



IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION - Birding Sites in Dubuque County

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Bee Branch Pond (16th St Ret B) (eBird Hotspot)

GPS Coordinates: 42.5098819,-90.6569288

Ownership: City

Description: Good spot for rarities during spring and fall waterfowl and shorebird migration. Gulls in late winter when ice is melting.

Habitat: Drainage basin; open water with shoreline mudflats (depending on conditions)

Directions: Kerper Blvd. exit, Hwy 151. Turn west onto 16th St and park in the Kwik Stop lot.

Amenities: Parking |

Deere Dike (eBird Hotspot)

GPS Coordinates: 42.5749533,-90.6840151

Ownership: Federal - USFWS

Description: Official name is now the Little Maquoketa River Delta, but the site has long been known as Deere Dike. Trails affording good views of marshy wetlands and open river. Over 200 species have been recorded here. Target species include waterfowl and shorebirds during spring and fall migration and wetland passerines during the breeding season.

Habitat: Mostly wetlands and good access to views of the Mississippi River. Some riparian woodlands.

Directions: Take Central Ave (SR 3) north through Dubuque. Turn right on E. 32nd Street, which becomes Peru Road. Follow Peru Road for 2.2 miles until it junctions with Riverside Road. Take Riverside Road around the John Deere plant and start birding. Once you cross the railroad tracks, there is a gravel parking lot 0.3 miles on the right. From here, gravel paths take you around the impoundment or to a vantage point where you can scan the river.

Public Hunting Area

Amenities: Parking | Trails |

Dubuque Arboretum (eBird Hotspot)

GPS Coordinates: 42.5325446,-90.7180241

Ownership: None listed

Description:

Habitat:

Directions:

Amenities:

Eagle Point Park (eBird Hotspot)

GPS Coordinates: 42.5365125,-90.6468201

Ownership: None listed

Description:

Habitat:

Directions:

Amenities:

FDR Park (eBird Hotspot)

GPS Coordinates: 42.4685997,-90.728989

Ownership: City

Description: Tucked out of the way and little-known, even to Dubuque residents, is a birding gem known as FDR park. Much of this park has been converted to a mountain biking trail system which gets moderate use on weekends. On weekdays, the park is deserted and provides a peaceful birding destination. The best times to bird this park are during spring and fall passerine migration. It is one of the more reliable spots for Whip-poor-will and Fox Sparrow during migration.

Habitat: Deciduous forest with adjacent agricultural lands.

Directions: The site lies southwest of the city of Dubuque. From US Hwy 20 at Center Grove, take Cedar Cross Road south for 1.4 miles, then turn right (west) on North Cascade Rd. Follow North Cascade Rd. for another 1.4 miles until you see the Storybook Zoo on the right. Do not enter the parking lot of the Storybook Zoo; rather, follow the gravel road counterclockwise around the perimeter of the property until you come to a small parking area and gate. Park here and follow the road beyond the gate to access the many trails in this park.

Public Hunting Area

Amenities: Parking | Trails |

Heritage trail (eBird Hotspot)

GPS Coordinates: 42.5538951,-90.7101384

Ownership: None listed

Description:

Habitat:

Directions:

Amenities:

Linwood Cemetery (eBird Hotspot)

GPS Coordinates: 42.5244167,-90.6646589

Ownership: Private (see directions for access)

Description: This is the go-to spot in winter to look for irruptive finches, such as Pine Siskin, crossbills, and redpolls, because of the large stand of tamarack (larch) trees that attract them. Great Horned Owl is sometimes flushed from the large spruce trees along the north edge of the cemetery, and Golden-crowned Kinglets sometimes overwinter. At times other than winter, it usually is not worth a visit.

Habitat: Cemetery with tall conifers.

Directions: Take E. 22nd St. and turn left on Windsor Avenue; after a half mile, the cemetery is on the right. This is a private cemetery, so park along Windsor Ave. and walk in.

Amenities:

Lower Swiss Valley Park (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)

GPS Coordinates: 42.4144648,-90.7694673

Ownership: None listed

Description:

Habitat:

Directions:

Amenities:

Mines of Spain SRA (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)

GPS Coordinates: 42.466433,-90.6478629

Ownership: State

Description: If you have several hours and want to experience a diversity of habitats and birds dependent on those habitats, head directly for Mines of Spain SRA. In just a few square kilometers of area, Mines of Spain will lead you from oak-hickory forest, to oak savanna, to tallgrass prairie, to wetland and riparian habitats. Well-maintained trails traverse the park, and are accessible throughout the year. Specialty breeding species here include Broad-winged Hawk, Barred Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Acadian Flycatcher, and Cerulean Warbler. The park is spectacular during spring and autumn songbird migration; summer and winter are less productive, although it is still possible to see 30-40 species during these times. The interpretive center maintains stocked bird feeders year-round and is a good place to start a birding trip to pick up the more common resident and wintering species. A Broad-winged Hawk pair usually nests along the Catfish Creek trail. Cerulean Warbler and Acadian Flycatcher usually are easy to pick up along the Cattese Hollow trail and the bottom of the Sauk Fox trail near the wetland, where Red-headed Woodpecker usually is found. The Cedar Ridge trail winds around extensive prairie habitat and harbors grassland-dependent species such as Sedge Wren, Henslow's Sparrow, and both meadowlarks. Bell's Vireo may be heard singing near the parking area at the trailhead.

Habitat: Deciduous forest, savanna & prairie.

Directions: Directions to the interpretive center, where you can pick up a map of the park: From city center, take US Hwy 52/60/151 south to Key West. Turn left on US 52 south (toward Bellevue), then immediately take the next left on to Bellevue Heights Rd. Follow this road appx. 0.5 miles to the parking lot of the interpretive center (on the left).

Public Hunting Area

Amenities: Restrooms | Drinking Water | Parking | Trails |

Mississippi River Lock & Dam 11 (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)

GPS Coordinates: 42.5385363,-90.6456184

Ownership: None listed

Description: Good viewing spot for river birds; observation platform at the lock site. Bald Eagles in winter; gulls and waterfowl during spring and fall migration. From 2013-2015 a Peregrine Falcon pair has nested in a crevice in the cliff of the rock quarry located nearby.

Habitat: Riverine

Directions: From Hwy 151, take the Kerper Blvd. exit and follow Kerper Blvd. north to its end and turn right either on Hawthorne St. or Lincoln Ave, which will connect you with Volunteer Dr. This road runs north and south along the river and provides opportunities to park along the way to scan the river.

Amenities: Restrooms | Drinking Water | Parking |

Mud Lake (eBird Hotspot)

GPS Coordinates: 42.6180671,-90.7015903

Ownership: None listed

Description: A county park/campground with river access. Species found here are similar to those that can be found at Deere Dike, but this is the only reliable spot for Tundra Swan in November and early December. River and wetland views not as extensive as Deere Dike and species list much smaller.

Habitat: Riverine and marshy wetland.

Directions: Take Central Avenue north out of Dubuque, where it becomes Highway 52/3. Bear right onto C9Y at the village of Sageville and turn right onto Mud Lake Road just after you pass Sageville Elementary School on the right. Follow Mud Lake Road to its end (about 3.6 miles) and the entrance to the park.

Amenities: Restrooms | Drinking Water | Parking | Camping |

Swiss Valley Nature Preserve (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)

GPS Coordinates: 42.4232434,-90.7585147

Ownership: County

Description: A county park/preserve with several miles of trails that take you through forest, stream bottom and prairie habitats. Best noted for passerines during spring and fall migration.

Habitat: Deciduous forest, with prairie and stream habitats between the two forested ridges.

Directions: From city center, take US Route 20 (Dodge Street) west out of town. From the junction with the Northwest Arterial (Highway 32), follow Route 20 west for 4.3 miles and turn left onto Swiss Valley Road. Follow Swiss Valley Road for 2.3 miles and then make a sharp right turn into the entrance to the park. There is an interpretive center here with trail maps and exhibits. Numerous trails lead you through upland forest and prairie habitats.

Amenities: Restrooms | Drinking Water | Parking | Trails |

White Pine Hollow SP (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)

GPS Coordinates: 42.6311803,-91.1216354

Ownership: None listed

Description: Target species here include Ruffed Grouse, Acadian Flycatcher, Louisiana Waterthrush (at least one nesting pair each year), Kentucky Warbler, Blue Grosbeak. Not well covered by area birders due to remote location.

Habitat: Mixed deciduous and coniferous forest, but the pines are being shaded/crowded out. Warning: rugged terrain! Trail system not well maintained.

Directions: Take Highway 52/3 north out of Dubuque and proceed about 26 miles to the village of Luxemburg. At Luxemburg, turn right (north) onto Highway 52, proceed 1.5 miles and turn left onto Lake Road. Follow Lake Road for 1.2 miles to a small parking area on the left. Park here and hike the path through the preserve. Alternate access: At Luxemburg, continue west on Highway 3 for 2 miles and turn right onto White Pine Lane. Follow this road to its end and a small parking area. Trail access is limited here.

Public Hunting Area

Amenities: Parking | Trails |