

# Lake Champlain Birding Trail



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### Lake Champlain Basin Program

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www.lcbp.org



### New York State Department of Environmental Conservation\*

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### Vermont State Parks

103 S. Main St., 10 South  
Waterbury, VT 05671-0603  
802 241 3665  
www.vtstateparks.com



### Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department

103 S. Main St., 10 South  
Waterbury, VT 05671-0501  
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## Lake Champlain Birding Trail

PO Box 196, Poultney, VT 05764  
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www.lakechamplainbirding.org

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## OPEN WATERS

**L**akes and ponds provide birds with a place to congregate, a source of food, and a safe haven from predators. Some birds can be found on open water year round. Open water is also a great place to see migrating waterfowl. Lake Champlain is within the Atlantic Flyway and attracts a variety of species. It is a premier spot to watch birds in the spring, fall, and winter.



**Common Loon, Horned Grebe, Red-necked Grebe, Snow Goose, Canada Goose, Mallard, Ring-necked Duck, Scaup, Black Scoter, White-winged Scoter, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Mergansers, Northern Shoveler, Osprey, Bonaparte's Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Greater Black-back Gull, Common Tern.**



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## SHORELINES

**S**horelines are prime habitats for migrating shorebirds to rest and feed. In years of low water many uncommon species can be found in the newly exposed mudflats taking advantage of their richness.



**Great Blue Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron, Bald Eagle, Plovers, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Belted Kingfisher**





## WETLANDS

**T**here are many types of wetlands in the Lake Champlain Basin including, cattail marshes, swamps, and bogs. Wetlands are extremely important environments in the Lake Champlain Basin, as well as nationwide. In addition to providing shelter and cover, wetlands act as natural filters to water systems. Wetlands also make the perfect breeding habitat for many species of birds.



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**Pied-billed Grebe, American Bittern, Green Heron, Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Green-winged Teal, Virginia Rail, Sora, American Coot, American Woodcock, Common Snipe, Alder Flycatcher, Willow Flycatcher, Marsh Wren, Yellow Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Swamp Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird.**



## FIELD & GRASSLAND

**F**ields and grasslands are excellent sources of food for birds of prey. Smaller birds also find food in the form of seeds and green plants. Only a few species nest in grasslands because of the limited protection.



GLISBERT VAN FRANKENHUYZEN/  
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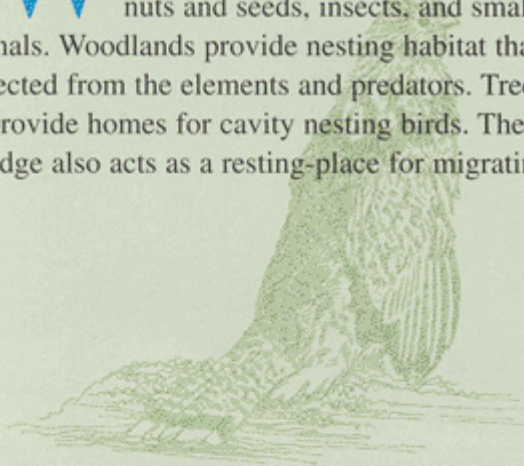
**Northern Harrier, Rough-legged Hawk, American Kestrel, Killdeer, Upland Sandpiper, Great Horned Owl, Tree Swallow, Eastern Kingbird, Horned Lark, Eastern Bluebird, Field Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Snow Bunting, Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark.**





## WOODLANDS

**W**oodlands provide many habitat qualities for nesting birds. Food sources include nuts and seeds, insects, and small mammals. Woodlands provide nesting habitat that is protected from the elements and predators. Trees also provide homes for cavity nesting birds. The forest edge also acts as a resting-place for migrating birds.



**Northern Goshawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Ruffed Grouse, Wild Turkey, Barred Owl, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Hairy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Least Flycatcher, Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Veery, Hermit Thrush, Wood Thrush, Red-eyed Vireo, Black-throated Green Warbler, Black and White Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak.**



## CLIFFS & BLUFFS

**C**liffs are a perfect place for birds of prey like the Peregrine Falcon to nest. The cliffs provide protection from predators and a place to watch for prey. Cliffs and bluffs are a great place to view migrating hawks.



**Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Eastern Phoebe, Cliff Swallow, Common Raven.**



# BIRD WATCHING TIPS

## Sharing Their Perch

Not all birds perch – some will be found on the water, some along shores, in wetlands and in open fields. Still others will be in flight. You'll find that early morning is the best time for



viewing some species, while dusk will be better for others. The more frequently and the longer you watch, the more you will see. Bird watching may take you onto private and public lands. Either way, you should proceed as a guest. Be mindful and practice common courtesy toward all creatures. If you are bringing children with you, let your behavior be a

good example. This is a wonderful opportunity for children to practice respect for wildlife.

**Respect all private property, wildlife, vegetation and other birdwatchers. In any situation involving birds and birders, the welfare of birds comes first.**

## Responsible Birding

*Respect wildlife homes, families and their natural habitat.* As a guest, you have certain responsibilities. This is a good time to teach children to never approach wildlife of any kind, never to pet or feed



them, never disturb their nests and never take wildlife home.

*Blend in with your surroundings.* Wearing natural color clothing will enable you to observe wildlife going about their normal activities. Most birds are blessed with keen sight, and exquisite hearing. Fright means flight. Tread lightly and move slowly. You'll be less likely to scare the creatures you want to observe. If there are other birders, respect their right to a quiet time of bird watching.

*Birding in Groups.* If you are bird watching with a group, special consideration is required. Group size and activity should not negatively impact the environment or interfere with others. Special permits/permission may be required for groups, so be sure to check with the appropriate site managers or landowners before your visit.

**Take advantage of natural or artificial cover to get a better view.**

## Before Your Visit

*Obtain permission before visiting private land, even if it's not posted.*

*Secure appropriate permits when visiting parks or other public areas.*

*Learn about the species that you might see at sites you are planning to visit. Consult field guides and learn to "think" like a bird. Consider factors that affect bird behavior: time of day,*



PETER AND SANDRA STETTENHEIM/  
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season, weather, food, cover, mating, migration, etc.

*Leave pets at home*, and you will be more likely to see birds. Pets may disturb wildlife or other birders.

*Pack* cameras, binoculars, and field guides within easy reach.

## During Your Visit

*Stay* on established paths, trails and roads. Going off pathways may damage plants or disturb birds.

*Follow* all rules and regulations pertaining to the site you are visiting.

*Leave* nests and nest areas alone. Your presence could lead predators to nests or cause parents to abandon them.

*Share* your lunch only with other humans. Wildlife digestive systems are different from ours, and your food may be harmful to them or make them dependent on human handouts.

*Limit* use of recordings, calls or whistles to attract birds or wildlife.

**Do not leave anything behind after your visit, including food.**



MARY TREMINE/CORNELL LAB OF ORNITHOLOGY



J.R. WOODWARD/  
CORNELL LAB OF ORNITHOLOGY

## Getting the Most Out of Your Visit

Since you are going to keep a distance from your subjects, you may need **binoculars**, or even a **spotting scope**. If you're just starting out as a birder, the advice of a professional will help you get the right equipment.

**Light binoculars of 7 or 8 power are recommended.** A close focus feature may also be desired. *Practice at home so you're comfortable with them.*

Find the subject with your unaided eyes. Bring the eyepieces just under your eyes. Sight the subject over the tops of the eyepieces. Slowly bring the binoculars to your eyes.

Like a memory, a picture is worth a thousand words. You may need a **telephoto lens since your subjects will be at a distance.** Early morning and afternoon light is best, try to keep the sun behind you. A photograph of your subject in its natural surroundings, behaving naturally, will make the best photo of all.

## Where the Birds Are

Look for these distinctive birding trail signs along Vermont and New York highways to help guide you to the best viewing sites. Remember, wildlife can't read signs. Watch for animals while you are traveling from site to site.



**BIRDING SITE**  
Please follow all rules and regulations of this site

