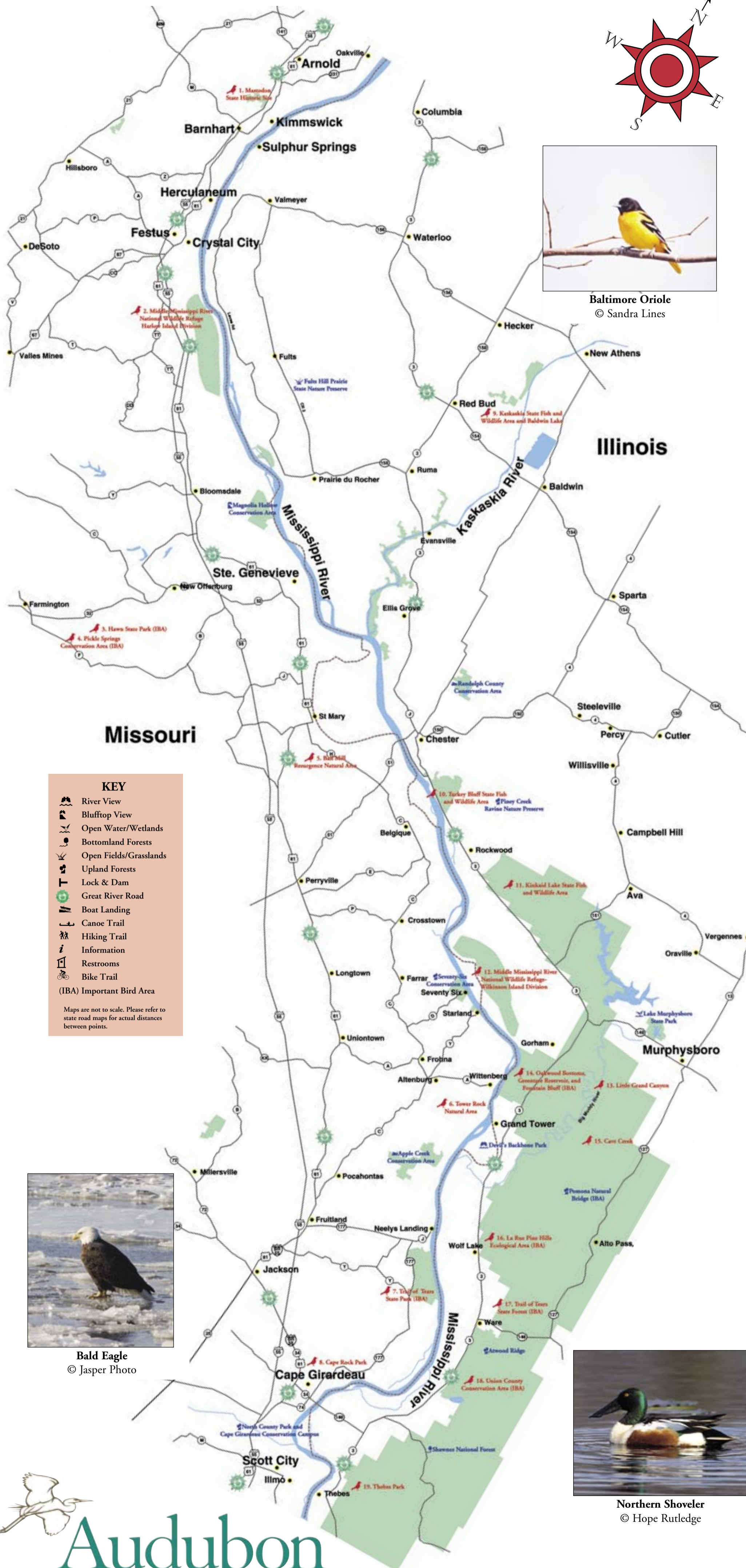
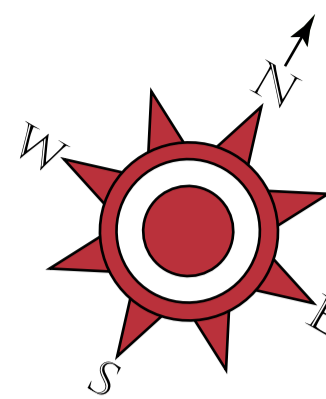


Great River Birding Trail

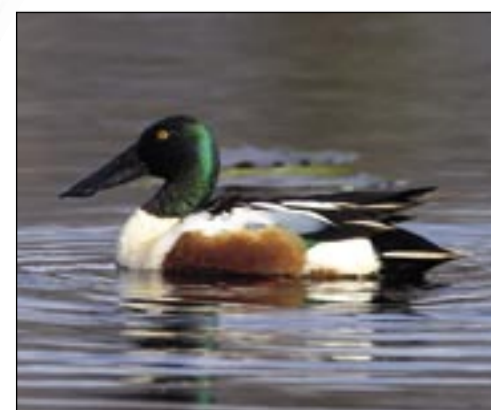
Ste. Genevieve, MO Map — Arnold, MO to Thebes, IL (River Mile 164 to 44)



Baltimore Oriole
© Sandra Lines



Bald Eagle
© Jasper Photo



Northern Shoveler
© Hope Rutledge

1. Mastodon State Historic Site

Where: Located 20 miles south of St. Louis, off I-55 at Imperial/Kimmswick Exit 186.

Birds: The 425-acre site is comprised of upland oak/hickory woodlands and bottomland forest along a meandering spring-fed creek. Up to 35 species of warblers can be seen during the spring/fall migrations. The creek bottom provides opportunities to see Green and Little Blue Herons, and Belted Kingfishers. The Charles H. Callison Memorial Bird Sanctuary is designed specifically as a bird feeding station and butterfly garden, and attracts well over 50 species of birds throughout the year.

2. Middle Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge - Harlow Island Division

Where: From Festus, Missouri take Highway 61 south to County Road AA. Turn east on County Road AA, then follow the signs to Truman Park Boat Ramp. A paved road and parking area are located at the southernmost boundary of the refuge.

Birds: Over 200 species of birds visit the refuge throughout the year. October, November, March and April are the best months to see large concentrations of waterfowl. Shorebird and warbler migrations usually peak around the first week of May. Bald Eagles are common in the winter as they gather near the river to feed in open water areas. Herons and egrets are commonly seen during the summer feeding in refuge wetlands.

3. Hawn State Park

Where: Located west from I-55 near Ste. Genevieve on Highway 32 to Highway 144.

Birds: This 4,953-acre park includes sandstone glades, open sandstone woodlands and high quality riparian habitat all protected as Missouri Natural Areas. Fourteen miles of trails lead through stands of native pine and along Pickle Creek. There are at least 84 species of birds, 31 of which are confirmed breeders. Historically, the area supported Brown-headed Nuthatches, Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, and Bachman's Sparrows. Henslow's Sparrows and Pine Warblers are common during the summer months.

4. Pickle Springs Conservation Area

Where: Located east of Farmington 5 miles on Missouri 32 to Route AA. Turn right on Route AA and go two miles to Dorlac Road on the left. Follow Dorlac about 1/4 mile to the parking lot.

Birds: This striking area includes large sandstone outcroppings, small waterfalls, rock-capped pillars called "hoodoos" and rocky glades, which in turn provide diversity and some challenging footing on a well constructed loop trail. Surveys found 73 bird species including 43 probable and 15 confirmed breeding species. Pine Warblers may be seen in summer as well as tanagers and other forest birds.

5. Ball Mill Resurgence Natural Area

Where: Located north from Perryville on Highway 61, then north on Route V for about 5 miles, following signs.

Birds: Habitat consists of mesic forest with sinkholes and a unique resurgence (spring-like geologic feature) surrounded by open land. Woodland birds can be seen here on the very nice loop trail that includes interpretive signs about geologic features.

6. Tower Rock Natural Area (Missouri Department of Conservation)

Where: To access, travel east on Route A from Frohna/Altenburg, then south on a gravel road.

Birds: This scenic area consists of an impressive rock island and adjacent steep forested slopes fronting the Mississippi River. Bald Eagles can be seen in winter and woodland forest birds can be seen in the upland forest. A trail leads to an overlook of the Tower Rock, one of the best-known and most photogenic landmarks on the Mississippi River.

7. Trail of Tears State Park

Where: This 3,400-acre area is located east on Highway 177 from I-55 at milepost 105.

Birds: Featuring eastern deciduous forest with a distinct Appalachian influence along the Mississippi River flyway, the park attracts migrant and nesting neo-tropical songbirds. Mississippi Kites can often be observed in the area. The park is located where the "Trail of Tears" crossed the Mississippi River, which was a forced march by the U.S. Army leading 13,000 Cherokee Indians from the Carolinas to Oklahoma. Safety is urged in the vicinity of overlooks.

8. Cape Rock Park (City of Cape Girardeau)

Where: Located in northeast Cape Girardeau on North Cape Rock Drive

Birds: This park offers a breathtaking view of the Mississippi River, site of the original trading post established by Ensign Girardot, for whom the city is named. The river overlook is in a wooded area, and other public lands nearby offer great forest and river birding venues.

9. Kaskaskia State Fish & Wildlife Area and Baldwin Lake

Where: The Kaskaskia River State Fish & Wildlife Area (KRFWA) is one of the largest state-owned and managed sites in Illinois, located 35 miles southeast of St. Louis, Missouri. To reach the Site Headquarters from the south: access State Hwy. 154 and go to the town of Baldwin. In Baldwin turn north on 5th Street and travel 4 miles, passing the Illinois Power generating facility. At the intersection of 5th Street and Risdon School Road, turn west (left) and travel one mile to the park entrance gate. Turn left at the gate and follow the black top road to the site office sign. The site office is 1/4 mile south of this sign. To reach the Site Headquarters from the north: access State Hwy. 13 and travel toward the village of New Athens. While on Hwy. 13 look for the "Baldwin Lake" Highway sign and turn south. Travel this blacktop road for 5 miles to the intersection of Risdon School Road and turn west (right). Travel on mile to the park entrance gate. Turn left at the gate and follow the black top road to the site office sign. The site office is 1/4 mile south of this sign.

Birds: This area comprises more than 20,000 acres and extends along the Kaskaskia River from Fayetteville to the Mississippi River in St. Clair, Monroe, and Randolph counties. A land area of about 16,000 acres includes an extensive mixed bottomland forest. Many cultivated and fallow fields, native grass patches, brushy areas, and other "open" areas are interspersed with the stands of mature bottomland timber. Baldwin Lake is located within the KRFWA. Watch for a diversity of sparrows, flycatchers, Loggerhead Shrikes, and Lapland Longspurs. In winter, watch for flocks of Snow Geese and Canada Geese. During winter, peak populations of 10,000 geese and 20,000 ducks may be seen in the area. Open waters in winter attract Common Loon, Horned and Eared Grebes, White-fronted Goose, Ross's Geese, Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler, American Wigeon, and Bonaparte's Gull. Baldwin Lake is a 2,018-acre reservoir built by Illinois Power Company, and serves as a source of cooling water in operating a nearby electric generating station. Baldwin Lake is open to the public for fishing and is a major part of the area's waterfowl refuge.

Where: Located between Rts. 3, 146 and 127. The State Forest Road intersects Rt. 3 at Wolf Lake.

Birds: This is an excellent place to visit during spring migration. Watch for warblers, vireos, thrushes and tanagers. This state forest may have the highest concentration of breeding Worm-eating Warblers. Hooded Warblers and Ovenbirds can also be found here, along with Scarlet and Summer Tanagers, Baltimore and Orchard Orioles, Blue Grosbeaks and Dickcissels. Check the pines along the blacktop road for Pine Warblers, and Red-breasted Nuthatches. Trail of Tears State Forest also co-sponsors the annual hummingbird festival during the 1st weekend of August every year. For more information call: (618) 833-4910.

18. Union County Conservation Area

Where: Located east of Rt. 3 in western Union County.

Birds: This conservation area covers 6,202 acres in the Lower Mississippi River bottomlands division of Illinois. Of the 5,350-acre land area, approximately 2,400 acres are cultivated. This area is best known for the phenomenal flock of Canada Geese and other waterfowl, which winter over in this area. More than 2,400 acres of corn, sunflower, wheat, clover and other crops are left standing to provide food for these birds. Also watch for Pileated Woodpeckers and Red-headed Woodpeckers, which are common in the woodlands. Watch the wetlands for shorebirds and waterfowl. Mississippi Kites are present most of the summer, as well as Fish Crows and Red-shouldered Hawks. For more information call: (618) 833-5175.

19. Thebes Park

Where: Located off of Rt. 3, overlooking river.

Birds: Great place to watch for Mississippi Kites as they hunt for insects in summer. In winter months, watch for gulls and ducks along the shores of the river and for Bald Eagles roosting in trees along the river.

10. Turkey Bluff State Fish & Wildlife Area

Where: Turkey Bluffs State Fish and Wildlife Area is located south of Chester. Access from Highway 3 (Illinois Great River Road).

Birds: Picnic areas and scenic overlooks afford views of soaring eagles and hawks during fall migration.

11. Kinkaid Lake State Fish & Wildlife Area

Where: From Murphysboro, located W. 6 miles on Rt. 149, then N. 4 miles on Rt. 151, to recreation area entrance, and turn right. Access the trail system from two trailheads: one is located on the east side of 151 just before the recreation area entrance and the other is at the east side of the Hike-in campground.

Birds: In the upland forests watch for common woodland songbirds, and along the water's edge watch for herons, shorebirds, and Belted Kingfishers.

12. Middle Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge - Wilkinson Island Division

Where: Wilkinson Island is about 37 miles north of Cape Girardeau, Missouri. From Jones Ridge, Illinois, take Jones Ridge Road south approximately two miles to the levee road. From this point, the refuge boundary follows the base of the levee approximately one mile west and two miles southeast.

Birds: Over 200 species of birds visit the refuge throughout the year. October, November, March and April are the best months to see large concentrations of waterfowl. Shorebird and warbler migrations usually peak around the first week of May. Bald Eagles are common in the winter as they gather near the river to feed in open water areas. Herons and egrets are commonly seen during the summer feeding in refuge wetlands.

13. Little Grand Canyon

Where: From Murphysboro, go south 6 miles on Rt. 127 to Etherton Road, and then west 5 miles, following directions to the site.

Birds: Located within the Shawnee National Forest, this National Landmark site is a large box canyon with vertical overhanging walls. There are a diversity of ecosystems, including wet and dry sandstone outcroppings, mixed forests and prairies. Walk the 3.6-mile loop for excellent birding opportunities along the blufftop as well as in the canyon. Birding is good during both spring and fall migrations for neo-tropical songbirds. Some year-round highlight species include Red-shouldered Hawks and Pileated Woodpeckers. This is an excellent location for breeding neo-tropical songbirds.

14. Oakwood Bottoms / Greentree Reservoir / Fountain Bluff

Where: Drive on Rt. 3 south of the intersection with Rt. 149 about 6 miles. There will be a sign for Oakwood Bottoms on the east side of the road. The entrance to Fountain Bluff is .75 miles north of Oakwood Bottoms and s on the west side of Rt. 3. Fountain Bluff is an undeveloped site.

Birds: Best birding is by walking the gravel access road that cuts directly from the south from the main entrance road. The levee is not always the easiest place to bird, as they are not mowed and snakes deter many people. This area has numerous migratory waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors and resident lowland forest birds. This is one of the best areas in southern Illinois to find Yellow-crowned Night Herons, and Fish Crows are common here as well. The Fountain Bluff area is excellent for woodland birds, including Pileated Woodpeckers, Worm-eating Warblers, thrushes, and other migrant vireos and warblers.

15. Cave Creek

Where: Located approximately 1 mile north of Pomona is Cave Creek. Just after crossing the bridge one can park along the road and walk the old gravel bed railroad to the east for several miles. This is known as one of southern Illinois' most popular birding sites, as most of the breeding warblers in southern IL are located here and in good numbers. Most birders traveling to southern Illinois include a stop at Cave Creek.

Birds: Watch for: Redstart, Cerulean, Kentucky, Hooded, Worm-eating, Pine, Parula, Prairie, Blue-winged, Prothonotary, Yellow-throated, Chat, Black-and-white, and Ovenbird. Formerly a spot for the elusive Swanson's Warbler. Good spot for Mississippi Kite, Fish Crow, Acadian Flycatcher, Scarlet and Summer Tanager, Blue Grosbeak and Red-eyed, Yellow-throated, White-eyed and Warbling Vireo. This is an excellent passerine migration location as well.

16. La Rue Pine Hills Ecological Area

Where: On Rt. 3, turn east at Wolf Lake and drive .6 miles to a gravel road (watch for sign to Pine Hills) turn N. onto Pine Hills Road.

Birds: Located in the Shawnee National Forest, this area is noted as one of the most diverse vegetative areas of the Midwest. There are 2,000 acres with more than 1,000 plant species representing northern, southern, eastern, and western U.S. 40 species rare in Illinois. La Rue Swamp is one of the northernmost southern swamps. Watch and listen for thrushes, Scarlet and Summer Tanagers, Orchard and Baltimore Orioles, Whip-poor-wills, Worm-eating Warblers, Kentucky Warblers, Red-eyed Vireos, Mississippi Kites, herons, egrets, Bald Eagles, Red-shouldered and Cooper's Hawks. In spring, a portion of the road is closed to vehicular traffic to allow for safe passage for hundreds of reptiles and amphibians. Excellent photo opportunities for hard to see snake species!

17. Trail of Tears State Forest

Where: Located between Rts. 3, 146 and 127. The State Forest Road intersects Rt. 3 at Wolf Lake.

Birds: This is an excellent place to visit during spring migration. Watch for warblers, vireos, thrushes and tanagers. This state forest may have the highest concentration of breeding Worm-eating Warblers. Hooded Warblers and Ovenbirds can also be found here, along with Scarlet and Summer Tanagers, Baltimore and Orchard Orioles, Blue Grosbeaks and Dickcissels. Check the pines along the blacktop road for Pine Warblers, and Red-breasted Nuthatches. Trail of Tears State Forest also co-sponsors the annual hummingbird festival during the 1st weekend of August every year. For more information call: (618) 833-4910.

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Audubon

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