

# Come Enjoy Birding in the Mad River Valley!



From the rocky summit of Mount Abe to the cobbled shores of the Mad River, the Mad River Valley is rich with birding opportunities. The diversity of natural communities in the Valley is ideal for viewing a variety of bird species.

Nestled in the heart of the Green Mountains, the Mad River Valley has an abundance of northern forest natural community types. With acres of uninterrupted forest in the mountains, birders have the unique opportunity to witness neotropical migrants in their breeding grounds. Our Green Mountains are the home of such birds as the rare Bicknell's Thrush, the Blackpoll Warbler and the Golden-crowned Kinglet.

Journeying to the valley floor, one will find lush agricultural fields and grasslands where the American Woodcock and Bobolink are found. Alder swamps provide breeding grounds for the Yellow Warbler and Alder Flycatcher, while the Mad River provides a haven for Spotted Sandpipers, Common Mergansers and Warbling Vireos.

Our guide is meant to be used with the Mad River Valley Map & Guide (MRVM). All numbers and letters in parentheses refer to quadrants of the guide and to individual walk descriptions. The suggested birding routes listed here begin at the north end of the Mad River Valley in Moretown and finish at the south end in Warren.

We hope you enjoy our guide to birding in the Mad River Valley! Consider becoming a part of the Mad Birders - join our list serve by sending an email to:

[discussrequest@madbird.talknormal.net](mailto:discussrequest@madbird.talknormal.net)

---

**Many of these routes are dirt roads.  
Please be sure to pull off safely,  
walk on the shoulder, and remember  
these roads are well traveled.  
Be careful & aware of other drivers!**

---

## *Birding Routes Starting at North End of the Valley*

### Ward Hill Road

**Description:** A dirt road that connects to Dowsville Road by an unimproved roadway that may be travelled on foot. With open areas, woodlands and open water, Ward Hill is a great place to discover a variety of birds.

**Birds:** Fine-tune your ears as you walk listening for such birds as Chestnut-sided Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Hermit Thrush, & Ovenbird.

**Location:** Start at the intersection of Routes 100 & 100B (C,7). Drive north on Route 100 about 1/2 mile & turn left on Ward Hill Road. Stay right at the intersection & continue 3 miles. Park at the red gate & walk straight down unimproved road.

## Our partners in creating Birdwatching in the Mad River Valley

The Mad River Valley  
Chamber of Commerce  
The Mad River Path Association  
Audubon Vermont  
The Mad River Naturalist Program

### *Other Resources & Places of Interest:*

- Birdwatching in Vermont by Ted Murin & Bryan Pfeiffer
- Champlain Valley Birding Trail Map [www.lakechamplainbirding.org](http://www.lakechamplainbirding.org)
- Connecticut River Birding Trail Map [www.birdtrail.org](http://www.birdtrail.org)
- Green Mountain Audubon Center, Huntington 434-3068 [www.vt.audubon.org](http://www.vt.audubon.org)
- Birds of Vermont Museum, Huntington 434-2167
- Vermont Institute of Natural Science, East Montpelier & Quechee 802-457-2779

### **The Mad River Valley Map & Guide may be found at:**

Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce, Waitsfield  
The Tempest Bookstore, Waitsfield  
Or online at [www.madriverpath.com](http://www.madriverpath.com)

# Birdwatching in the Mad River Valley



**Created by  
the Mad Birders**

*Guide to be used in conjunction with the  
Mad River Valley Map & Guide published by  
Mad River Path Association*

## Pony Farm Road

**Description:** This route offers a mix of habitats, with ample pull-off spots. Be sure to explore the oxbows of the Mad River near Pony Farm and at the intersection of Meadow Road and North Road.

**Birds:** Drive slowly checking the meadows on both sides of the road for Eastern Meadowlarks, Killdeer, and American Pipits.

**Location:** Start just south of Moretown village on Pony Farm Road (C, 7) which turns into North Road and connects with Meadow Road. Use Meadow Road as a return to Route 100. You can also access the Mad River Path (D,7) from this driving loop or pick up the Center Fayston Road Loop (D,6) from Route 100.

---

## Center Fayston Road Loop

**Description:** A loop that provides ample opportunity for roadside parking with a variety of habitats including grasslands, woodlands, and a beaver pond. Stop to look at old logging landing sites & stream crossings.

**Birds:** American Kestrel, Ruffed Grouse, Pileated Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Evening Grosbeak, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Song Sparrow, Eastern Phoebe, Golden-crowned Kinglet

**Location:** Find the intersection of Route 100 and Center Fayston Road (D,6). Turn left at Kew-Vasseur Road and continue to Bragg Hill Road. At the intersection, turn left going down Bragg Hill Road to Route 100. Or, turn right continuing on Bragg Hill Road then left on Number 9 Road which connects with Route 17. Turn left on Route 17 to return to Waitsfield Village & Route 100. *Refer to Bragg Hill Road Walk (# 6).*

## Mad River Path/Greenway

**Description:** This easy walk follows the Mad River, offering a wonderful variety of wetland/river, shrubby thicket/edge, and grassland habitats.

**Birds:** Over sixty migrating and nesting species recorded including American Redstart, Yellow Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Warbling & Red-eyed Vireos, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested & Willow Flycatchers, Osprey, Bobolink, Indigo Bunting, Catbird, Great Blue Heron, Belted Kingfisher.

**Location:** Start at the Meadow Road parking lot (D,7). Cross the bridge and walk north or south. Alternates include parking at Tremblay Road or walking the west side of the river from Meadow Road. *Refer to Mad River Greenway Walk (#1).*

---

## East Warren Road

**Description:** This route offers mostly grasslands and farm fields with some shrubby thickets/edges. This road is well traveled, so be sure to watch the traffic and pull off in safe locations. Birding is good at the pond area just beyond Round Barn Inn about 2 miles outside of the village.

**Birds:** Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Savannah & Chipping Sparrows, Bobolink, Eastern Bluebird and American Woodcock.

**Location:** Start at the intersection of Route 100 and Bridge Street in Waitsfield Village (E,6). Follow Bridge Street as it becomes East Warren Road. Continue for about 6 miles to East Warren Four Corners.

---

## East Warren Four Corners

**Description:** With a variety of choices from the four corners, this dirt road is bordered by grasslands, shrubby thickets and edges. Stop at the Schoolhouse Market, just off of the four corners, for wine & cheese. Check the parking lot for orioles and sparrows. Parking on the side of the roads and walking will yield the best birding or drive slowly with the windows down.

**Birds:** *Senor Road & Fuller Hill Road* – Willow Flycatcher, Bobolink, Chipping & Savannah Sparrow, swallow species around barns, Blackburnian, Chestnut-sided, Black-throated Blue, & Black-throated Green Warblers, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and Indigo Bunting. Redtail and Broad-winged Hawks have also been seen.

*Blueberry Lake* – Many species of migrating waterfowl seen during spring and fall including loons, mergansers, scoters & Long-tailed Ducks. Songbirds like the American Redstart, Northern Parula & Magnolia Warbler.

**Location:** Start at East Warren Four Corners (G,6).

A. Drive east on Roxbury Mountain Road, take first right on Senor Road. Park & walk about 0.5 miles to Poor Farm Road, checking barns, fencerows, and farm fields. There are several swampy areas where flycatchers nest. Or, continue driving south and turn right on Fuller Hill Road. About 0.5 miles on Fuller Hill Road, stop to explore trails marked in blue (part of Blueberry Lake Cross Country Center). Follow Fuller Hill Road west to Warren Village, stopping to explore promising habitat. *Refer to Fuller Hill Loop (#8).*

B. Continue south on East Warren Road. Take first right onto Plunkton Road and continue to Blueberry Lake. Park at the north or south end of the lake. Check out the lake, edges, and the woodland trail that follows a brook at the dam outlet.

---

## Sherman/Bowen Roads

**Description:** This route is an out & back walking opportunity that begins with grasslands on both sides, passes a farm with a pond, and shortly becomes a mixed forest. Wear sturdy walking shoes and bring insect repellent.

**Birds:** Early spring sightings include Eastern Bluebird, American Kestrel, Killdeer, Bobolink, a variety of warblers, vireos, woodpeckers, thrushes.

**Location:** Start at the intersection of Route 100 and Bridge Street in Waitsfield Village (E,6), follow Bridge Street as it becomes East Warren Road. After about 4 miles take a sharp left on Sherman Road, park on the side of the road. As you walk, you will come to the intersection of Sherman and Bowen Roads.

## The Long Trail & Lincoln Gap Road

**Description:** This road is not open in winter and is steep and narrow with many turns. Driving through Lincoln Gap will give you a wonderful glimpse into our northern forest habitat. There are places to stop and walk as well.

**Birds:** Look for higher elevation birds like Golden-crowned Kinglets, Blackpoll, Magnolia, Nashville, & Yellow-rumped Warblers, Swainson's Thrush, and the elusive Bicknell's Thrush. In open areas with views look for soaring birds like Turkey Vultures, raptors such as Red-tailed, Broad-winged, & Cooper's Hawks, and if you get lucky, Peregrine Falcons.

**Location:** Turn onto Lincoln Gap Road where it intersects with Route 100 in the town of Warren (G, 5). As the road begins to climb, consider stopping at Forest Road on your left for a pleasant walk in the woods. Near the top of the gap, you will see parking lots on your left. Spend some time listening and looking from the parking lot before heading out on the Long Trail. Your choice - a pleasant, easy hike south to Sunset Ridge (#22) or a more strenuous, longer hike north towards Battell Shelter & Mount Abe (#20).

Note that you may also easily access the Long Trail from the Appalachian Gap on Route 17(D,3), but the hike south is very steep (#19). Or, a third way, from route 100 turn onto North Fayston Road (D, 7) driving until there is a sharp left turn, continue straight and the road becomes Big Basin Road. Drive to the end, park and follow the signs for Burnt Rock (#18).