

WELLINGTON NORTH BIRDING TRAIL

Bobolinks to Snipes



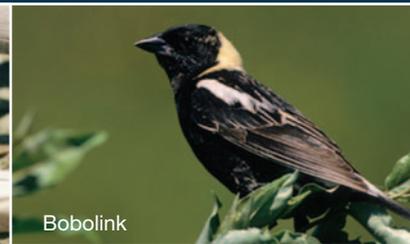
Bluebird



Baltimore Oriole



Marsh Wren



Bobolink



Kildeer



Female Cardinal

FROM BOBOLINKS TO SNIPES -- BIRDING IN WELLINGTON NORTH

Identifying birds by sight and sound is a lifelong learning experience and a healthy outdoor pastime for millions of people. Approximately 145 bird species nest in Wellington North in late spring and summer due to the diversity of habitat from grassland to marsh. Dozens more species pass through on migration. Thousands of waterfowl stage in fields and wetlands in autumn. Far-northern species such as Snow Bunting, Rough-legged Hawk, and Snowy Owl are winter regulars.

LUTHER MARSH WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

Located in the eastern portion of Wellington North, the 13,000-plus-acre Luther Marsh Wildlife Management Area, jointly managed by the Grand River Conservation Authority and Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, is one of Ontario's birding gems, with 135 nesting species documented in the Atlas of Breeding Birds of Ontario, 2001-2005. Portions of the LMWMA are designated as Sanctuary.

Luther Marsh provides critically important habitat for waterfowl, herons, rails and many other bird species. It's a haven for a variety of mammals, reptiles, amphibians and insects. Rare plants abound. The area includes lakes, ponds, fens, bogs, marshes, grasslands and extensive hardwood and softwood forests. The lake was created in 1954 by the Grand River Conservation Commission and since 1966 has been managed by the GRCA, which continues to acquire, restore, enhance, and protect valuable wetland, woodland and grassland habitat in the area.

TAKE CARE

A number of locations indicated on the map require hiking on uneven ground where footing can be difficult. Please wear appropriate footwear, dress for the weather and use discretion. Participation is entirely at your own risk. For the mobility challenged, many perimeter roads around Luther Marsh offer excellent birding opportunities. The nearest gasoline stations are in Mount Forest and Arthur. The nearest hospital is in Mount Forest. Refreshments are available in Damascus and Conn while family restaurants, fine dining and shopping can be found in both Mount Forest and Arthur.

BE A BIRDING AMBASSADOR

Enjoy your birding but please remember at all times to put the welfare of birds first. Whether you're a casual birder, keen lister, photographer or conducting serious scientific research, be a birding ambassador.

Some birds tolerate human activity, but most become skittish if approached. It varies by species and the time of year. Migrants may be tired and hungry. Ensure your actions don't interfere with their resting and feeding. Around nests, use common sense and extreme caution. A good maxim to follow - always observe birds from far enough away that they feel non-threatened and continue with their daily activities.

RESPECT FOR LANDOWNERS

Respect the rights of public and private landowners and do not trespass on private property without prior permission from the landowner. Leave gates as you find them and do not damage fences. Use trails wherever possible to avoid tramping vegetation.

Respect posted signs in conservation areas. All areas indicated as Sanctuary in the Luther Marsh Wildlife Management Area are completely off limits. Penalties for trespassing in a Sanctuary are substantial.

PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS

Many birds can be photographed safely from a distance by using a long telephoto lens (400 mm or more) or spotting scope. If the birds become jittery, you're too close. Retreat immediately. Avoid using a flash around owls.

Do not harass birds by deliberately flushing them from cover. Tape recordings of songs and calls and the use of other lures to attract birds are rarely warranted. In popular birding areas these and similar actions may stress birds on feeding or breeding territories.

RARE SIGHTINGS

Should you find a rare breeding bird, there's no obligation to tell other birders. Record the details of your discovery (date, time, location, description of bird) and consider reporting it to one of the organizations noted in this map. It's generally best to avoid visiting sites of rare breeding birds unless the birds can be viewed without disturbance from a distance.

Think carefully before reporting a rare bird sighting. Ask yourself: Is it indeed a rarity? Would a crowd stress the bird? Is it located where many birders, perhaps over a period of days, can observe it safely from a distance? Is parking nearby? Will area residents be disturbed? Will habitat be damaged?

If the bird is on private property, talk with the property owner about your find and explain the issues, particularly that birders may appear at any time of day or night. If the property owner agrees that the bird and its location may be reported, confirm where birders may stand to view the bird, any restrictions on time of day, and areas off limit. Non-birders may be surprised at the number of people who appear. If you inform other birders, give precise directions, instructions and if possible a telephone number.

A number of the above points have been modified from the code of ethics of the Ontario Field Ornithologists, an organization many Ontario birders choose to join.

CONTACTS:

Grand River Conservation Authority www.grandriver.ca
Ministry of Natural Resources www.mnr.gov.on.ca
Ontario Field Ornithologists www.ofo.ca
Bird Studies Canada www.bsc-eoc.org
Canadian Wildlife Service www.on.ec.ca/wildlife
Ducks Unlimited Canada www.ducks.ca
Township of Wellington North www.wellington-north.com

Reporting an active nest: Ontario Nest Records Scheme, Ornithology, Department of Natural History, Royal Ontario Museum www.birdsontario.org/onrs/onrsmain.html
Reporting a rare bird: The Ontario Bird Records Committee, Ontario Field Ornithologists www.ofo.ca

WINTER BIRDING

Check wind-swept areas throughout Wellington North for flocks of Snow Bunting and Horned Lark. Rough-legged Hawk and Red-tailed Hawk perch in trees overlooking fields. Northern Shrike hunt from exposed perches near brushy areas. Snowy Owl perch on fence posts and drifts in open areas. Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, American Tree Sparrow, Golden-crowned Kinglet and Blue Jay inhabit forests. By late February Great Horned Owl are nesting in deciduous forests. Area around B on the map may hold Common Redpoll, Red Crossbill, White-winged Crossbill, Purple Finch, Pine Grosbeak.



The Township of Wellington North

View our web-site to download extra copies of the Butter Tart Trail™ award winning map and to discover more tourist attractions and events in The Township of Wellington North. www.wellington-north.com
519.848.3620 866.848.3620



Grand River Conservation Authority

Luther Marsh in Wellington North is just one of 12 beautiful Conservation areas operated by the GRCA. Open May to October
519.928.2832 866.900.4722

Indigo Bunting photo and text by Lionel Gould



The Township of Wellington North

www.wellington-north.com
519.848.3620 866.848.3620

1. 43°57.711N 080°24.030W

Main entrance to Luther Marsh Wildlife Management Area, Side Road 21-22. The lake is viewable from the parking lot.

A daily or seasonal pass is required to hike on GRCA property within the LMWMA. Access is permitted at map locations 1 through 6. Seasonal Passes may be purchased at the main gate (map location 1) or by calling 1.519.928.2832. The gate is not staffed; please have coins and small bills. A privy is located near the gate.

Habitat: Observation tower overlooking lake. Hiking trails along lake, plus road north across dam and south through coniferous forest. Interior roads closed to vehicles during nesting season.

Look for: Canada Goose, Trumpeter Swan, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Ring-billed Gull, plus many species of ducks particularly in autumn. Along shorelines Great Blue Heron, Marsh Wren, Swamp Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Yellowthroat. In forests Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Yellow Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Pine Warbler.

Note: Designated Sanctuaries in the LMWMA are closed to the public. Please remain on roads.

2. 43°56.020N 080°23.588W

Mallard Pond, 3.2 kilometres south of main entrance to LMWMA. Entrance at bend where Side Road 21-22 turns into Concession Road 6-7. Small off-road parking lot.

Habitat: Large pond surrounded by forest and brushy fields.

Look for: Wood Duck, Gadwall, Mallard, Ring-necked Duck, Hooded Merganser, Pied-billed Grebe, American Bittern, Green Heron, Virginia Rail, Black Tern.

Note: Trail separates pond from brushy habitat and leads to coniferous forest and lake.

3. 43°58.535N 080°24.224W

Monticello Wetland, entrance on Side Road 21-22 approximately .7 kilometres south of crossroads in Monticello. Sign at entrance to small off-road parking lot.

Habitat: Large ponds surrounded by fields with scattered trees.

Look for: Gadwall, American Wigeon, American Black Duck, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Hooded Merganser, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Northern Harrier, American Kestrel, Sora, Sandhill Crane, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, Wilson's Snipe, Black Tern, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow.

Note: Limited trails. Three wildlife viewing mounds strategically located overlooking ponds.

4. 43°58.852N 080°25.917W

1/2 kilometre south of intersection of Line 12 and East Luther-West Luther Townline. Townline is single-lane summer road. Park carefully alongside road - the ditches are deep.

Habitat: Ponds and drainage ditches surrounded by tamarack, mixed pine and spruce forest. GRCA sign. Short trail with uneven footing leads into wetland.

Look for: Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Black-throated Green Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Swamp Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, American Goldfinch.

Note: Excellent birding along Townline south to Country Road 15. At bridges check for Tree Swallow, Rough-winged Swallow, Yellow Warbler.

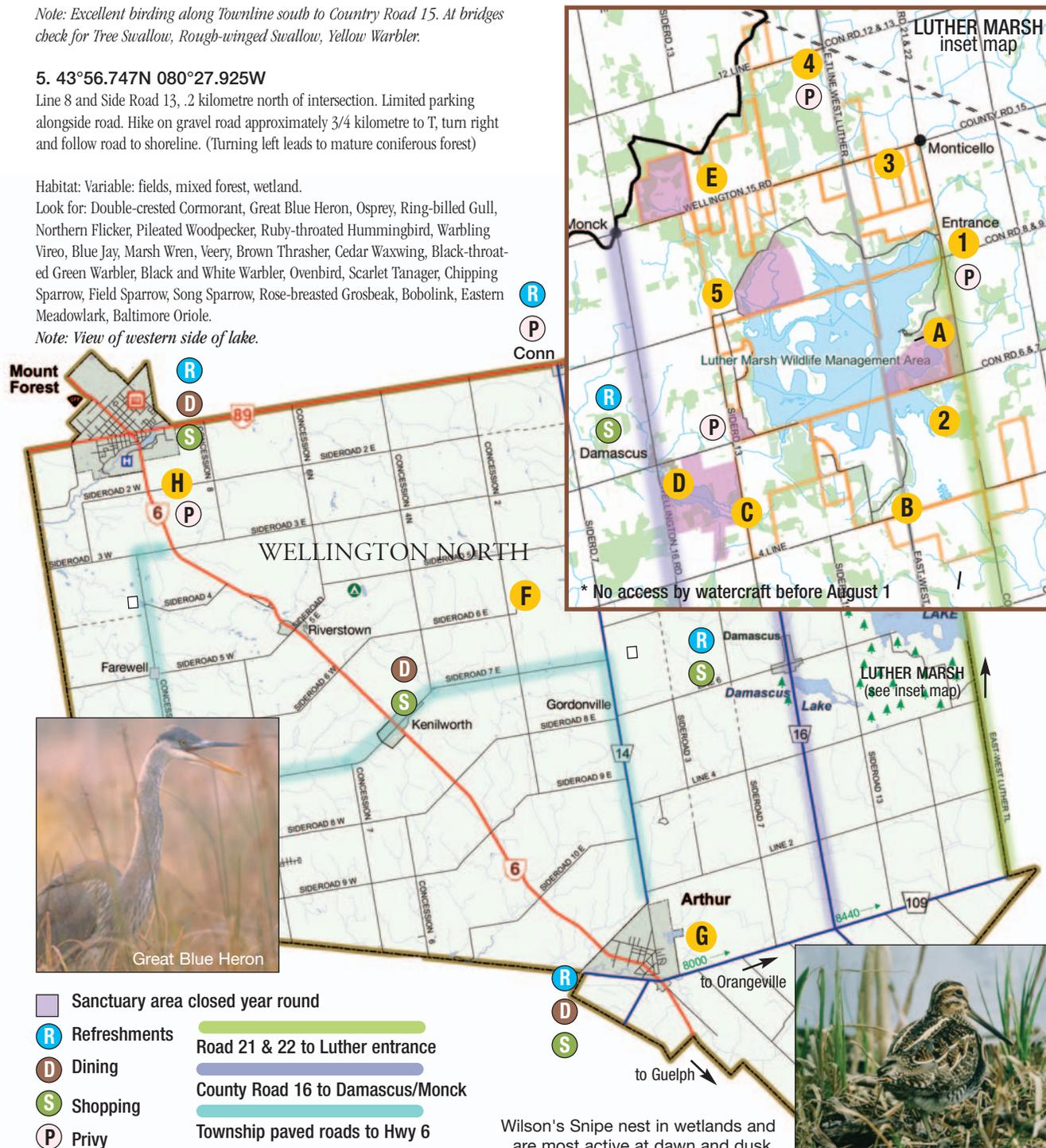
5. 43°56.747N 080°27.925W

Line 8 and Side Road 13, .2 kilometre north of intersection. Limited parking alongside road. Hike on gravel road approximately 3/4 kilometre to T, turn right and follow road to shoreline. (Turning left leads to mature coniferous forest)

Habitat: Variable: fields, mixed forest, wetland.

Look for: Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Osprey, Ring-billed Gull, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Warbling Vireo, Blue Jay, Marsh Wren, Veery, Brown Thrasher, Cedar Waxwing, Black-throated Green Warbler, Black and White Warbler, Ovenbird, Scarlet Tanager, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, Baltimore Oriole.

Note: View of western side of lake.



* GPS coordinates based on NAD 83

A. 43°56.974N 080°23.792W

Side Road 21-22, 1.5 kilometres south of main entrance to LMWMA. Limited parking alongside road.

Habitat: Swamp on west side, fields on east.

Wood Duck, Mallard, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Black-crowned Night Heron, Sandhill Crane, Belted Kingfisher, Eastern Kingbird, Red-winged Blackbird.

Note: Often excellent views of egrets.



B. 43°54.280N 080°24.579W

Corner of Line 4 and East-West Luther Townline. Limited parking at corner.

Habitat: Tamarack and spruce bog with some open wetland.

Look for: Ruffed Grouse, Green Heron, Downy Woodpecker, Least Flycatcher, Tree Swallow, White-breasted Nuthatch, Marsh Wren, Pine Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat, White-throated Sparrow, American Goldfinch.

Note: Hike road in both directions. No access to this part of LMWMA during nesting season.

C. 43°54.271N 080°27.376W

Eastern end of Damascus Reservoir, 1.7 kilometres south from intersection of Side Road 13 and Line 6. Limited parking alongside road.

Habitat: Wetland surrounded by mixed forest.

Look for: Canada Goose, Mallard, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Cooper's Hawk, Sora, American Woodcock, Belted Kingfisher, Tree Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, Cedar Waxwing.

Note: No Trespassing. Area closed to public. Drive south on Side Road 13 and check fields for Eastern Bluebird, American Kestrel, Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark.

D 43°54.645N 080°28.842W

Western end of Damascus Reservoir .4 kilometres south of Damascus on Wellington Road 16. Limited parking alongside road.

Habitat: Lake surrounded by mixed forest.

Look for: During spring and fall migrations, Canada Goose, possibly Mute Swan, Mallard, Ring-necked Duck, Hooded Merganser. If water level is low exposing mud flats, check for Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, migrating Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs.

Note: No Trespassing. Area closed to public.

E 43°58.525N 080°26.153W

Wellington County 15 from 1/2 kilometre east of Monck to Monticello. Parking alongside road.

Habitat: Shrubby wetlands, ponds, grassy meadows and mixed forest along both sides of road.

Look for: Great Blue Heron, Northern Harrier, American Kestrel, Virginia Rail, Sora, Upland Sandpiper, American Woodcock, Northern Flicker, Alder Flycatcher, Willow Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Eastern Kingbird, Tree Swallow, Eastern Bluebird, Yellow Warbler, Vesper Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Indigo Bunting.

Note: Excellent birding both sides of road. Much of the area is a Sanctuary and closed to public year round.

F. 43°56.837N 080°34.301W

Side Road 5E, 1 kilometre west of Wellington Road 14. Limited parking alongside road.

Habitat: Mature pine, spruce, cedar forest with some hardwoods on higher ground, and two small wetlands. Extensive trails lead to access points off Grey Road 14 and Concession 2.

Look for: Ruffed Grouse, Wild Turkey, Green Heron, Turkey Vulture, Cooper's Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Great Horned Owl, Blue Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, Brown Creeper, Winter Wren, Marsh Wren, Veery, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Pine Warbler, Common Yellow-throat.

Note: Gordon and Derrynane Tracts sign at entrance. If the farm field across from entrance (private property) is in fallow, it's excellent for Northern Harrier, American Kestrel, Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow.

G. 43°50.478N 080°31.749W

Arthur Sewage Lagoons. In Arthur head north on County Road 14 and turn east on gravel road opposite Township of Wellington North Works Department building. Limited parking near gate. Access to lagoons is prohibited. Excellent birding can be found along the trail.

Habitat: Three cells and two ponds surrounded by farm fields.

Look for: Canada Goose, Ring-billed Gull, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, variety of ducks during spring and fall migrations. The southeast pond may hold shorebirds.

Note: Access to the lagoons is strictly prohibited, but excellent birding along the rail line and the side of the lagoon.

H. 43°58.530N 080°43.544W

Murphy's Park, east side of Highway 6, south of Saugeen River, Mount Forest. Parking lot.

Habitat: Mixed forest along south side of Saugeen River. Mount Forest Walking Trail approximately 1/2 kilometre along south side of Saugeen River. Observation platform overlooking water midway along trail.

Look for: Canada Goose, Mallard, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Ring-billed Gull, Caspian Tern, Least Flycatcher, Red-eyed Vireo, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Baltimore Oriole.

Note: Accessible by wheelchair. Privy beside parking lot.