

THE HOTSPOTS

Madison County has diverse geology, elevation, and physical conditions, creating a wide range of habitats for a diversity of birds. We have selected locations with different seasonal peaks, different resident and migrant bird population. Regardless of where you're coming from and what you're looking for, this brochure and the accompanying digital materials should help. Scan the QR codes to get to the website.

RIVER ROAD

River Road, which starts in Hot Springs, under the 25/70 bridge, and stretches 6 miles north (downstream), offers some of the best opportunities for diversity in the county.



Wood Duck

Watch for eagles, Ospreys and 5 species of swallows over the river. During the winter months check the river for waterfowl such as Hooded and Common Mergansers. Watch the edges of the French Broad for Wood Ducks. In springtime Spotted and Solitary Sandpipers move through. Yellow-throated Warblers, Northern Parulas, Orchard and Baltimore Orioles regularly nest throughout the valley. Listen for rails and White-eyed Vireos near the marshes past Murray Branch.

MAX PATCH

Max Patch Mountain and Max Patch Road are great places to visit, starting in late April through the fall. Heading up the hill to Max Patch, stop in wooded areas to hear Wood



Thrushes, Black-throated Blue Warbler and Hooded Warblers. As you approach the top, listen for Veerys. Ravens are regulars at the summit. Migrating hawks including kettles of Broad-winged Hawks



Chestnut-sided Warbler

come through in spring and fall. During the spring migration look for American Redstarts, Blackburnian Warblers, Canada Warblers, and Chestnut Sided Warblers around the Max Patch parking area and along the Horse Trail. Check out the pond area for Acadian Flycatchers. In the summer listen for Peewees and Least Flycatchers in the woods.

SANDY MUSH GAMELANDS

Sandy Mush Game Lands is a well known spot for birding due to the diverse habitat, including well managed native grassland. Sandy Mush Game Lands is 2600 acre comprising several nearby land tracks. There are a number of parking areas and well developed trails throughout.



It's definitely the best place around to see early successional species like Grasshopper Sparrows, Blue Grosbeaks, Savannah Sparrows, Common Yellowthroat, Prairie Warblers and Yellow Breasted Chats. There are actively maintained Kestrel nesting boxes on Sandy Mush Game Lands, so please keep a very respectful distance from any nesting activity.



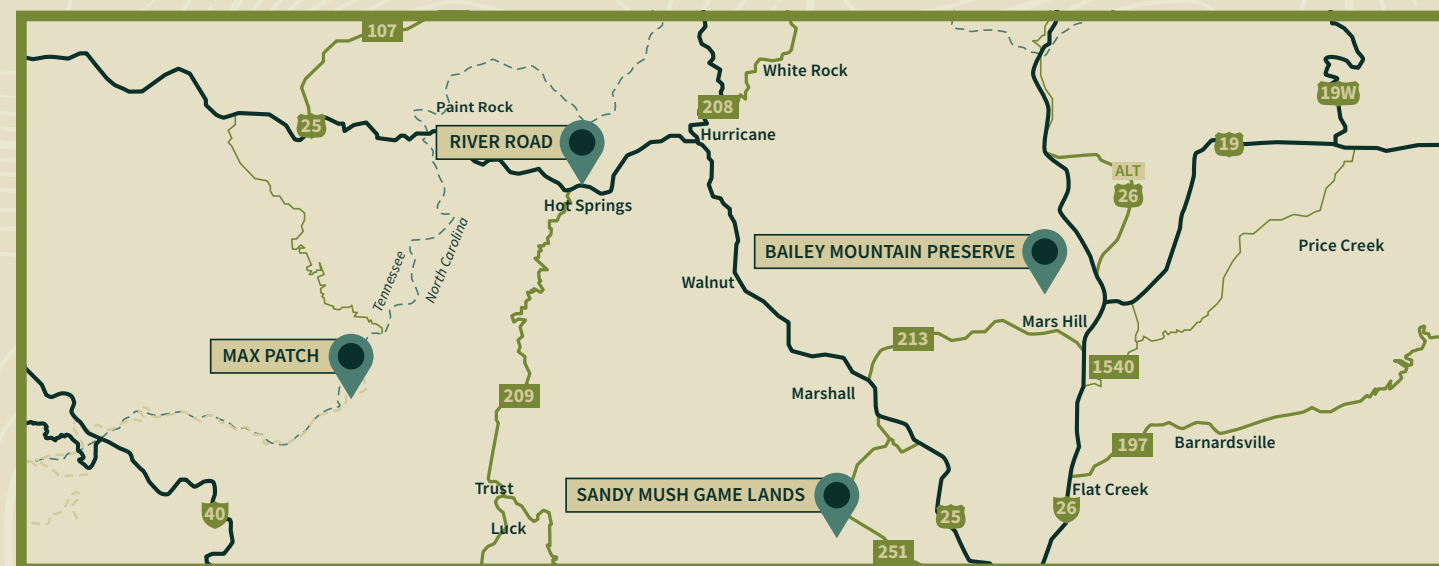
Yellow-breasted Chat

BAILEY MOUNTAIN PRESERVE

Bailey Mountain Preserve is a wonderful place to take a look at classic western North Carolina woodland and farm environments. There is a mix of habitat, including rich cove, woods edge and pastures. It's a great place for Black-thoated Green Warblers, Indigo Buntings, Yellow-breasted Chats, Brown Thrashers, Grey Cat Birds, Gold Finches, a variety of woodpeckers, wrens and sparrows.



Wood Thrush



BIRDING

in Madison County, NC

HOTSPOTS, RESOURCES, AND CHECKLIST



visitmadisoncounty.com
madisonnaturalheritage.org

Madison County, NC, Bird Checklist

DATE: _____
START TIME: _____
DURATION: _____
DISTANCE: _____
PARTY SIZE: _____

Generated using Global
Databases and Local Sources
in 2021: 219 Species

WATERFOWL

- ☐ Snow Goose
- ☐ Canada Goose
- ☐ Muscovy Duck (Domestic type)
- ☐ Wood Duck
- ☐ Blue-Winged Teal
- ☐ Northern Shoveler
- ☐ Gadwall
- ☐ Mallard (Domestic and wild type)
- ☐ Green-winged Teal
- ☐ Redhead
- ☐ Canvas Back
- ☐ Ring-necked Duck
- ☐ Lesser Scaup
- ☐ Bufflehead
- ☐ Hooded Merganser
- ☐ Common Merganser
- ☐ Red-breasted Merganser
- ☐ Ruddy Duck

GROUSE, QUAIL AND ALLIES

- ☐ Northern Bobwhite
- ☐ Ruffed Grouse
- ☐ Wild Turkey

GREBES

- ☐ Pie-billed Grebe
- ☐ Horned Grebe

PIGEONS AND DOVES

- ☐ Rock Pigeon
- ☐ Eurasian Collared-Dove
- ☐ Mourning Dove

CUCKOOS

- ☐ Yellow-billed Cuckoo
- ☐ Black-billed Cuckoo

NIGHTJARS

- ☐ Common Nighthawk
- ☐ Chuck-will's-widow
- ☐ Eastern Whip-poor-will

SWIFTS

- ☐ Chimney Swift

HUMMINGBIRDS

- ☐ Ruby-throated Hummingbird
- ☐ Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird

RAILS, GALLINULES, AND ALLIES

- ☐ American Coot
- ☐ Sora Rail

CRANES

- ☐ Sandhill Crane

SHOREBIRDS

- ☐ Whimbrel
- ☐ Killdeer
- ☐ American Woodcock
- ☐ Wilson's Snipe
- ☐ Buff-breasted Sandpiper
- ☐ Spotted Sandpiper
- ☐ Solitary Sandpiper
- ☐ Willet

GULLS, TERNS AND SKIMMERS

- ☐ Ring-billed Gull

LOONS

- ☐ Common Loon

CORMORANTS AND ANHINGAS

- ☐ Double-crested Cormorant

HERONS, IBIS, AND ALLIES

- ☐ Great Blue Heron
- ☐ Great Egret
- ☐ Little Blue Heron
- ☐ Cattle Egret
- ☐ Green Heron
- ☐ Least Bittern

- ☐ American Bittern
- ☐ Yellow-crowned Night-Heron
- ☐ White Ibis

VULTURES, HAWKS, AND ALLIES

- ☐ Black Vulture
- ☐ Turkey Vulture
- ☐ Osprey
- ☐ Golden Eagle
- ☐ Northern Harrier
- ☐ Sharp-shinned Hawk
- ☐ Cooper's Hawk
- ☐ Bald Eagle
- ☐ Red-shouldered Hawk
- ☐ Broad-winged Hawk
- ☐ Red-tailed Hawk

OWLS

- ☐ Eastern Screech Owl
- ☐ Great Horned Owl
- ☐ Barred Owl
- ☐ Short-eared Owl
- ☐ Long-eared Owl
- ☐ Northern Saw-whet Owl
- ☐ Barn Owl

KINGFISHERS

- ☐ Belted Kingfisher

WOODPECKERS

- ☐ Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
- ☐ Red-headed Woodpecker
- ☐ Red-bellied Woodpecker
- ☐ Downy Woodpecker
- ☐ Hairy Woodpecker
- ☐ Pileated Woodpecker
- ☐ Northern Flicker

FALCONS AND CARACARAS

- ☐ American Kestrel
- ☐ Merlin
- ☐ Peregrine Falcon

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS: PEWEES, KINGBIRDS AND ALLIES

- ☐ Eastern Wood-Pewee
- ☐ Yellow-bellied Flycatcher

- ☐ Acadian Flycatcher
- ☐ Alder Flycatcher
- ☐ Willow Flycatcher
- ☐ Alder/Willow Flycatcher (Traill's Flycatcher)
- ☐ Least Flycatcher
- ☐ Eastern Phoebe
- ☐ Great Crested Flycatcher
- ☐ Eastern Kingbird

VIREOS

- ☐ White-eyed Vireo
- ☐ Yellow-throated Vireo
- ☐ Philadelphia Vireo
- ☐ Blue-headed Vireo
- ☐ Warbling Vireo
- ☐ Red-eyed Vireo

JAYS, MAGPIES, CROWS, AND RAVENS

- ☐ Blue Jay
- ☐ American Crow
- ☐ Fish Crow
- ☐ Common Raven

TITS, CHICKADEES, AND TITMICE

- ☐ Carolina Chickadee
- ☐ Black-capped Chickadee
- ☐ Carolina/Black-capped Chickadee
- ☐ Tufted Titmouse

LARKS

- ☐ Horned Lark

MARTINS AND SWALLOWS

- ☐ Northern Rough-winged Swallow
- ☐ Purple Martin
- ☐ Tree Swallow
- ☐ Bank Swallow
- ☐ Barn Swallow
- ☐ Cliff Swallow

KINGLETS

- ☐ Golden-crowned Kinglet
- ☐ Ruby-crowned Kinglet

NUTHATCHES

- ☐ Red-breasted Nuthatch
- ☐ White-breasted Nuthatch
- ☐ Brown-headed Nuthatch

TREECREEPERS

- ☐ Brown Creeper

GNATCATCHERS

- ☐ Blue-gray Gnatcatcher

WRENS

- ☐ House Wren
- ☐ Winter Wren
- ☐ Sedge Wren
- ☐ Marsh Wren
- ☐ Carolina Wren

STARLINGS AND MYNAS

- ☐ European Starling

CATBIRDS, MOCKINGBIRDS, AND THRASHERS

- ☐ Gray Catbird
- ☐ Brown Thrasher
- ☐ Northern Mockingbird

THRUSHES

- ☐ Eastern Bluebird
- ☐ Veery
- ☐ Gray-cheeked Thrush
- ☐ Swainson's Thrush
- ☐ Hermit Thrush
- ☐ Wood Thrush
- ☐ American Robin

WAXWINGS

- ☐ Cedar Waxwing

OLD WORLD SPARROWS

- ☐ House Sparrow

WAGTAILS AND PIPITS

- ☐ American Pipit

FINCHES, EUPHONIAS, AND ALLIES

- ☐ Evening Grosbeak
- ☐ House Finch
- ☐ Purple Finch
- ☐ House/Purple Finch
- ☐ Red Crossbill

- ☐ Pine Siskin
- ☐ American Goldfinch

NEW WORLD SPARROWS

- ☐ Grasshopper Sparrow
- ☐ Chipping Sparrow
- ☐ Clay-colored Sparrow
- ☐ Field Sparrow
- ☐ Lark Sparrow
- ☐ Fox Sparrow
- ☐ Dark-eyed Junco
- ☐ White-crowned Sparrow
- ☐ White-throated Sparrow
- ☐ Vesper Sparrow
- ☐ Savannah Sparrow
- ☐ Song Sparrow
- ☐ Lincoln's Sparrow
- ☐ Swamp Sparrow
- ☐ Eastern Towhee

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT

- ☐ Yellow-breasted Chat

BLACKBIRDS

- ☐ Bobolink
- ☐ Eastern Meadowlark
- ☐ Orchard Oriole
- ☐ Baltimore Oriole
- ☐ Red-winged Blackbird
- ☐ Brown-headed Cowbird
- ☐ Rusty Blackbird
- ☐ Common Grackle

WOOD-WARBLERS

- ☐ Ovenbird
- ☐ Worm-eating Warbler
- ☐ Louisiana Waterthrush
- ☐ Northern Waterthrush
- ☐ Golden-winged Warbler
- ☐ Blue-winged Warbler
- ☐ Brewster's Warbler (hybrid)
- ☐ Black-and-white Warbler
- ☐ Prothonotary Warbler
- ☐ Swainson's Warbler
- ☐ Tennessee Warbler
- ☐ Nashville Warbler
- ☐ Orange-crowned Warbler
- ☐ Connecticut Warbler

- ☐ Mourning Warbler
- ☐ Kentucky Warbler
- ☐ Common Yellowthroat
- ☐ Hooded Warbler
- ☐ American Redstart
- ☐ Kirtlands Warbler
- ☐ Cape May Warbler
- ☐ Cerulean Warbler
- ☐ Northern Parula
- ☐ Magnolia Warbler
- ☐ Bay-breasted Warbler
- ☐ Blackburnian Warbler
- ☐ Yellow Warbler
- ☐ Chestnut-sided Warbler
- ☐ Blackpoll Warbler
- ☐ Black-throated Blue Warbler
- ☐ Palm Warbler
- ☐ Pine Warbler
- ☐ Yellow-rumped Warbler
- ☐ Yellow-throated Warbler
- ☐ Prairie Warbler
- ☐ Black-throated Green Warbler.
- ☐ Canada Warbler
- ☐ Wilson's Warbler

CARDINALS, GROSBEAKS, AND ALLIES

- ☐ Summer Tanager
- ☐ Scarlet Tanager
- ☐ Northern Cardinal
- ☐ Rose-breasted Grosbeak
- ☐ Blue Grosbeak
- ☐ Indigo Bunting
- ☐ Painted Bunting

CREDITS:

Blue Ridge Bird Observatory
Madison Natural Heritage
Madison County Tourism
Development Authority
Cover photo by Kmron
from Pexels