Ashworth Park (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)
GPS Coordinates: 41.5754971,-93.6830641
Ownership: City
Description:
Habitat:
Directions:
Amenities:

Big Creek SP (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)
GPS Coordinates: 41.816873,-93.7511444
Ownership: State
Description: A state park probably best known for fishing and sailing, Big Creek was created during the building of Saylorville Reservoir and the building of the Big Creek dam and spillway.
Habitat: Mostly edge habitat surrounds the park but it can be attractive to a number of passerine species. Most birders go to Big Creek for waterfowl and gulls.
Directions: At the northern end of the Sayloville Lake area in Polk Co. Take Hwy. 415 a little over 1.5 miles north out of Polk City to the park entrance.
Amenities: Restrooms | Drinking Water | Parking | Trails |

Brown's Woods (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)
GPS Coordinates: 41.5462314,-93.7084007
Has Site Guide
Ownership: County
Description: This county preserve is upland timber along the south banks of the Raccoon River. Amenities are few and trails may be steep but the birding is great.
Habitat: Upland timber that often hosts many otherwise difficult to find birds such as Summer Tanager and Pileated Woodpecker.
Directions: From I-235 inn West Des Moines: Take the 63rd St exit, and head south for about 3 miles to Brown's Woods Dr. Take a right at the stoplight and follow the signs.
Amenities: Parking | Trails |

Capitol Complex
GPS Coordinates: 41.5903341597234,-93.6032296616211
Ownership: State
Description: The Iowa State Capitol Complex has hosted breeding Western Kingbirds for a number of years.
Habitat: Urban setting with some large trees. The kingbirds are partial to sycamores.
Directions: The capitol complex is east of downtown Des Moines and very visible from a number of
vantages. Post-breeding birds may be found wandering anywhere around the complex but nesting seems to be primarily on the south side of the capitol building along Walnut St. Park in any public parking lot in the area and just wander around.

**Amenities:** Restrooms | Drinking Water | Parking | ADA Accessible Trails

**Carney Marsh (eBird Hotspot)**
**GPS Coordinates:** 41.6892582,-93.5919285
**Ownership:** None listed
**Description:**
**Habitat:**
**Directions:**
**Amenities:**

**Chichaqua "Duck ponds"**
**GPS Coordinates:** 41.7901128466648,-93.4201169013977
**Ownership:** None listed
**Description:**
**Habitat:**
**Directions:** The duck ponds are off the south side of NE 126th Avenue to the east of the ranger's house and associated buildings. How to get there. From NE 134th Ave (aka F22 on the DeLorme Gazetteer), head south on NE 80th Street. At the end of this road, you'll automatically be heading east onto NE 126th Ave, which is smoothly paved. After about three-fourths of a mile, look for some buildings (including the ranger's house) on the north side of the road. Just before these buildings, there is a large, rectangular parking lot. Park here. (You could alternatively park in a small area that is ENE of the ranger's house, but the big lot is probably the best bet on weekends - and it's close to where you'll need to walk anyway.) Now, walk out and follow 126th Ave again to the east. After a short distance, about where a separate road heads to the north, notice that 126th is gated. Walk past this gate and continue east along the gravel two-track path. After a leisurely ~10-minute walk, you'll see the unlabeled "duck ponds" off the south side of the path. These ponds are obviously much deeper than the wetlands you may have noticed during the first part of the walk. At my last check, there was an elevated outlet pipe distributing water into the ponds.
**Amenities:**

**Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)**
**GPS Coordinates:** 41.7738722,-93.4140015
**Ownership:** None listed
**Description:**
**Habitat:**
**Directions:** in northeast Polk Co. Take the Elkhart/F-22 exit off I-35 and drive 5.5 miles east through Elkhart to a T-intersection with NE 72nd St. Turn left (north) on 72nd and follow for one mile as it curves
northeast and east. Look for the entrance signs to the park.

**Amenities:**

**Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt--Chichaqua Bottoms Trail (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)**

**GPS Coordinates:** 41.7944003,-93.4296092

**Ownership:** None listed

**Description:**

**Habitat:**

**Directions:** in northeast Polk Co. Take the Elkhart/F-22 exit off I-35 and drive 5.5 miles east through Elkhart to a T-intersection with NE 72nd St. Turn left (north) on 72nd and follow for one mile as it curves northeast and east. Look for the entrance signs to the park.

**Amenities:**

**Clive Greenbelt Trail (eBird Hotspot)**

**GPS Coordinates:** 41.6115119,-93.7823009

**Ownership:** None listed

**Description:**

**Habitat:**

**Directions:** In the west Des Moines (city) area. West of Des Moines, take the U.S. 6 exit off I-35/80 and go east one mile to 100th St. Go south on 100th about a third of a mile and look for the parking area for the greenbelt bike trail, which goes off in either direction.

**Amenities:**

**Dale Maffitt Reservoir (Polk Co.) (eBird Hotspot)**

**GPS Coordinates:** 41.5144903,-93.7834167

**Has Site Guide**

**Ownership:** Other Public

**Description:**

**Habitat:**

**Directions:** From Des Moines: Take I-35 south to the Highway 5/Des Moines International Airport exit. Once on Highway 5, take the 1st exit you come to, which is the Walnut Woods exit. Take a right on Maffitt Lake Dr. Cross over I-35, and the lake will be on your left.

**Amenities:** Restrooms | Parking | Trails |
Amenities:

Easter Lake County Park (eBird Hotspot)
GPS Coordinates: 41.543019,-93.564015
Has Site Guide
Ownership: County
Description: A Polk County park with wooded edges around a popular fishing lake. Accessible trails wander through varied habitats.
Habitat: Mostly woodlands surrounding a man-made lake. Several viewing areas for waterfowl and trails lead to areas with numerous passerines.
Directions: On the south side of Des Moines. From US 65, turn east onto East Army Post Rd. Go about a mile to Indianola Ave. and turn north. Go about another mile to the stop light and turn east (right). In approximately a mile the entrance to the park will be on your left. Other access points are found by following the road around the lake.
Amenities: Restrooms | Drinking Water | Parking | Trails | ADA Accessible Trails

Errington Marsh WMA (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)
GPS Coordinates: 41.7579276,-93.5088278
Ownership: None listed
Description:
Habitat:
Directions: In northeast Polk Co. Off I-35 at Ankeny, go three miles east on Hwy. 931 to 46th St. Proceed north on 46th one mile to 102nd Ave., then east one half mile to the south end of the marsh area. The area extends north one mile to 110th Ave. and generally along 56th St., the next road east.
Amenities:

Glendale Cemetery (eBird Hotspot)
GPS Coordinates: 41.6053029,-93.6887455
Has Site Guide
Ownership: None listed
Description:
Habitat:
Directions:
Amenities:

Gray's Lake Park (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)
GPS Coordinates: 41.5704405,-93.6396338
Has Site Guide
Ownership: None listed
Description:
Habitat:

**Directions:** From Fleur Avenue, about 2 1/2 miles north of the Des Moines Airport and just southwest of the downtown area. From downtown, follow Grand Ave. west until it angles south and crosses the Raccoon River bridge, becoming Fleur. From I-235, take the Airport/Martin Luther King exit and follow the signs to the airport along a circuitous and confusing route to Fleur. Waterworks Park will be on one side, and Gray's Lake on the other side of Fleur.

**Amenities:**

**Johnston gravel pits**

**GPS Coordinates:** 41.6618764165558,-93.6836800212041  
**Ownership:** None listed  
**Description:**

Habitat:

**Directions:** - just northwest of Des Moines. Take the Johnston exit, no. 131, north off I-35/80. Go north one half mile on Merle Hay Rd. to 55th, and west on 55th more than one half mile to Beaver Dr. Turn north on Beaver and look for a lane going west passing between the gravel pits. Park on the shoulder and walk the lane.

**Amenities:**

**Living History Farms**

**GPS Coordinates:** 41.6164887009938,-93.7712709748303  
**Ownership:** None listed  
**Description:**

Habitat:

**Directions:** In the Des Moines metro area: Take Interstate 35/80 to the Highway 6/Hickman Rd. exit. Go west on Hickman until you get to 111th St. Turn north, and the address is 2600 111th St. in Urbandale.

**Amenities:**

**Moeckley Prairie (private property) (eBird Hotspot)**

**GPS Coordinates:** 41.7791208,-93.666687  
**Ownership:** None listed  
**Description:**

Habitat:

**Directions:** From Polk City: Take NW 118th Ave (also known as northside drive) east out of Polk City. Just past NW 38th St. on the north. side of the road.

**Amenities:**

**Morningstar airport pits (private property) (eBird Hotspot)**

**GPS Coordinates:** 41.6585353146898,-93.6429540955578  
**Ownership:** Private (see directions for access)
Description:
Habitat:
Directions:
Amenities:

Raccoon River Park (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)
GPS Coordinates: 41.5485524,-93.7314275
Has Site Guide
Ownership: None listed
Description:
Habitat:
Directions:
Amenities:

Red Feather Prairie
GPS Coordinates: ,
Ownership: None listed
Description:
Habitat:
Directions: At the south end of Saylorville Lake, east side. From I-80 north of Des Moines, take Hwy. 415 north, west, and north again, seven miles to 80th Ave., on the left. The prairie is at the end of this dead end road, through a housing subdivision.
Amenities:

Runnells W.A. (Important Bird Area)
GPS Coordinates: 41.5046885509973,-93.3622026443481
Ownership: None listed
Description:
Habitat:
Directions: An unofficial, locally-named area in the extreme southeast corner of Polk Co. (within the Red Rock Area). In town of Runnells, Hwy. 316 has a right-angle corner at Brown St. (N-S) and McKinney St. (E-W). Go south on Brown one block to Hancock, at the Post Office. Turn right (west) on Hancock about two blocks, until you can follow a gravel road (SE Vandalia Dr.) curving south over the R.R. tracks. When the gravel road soon turns right (west), continue straight on the dirt road into the public hunting area.
Amenities:

Saylorville Reservoir (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)
GPS Coordinates: 41.7164928,-93.6872864
Ownership: None listed
Description:
Habitat:
Directions:
Amenities:

Saylorville Reservoir--Big Creek spillway (W. Jester Park Dr. access) (eBird Hotspot)
GPS Coordinates: 41.7786088,-93.7381411
Ownership: None listed
Description:
Habitat:
Directions:
Amenities:

Saylorville Reservoir--Cherry Glen Recreation Area (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)
GPS Coordinates: 41.7310987,-93.6875439
Ownership: None listed
Description:
Habitat:
Directions: on the southern east shore of Saylorville Lake in Polk Co. About four miles south of Polk City along Hwy. 415, take NW 94th Ave. west into the Cherry Glen area.
Amenities:

Saylorville Reservoir--Cottonwood Recreation Area (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)
GPS Coordinates: 41.6897389,-93.6757851
Ownership: None listed
Description:
Habitat:
Directions: From the top of the Saylorville Dam heading east. Go east to the intersection with NW Horseshoe Rd., and take a right. Round the curve to the T-intersection of NW Horseshoe Rd. and NW 37th St. Take another right, and follow the signs. The bird was found in the Cottonwood Area east of the river below the dam.
Amenities:

Saylorville Reservoir--dam pullouts (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)
GPS Coordinates: 41.7038702,-93.6826086
Ownership: None listed
Description:
Habitat:
Directions: ABOVE THE DAM - Off I-80/I-35, north of Des Moines, go six miles north on Hwy. 415, including turns west and north again, to NW 84th Ave. Turn west and follow the signs to the dam.
BELOW THE DAM - Take the Johnston exit north off I-35/80, northwest of Des Moines, and continue
through Johnston about a mile to the four-way stop at Merle Hay Rd. and NW Beaver Dr. Turn left (west) on Beaver and continue about one mile to NW 78th Ave., across from Camp Dodge. Turn right on 78th and after about one mile take a right at the T-intersection and follow this to below the dam. TAILWATER PONDS - Turn right on 78th as above and after about one mile take a left at the T-intersection and follow this to the tailwater ponds. (also see Saylorville page on this website)

**Amenities:**

**Saylorville Reservoir--Jester Park (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)**

**GPS Coordinates:** 41.784,-93.772  
**Ownership:** County  
**Description:** Jester Park is a part of the general Saylorville Reservoir area and is managed by Polk County. Varied habitats and a wide variety of bird species are found here in all seasons. A blind is available for those who want to see some feeder birds up close. In the fall the American White Pelican migration brings many visitors to the park.  
**Habitat:** Much of the park is mature woodlands high above the Des Moines River. A few planted pine groves can be interesting, especially in winter. The major draw for Iowa birders, however, is the abundant shallow waters and mudflats which serve as a draw for shorebirds and waders. Several of Iowa's accidental species have been recorded here.  
**Directions:** On the west shore of Saylorville Lake in Polk Co. Just southeast of Granger, take Hwy. 17 about two miles north from Hwy. 141 to NW 122nd Ave. Turn right (east) and follow the signs to the park and campground. Or, past the west end of the Mile Long Bridge over the lake, go west (slightly right) at the first intersection, and after one half mile turn north on 107th St. and follow the signs.  
**Amenities:** Restrooms | Drinking Water | Parking | Trails | Camping |

**Saylorville Reservoir--Lakeview Recreation Area (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)**

**GPS Coordinates:** 41.7079392,-93.6990023  
**Ownership:** None listed  
**Description:**  
**Habitat:**  
**Directions:** At the south end of the western shore of Saylorville Lake in Polk Co. Just north of Johnston, take NW Beaver Dr. left (ultimately north) a little more than two miles from the four-way stop at Merle Hay Rd. to the Lakeview entrance road on the right.  
**Amenities:**

**Saylorville Reservoir--Lincoln Access (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)**

**GPS Coordinates:** 41.7565229,-93.750844  
**Ownership:** None listed  
**Description:**  
**Habitat:**  
**Directions:** At the west end of the Mile Long Bridge across the midsection of Saylorville Lake. The
bridge is entered from W. Bridge St. off Hwy. 415 at the south edge of Polk City.

Amenities:

Saylorville Reservoir--Oak Grove Recreation Area (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)
GPS Coordinates: 41.7373756,-93.694582
Ownership: None listed
Description:
Habitat:
Directions: On the southern east shore of Saylorville Lake in Polk Co. About 3.5 miles north of I-80 along I-35, take the Hwy. 160/Bondurant exit, no. 90. Go west on 160 three miles to Hwy. 415. Follow 415 north about four miles and look for signs to the area.

Amenities:

Saylorville Reservoir--overflow spillway and Bob Shetler Recreation Area (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)
GPS Coordinates: 41.6973016,-93.6832952
Ownership: None listed
Description:
Habitat:
Directions:
Amenities:

Saylorville Reservoir--Polk City Wildlife Area (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)
GPS Coordinates: 41.7575189,-93.6949253
Ownership: None listed
Description:
Habitat:
Directions: Just south of Polk City in Polk County, at about the midway point of the east side of Saylorville Lake. About one mile south of Polk City along Hwy. 415, come to a dam at an inlet near a marina. Just past the east end of the dam (away from Polk City), NW 110th Ave. goes north to Polk City W.A.
Amenities:

Saylorville Reservoir--Red Feather Prairie (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)
GPS Coordinates: 41.7207853,-93.6696911
Ownership: None listed
Description:
Habitat:
Directions:
Amenities:
Saylorville Reservoir--Sandpiper Recreation Area (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)

GPS Coordinates: 41.746982,-93.7059975
Ownership: None listed
Description:
Habitat:
Directions: On the east shore of Saylorville Lake in Polk Co. The area is at the end of McBride Dr., which runs south off a bend in Hwy. 415 about one half mile south of Polk City.
Amenities:

Saylorville Reservoir--Visitor Center (eBird Hotspot)

GPS Coordinates: 41.7071703,-93.6709785
Ownership: None listed
Description:
Habitat:
Directions:
Amenities:

Scott St. Dam

GPS Coordinates: 41.58055997114,-93.6103874444962
Ownership: None listed
Description:
Habitat:
Directions: On the Des Moines River in downtown Des Moines. Follow 1st St. south along the west bank of the river. You soon come to the baseball stadium on your right, and after this a traffic light at the river, which is Scott St. Turn left here, cross the river, and look for the parking area on your right, at the river.
Amenities:

Small wetland near Jester Park

GPS Coordinates: 41.7681094263311,-93.7615245580673
Ownership: None listed
Description:
Habitat:
Directions: This wetland can be viewed from the corner of 103rd Court and 114th Street in NW Polk County generally south of Jester Park. From NW Beaver Drive on the west side of Saylorville Lake, turn north at 107th Street and turn right at 114th Street (this is the street that leads to the Jester Park Stables.)
Amenities:
Terra Park (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)
GPS Coordinates: 41.6617667,-93.7065902
Ownership: None listed
Description:
Habitat:
Directions: In Johnston in western Polk Co. From I-35/80, take Merle Hay Rd. (the Johnston exit) north a little more than 1/2 mile to Pioneer Parkway. Turn west on Pioneer Parkway and proceed about 1/3 mile to the lake on the south side, adjacent to Iowa Public Television. There are drives on both sides of the lake and a trail around it.
Amenities:

Walnut Woods SP (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)
GPS Coordinates: 41.540771,-93.7419176
Has Site Guide
Ownership: None listed
Description:
Habitat:
Directions: in Polk Co. adjacent to West Des Moines. 4.5 miles south of I-235, take exit 68 off I-35 to Hwy. 5. Take Hwy. 5 east one half mile to 105th St. Turn left (north) and follow 105th into the park.
Amenities:

Water Works Park (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)
GPS Coordinates: 41.5647253,-93.6672927
Has Site Guide
Ownership: None listed
Description:
Habitat:
Directions: In West Des Moines in Polk Co. Take the 31st St. exit off of I-235, a little more than two miles west of the Des Moines River. Go south on 31st one mile to Grand Ave., and then east on Grand one mile to 18th St. Turn right (south) on 18th and then quickly right onto Fleur Dr. A little less than one mile south on Fleur is the entrance to the park, to the west. Follow the blacktop entrance road about 1/4 mile until the road begins to turn left, but at this point continue straight ahead to a parking area at the water.
Amenities:

Yellow Banks County Park (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)
GPS Coordinates: 41.5487768,-93.4735572
Ownership: None listed
Description:
Habitat:
Directions:
Amenities: