prothonotary warbler, American redstart, ovenbird, Louisiana waterthrush, yellow-throated vireo and Kentucky warbler.



In the winter, flocks of cedar waxwings move through the forest canopy, white-throated sparrows are abundant, and less common species

such as red-headed woodpecker, brown creeper, winter wren and fox sparrow may be observed along the trail. Bald eagle is often seen along the trail from NC 48 to below Weldon and flocks of various ducks can be seen, including black duck, ring-necked duck and mallard.

Birders travel from afar to hunt for local rarities like the cerulean warbler, Swainson's warbler and Mississippi kite. A small population of cerulean warblers has been reported along the river from the Chockyotte Creek aqueduct downstream to the US 158 bridge. Mississippi kites may be observed anywhere along the trail hawking insects overhead during the summer months. Breeding Swainson's warblers nest in the canebrakes and shrubby understory near the river, particularly between the aqueduct and US 158 bridge.

DATE							
LOONS GREBES							
	Common Loon						
	Pied-billed Grebe						
	Horned Grebe						
	Cormorants* Anhingas						
	Double-crested Cormorant						
	Bitterns* Herons* Ibises						
	Great Blue Heron						
	Great Egret						
	Green Heron*						
	Swans* Geese* Ducks						
	Canada Goose*						
	Wood Duck*						
	Mallard						
	Black Duck						
	Gadwall						
	Ring-necked Duck						
	Lesser Scaup						
	Bufflehead						
	Hooded Merganser						
	Red-Breasted Merganser						
	Ruddy Duck						
QUAILS GROUSE TURKEYS							
	Wild Turkey*						
	Northern Bobwhite						
RAILS GALLINULES COOTS							
	American Coot						
PLOVERS OYSTERCATCHERS							
	Killdeer						

	DATE								
SANDPIPERS PHALAROPES									
Greater Yellowlegs									
Solitary Sandpiper									
Spotted Sandpiper									
Least Sandpiper									
Common Snipe									
American Woodcock									
SKUAS GULLS									
Laughing Gull									
Bonaparte's Gull									
Ring-billed Gull									
Herring Gull									
Great Black-backed Gull									
TERNs SKIMMERS									
Caspian Tern									
PIGEONS DOVES									
Rock Dove*									
Mourning Dove*									
CUCKOOS ANIS									
Black-billed Cuckoo									
Yellow-billed Cuckoo*									
OWLS GOATSUCKERS									
Eastern Screech-owl*									
Great Horned Owl*									
Barred Owl*									
Common Nighthawk*									
Chuck-will's-widow*									
Whip-poor-will*									
SWIFTS HUMMINGBIRDS									
Chimney Swift*									
Ruby-throated Hummingbird*									

	DATE					
KINGFISHERS 						
WOODPECKERS						
Belted Kingfisher*						
Red-headed Woodpecker*						
Red-bellied Woodpecker*						
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker						
Downy Woodpecker*						
Hairy Woodpecker*						
Northern Flicker*						
Pileated Woodpecker*						
FLYCATCHERS						
Eastern Wood-Pewee*						
Acadian Flycatcher*						
Eastern Phoebe*						
Great Crested Flycatcher*						
Eastern Kingbird*						
LARKS SWALLOWS						
Purple Martin*						
Barn Swallow*						
Cliff Swallow						
Bank Swallow						
Tree Swallow						
N. Rough-Winged Swallow*						
JAYS CROWS						
Blue Jay*						
American Crow*						
Fish Crow*						
TITMICE NUTHATCHES						
Carolina Chickadee*						
Tufted Titmouse*						
Red-breasted Nuthatch						
White-breasted Nuthatch*						
Brown-headed Nuthatch*						

	DATE						
CREEPERS WRENS KINGLETS							
		Brown Creeper					
		Carolina Wren*					
		House Wren*					
		Winter Wren					
		Golden-crowned Kinglet					
		Ruby-crowned Kinglet					
		Blue-gray Gnatcatcher*					
THRUSHERS THRASHERS							
		Eastern Bluebird*					
		Veery					
		Swainson's Thrush					
		Hermit Thrush					
		Wood Thrush*					
		American Robin*					
		Gray Catbird*					
		Northern Mockingbird*					
		Brown Thrasher*					
WAGTAILS STARLINGS							
		Cedar Waxwing					
		European Starling					
VULTURES HAWKS EAGLES							
		Black Vulture*					
		Turkey Vulture*					
		Osprey					
		Mississippi Kite*					
		Bald Eagle					
		Northern Harrier					
		Sharp-shinned Hawk					
		Cooper's Hawk					
		Red-tailed Hawk*					
		Red-shouldered Hawk*					
		Broad-winged Hawk					
		American Kestrel					
		Merlin					

	DATE						
VIREOS							
White-eyed Vireo*							
Blue-headed Vireo							
Yellow-Throated Vireo*							
Red-eyed Vireo*							
WARBLERS							
Blue-winged Warbler							
Tennessee Warbler							
Orange-crowned Warbler							
Northern Parula*							
Yellow Warbler							
Chestnut-sided Warbler							
Magnolia Warbler							
Cape May Warbler							
Black-throated Blue Warbler							
Yellow-rumped Warbler							
Black-throated Green Warbler							
Blackburnian Warbler							
Yellow-throated Warbler*							
Pine Warbler*							
Prairie Warbler*							
Palm Warbler							
Bay-breasted Warbler							
Blackpoll Warbler							
Cerulean Warbler*							
Black-and-white Warbler*							
American Redstart*							
Prothonotary Warbler*							
Worm-eating Warbler							
Swainson's Warbler*							
Ovenbird*							
Northern Waterthrush							
Louisiana Waterthrush*							
Kentucky Warbler*							
Common Yellowthroat*							
Hooded Warbler*							

DATE						
Yellow-breasted Chat*						
TANAGERS SPARROWS						
Summer Tanager*						
Scarlet Tanager*						
Northern Cardinal*						
Rose-breasted Grosbeak						
Blue Grosbeak*						
Indigo Bunting*						
Eastern Towhee*						
Chipping Sparrow*						
Field Sparrow*						
Savannah Sparrow						
Fox Sparrow						
Song Sparrow						
Swamp Sparrow						
White-throated Sparrow						
White-crowned Sparrow						
Dark-eyed Junco						
BLACKBIRDS FINCHES						
Bobolink						
Red-winged Blackbird*						
Eastern Meadowlark						
Rusty Blackbird						
Common Grackle*						
Brown-headed Cowbird*						
Orchard Oriole*						
Baltimore Oriole						
Purple Finch						
House Finch*						
Pine Siskin						
American Goldfinch*						
House Sparrow*						