Ely Ford

**GPS Coordinates:** 40.7182433878507,-91.9876563549042  
**Ownership:** State  
**Description:** Woodland area that provides perfect warbler habitat in the spring and great birding year round.  
**Habitat:** Riparian terrain. Pileated Woodpeckers nest near the entrance to Ely Ford. Cerulean Warblers can often be seen and heard in the trees of the small parking lot located to the south, directly across the entrance from Ely Ford. From this parking area, follow the trail south following the creek from that parking area to observe Kentucky and Worm-eating Warblers. At Ely Ford, Yellow-throated Warblers & Northern Parulas and other warblers are readily seen.  
**Directions:** In Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. in central Van Buren Co. The state park entrance is on the south edge of Keosauqua, just south across the Des Moines River off Hwy. 1. The Ely Ford area is well into the park, reached by taking the second right turn after entering, and then following the signs.  
**Amenities:** Parking | Trails |  

Fox River WMA (eBird Hotspot)

**GPS Coordinates:** 40.6161351,-91.9351387  
**Ownership:** State  
**Description:** Wetlands bordered by small tracts of grassland areas. Riparian terrain to the south along the Fox River.  
**Habitat:** Wetlands bordered by small tracts of grassland areas. Riparian terrain to the south along the Fox River. Migrating waterfowl and shorebirds are readily seen. Nesting Red-Shouldered Hawks and Bald Eagles can be seen. Northern Harriers have also been observed.  
**Directions:** Follow County Road J56 west out of the town of Mt. Sterling, Iowa in Van Buren County for a short ways, look for the Fox River WMA sign and parking area.  
**Amenities:** Parking |  

Lacey-Keosauqua SP (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)

**GPS Coordinates:** 40.7103125,-91.9735909  
**Ownership:** State  
**Description:** Large state park with hardwood forests bordering the Des Moines River.  
**Habitat:** Hardwood forest, riparian terrain. Notable birds: Summer and Scarlet Tanagers, Kentucky, Worm-eating, Yellow-throated, Northern Parula and Cerulean Warblers are generally found.  
**Directions:** Located in central Van Buren Co. The main park entrance is on the south edge of Keosauqua, just south across the Des Moines River off Hwy. 1. The park's "west" entrance is accessed via County Road J40; a few miles west of Pittsburg, IA, look for the brown state park signs, turn south onto Park Road and follow into the park.  
**Amenities:** Restrooms | Drinking Water | Parking | Trails | Camping | Cabins |
Lake Sugema (eBird Hotspot)
**GPS Coordinates:** 40.6883182,-92.0055199
**Ownership:** County
**Description:** Man-made lake that is adjacent to Lacey-Keosauqua State Park in Van Buren County.
**Habitat:** 574-acre man-made lake with a few different habitats bordering the lake, including the hardwood forest of Lacey-Keosauqua State Park and a few grassland areas. Migrating waterfowl, a few shorebirds, American White Pelicans, Trumpeter Swans, and Bald Eagles can regularly be seen here.
**Directions:** From Lacey-Keosauqua State Park in Van Buren County, Iowa continue straight on the road that passes the campground and follow it to the lake. Or from Hwy 2, turn north on Jersey Avenue (which is about 5 miles east of the town of Cantril, IA).
**Amenities:** Parking | Trails | Camping | Cabins |

Mt. Sterling Marsh
**GPS Coordinates:** 40.6146365670036,-91.9474983215332
**Ownership:** Multiple
**Description:** Assorted wetlands viewable from County Road J56 and Maple Avenue west of the town Mt. Sterling. Most areas are designated REAP areas. Wetlands can be viewed from the roads; however most land owners are willing to grant permission to birders if asked. There are a few small parking turnout where you can pull off of the road.
**Habitat:** Wetlands (most are designated REAP areas); some row crops/hay fields, woodlands run along the Fox River. Confirmed nesting species include: Red-shouldered Hawk, Trumpeter Swan, Bald Eagle. Shorebird and waterfowl species abundant during migration.
**Directions:** In Van Buren County, go west out of the town of Mt. Sterling, Iowa on County Road J56 (aka 295th St. or Roberts Saw Mill Road). Large wetland area can be found between County Road W20 and Maple Avenue. Continue to follow County Road J56 west and several other wetlands can usually be seen north of the road.
**Amenities:** Parking |

Shimek State Forest--Farmington Unit (Van Buren Co) (eBird Hotspot)
**GPS Coordinates:** 40.6539783,-91.7285657
**Ownership:** State
**Description:** The Farmington Unit contains Bitternut Lake, White Oak Lake and Black Oak Lake which has a handicapped accessible picnic area, fishing dock, parking area, and restrooms. The unit has 18.9 miles of hiking trails.
**Habitat:** Forest; Pileated Woodpeckers readily seen and heard near Bitternut Lake.
**Directions:** To access northern sections of the Farmington Unit, follow County Road W46 north out of the town of Farmington for 1.8 miles; turn left onto Bitternut Lake Road. You can also access part of the Farmington Unit of Shimek by turning right onto Coal Mine Hollow Drive from County Road W46. A small section of the Farmington Unit can also be accessed while traveling east on Hwy 2 out of Farmington;
turn left at the first road (110th Avenue).

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