



DISCOVER OUR WILD SIDE

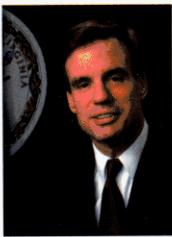
VIRGINIA BIRDING AND WILDLIFE TRAIL



COASTAL AREA

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND INLAND FISHERIES

MESSAGE FROM GOVERNOR



I am pleased to extend a warm welcome to all outdoor enthusiasts to come experience the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail. Virginians and visitors alike now have the unique opportunity to explore the wild places of coastal Virginia and to witness the diverse wildlife resources in this area of our wonderful Commonwealth. I take tremendous pride in our vision of a statewide trail – the first of its kind in the United States. When fully completed, the trail will truly open the door to the Old Dominion's almost limitless natural wonders.

As Virginia's 69th Governor, I am determined to preserve and enhance our natural heritage, from the Cumberland Gap to the Chesapeake Bay. Our challenge is to preserve our outdoor assets for future generations of Virginians. Conservation and responsible stewardship must serve as the cornerstone for these efforts.

As you travel the hundreds of miles of the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail, I encourage you to stop along the way and discover our wild side. Enjoy your experiences and the natural world that brings us both solitude and excitement. Again, Welcome!

Governor Mark R. Warner



Additional support provided by:



Credits:

Trail Development/Text: David K. Whitehurst, Rebecca K. Wajda, and Jeffrey B. Trollinger, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries; *Maps:* Lenée F. Viney, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries; *Technical Assistance/Writing:* Fermata, Inc.; *Graphic Design and Layout:* Office of Graphic Communications, Virginia Department of General Services; *Printing:* Progress Printing; *Illustration:* Carl C. "Spike" Knuth, Publications Coordinator, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. Special thanks for greatly enhancing this publication.

About the Artist – Carl C. "Spike" Knuth

Spike Knuth's career as a wildlife artist is both the result and the sign of a deep and enduring fascination with the natural world. As a boy in Wisconsin, much of his time was spent at Lake Okawchee, sketching birds and fishing. On long walks around Lake Winebago and Horicon marsh he began a life long habit of keeping nature journals; of recording with static grey marks the blooms of color and movement that were birds. His parents nurtured this interest, buying him field guides and fishing rods and taking him for long walks by the water. By the time he was twelve, Spike had discovered two things: that the variation in nature was "never ending", and that trying to capture that variation made him happy. Time and different jobs led him to experiment with different media: patterns of paint, patterns of words, images burned into film. And although many would say that his efforts have been successful, Spike feels that he still has "so much to learn," that it would take "seven lifetimes" to study and set down the wildlife around him. Spikes is the contributing editor, writer and wildlife artist to Virginia Wildlife and is approaching 30 years of service with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.



Eastern Tiger Swallowtail

WELCOME TO THE VIRGINIA BIRDING AND WILDLIFE TRAIL

From the Atlantic Ocean on Virginia's eastern border, to the towering Mt. Rogers at its southwest corner, the Commonwealth includes every bird and animal habitat that occurs naturally between Maine and Florida. The state also offers a long history, rich culture, and tradition of warm hospitality to welcome visitors.

Within Virginia's 43,000 square miles of diverse natural habitat, you can find some 400 species of birds, 250 species of fish, 150 species of terrestrial and marine animals, 150 species of amphibians and reptiles, and a wide variety of aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates. The Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail celebrates this diversity. In fact, it is the first statewide program of its kind in the United States. In Virginia, three phases of the trail link wildlife viewing sites throughout the state.

The Coastal Area is the first to be developed. It features untouched barrier islands, cypress swamps, great stands of pine forest, and bayside salt marshes. Here are 18 trail loops for you to explore. Be on the lookout for birds, butterflies, snakes, turtles, dragonflies, and more.

USE THIS GUIDE FOR NAVIGATION

Before leaving on your journey, visit the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail web site to make sure you have the most up-to date information: www.dgif.state.va.us. The web site is updated regularly to indicate any changes to the trails.

This guide provides a detailed description of both the loops and the sites located along those loops, so you know what to expect. For each loop, you will find maps, directions, and contact information. Each site description includes history, best season to visit, special features, and possible side trips. Symbols indicate services and activities available at each site. (See the symbol legend on page 3.)

Begin with the general map of the Coastal Area, showing all loops with their distance from each other (page 4-5). Then look more closely at the details of each individual loop. You may want to supplement this guide with local maps.

As you travel, look for the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail logo. There is also a three-part number posted at each site which corresponds to the same number on the site map in this guide. For instance, **Site CGF01** is Chinquapin Park: C stands for Coastal Region; GF stands for Great Falls loop; and **01** stands for Chinquapin Park site.

ASK FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Check Resources and Opportunities at the end of this book (page 98) for specific contact information.
- Contact the Virginia Tourism Corporation at 1-866-VABIRDS for extra copies of trail loop and site maps.
- Contact the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries at (804) 367-1000 or www.dgif.state.va.us about wildlife resources, lakes, public fishing opportunities, and state wildlife management areas.
- Contact the Virginia Department of Transportation at (804) 367-ROAD or www.virginiaDOT.org for highway travel information.

RESPECT VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

1. Increase your viewing opportunities by:

- using binoculars, spotting scopes and viewing blinds for a closer look
- moving slowly and quietly to minimize disturbance
- passing up scented lotions and colognes which can broadcast your presence
- staying clear of nests and dens so parents will not abandon young
- recognizing animal alarm signals and behavior changes
- avoiding artificial calls and lures which disrupt natural animal behavior
- resisting the impulse to offer human food, which can cause animals expecting handouts to become aggressive

2. Film and photograph wildlife responsibly by:

- using a telephoto lens from a vehicle or viewing blind
- avoiding the urge to chase, herd, flush or make noises
- leaving plants and other natural features alone





3. Be considerate of others by:

- asking permission to watch wildlife on private land
- observing all rules and regulations
- ask permission to access private property
- closing gates and returning property to the condition it was when you arrived
- waiting your turn to view or photograph animals
- leaving your own pets at home or in the car
- staying on trails and roads to minimize your impact on the environment
- pulling off the road as far as possible when you are watching wildlife and being aware of local traffic

4. Increase your enjoyment and involvement by:

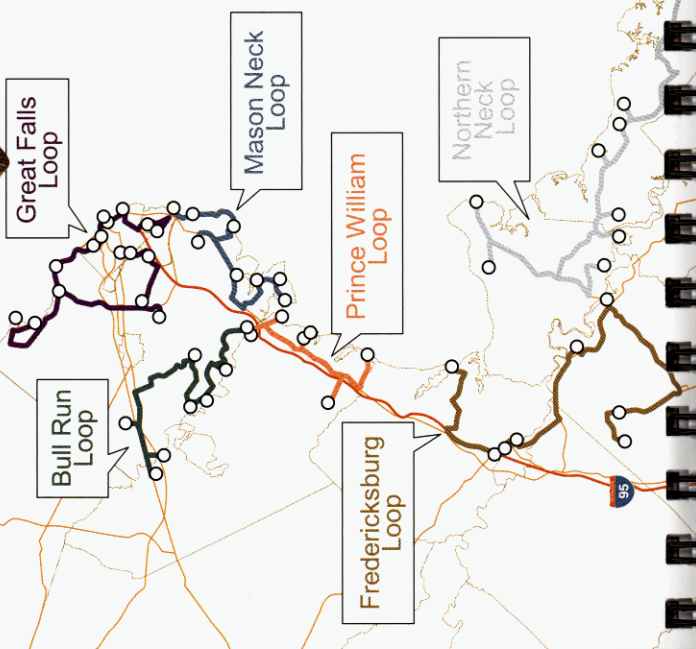
- researching your trips ahead of time
- participating in wildlife and habitat conservation
- helping others become responsible wildlife watchers

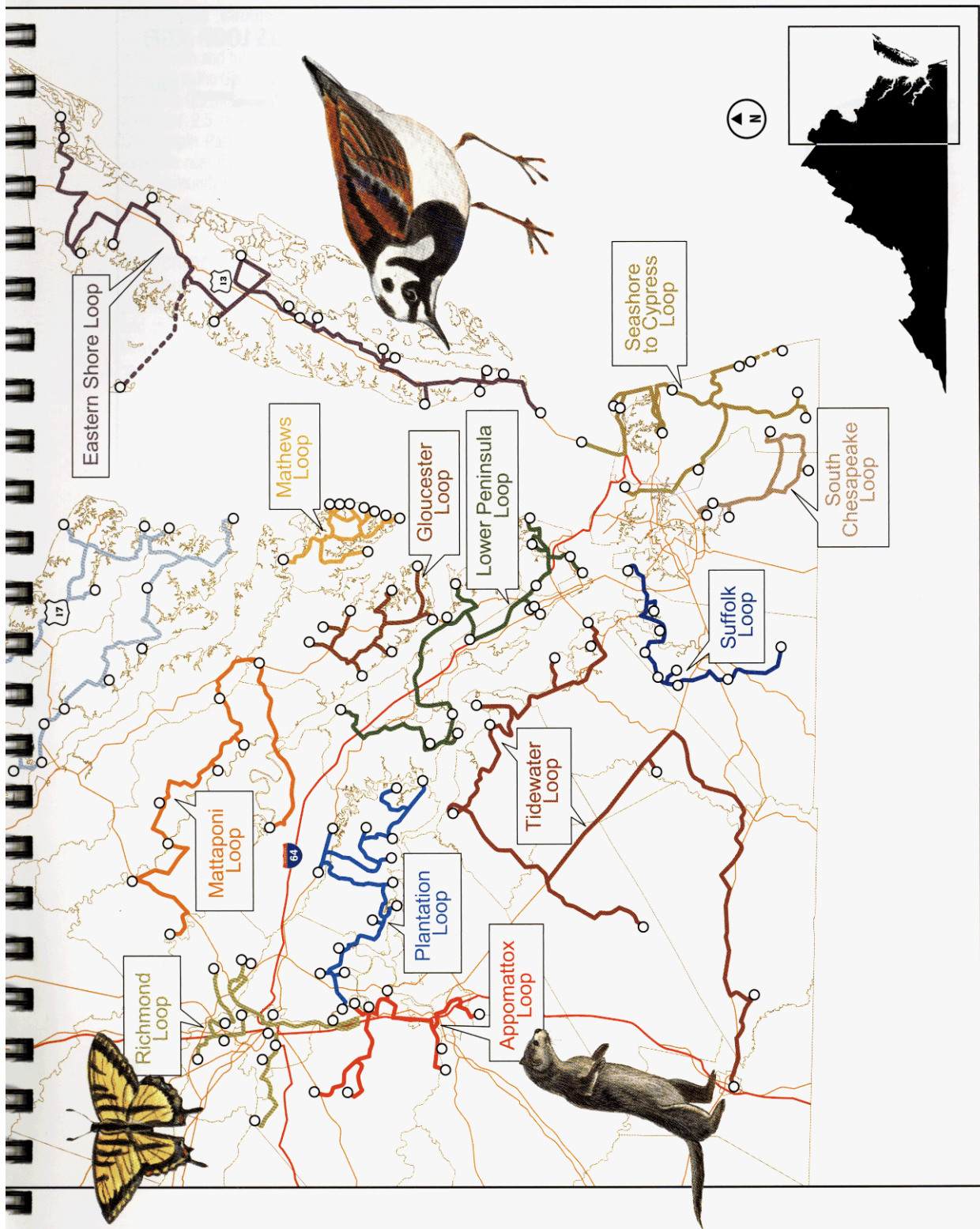
Some of this information was adopted from the Watchable Wildlife, Inc. Wildlife Watcher's Code of Ethics and the American Birding Association Principles of Birding Ethics

	Bike Trails		Interpretive Trail
	Camping		Lodge
	Environmental Study Area		Lookout Tower
	Fee		Parking
	Food		Phone
	Handicap Accessible		Picnic
	Hiking Trails		Restrooms
	Information		Site is only viewable by boat
	Interpretive/Nature Programs		Viewing Blinds
	Wildlife (WL) Facts		Wildlife Watching (WW) Tips

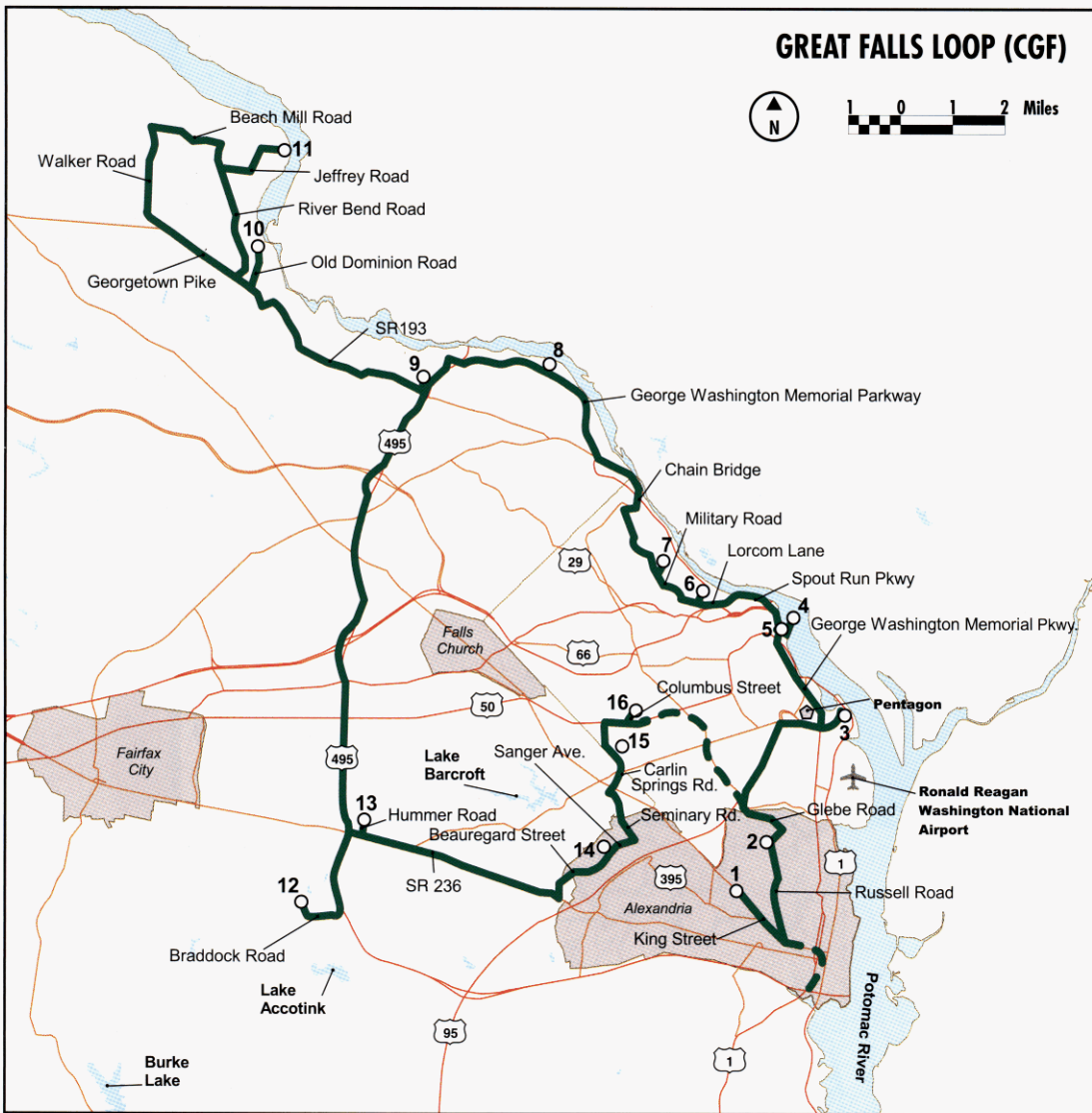
Map: ● ● ● Access to site from Interstate ● ● ● Site access by boat

COASTAL AREA





GREAT FALLS - LOOP DESCRIPTION



The Great Falls Loop begins immediately west of our nation's capital, along the brackish waters of the Potomac River. Continuing northwest along the George Washington Memorial Parkway, the loop trail follows the Potomac River upstream through the spectacular rapids and whirlpools of Great Falls National Park, to the northernmost site at Riverbend Park, which lies above the Fall Line and beyond the tidal effects of Chesapeake Bay. Following I-495 south (the Capital Beltway), the loop samples an assortment of habitats, ranging from extensive forests to narrow riparian corridors. From the Coastal Plain, a wintering ground of swans, geese, and ducks, to the Piedmont forest, an area alive with the songs of nesting scarlet tanagers, and cerulean and worm-eating warblers, the route unveils the natural beauty that exists a mere stone's throw from metropolitan Washington D.C.

Site CGF01 Chinquapin Park

Directions: From I-95, exit north on US 1 (Exit #1), travel 0.1 miles north and turn right on Franklin. Continue approximately 3 blocks to the George Washington Memorial Parkway. Turn left and drive 0.5 miles to King Street/SR 7. Turn left on King Street; travel for 2.5 miles to Chinquapin Drive. Turn left into the Chinquapin Park and Recreation Center complex. Parking is available near the recreation center or on the driving loop near the community garden.

P C ♣ ♿ ?

Site CGF02 Monticello Park

Directions: From Chinquapin Park, turn right onto King Street and travel 1.6 miles to Russell Road. Turn left onto Russell Road and continue 2.0 miles to Beverly Drive. Turn left onto Beverly Drive; travel for 200 yards to the park entrance on the left.

P

Site CGF03 Roaches Run Waterfowl Sanctuary

Directions: From Monticello Park in Alexandria, travel north (left) on Russell Road 0.3 miles and turn left onto West Glebe Road. Go 0.8 miles and turn left onto South Glebe Road/SR 120 North. Proceed 0.1 miles and turn right on I-395 North. Travel to the George Washington Memorial Parkway and follow it south for approximately 0.5 miles to the exit for Roaches Run. The parking lot is on right side.

P

Site CGF04 Theodore Roosevelt Island

Directions: From Roaches Run Waterfowl Sanctuary, return to the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP) South and take the first exit for Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport. Follow the signs for GWMP and get on GWMP North. Travel 4.0 miles and exit right to the entrance of Theodore Roosevelt Island. Go to the south end of the parking lot and cross the pedestrian bridge to Theodore Roosevelt Island.

P ♣ ♿ ?

Site CGF05 Potomac Heritage Trail

Directions: The Potomac Heritage Trail begins at the north end of the Theodore Roosevelt Island parking lot.

P ♣ ♿ ?

Site CGF06 Fort C.F. Smith Park and Historic Site

Directions: Exit Theodore Roosevelt Island parking lot and turn right onto the George Washington Memorial Parkway. Travel 0.6 miles and exit left at Spout Run Parkway. Continue on Spout Run Pkwy for 0.8 miles and turn right on Lorcom Lane. Proceed 0.1 miles on Lorcom Lane and turn right onto Edgewood Street. After traveling 0.1 miles, turn right onto 24th Street. Continue 0.4 miles to the park entrance and parking area on the left.

P C ♣

Site CGF07 Potomac Overlook Regional Park

Directions: Exit Fort C.F. Smith Park and return to Lorcom Lane. Turn right (northwest) and go 0.1 miles to Nelly Custis Drive. Turn right onto Nelly Custis Drive and continue for 0.3 miles. Here, Nelly Custis Drive becomes Military Road; continue 0.1 miles on Military Road. Turn right onto Marcey Road and proceed for 0.3 miles. Potomac Overlook Regional Park and Nature Center is at the end of the road.

P ♣ ♿ ?

Site CGF08 Turkey Run Park

Directions: From Potomac Overlook Regional Park, return on Marcey Road to Military Road and turn right. Travel 1.4 miles and turn right at the Chain Bridge sign, just before the T-intersection on Military Road. Continue 0.4 miles and turn left onto SR 123. Proceed 1.0 miles to the George Washington Memorial Parkway/I-495 entrance. Continue 1.9 miles north on the parkway and turn right at the Turkey Run Park sign. Proceed 0.1 miles and follow the signs to the park.

P C ♣ ?

Site CGF09 Potomac River Corridor-Scott's Run Preserve

Directions: Exit Turkey Run Park onto George Washington Memorial Parkway-North. Continue north on the parkway a total of 1.3 miles to I-495 South. Follow the exit road and ramp to I-495 South and exit off the feeder road onto SR 193 west, a total of 1.2 miles. Turn right on SR 193 West; travel for 0.2 miles to Scott's Run Natural Area Preserve parking area, on the right. The entrance is almost immediately on the right off SR 193 West, but the site is nearly hidden. A second parking area is accessible 0.3 miles further west on SR 193 and has a large parking area. This is the main park entrance.

P

Site CGF10 Great Falls Park

Directions: From Scott's Run Preserve, turn right and continue on SR 193 west for 3.9 miles. Turn right at the traffic light onto Old Dominion Road. The park is 1.0 mile from the light, at the end of the road.

P C ♣ ?

Site CGF11 Potomac River Corridor-Riverbend Park

Directions: From Great Falls National Park, return on Old Dominion Road to Georgetown Pike/SR 193. Go north (right) on SR 193 for 0.3 miles and turn right on River Bend Road. Travel 2.2 miles and turn right on Jeffrey Road. The entrance is 0.8 miles from the turn, on the right, and the nature center is another 0.6 miles from the entrance.

P C ♣ ♿ ? ♣

Site CGF01 Chinquapin Park

Seasons: Fall/Spring

Site Contact: Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, Mark Kelly Phone: (703) 838-4829 x309

Web Site: www.ci.Alexandria.va.us/rpca/

Site Access: Free, Daily

Description: This multi-use park is situated atop one of the highest points of the city. The park contains one of the largest tracts of forested land in Alexandria and a sizeable amount of space allotted for a community garden. Trails meander through the woods and creek bottoms, which provide optimal birding during migrations. Open fields adjacent to the wooded area provide additional opportunities for wildlife observation. The community garden attracts many species of butterflies, including eastern tiger swallowtail.



Site CGF02 Monticello Park

Seasons: Fall/Spring

Site Contact: Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, Mark Kelly Phone: (703) 838-4829 x309

Web Site: www.ci.Alexandria.va.us/rpca/

Site Access: Free, Daily

Description: Among local birders, this 15-acre park is renowned for its great diversity of migrating warblers; nearly all eastern species have occurred here. The park's creek is a focus for migrant activity, which is significant throughout the day. A steep canyon and creek are the prominent features of the site.



Site CGF03 Roaches Run Waterfowl Sanctuary

Seasons: Winter and migrations for birds, insect-life during summer

Site Contact: (703) 289-2500, gwmp_superintendent@nps.gov

Web Site: www.nps.gov/gwmp

Site Access: Free, Daily

Description: This is a popular spot for observing wintering waterfowl. During summer, osprey, green heron, red-winged black-bird, and mallard are common. In addition, summer vegetation along the lakeshore is alive with dragonflies and damselflies.



Site CGF04 Theodore Roosevelt Island

Seasons: Migrations, Winter

Site Contact: (703) 289-2500, gwmp_superintendent@nps.gov

Web Site: www.nps.gov/gwmp

Site Access: Free, Daily

Description: Upon reaching the island, stop at the bulletin board and pick up a trail map. This site offers over 2½ miles of trails through woodland, marsh, swamp, and forested riparian

edges. During migration, thrushes and warblers are plentiful, and a variety of water birds can be seen throughout the year. Given the density of the surrounding urban development, the forested area acts a crucial focal point for bird life, particularly during migration. The site provides excellent winter viewing habitat. This site is proximate to major urban facilities such as Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport and is a convenient site for viewers seeking a nearby destination.



Site CGF05 Potomac Heritage Trail

Seasons: Migrations, Winter

Site Contact: (703) 289-2500, gwmp_superintendent@nps.gov

Web Site: www.nps.gov/gwmp

Site Access: Free, Daily

Description: More than 150 species of birds have been recorded here. The trail winds along the quiet water of the Potomac River for 10 miles, crossing Turkey Run and Dead Run, two of the area's pristine streams, as well as several islands and a variety of historic sites. The trail, with pedestrian access only, can be accessed from eight sites that are indicated on the Potomac Heritage Trail brochure available from the National Park Service. Although the Potomac Heritage Trail is not part of the official Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, it contributes to the concept of the 425-mile corridor between the Chesapeake Bay and the Allegheny Highlands.



Site CGF06 Fort C.F. Smith Park and Historic Site

Seasons: Migrations, Summer

Site Contact: Wally Owen, (703) 243-7329

Web Site: www.co.Arlington.va.us/prcr

Site Access: Free, Daily

Description: Two-thirds of this park is comprised of meadows and hardwood forests. During the warmer months, the meadows around the parking lot are cloaked by wildflowers, which support a variety of butterflies. These same meadows attract a variety of seed-eating birds, such as vesper, field, song, and savannah sparrows, American goldfinch, and indigo bunting, which in turn attract a variety of hawks.



WW Tip

Binoculars are great tools for viewing wildlife. Find the animal with your eyes and then slowly bring the binoculars up to your face. While still looking at the animal, bring the binoculars to your eyes and focus them. This technique takes practice, but should help you see the animals better with your binoculars.



Gray Squirrel

Site CGF07 Potomac Overlook Regional Park

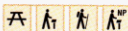
Seasons: All

Site Contact: (703) 528-5406

Web Site: www.nvrpa.org/potomacoverlook.html

Site Access: Free, Nature Center open Tues-Sat 10-5, Sunday 1-5

Description: This 70-acre park, part of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, provides access to the Potomac River, providing an opportunity to view local wildlife. The oak, beech and tulip poplar woodland, along with brushy edges, provide habitat for a large number of breeding birds. As part of their interpretive program, the nature center maintains several captive birds of prey, including red-tailed hawk, barred owl and great-horned owl. There are also butterfly and native plant gardens. Be sure to stop at the nature center and pick up a trail map that discusses the historical aspects of the park.



Site CGF08 Turkey Run Park

Seasons: Migrations, Summer

Site Contact: (703) 289-2500,

gwpmp_superintendent@nps.gov

Web Site: www.nps.gov/gwpmp

Site Access: Free, Daily

Description: Turkey Run Park's 700-acres of forest provide habitat for over 140 species of breeding and migratory birds, as well as a large diversity of reptiles, amphibians, and small mammals. Nesting birds include pileated woodpecker, wood duck, wood thrush, cerulean warbler, and Louisiana waterthrush. The spectacular spring wildflower display attracts a multitude of butterflies. The site includes a number of walking trails and access to the 10-mile Potomac Heritage Trail.



Site CGF09 Potomac River

Corridor-Scott's Run Preserve

Seasons: Migrations, Winter

Site Contact: Fairfax County Park Authority, (703) 759-9018

Web Site: www.co.fairfax.va.us/parks/nature.htm

Site Access: Free, Daily

Description: This forest is composed of tall, slender trees including tulip poplar and American beech. The extensive 385-acre park is home to a number of breeding birds, including summer and scarlet tanagers, cerulean, Kentucky, and yellow-throated warblers. Migrants are abundant during both spring and fall, and readily viewed because of the forest's open lower canopy.



Site CGF10 Great Falls Park

Seasons: All

Site Contact: (703) 289-2500,

gwpmp_superintendent@nps.gov

Web Site: www.nps.gov/gwpmp

Site Access: \$5.00/car, Daily

Description: This site provides significant natural drama as the stark relief of the falls delineates the cascading waters. This is the most dramatic example of the Fall Line in Virginia, which is the major escarpment separating the Coastal Plain from the Piedmont. The beauty of the venue is exceptional. The old canal bed that was once used to portage around the falls still exists, providing additional historical elements of interest here. Birdlife here takes advantage of the variety of habitats provided at the site: floodplain woodlands, bedrock terraces, swamps, open areas, and upland deciduous forests. Birds of prey are continually aloft, providing consistent viewing opportunities.



Site CGF11 Potomac River Corridor-Riverbend Park

Seasons: Migrations

Site Contact: (703) 759-9018

Web Site: www.co.fairfax.va.us/parks/nature.htm

Site Access: Free, daily

Description: This park consists of a mature deciduous forest bordering the Potomac River. This stretch of the river is an interesting counterpoint to the drama of Great Falls. Rock islands interspersed in the river provide beautiful contrast to the placid flow of the river. An extensive trail system and an inter-

**Site CGL06 Naxera/Bryan, Bay Site
(Rt. 657 Terminus)**

Seasons: All

Site Contact: (540) 899-4209,
Robert.Pickett@virginiadot.org

Web Site:

Site access: Free, Daily

Description: This small, state-owned watercraft launch site is just upriver from the Severn River's mouth. Boaters will find good viewing of common summer waterbirds that frequent the river and diving ducks, loons, and perhaps horned grebe should enliven the winter scene.

Site CGL07 Severn River Landing

Seasons: All

Site Contact: (540) 899-4209,
Robert.Pickett@virginiadot.org

Web Site:

Site access: Free, Daily

Description: There are numerous roads that dead-end along the Virginia shore, almost all of which provide foot and boat access to various habitats. This site is composed of a large cordgrass marsh south of the mouth of the Severn River that faces into Chesapeake Bay. It attracts numerous birds that associate with both the shoreline vegetation and the open channel. The simple boat landing allows canoe and kayak access.

Site CGL08 Gloucester Point Beach

Seasons: All

Site Contact: (804) 693-2355, csteale@gloucesterva.info

Web Site: www.co.gloucester.va.us

Site access: Free, Daily

Description: The beach, located below the north end of the Coleman Memorial Bridge, provides year-round views of waterbirds. The greatest bird diversity here occurs during fall migration and winter, but this is a site that can be checked at any time for potentially good finds. During warmer months, the weedy area between the parking lot and the water attracts butterflies and a few dragonflies that make for interesting viewing. Also, the Virginia Institute of Marine Science's pier, just to the north, is open to visitors.

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WW Tip

Shorebirds are best viewed at a distance through a spotting scope. Set your scope on solid ground and quietly look out over a marsh, mudflat or sandy shore. Many shorebirds travel in small flocks, so watch for different species in the same group.



Ring-billed Gull

SELECTED BOOKS

American Birding Association. 1997. *A Birder's Guide to Virginia*. American Birding Association, Inc. Colorado Springs, CO, 280pp.

DeLorme, Inc. *Virginia Atlas and Gazetteer*, P.O. Box 298, Yarmouth, ME 04096, (207) 846-7000; www.delorme.com

Duda, M.D. 1994. *Virginia Wildlife Viewing Guide*. Falcon Press Publishing Co., Inc. Helena and Billings, MT and Defenders of Wildlife, Washington, DC. 95 pp.

MORE INFORMATION ON FESTIVALS AND WILDLIFE:

Birds and Blossoms Festival, First weekend in May

Norfolk Botanical Garden
6700 Azalea Garden Road, Norfolk, Virginia 23518-5337
(757) 441-5830
www.viriniagarden.org

Eastern Shore Birding Festival, First weekend in October

P.O. Box 460, Melfa, Virginia 23410
(757) 787-2460
www.esva.net/~esvachamber/

American Birding Association: For information about enjoying and protecting birds across the United States and bird watching ethics, visit online at www.americanbirding.org.

Leave No Trace, Inc.: "Take Only Memories, Leave Only Footprints." For information about responsible recreation in the outdoors, visit online at www.lnt.org.

National Audubon Society-Virginia: For information about birds, bird conservation, and local birding activities, visit online at www.audubon.org/states/va.

North American Butterfly Association: For information about butterflies, including illustrations and photographs, as well as on-going research, visit online at www.naba.org.

Virginia Herpetological Society: For information about Virginia's reptile and amphibian species, visit online at fwie.fw.vt.edu/VHS/.

Virginia Museum of Natural History: For information about Virginia's natural resources, visit online at www.vmnh.org.

Virginia Society of Ornithology (VSO): For information about Virginia birds and links to local bird clubs and chapters, visit online at www.ecoventures-travel.com/vso/.

Watchable Wildlife, Inc. For more information about wildlife viewing and nature appreciation, visit online at www.watchablewildlife.org.

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WILDLIFE VIEWING DIARY

Animal Viewed

Date

Time

Location & Loop

Notes

Animal Viewed

Date

Time

Location & Loop

Notes

Animal Viewed

Date

Time

Location & Loop

Notes

Animal Viewed

Date

Time

Location & Loop

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Animal Viewed

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Black Bear