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Photos and drawings courtesy of US Fish and Wildlife, North Dakota Game and Fish, and US Geological Survey.

The Carrington and Jamestown Birding Drives were written by Ron Martin of Prairie Fire Tours and Consulting, with assistance from Lawrence Igl, Paulette Scherr, and Dan Svingen. Thank you to Northern Plains Electric Cooperative for assistance in producing this booklet.

From the heart of the Prairie Potholes –
drives to the best birding in the country!

Birding Drives DAKOTA

In North Dakota, from Carrington and Jamestown
to the wild and amazing Coteau region,
COME DRIVE OUR DRIVES!

Featured Highlights:

Largest nesting
white pelican colony
of Chase Lake NWR

Bison herd and
grassland birds of
Arrowwood NWR

Sweeping vistas of
waterfowl-rich Coteau

Ferruginous Hawk
Sprague's Pipit
Chestnut-collared Longspur
Baird's Sparrow and more!

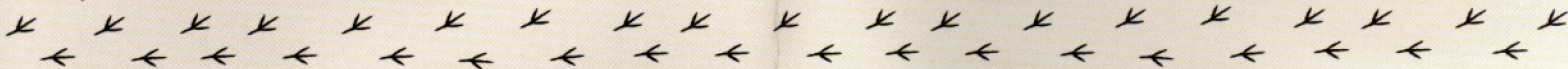
Birding Drives
DAKOTA

210 Tenth Street SE, Jamestown, ND 58401

1-888-921-2473

www.birdingdrives.com info@birdingdrives.com

Photo by Tom Bean



Welcome!

North Dakota is a state with few people and abundant wildlife. It has 63 national wildlife refuges—more than any other state!—and therefore offers unknown and amazing opportunity for wildlife watching.

The Jamestown-Carrington area is in east central North Dakota, 100 miles west of Fargo, which is the east entrance to the state. This area is in the heart of the Prairie Potholes region, and is graced by the presence of the tallest and most rugged part of the Coteau, a geographical formation that holds some of the highest density of wetlands in the nation.

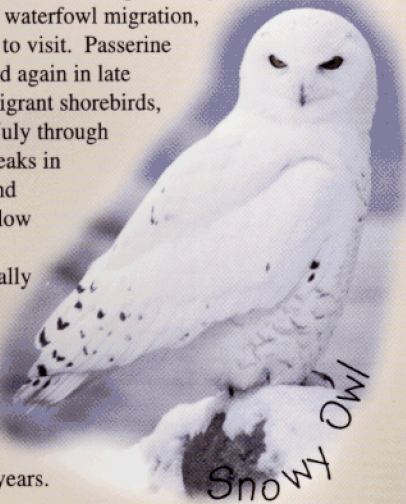
The six birding drives defined in this booklet were designed by a leading ornithologist who knows and loves the land, habitat and birds. They are brought to you from Birding Drives Dakota, a coalition of communities and agencies dedicated to the promotion of birding in North Dakota. These drives will take you to some of the best places for birding in the Missouri Coteau. They will take you to observe one of the world's largest nesting colony of American White Pelicans at Chase Lake National Refuge, dancing Sharp-tailed Grouse at Arrowwood, and grassland birds near Lake Juanita. They will take you off the beaten path to a wild and wonderful place that offers species such as Baird's, LeConte's and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows, and Chestnut-collared Longspurs.

Finally, these birding drives will take you to and from the communities of Carrington and Jamestown—two central North Dakota towns that embrace you and treasure your visit. Enjoy!



When To Visit

Most birders visit southeastern North Dakota from May to July, when diversity and numbers are at their peak. If you want to witness the spectacle of waterfowl migration, April and October are the times to visit. Passerine migration peaks in mid-May, and again in late August to early October. For migrant shorebirds, the best windows are May and July through September. Raptor migration peaks in April and again in September and October. Winter is generally a slow time for birds and birding in North Dakota, but there are usually a few interesting species that might be encountered. Golden Eagles, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Snowy Owls, Bohemian Waxwings, Red Crossbills, and Common Redpolls are present during the winter most years.



Weather and Other Travel Conditions

North Dakota is a land of dynamic weather. Winters can be cold, but July and August can be very warm. Average temperatures vary from 6 degrees F. in January to 68 degrees F. in July. Average annual precipitation in the area is about 19 inches, with 75 percent coming as rain in the growing season. Snowfall averages 44 inches per year, but again, huge variation is common. For maximum enjoyment you will want to start your birding adventures very early in the morning, when winds are light and birds most active.

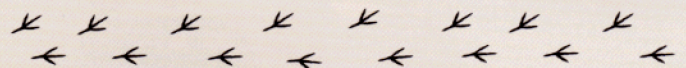
Mosquitoes, deer flies, and horse flies can be persistent companions during summer birding, so be prepared with your favorite deterrents. Good numbers of woodticks can be present from late April to late July. Be careful when driving on prairie trails, minimum-maintenance and gravel roads after rains. They can become very slippery.

If visiting in late fall, winter, or early spring, be prepared for snow, ice, and mud. Carry survival gear, including extra clothes, food, shovel, jumper cables, and a tow rope. Know your vehicle's abilities, and drive accordingly. These birding routes go through some very rural areas, so forethought must be given to fuel and food for your adventures.



About the Missouri Coteau

The Coteau is the most rugged topographical feature of glacial origin in the state, and runs from northwest to southeast through the area. Created by the most recent Wisconsin Age glaciation, the landform of the Coteau is known as dead-ice moraine. The hilly landscape is a result of the ice advancing over the Missouri Escarpment. In the process, the stress from the internal shearing resulted in large amounts of sediment being forced to the surface of the glacier. When the ice eventually melted, the cover of glacial sediment on top of the ice slumped and slid, forming the hilly landscape we see today. The multitude of wetlands on the Coteau are critical for the production of many species of waterfowl in North America.

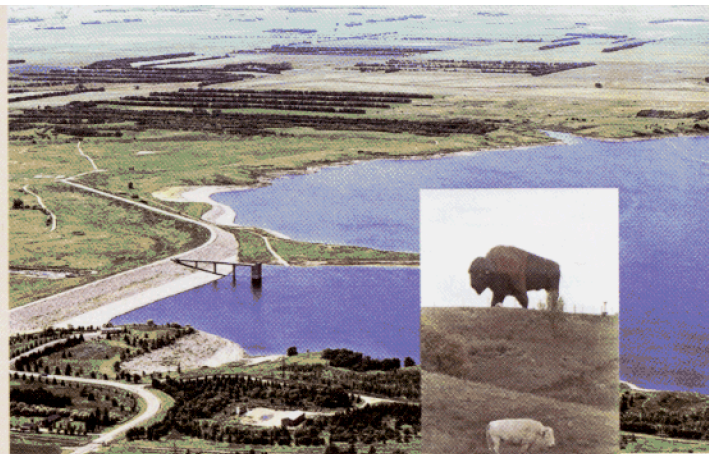


Welcome to Carrington!

This "Central City" is located on the Southern Drift Plain near the edge of the Missouri Coteau in southeastern North Dakota. It is the county seat of Foster County and the business hub of the area. The varied landscapes around Carrington harbor some premier birding attractions. The three birding routes from Carrington detailed in this pamphlet will take you out where the birds are!

Once you have scoped that special species or just escaped to enjoy the fresh air and sunshine of the prairie, you'll want to return to this town of 2,300 to shop, dine and relax. The community is known for its quaint gift shops and friendly people. Located 40 miles north of Jamestown on Highway 281, Carrington offers a brand new 18-hole golf course and beautiful city park. Nearby Lake Juanita offers recreational activities such as fishing, swimming and boating. Nine miles south of Carrington off Highway 281, Pipestem Creek offers interesting tours of its facilities. Pipestem Creek manufactures all-natural bird feeders and decorative wreaths. Its owner, Ann Hoffert, has appeared on *Martha Stewart Living*, *Good Morning America*, and in several national publications.

For more information, contact the Carrington Chamber of Commerce at 701-652-2524, e-mail to cgtcham@daktel.com, or visit the Website at www.carringtonnd.com.



White Buffalo



Hello from Jamestown!

Nestled in the scenic James River Valley in southeastern North Dakota, Jamestown is the county seat of Stutsman County and boasts some premier birding attractions. The three birding routes from Jamestown detailed in this pamphlet will take you through some of these prairie treasures and even through some amazing city "hotspots."

Located at the intersection of I-94 and Highway 281—midway between Bismarck and Fargo—Jamestown is the birthplace of famous western writer Louis L'Amour. The city of 16,000 offers a wide variety of options in accommodations and dining. Located in the valley where the James and Pipestem Rivers meet, the area boasts two impressive reservoirs that offer a variety of recreational opportunities including fishing, boating, swimming, hiking, biking, and, in winter, ice fishing, snowmobiling and cross-country skiing. Jamestown is home to an interesting 1800's western Frontier Village, the World's Largest Buffalo, the National Buffalo Museum, North Dakota Sports Hall of Fame, and the Basilica of Saint James.

For more information, contact the Jamestown Area Chamber of Commerce at 701-252-4830, e-mail info@jamestownchamber.com, or visit the Website at www.jamestownchamber.com.



Putnam House

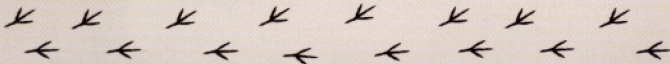
Habitat Associations

The area supports a varied avifauna. Woodlands have birds with typically eastern affinities. The wetlands abound with birds representing a mix of eastern (Wood Duck), western (Yellow-headed Blackbird), southern (Great Egret), and northern (Horned Grebe) affinities.

A basic understanding of the major habitat types that support these species can be of help when planning your birding effort. Following is a brief description of the major habitat types you will encounter, and the common species associated with those habitats. Emphasis is placed on the breeding season, when most visitors bird this area.

Prairie Wetlands

Wetlands in the area come in a variety of sizes, depths, and vegetative structures. Larger, more open areas are frequented by American White Pelicans, Double-crested Cormorants, Western Grebes, and various migrant waterfowl. Smaller, more heavily vegetated marshes are home to American Bitterns, Black-crowned Night-Herons, various dabbling ducks, Soras, Virginia Rails, Marsh Wrens, and Yellow-headed Blackbirds. Along wetland edges and in sedge meadows, watch for Willets, Wilson's Phalaropes, Sedge Wrens, and LeConte's and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows. Prairie marshes are also the place to look for Franklin's, Ring-billed, and California Gulls, along with Forster's and Black Terns. Alkali lakes are the place to search for Piping Plovers and American Avocets.



Mixed Grass Prairie

Significant patches of this ecosystem can be found along river valleys and on the Missouri Coteau. Primary plant species include Prairie Junegrass, Green Needlegrass, Needle-and-Thread, Blue Grama, Little Bluestem, and Western Snowberry. Invading exotic species such as Kentucky Bluegrass and Smooth Brome are also prevalent. A great variety of colorful flowering forbs can be found in this community as well. Characteristic breeding species include Sharp-tailed Grouse, Upland Sandpiper, Marbled Godwit, Sprague's Pipit, Savannah Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Baird's Sparrow, Western Meadowlark, Brown-headed Cowbird, and Chestnut-collared Longspur.

Hayfields and CRP

Scattered hayfields occur in the region and are usually dominated by domestic grasses and forbs such as Smooth Brome, Alfalfa, and Yellow Sweetclover. Additionally, some areas have significant patches of former cropland temporarily enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Under this program, the landowner idles the land and plants a perennial grass cover, usually domestic grasses and forbs. Some typical birds in this habitat include Northern Harrier, Ring-necked Pheasant, Upland Sandpiper, Sedge Wren, Common Yellowthroat, Clay-colored, Savannah, Grasshopper, and LeConte's Sparrow, Dickcissel (irregular), Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird, and Western Meadowlark.



Photo by Tom Bean

Prairie Thickets

Isolated woody thickets are scattered throughout the prairie grasslands and along the edges of river valleys and escarpments. These areas are dominated by small trees and shrubs, including such species as Saskatoon Serviceberry, Hawthorn, Wild Plum, and Chokecherry. Characteristic of these areas are Swainson's Hawks, Mourning Doves, Black-billed Cuckoos, Eastern Kingbirds, Willow Flycatchers, Gray Catbirds, Brown Thrashers, Cedar Waxwings, Yellow Warblers, Clay-colored Sparrows, Song Sparrows, Brewer's Blackbirds, and American Goldfinches.

Shelterbelts, Tree Claims, and Farmsteads

A considerable variety of native and exotic species have been used for these plantings. Common species include Colorado Blue Spruce, Ponderosa Pine, Cottonwood, American Elm, Chinese Elm, Wild Plum, Caragana, Box Elder, Russian Olive, Lilac, and Green Ash. These areas support a diverse community of woodland and edge species. Look for Swainson's Hawks, Red-tailed Hawks, Mourning Doves, Great Horned Owls, N. Flickers, Least Flycatchers, Eastern and Western Kingbirds, Warbling Vireos, American Crows, Barn Swallows, House Wrens, American Robins, Brown Thrashers, European Starlings, Yellow Warblers, Clay-colored Sparrows, Common Grackles, Baltimore and Orchard Orioles, and American Goldfinches.

Deciduous Forest

This habitat is limited to the James River Valley at Arrowwood NWR and to a few areas along the Coteau. Located near the western edge of the range of eastern deciduous forest, dominant species include American Elm, Box Elder, Green Ash, and Burr Oak. Typical in this community are Cooper's Hawks, Red-tailed Hawks, Great Horned Owls, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, E. Wood-Pewees, Great Crested Flycatchers, Red-eyed Vireos, Yellow-throated Vireos, Blue Jays, Black-capped Chickadees, White-breasted Nuthatches, House Wrens, Yellow Warblers, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Indigo Buntings, and Baltimore Orioles.

Cities and Towns

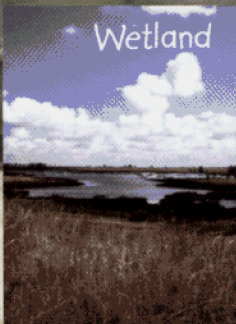
The artificial habitat created by towns and cities draws its own set of species in the northern plains. The combination of exotic trees, lawns, buildings, and bird feeders creates habitat unique to some species. Look here for Common Nighthawks, Chimney Swifts, Purple Martins, Barn Swallows, Red-breasted Nuthatches (winter), Brown Creepers (winter), Bohemian Waxwings (winter), House Finches, Crossbills (winter), and Pine Siskins.

Croplands

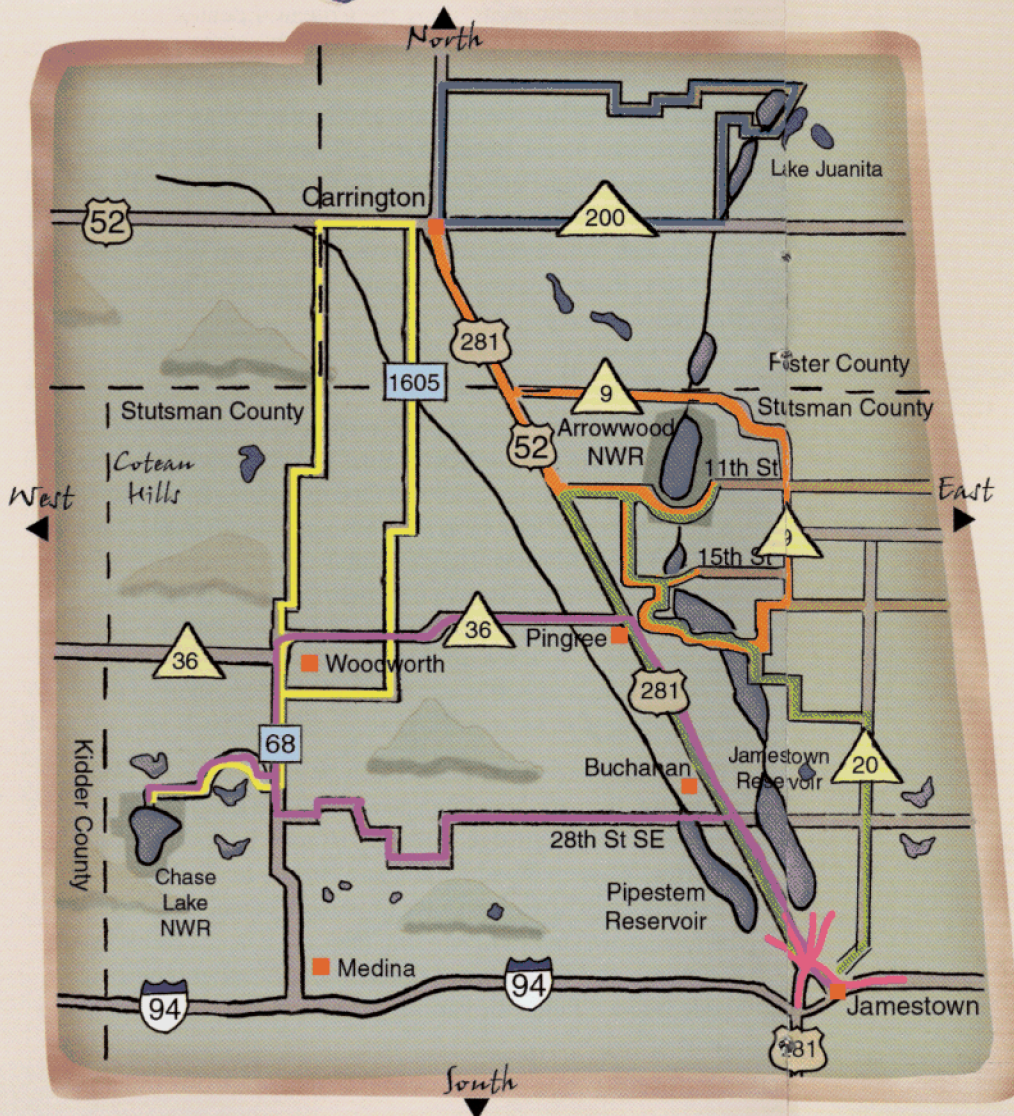
These disturbance communities can be easily scanned from roadsides. Primary breeding species include Ring-necked Pheasant, Gray Partridge, Killdeer, Horned Lark, Vesper Sparrow, Western Meadowlark, and Brown-headed Cowbird. Bobolinks will often use fields of planted cereal grains. In the fence rows and field borders, look for Eastern and Western Kingbirds, and Red-winged Blackbirds. During migration, scope flooded fields for various waterfowl and shorebird species.

North Dakota

LEGENDARY



Birding Drives



Map Legend

- | | |
|--|---|
| ● Carrington to Chase Lake | ● Carrington to Arrowwood |
| ● Jamestown to Chase Lake | ● Jamestown to Arrowwood |
| ● Lake Juanita | ● Jamestown Area Drives |

Our drives will take you to these remote birding "hotspots":

Arrowwood National Wildlife Refuge

Chase Lake National Wildlife Refuge

Lake Juanita

Missouri Coteau Region

Edward R. Brigham III

Alkali Lake Sanctuary

Jamestown Reservoir

Jamestown Sewage Lagoons

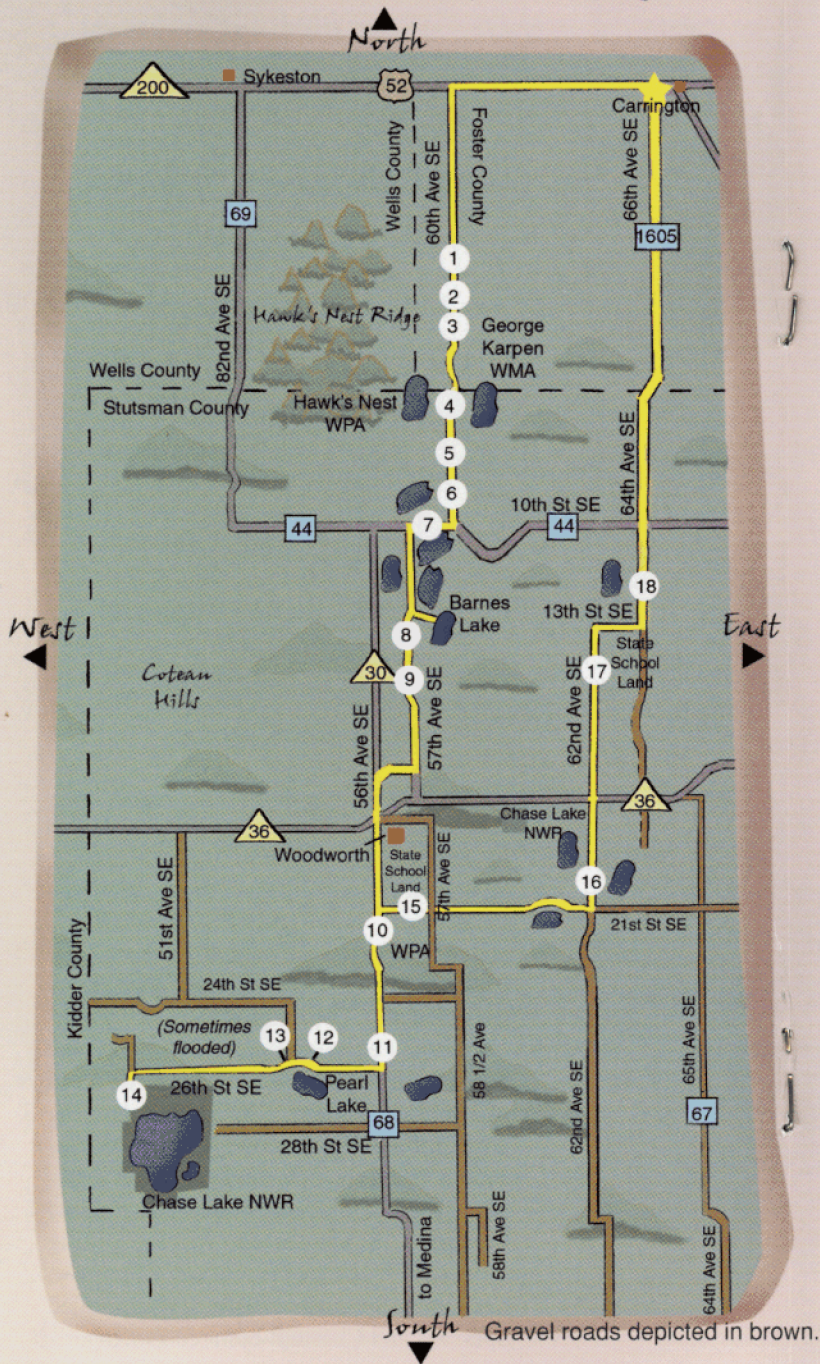
James River Valley

Hawk's Nest Ridge

Pipestem Reservoir

Southeastern North Dakota is characterized by sweeping croplands and grasslands, punctuated by thousands of prairie marshes. Planted tree claims and riparian woodlands add to the diversity of habitats. These varied habitats support a diverse avian community encompassing approximately 320 species. You should encounter a great diversity and density of waterfowl, shorebirds, and blackbirds. The area also hosts a dazzling array of breeding sparrows. Several highly-sought species of birds might be found in this region, including Ferruginous Hawk, Gray Partridge, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Piping Plover, Sprague's Pipit, Baird's Sparrow, LeConte's Sparrow, Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, and Chestnut-collared Longspur.

Carrington to Chase Lake National Wildlife Refuge



Carrington to Chase Lake NWR (9)

Home of the largest nesting colony of American White Pelica

We will begin our trip at the junction of US 281 and US 52/ND city. Proceed west on US 52/ND 200 for seven miles and turn the Foster/Wells Co. line. As you proceed south you will beg Coteau.

Stop #1 (7 miles West, 6.3 miles South). Listen for Wilson's and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows in the fen on both sides of you might find Baird's and Grasshopper Sparrows and in the Northern Rough-winged Swallows.

Stop #2 (1.2 miles South). Turn west onto trail that leads to F can be negotiated with a conventional vehicle, but you might a rain. Watch for Sharp-tailed Grouse along the entrance ro rewarded with expansive vistas in every direction. During sprin in early April, one might see large numbers of hawks passing northward. Cloudy days with southeast winds are the best hawks. The woodlands at Hawk's Nest have typically easter Wood-Pewee.

Stop #3 (.5 miles South). George Karpen Wildlife Managem pasture to the north of the WMA for Chestnut-collared Long colored Sparrows.

Stop #4 (1.2 miles South). Hawk's Nest Waterfowl Production for various waterfowl, Short-eared Owls, and Le Conte's Spa

Stop #5 (2.4 miles South). You might find Black-billed Magp brush on the right (west) side of the road might harbor a few

Stop #6 (.9 miles South). Listen for Sprague's Pipits here.

Stop #7 (.6 miles South, .6 miles West). During high water y shorebirds and scope the wetlands for Western Grebes. At a find Horned Grebes, Black-crowned Night-Herons, Bonapart As you proceed to the next stop, watch for Double-crested C (north) side of the road.

Stop #8 (.4 miles West, 2.8 miles South). Barnes Lake. Her shelter and restrooms. This area offers a good view of Barn waterfowl and other waterbirds.

miles)
is!
D200 on the north side of the
left (south) at milepost 215.7,
in to climb onto the Missouri

Snipes, Le Conte's Sparrows,
the road. In the next half mile
gravel pit look for Bank and

hawk's Nest Ridge. This trail
want to walk this stretch after
d. A hike to the top will be
g hawk migration (particularly
g over the ridge on their way
conditions to view migrating
a avifauna, including Eastern

nt Area (WMA). Check the
purs and the WMA for Clay-

Area (WPA). Check this area
rows.

es and Sprague's Pipits. The
Willow Flycatchers.

ears, check the causeway for
ropriate seasons you might
's Gulls, and Forster's Terns.
ormorants nesting on the right

e is a public use area with a
es Lake and area for various

Stop #9 (*1.5 miles South*). Look for Le Conte's Sparrows on the Mallard Lake WPA on the left (east) side of the road.

Stop #10 (*2.1 miles South, 1 mile West, 5.2 miles South*). Listen for Sprague's Pipits and Baird's Sparrows in the pasture on the right (west).

Stop #11 (*4.4 miles South*). Check these old buildings for Say's Phoebe.

Stop #12 (*4 miles South, 1.7 miles West*). This solid, two-track road may not be passable after a significant rain, so make your plans accordingly.) You will cross the first of two causeways through Pearl Lake. Watch for Spotted Sandpipers as you cross. Scan the wetlands for Western, Clark's, and Eared Grebes, Franklin's Gulls, Forster's Terns, and over a dozen duck species. In the cattails and marsh edges, listen for Marsh and Sedge Wrens; Swamp, Le Conte's, and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows; as well as Sora and Virginia Rails. Keep an eye out for Cattle and Snowy Egrets, both of which have nested in this area in recent years.

Stop #13 (*1.5 miles West*). Continue west on the two-track trail for about four miles. Look and listen for grassland sparrows; Baird's Sparrows are present most years, usually several hundred feet from the road. Search along the ridges (on the left) for singing Sprague's Pipits. Watch for nesting Swainson's Hawks and Loggerhead Shrikes in the tree row to the right (north).

Stop #14 (*4.2 miles West, 1 mile South*). Chase Lake Pass. From the signed overlook you can scan the nesting islands for American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, and Ring-billed and California Gulls. In recent years a few Caspian Terns have nested. In low water years, scope the beaches for nesting Piping Plovers and migrant shorebirds. Remember that this is a wilderness area, so use common sense and, as always, do not disturb nesting birds.

Stop #15 (*Return to 56th Ave (County Road 68) turn left and travel North to 21st St. SE, turn right (East) and travel .5 miles*). The land to the north is state school land, and the land to the south is Peda WPA. Walking access is permitted in both of these areas. The state land might support Sprague's Pipits, Baird's Sparrows, and Chestnut-collared Longspurs.

The following stops traverse excellent grassland habitat with wetlands interspersed. During high water years, make sure to check road edges for shore birds. Listen for more grassland sparrows and view the Drift Plain from the edge of the Coteau.

Stop #16 (*5.5 miles East, .5 miles North*).

Stop #17 (*6 miles North*).

Stop #18 (*1.5 miles North, 2 miles East, 1 mile North*).

Return to Carrington (*15 miles North, 1 mile East*)

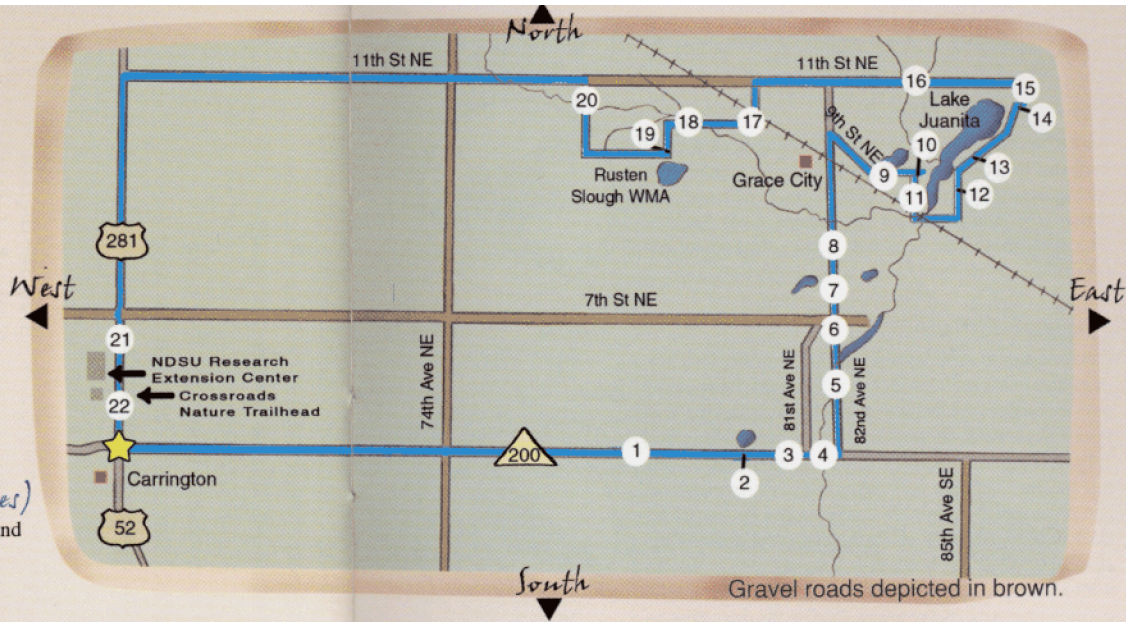
For more information, call Chase Lake NWR at 701-752-4218.

During spring and fall migration, the trees and water in the park provide excellent stopover habitat for a variety of flycatchers, vireos, thrushes, warblers, and sparrows. Twenty-three warbler species are regular migrants in the park. Rare but regular are

Lake Juanita Loop

The Lake Juanita Loop (62 miles)

This route will sample the Lake Juanita area and the James River valley east of Carrington.



Stop 1 (11 miles East of Carrington on Highway 200). Wetlands and low prairie: Virginia Rails and various waterbirds. In spring, check shallow water in the fields for migrating shorebirds.

Stop 2 (2.4 miles East). Wetland north of highway yields migrant shorebirds, breeding waterfowl. Hayland to the south yields Bobolinks.

Stop 3 (.6 miles East). Native prairie yields Upland Sandpipers, Clay-colored Sparrows, Brewer's Blackbirds, Grasshopper Sparrows and Chestnut-collared Longspurs.

Stop 4 (.9 miles East). Cliff Swallows at the bridge over the James River.

Stop 5 (.1 miles East, 1.8 miles North). Turn left on 82nd Ave NE. Going north, watch for American White Pelicans in the wetlands, Willow Flycatcher and Gray Catbirds in the brushy spring. Listen for Vesper Sparrows in open areas.

Stop 6 (1.1 miles North). A mile further should produce many Clay-colored Sparrows.

Stop 7 (.4 miles North). Scan the area for raptors from the highest point. Listen at the wetland for Le Conte's and Nelson's Sharp-tailed sparrows. Various grassland species in hayland on east.

Stop 8 (.5 miles North). Listen for Le Conte's and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows.

Stop 9 (2.7 miles North, 1 mile East). Turn east at 9th St NE. Blue Cloud Lake WPA: various waterfowl. Look for Willow Flycatchers, and Marsh Wrens in cattails.

Stop 10 (1.1 miles East). At Lake Juanita, the large tree planting on the right contains diverse vegetation that, during migration, hosts warblers and sparrows. East from the planting where the trail turns left (north), walk the marsh for possible American Bittern, Black-crowned Night-Heron, and Le Conte's and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows; scope Lake Juanita for Western Grebes and American White Pelicans in summer and Common Loons during April and October.

Stop 11 (.75 miles). Check the cattails for Virginia Rails.

Stop 12 (.3 miles South). Native prairie on west side of road hosts Chestnut-collared Longspurs and other grassland birds.

Stop 13 (.4 miles North). At Lake Juanita look over the water for Western Grebes in summer; Common Loons during migration.

Stop 14 (1.2 miles North). To the southeast, look for Swainson's Hawks and Marbled Godwits. Before proceeding left (north) look for various grassland species.

Stop 15 (.4 miles North). Check for Le Conte's and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows in low area on left.

Stop 16 (.6 miles North, 2.2 miles West). Land to the left (south) is good area for Wilson's Snipes, Sedge Wrens, Le Conte's Sparrows, and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows, and some years, Yellow Rails.

Stop 17 (3.8 miles West, 1 mile South). Hike for grassland species on half-section to the southeast. Sprague's Pipits and Baird's Sparrows may be found.

Stop 18 (1.5 miles West). Check prairie on the right (north) for Chestnut-collared Longspurs.

Stop 19 (.5 miles West, 1 mile South). Rusten Slough WMA. Scope for waterbirds.

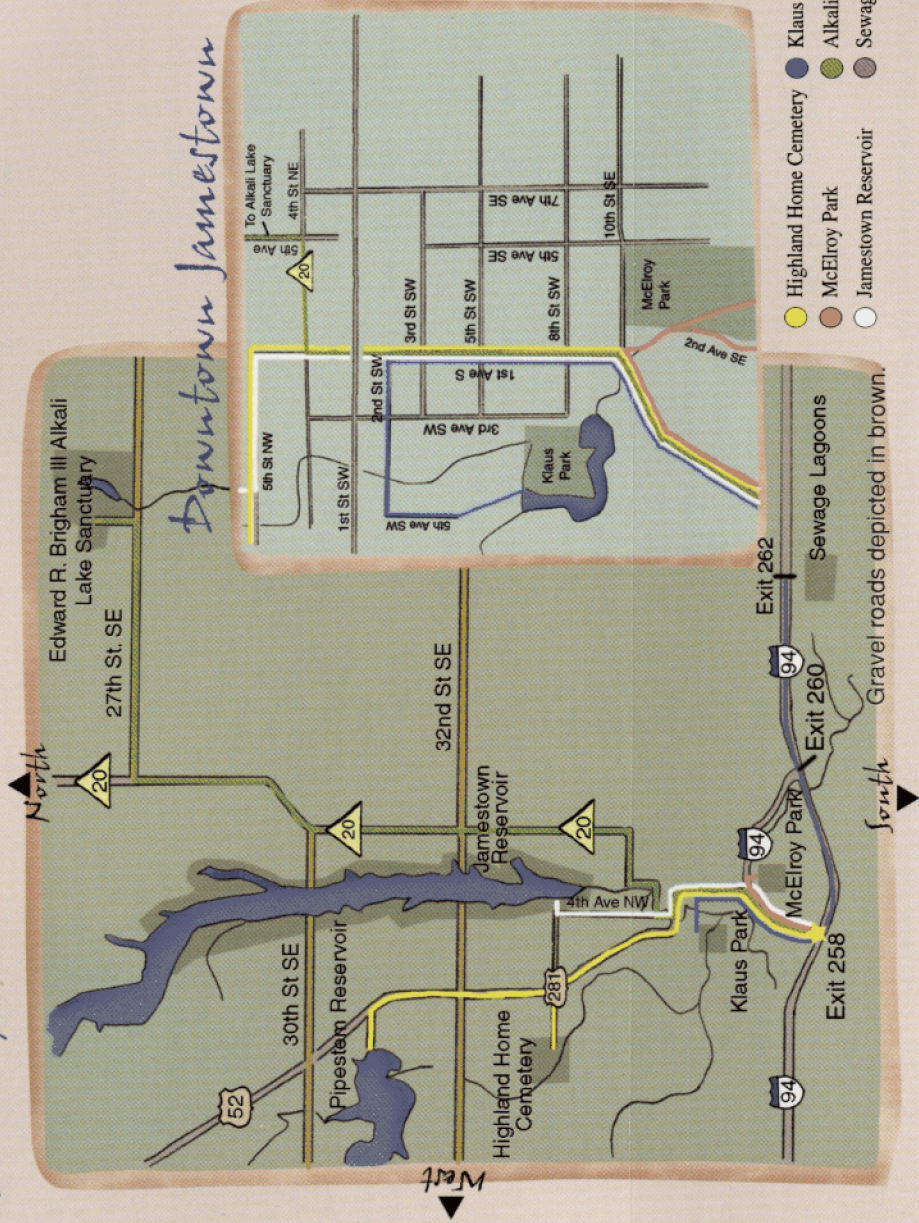
Stop 20 (2 miles West, 1.6 miles North). James River breaks area. Listen for Baird's Sparrows in summer and migrant Smith's Longspurs in early October.

Stop 21 (.4 miles North, 9 miles West, 4.5 miles South). Walk NDSU-Carrington Research Extension Center's trees for migrant passerines, and the grounds for various thrushes, warblers, and sparrows during migration.

Stop 22 (3 miles South). Carrington Cemetery: Golden-crowned Kinglets and Crossbills in fall and Chipping Sparrows and Pine Siskins in summer.

During migration (especially after nighttime rains), walk the residential areas of Carrington for warblers and other passerines.

Jamestown Area



Downtown Jamestown

In this section we will sample several city parks, the Edward R. Brigham III Alkali Lake Sanctuary, and the two reservoirs north of the city. We have designed this drive as trips to individual sites in the area that should produce a well-rounded checklist for the day. Directions to all areas will start at I-94 Exit 258 in southwest Jamestown.

McElroy Park

From Exit 258 take US 281/US 52 north and descend into the valley. At the intersection at mile 1.0, stay right (east) on 10th St. SE. At mile 1.1, turn right (south) onto 2nd Ave SE. Drive 0.2 mile south to the park entrance. As you continue, take the right fork and drive the park loop. The best birding is usually on the south side of the James River, accessed via the All Veterans Memorial Bridge, which is 0.4 mile from the park entrance. Cross the bridge and follow a network of trails to the left that follow the river.

During spring and fall migration, the trees and water in the park provide excellent stopover habitat for a variety of flycatchers, vireos, thrushes, warblers, and sparrows. Twenty-three warbler species are regular migrants in the park. Rare but regular are

Northern Parula, Cape May and Connecticut Warblers. Watch for Yellow-bellied and Alder Flycatchers in late May and early June. Solitary Sandpipers can be seen at the river's edge in migration. Nesting species include Cooper's Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Least Flycatcher, Great Crested Flycatcher, Warbling Vireo, Gray Catbird, House Wren, Yellow Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Baltimore Oriole. In recent years, Black-headed Grosbeaks have been present during the breeding season. Keep an eye to the sky for migrant raptors.

Klaus Park

From Exit 258, go north on US 281/US 52 and descend into the valley. At mile 1.0, turn left (north) onto 1st Ave S. At mile 1.6, turn left (west) onto 2nd St SW. Turn left (south) at mile 2.0 on 5th Ave SW and proceed to the park entrance at mile 2.2. Located at the confluence of the James River and Pipestem Creek, Klaus Park offers many of the same birds as McElroy Park. The best way to bird the park is to walk along the trees bordering the river as well as the scattered trees in more open areas. Getting to the park early, especially on weekends, will help you to avoid the bustle of visitors.

Jamestown Sewage Lagoons

From Exit 258, travel east 4.3 miles on I-94 to Exit 262. Exit here and drive south 0.1 mile to the lagoons. Access is limited here, so bird from the road only. In the northern plains, sewage lagoons are important stopover points for many species of waterfowl and shorebirds. Typically, hundreds or even thousands of waterbirds are present on the cells. Eared Grebes and Ruddy Ducks usually are plentiful, and several species of gulls are regular in summer and migration. A few Greater Scaups may be found here in spring and fall, and large numbers of Wilson's Phalaropes stage on the various ponds. Shorebirds usually are present, including a few Ruddy Turnstones in late May. In October, you may find a scoter or two on the lagoon.

Jamestown Reservoir

The 2095-acre Jamestown Reservoir is located on the James River at the north end of Jamestown and extends north to the southern boundary of Arrowwood NWR. From Exit 258, go north on US 281/US 52 and descend into the valley. At mile 1.0, turn left (north) on 1st Ave. S and continue to mile 2.0. Turn left (west) onto 5th St NW. At mile 2.2, turn right (north) on 4th Ave NW and proceed to mile 3.5. Turn right (east) on Jamestown Dam Rd. and park on a gravel pad at the side of the road at mile 3.8. Walk down to the dam spillway and look for migrants in the trees along the gravel road bordering the east side of the river.

To scope for waterbirds, return to the top of the dam. Common Loons and various grebes—and scoters in October—may be seen here in migration, along with many species of waterfowl and gulls. The reservoir is accessible at many other points to the north on both the east and west sides. Check for rare waterfowl in October and November.

Highland Home Cemetery and Pipestem Reservoir

Starting at Exit 258 on I-94, proceed north on US 281/US 52 and descend into Jamestown. At mile 1.0, turn left (north) on 1st Ave. S and continue to mile 2.0. Turn left (west) onto 5th St. NW and follow the highway as it turns to the northwest and ascends out of the valley. Follow US 281/US 52 to mile 4.2 and turn left (west) into Highland Home Cemetery (33rd St. SE). Mature spruce here are a magnet for some species. Migrant warblers that prefer this habitat include Cape May, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, and Bay-breasted Warblers. In fall and winter look here for Red-breasted Nuthatches, Brown Creepers, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Dark-eyed Juncos, Purple Finches, Red Crossbills, White-winged Crossbills, and Pine Siskins. After invasion years, you might find crossbills nesting here. In summer, look for Chipping Sparrows and Pine Siskins.

The 840-acre lake created by the construction of Pipestem Reservoir is surrounded by 3400 acres of uplands open to public use. To bird Pipestem Reservoir, return to US 281/US 52 and zero your mileage. Continue northwest to mile 2.1 and turn left (west) on 31st St. SE (milepost 261). At mile 2.7, walk the Ponderosa Pines near the office for migrants. Continue west across the dam. At mile 3.6, turn right (north) and follow the trail to the lake. Scope here during migration for Common Loons, grebes, and other waterfowl;

Tips for Finding North Dakota Specialties

Ferruginous Hawk

Rare to uncommon, late March to October. Look for this majestic buteo in heavily grazed native prairie with Richardson's Ground Squirrel colonies. The Chase Lake region is a regular area for this species. Look for their large nests in isolated trees and on large steel power line towers.



Sprague's Pipit

Fairly common summer resident, late April to October. A species much more easily heard than seen, these native prairie obligates are usually encountered skylarking high in the sky. Peak singing activity occurs in May and July. It is crucial to know the song if you intend to find this species. They are very difficult to see on the ground, but occasionally might be encountered in the wheel tracks of prairie trails or flushed in grassland. When singing, this species has a very unique shape in the air, with a plump body and narrow base of the tail. Easier to find in the area in dry years. Prefers the drier hilltops and breaks along river valleys and escarpments. Also uses alkali meadows. Look for this species on the ridges around Chase Lake and the grazed edges of the James River Valley.



Gray Partridge

Fairly common resident. This well-established exotic is characteristic of cropped areas. The best way to search for this species is to drive gravel roads in cropland very early in the morning. Stop every half-mile to listen and scan. They are often seen right along the edge of the road. In winter, coveys of this species are most easily seen in fields near farmsteads in late afternoon.



Sharp-tailed Grouse

Fairly common resident. This popular game bird is most easily seen at the various refuges where blinds are maintained at leks. Peak dancing activity is in April and May. During other times of the year a walk in the area of the lek will usually produce a few birds, as males seem never to be far from the lek. In fall and winter flocks may be encountered almost anywhere, but harvested sunflower fields and rows of Russian Olive trees are especially favored.



Chestnut-collared Longspur

Common summer resident, April to late September. Prefers heavily grazed native prairie and recently burned areas. Sometimes uses cropland. Most easily found on private land. Watch for them skylarking over the prairie or sitting on fences along the roads on the Coteau.



Baird's Sparrow

Fairly common summer resident, May through August. Prefers lightly grazed mixed grass prairie. More common in the area in dry years. Occasionally found in hayfields and grain fields. Usually does not sit on fence wires. The Chase Lake region is often good for this species. Be patient and listen for the song, a few ticks followed by a lilting trill.



LeConte's Sparrow

Common summer resident in wet cycles, uncommon in dry cycles, May to early October. Prefers wet grassy areas, marsh edges, sedge meadows, and CRP fields. Look for this species at Arrowwood NWR in the valley along the edges of the marshes. Typically, this species sings from a perch just below the top of a grass tuft. They can be hard to pick out, so be patient. If flushed, LeConte's usually drop into heavy vegetation and are reluctant to come up again. They do respond to pishing. LeConte's Sparrows do quite a bit of nocturnal singing, and are particularly vocal in the morning when it is still quite dark. Their insect like-call can be difficult for some people to hear.



Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow

Uncommon summer resident, late May to late September. This species prefers slightly wetter habitat than LeConte's Sparrows. Marsh edges, where there is a mix of vegetation, and fens are particularly favored. Generally does not prefer solid cattails. Often heard in the same areas as LeConte's Sparrows, and like LeConte's, does a lot of nocturnal singing. This species does not always sit in full view, but can usually be spotted if one is patient. They have a very unusual song, sounding like a hot poker being stuck in a bucket of water. Look for this marsh edge denizen at Arrowwood NWR.



Yellow Rail

Rare to uncommon summer resident, May to September. This species is very difficult to find, and even more difficult to see. Prefers fens and boggy swales with shallow, slowly running water. Spring-fed areas are the most preferred. These areas are often characterized by quaking surface mats of vegetation. More common in wet cycles. In dry times this species is found only in the most preferred areas. Listen for their unusual clicking calls after dark or well before sunrise.



Drawings courtesy of US Fish and Wildlife, USGS and Chris Goldade

