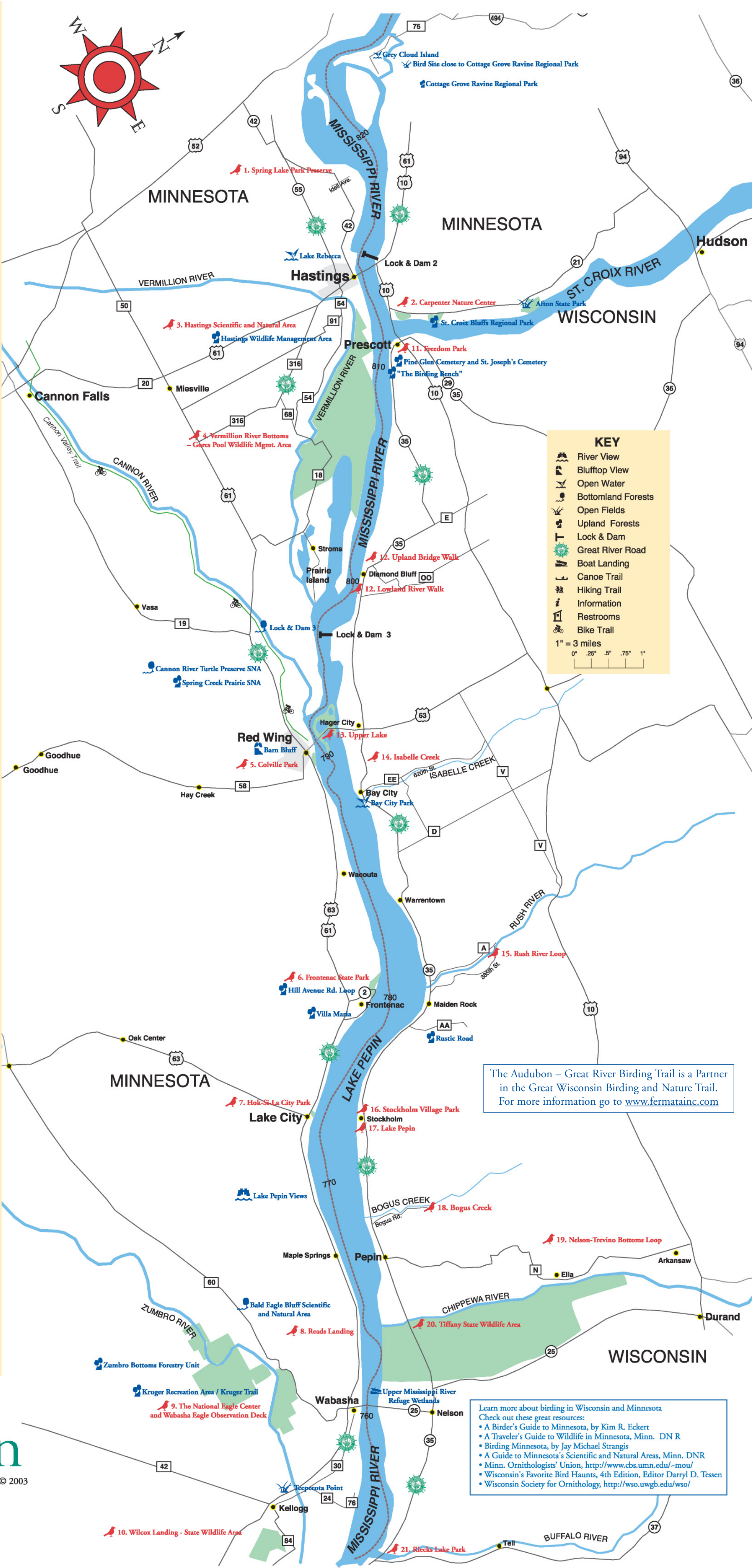


# Great River Birding Trail

Red Wing, Minn., Map — from Cottage Grove, Minn., to Kellogg, Minn. (River Mile 823 to 755)



## 1. Spring Lake Park Preserve

**Where:** Take Hwy. 42 west from Hastings and turn north on Idell Ave. to enter the park.  
**Birds:** Trails along the steep cliffs of Schaar's Bluff offer great views of the river and soaring hawks, Turkey Vultures and Bald Eagles. Watch for nesting passerines in the forest understory.  
**Notes:** Beautiful views of spring flowers and rich deciduous woods. Great for spring ephemerals and warblers. Spring Lake Preserve Archery Range is also a great place for owls and woodland birds.

## 2. Carpenter Nature Center / St. Croix & Mississippi Confluence

**Where:** Located just north of the St. Croix & Mississippi confluence. From St. Paul take Hwy. 61 southeast to Hwy. 10. Go 2 miles on Hwy. 10 and turn left onto Cty. Rd. 21. Entrance is 1.5 miles on the right.  
**Birds:** There are a variety of habitats, ranging from heavily wooded ravines to prairie and oak savanna. Great area to spot migrating raptors, waterfowl, warblers, vireos, sparrows and thrushes. Watch for prairie species and harriers. Look and listen for owls. Bird banding is a weekly activity at the center.  
**Notes:** The Carpenter Nature Center is a nature preserve and environmental education facility. There are trails and public programs available. Wheelchair-accessible trails.

## 3. Hastings Scientific and Natural Area

**Where:** South on Hwy. 61 from Hastings, turn left onto 10th St. This will become Hwy. 54 as you head out of town. Turn right onto Cty. Rd. 91. A small parking lot is located 1 mile up the road. Watch for the Hastings Scientific and Natural Area sign.  
**Birds:** Warblers, hawks, owls, woodpeckers, herons and Bald Eagles.  
**Notes:** There are no trails leading into this area, but it is public land. So get out and explore! On the right side of the road is remnant maple and basswood forest. On the left side of the road is floodplain forest. Excellent spots for undisturbed bird watching and for spring ephemeral flowers, amphibians and reptiles.

## 4. Vermillion River Bottoms - Gores Pool Wildlife Mgmt. Area

**Where:** From Red Wing, drive north on Hwy. 61, turn right onto Hwy. 18. Follow Hwy. 18 to Hwy. 54. From Hastings, turn left on 10th St. This will become Hwy. 54.  
**Birds:** Wintering eagles, warblers in migration, herons, woodpeckers and owls. For excellent viewing of eagles in winter, follow the road to Lock & Dam 3.  
**Notes:** This is a very scenic side trip away from the Great River Road that offers access to the Hastings Scientific and Natural Area on the north end of Hwy. 54, before rejoining Hwy. 61.

## 5. Colville Park

**Where:** Located just south of Red Wing on Hwy. 61. Watch on Hwy. 61 for sign for this park.  
**Birds:** Excellent viewing of large congregations of Bald Eagles during winter. In spring and fall look for Mallards, Common Mergansers, Common Goldeneyes, Great Blue Heron, gulls and woodpeckers.

## 6. Frontenac State Park

**Where:** From Hwy. 61 south of Red Wing, turn east onto Cty. Rd. 2. You can continue on this road after visiting the park to return to Hwy. 61 below the park entrance.  
**Birds:** Migrating raptors, Turkey Vultures and Tundra Swans. Excellent for migrating warblers, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Hermit Thrushes, Scarlet Tanagers and Blue-gray Gnatcatchers. Watch and listen for owls and Wild Turkeys.  
**Notes:** Frontenac State Park has complete bird lists for the park. There are also several hiking trails. Be sure to purchase a day pass or a seasonal Minnesota State Park pass.

## 7. Hok-Si-La City Park

**Where:** The park is just north of Lake City on the east side of Hwy. 61, on the shore of Lake Pepin.  
**Birds:** One of the very best spots to watch for migrating warblers. Watch for Cape May, Magnolia, Bay-breasted, Chestnut-sided and Nashville warblers.

## 8. Reads Landing

**Where:** North of Wabasha, turn right off of Hwy. 61.  
**Birds:** Excellent viewing of Bald Eagles in winter. Wintering Rough-legged Hawks may also be present. Watch for other hawks, owls, Common Mergansers and Goldeneyes.

## 9. The National Eagle Center and Wabasha Eagle Observation Deck

**Where:** From Hwy. 61, turn onto Hwy. 60. Follow Hwy. 60 straight into the heart of Wabasha (Pembroke Ave.). The Eagle Observation deck is at the terminus of Pembroke Ave. The National Eagle Center is located at 152 Main St.  
**Birds:** Up-close viewing of non-releasable eagles at the National Eagle Center. The observation deck provides excellent viewing of Bald Eagles from November to March.  
**Notes:** Volunteers staff the observation deck weekends November to March from 1-3 p.m., providing visitors with eagle education, spotting scopes and binoculars.

## 10. Wilcox Landing - State Wildlife Area

**Where:** Located between Kellogg and Wabasha, turn off of Hwy. 61 above Kellogg to Cty. Rd. 30. Go north past Cty. Rd. 24 intersection. Turn right at the 2nd Cty. Rd. intersection. Sign for wildlife area is on the left. If coming from Wabasha on Cty. Rd. 30, turn left at the first Cty. Rd. 24 intersection and proceed as above.  
**Birds:** Almost all duck species, Tundra Swans, many shorebirds, Woodcocks, Bald Eagles, Prothonotary Warblers, Lark Sparrows, Grasshopper Sparrows and Red-shouldered Hawks.  
**Notes:** Particularly good sightings during spring flooding. Drive carefully in May and June to avoid the rare Blanding's Turtles crossing Hwy. 84.

## 11. Freedom Park

**Where:** Located along Hwy. 35 at the south end of Prescott. Watch for park sign on the west side of the road.  
**Birds:** Exceptional viewing area high above the river. This is an excellent place to watch fall migrations of hawks and migratory waterfowl.  
**Notes:** Freedom Park has a good view of the confluence of the St. Croix and the Mississippi. Future plans for the park include a year-round environmental education center.

## 12. Upland Bridge Walk & Lowland River Walk

**Where:** Start at the junction of Hwy. 35 and CTH 00, then go north on 35 for .75 mile up the hill to where a road intersects from the left. Take this left turn and proceed .5 mile to the bridge over a dry run. Park here and look for birds. For the lowland walk, drive back to Hwy. 35 and turn right. Proceed .25 mile to a paved road on the right, then over the tracks to a "T" intersection. Watch for birds all along this road. Avoid trespass where fences or gates are found.  
**Birds:** The upland walk is excellent for migrant songbirds and warblers, especially the Northern Waterthrush. Watch for gnatcatchers, thrushes, vireos, orioles, and tanagers. The lowland river walk is a great spot for year round birding, boasting almost all northern nesting songbirds in spring. Along the wooded sloughs, watch for Pileated Woodpeckers, Wood Ducks, Hooded Mergansers, Red-shouldered Hawks, American Bittern, Green Heron, Great Horned and Barred Owls. Great for Bald Eagles in winter.  
**Notes:** Keep an eye on the bluffs above Diamond Bluff for migrating raptors riding warm air thermals.

## 13. Upper Lake

**Where:** Go south out of Hager City on Hwy. 63 for 2 miles. The lake is to the east, before the bridge to Red Wing. Park along the highway to scan the lake. Be careful of traffic.  
**Birds:** In spring watch for Canvasbacks, Tundra Swans, Common Mergansers, Ruddy Ducks, Black-crowned Night-herons and Green Herons. Excellent for gulls, Caspian, Forster's, and Common Terns. In fall watch for huge numbers of Great Blue Herons and Great Egrets. Excellent variety of shorebirds on the mudflats, such as Willets, stilts, plovers, dowitchers and sandpipers.  
**Notes:** This is one of the best places in Pierce County to observe migrant water birds in spring and fall. It is one of the first lakes to thaw out in the spring.

## 14. Isabelle Creek

**Where:** From Hwy. 35 in Bay City, follow Cty. Rd. EE north for 2 miles. When EE turns east, follow Creek Rd. north as it parallels Isabelle Creek north for 4 miles to Cty. Rd. V. If you would like to return to Hwy. 35 via a loop, follow V west to Hwy. 63 south (north of Bay City) or follow V east to follow Cty. Rd. D south (south of Bay City).  
**Birds:** This is an excellent area to watch for warblers, vireos, thrushes, and raptors during spring and fall migrations. During nesting season, watch for Willow Flycatchers, Wood Thrushes, Yellow-throated Vireos, Baltimore Orioles and Golden-winged, Blue-winged and Cerulean Warblers.

## 15. Rush River Loop

**Where:** Just north of Maiden Rock, turn onto Cty. Rd. A (designated Scenic Rd.). Follow A and turn right at 385th St. (bridge over Rush R.). This will return straight to Hwy. 35 above Maiden Rock. You can extend this loop by driving up to Hwy. 10, or even further to Martell.  
**Birds:** This is one of the best places for birdwatching in Pierce County. Check the Rush River and wetlands area for American Woodcocks, Wood Ducks and warblers such as the Common Yellowthroat. In woodland areas, watch and listen for Wood Thrushes, Ovenbirds, Scarlet Tanagers, Prothonotary and Blue-winged Warblers, Yellow-billed and Black-billed Cuckoos. Scan the area below the wetlands under the Hwy 35 bridge for waterfowl, and also keep an eye out for Pileated Woodpeckers, Red-shouldered, Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks and owls.

## 16. Stockholm Village Park

**Where:** Located off of Hwy 35 in Stockholm. The road to the park is well-marked.  
**Birds:** During spring and fall migration, this is a great place to watch for shorebirds, ducks, terns, gulls and grebes. In fall there are large rafts of Lesser Scaups, Canvasbacks, and Common and Red-breasted Mergansers. Keep an eye on the bluffs for migrating raptors, such as Rough-legged Hawks, Bald Eagles, Sharp-shinned Hawks, Peregrines and Merlins.

## 17. Lake Pepin

**Where:** Travel Hwy 35 from Pepin to Maiden Rock. The highway is squeezed in a narrow corridor between the bluffs and the Mississippi.  
**Birds:** This drive offers spectacular views of Lake Pepin. In winter, watch for incredible numbers of Bald Eagles along the bluffs. In November, watch for Common Mergansers by the tens of thousands on Lake Pepin. Spring, summer and fall offer chances to see Canvasbacks, Common Goldeneyes, Red-tailed Hawks, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Bluffs.  
**Notes:** The beach next to the Pepin marina offers a good view of the lake. There is also an observation deck and parking area at the north end of Pepin. Watch for other turn-offs and viewing areas while travelling north to Maiden Rock. Just prior to Maiden Rock, watch for Cty. Rd. AA and a sign for the Rustic Rd. This is a fantastic backroad for birding.

## 18. Bogus Creek

**Where:** In Pepin, drive northwest on Hwy. 35 for 3 miles. Turn north onto Bogus Road and follow it along Bogus Creek for 3 miles.  
**Birds:** Check the forests and creek area for Wood Thrushes, Louisiana Waterthrushes, Tufted Titmouse, Acadian Flycatchers, warblers, woodpeckers, gnatcatchers and hawks.

## 19. Nelson-Trevino Bottoms Loop

**Where:** This loop takes you up the Chippewa R. 20 miles to Durand and back to the Mississippi at Pepin. North of Nelson on Hwy. 35, turn north on Hwy. 25 to Durand. In downtown Durand, take Hwy. 10 west to Cty. Rd. N. Go south on N through Arkansaw and Ella. This will bring you back to Hwy. 35 at Pepin.  
**Birds:** Bald Eagles, Wild Turkeys, Black-billed and Yellow-billed Cuckoos, Eastern Wood Pewees, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Cedar Waxwings, Yellow-throated Vireos, Eastern Bluebirds, Blue-winged Warblers, Ovenbirds, Kentucky Warblers and Red-shouldered Hawks.

## 20. Tiffany State Wildlife Area/Chippewa River

**Where:** Located off of Hwy. 35. Parking areas and trails located just east of the Chippewa R. bridge. Watch for the abandoned railroad bed trail off of Hwy. 35 that runs from the Mississippi north to Durand. This provides excellent birding through the woodland river bottoms.  
**Birds:** Watch for woodland raptors such as owls and Cooper's Hawk. This is a great place to watch for migrating warblers, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and other woodland songbirds, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Pileated and Red-bellied Woodpeckers. Listen for Wild Turkeys in the spring.

## 21. Riecks Lake Park

**Where:** Two miles north of Alma on Hwy. 35.  
**Birds:** This is the best spot on the Mississippi to get up-close views of Tundra Swans in the fall. Spring and fall are the best viewing times for American Black Ducks, Northern Pintails, Green-winged Teals, Blue-winged Teals, Great Blue Herons, Sandhill Cranes, Wood Ducks, Northern Harriers, Pileated Woodpeckers and Red-bellied Woodpeckers.  
**Notes:** This area is an estuary of the Buffalo R. In late fall and early winter, "Swan Watch" volunteers provide interpretation during weekends on the viewing decks. Just south of Rieck's Lake, take a drive up Hwy. 37 along the Buffalo River and explore side roads along the way. This has been a reliable area to see wintering Golden Eagles.