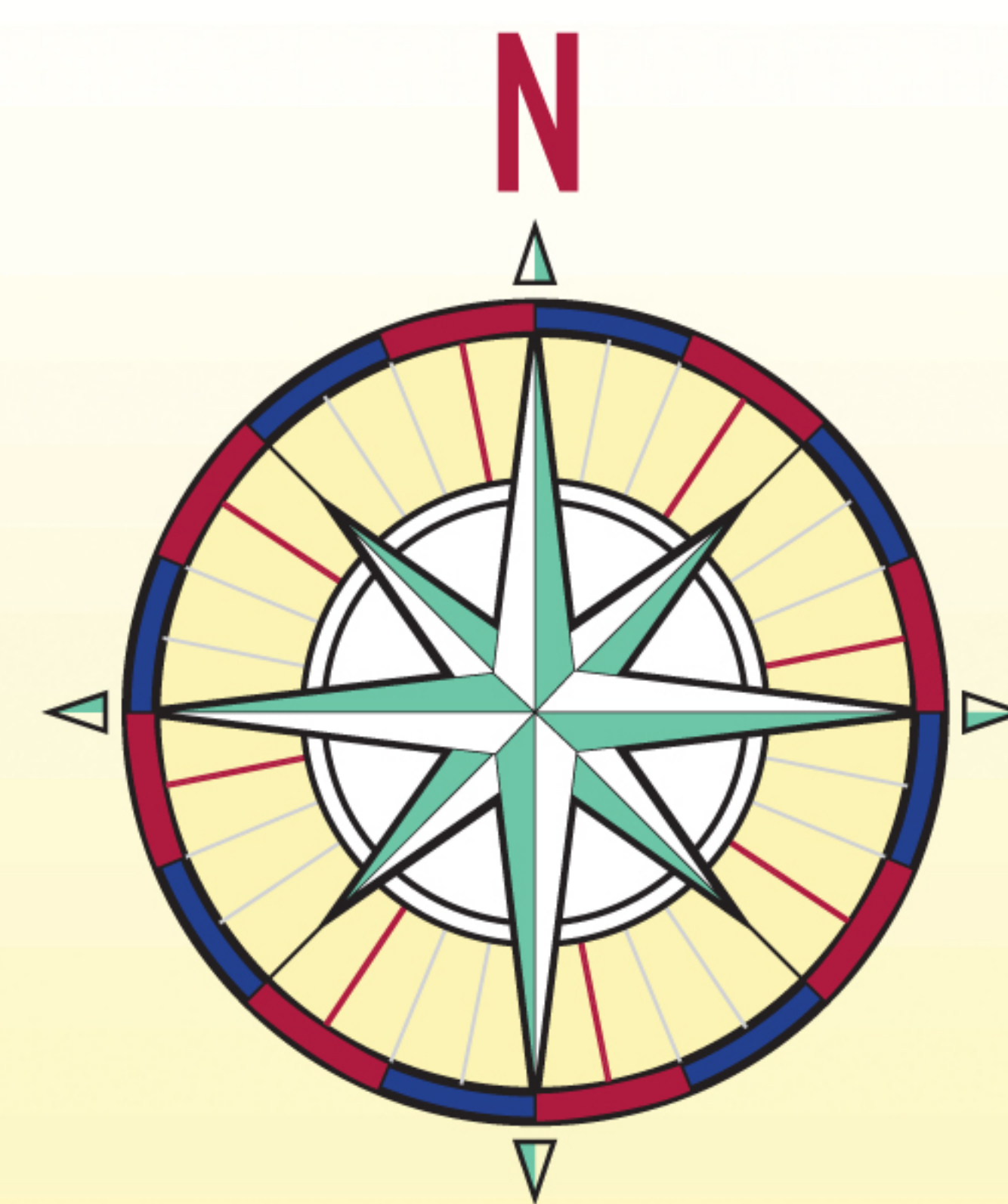


BERRIEN COUNTY BIRDING DESTINATIONS

BIRDING DESTINATIONS



- 1 New Buffalo Public Beach
GPS: N41°48.05, W86°44.83
- 2 Galien River County Park
GPS: N41°48.05, W86°43.09
www.berriencounty.org/parks
- 3 Union Pier Overlook
GPS: N41°49.69, W86°42.24
- 4 Lakeside Overlook
GPS: N41°51.11, W86°40.33
- 5 Forest Lawn Road Floodplain & Kesling Nature Preserve
GPS: N41°46.61, W86°39.82
www.swmlc.org/kesling.htm
- 6 Three Oaks Treatment Ponds
GPS: N41°48.16, W86°37.78
- 7 Warren Woods State Park
GPS: N41°49.67, W86°37.40
www.michigandnr.com/parksandtrails
- 8 Warren Dunes State Park
GPS: N41°54.10, W86°32.15
www.michigandnr.com/parksandtrails
- 9 Grand Mere State Park
N42°00.21, W86°32.15
www.michigandnr.com/parksandtrails
- 10 Silver Beach County Park
GPS: N42°06.64, W86°29.19
- 11 Tiscornia Beach Park
GPS: N42°06.93, W86°29.25
- 12 Jean Klock Park
GPS: N42°07.43, W86°28.31
- 13 Brown Sanctuary
GPS: N42°08.50, W86°24.92
www.sarett.com (269) 927-4832
- 14 Sarett Nature Center
N42°09.34, W86°22.74
www.sarett.com (269) 927-4832
- 15 Love Creek County Park & Nature Center
GPS: N41°57.09, W86°17.90
www.berriencounty.org/parks (269) 471-2617
- 16 Fernwood Botanical Garden & Nature Preserve
GPS: N41°51.96, W86°20.40
www.fernwoodbotanical.org (269) 695-6491
- 17 Mud Lake Bog Preserve
GPS: N41°49.63, W86°26.16

As Michigan's southwestern-most county, Berrien is a well known destination for sandy Lake Michigan beaches, winery tours, backroads bicycling, summer festivals and more. It is also an excellent destination for quality birding experiences!

Berrien County features a diversity of inland forests, wetlands and agricultural areas bordered on the west by Lake Michigan and spectacular wooded dunes. This diverse medley of habitats, proximity to the southern end of Lake Michigan and an active birding community has resulted in an exceptional Michigan county list – 353 species have been recorded here through 2011 – and it has made Berrien County a popular destination for birders from throughout Michigan and the Midwest for many years.

This brochure is by no means a comprehensive guide to birding in Berrien County, but rather a summary of some of the most popular and productive destinations. Those intent on exploring Berrien County may also want to contact any of the three nature centers listed for additional birding

information or visit the Berrien Birding Club's web page (go to www.berriencounty.org/parks and click the "birding" link) for additional information and a list of upcoming birding events. *Good birding!*



1 The **New Buffalo Public Beach** at the mouth of the Galien River is one of several excellent shoreline access locations in Berrien County to watch for **loons, grebes, geese, ducks, gulls** and **terns** during the spring and fall migration periods. The rocky jetty regularly hosts the rare **Purple Sandpiper** in late fall and in some winters it is possible to find a **Snowy Owl** perched here. While this is a popular summer tourist destination, early mornings can still be worth a visit to scan the beach area and the sandy areas on both sides of the inner harbor for resting **shorebirds, terns** and uncommon **gull species**. The beach entrance is located at the north end of Whitaker Street in New Buffalo. A park entry fee is charged from spring through fall.

2 **Galien River County Park** is a new park with initial improvements scheduled for 2012. It should provide excellent birding opportunities as Phase 1 developments will include boardwalk trails in the marsh adjacent to the Galien River, upland trails along a wooded bluff that can be productive during migration for **warblers** and other **songbirds**, and an exciting "skywalk" trail that will lead from the wooded bluff through the trees to an observation platform overlooking the marsh and the river. Along the way this elevated trail will provide eye-level views of **songbirds** in the forest canopy! Entrance to the park will be located on Red Arrow

Highway, north of the junction with US-12 (0.3 mile) and across from the New Buffalo Township Hall and Fire Department. For updates on access, visit www.berriencounty.org/parks.

3 Located along the lakeshore north of New Buffalo, the **Union Pier Overlook** offers opportunities to scan Lake Michigan for resting **loons, grebes** and **ducks**. Large flocks of **diving ducks** often form here from late fall through early spring and may include **Red-throated Loon, Harlequin Duck** or all three **scoters**. Scan from the deck at the top of the bluff or walk down the stairs to the beach area. The overlook and beach access is at the west end of Townline Road in Union Pier. Birding is best from late fall through spring and the location is best avoided during the summer "beach season" when parking is limited.

4 The **Lakeside Overlook** at the end of Pier Road in Lakeside offers another good location to scan Lake Michigan for **loons, grebes** and **ducks** from an elevated location with good visibility. Like the Union Pier Overlook, an observation deck with stairs to the beach is available. The birding is also best here from late fall through spring, when more birds are present offshore and parking is not usually an issue.

5 The **Forest Lawn Road Floodplain** and **Kesling Nature Preserve** along the Galien River are excellent locations to see a variety of nesting **woodland species and spring migrants**. The large Sycamores in the river floodplain here provide some of the best locations in Michigan to see **Yellow-throated Warblers**. Other species to expect in the forests here during spring and summer include **Cerulean Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush** and **Red-shouldered Hawk**. The entrance to the Kesling Preserve is on the north side of Forest Lawn Road, east of the intersection with Lakeside Road (0.4 mile). There is a pull off here with room for a vehicle or two. The best birding on Forest Lawn Road is typically between the Kesling entrance and Lakeside Road to the west. Bird along the roadside here – always being alert for passing traffic – and explore trails within the Kesling Preserve. When

birding this area, you may also want to check the Galien River crossing on Lakeside Road, just to the north of Forest Lawn Road, as this is often a productive area for woodland birds as well.

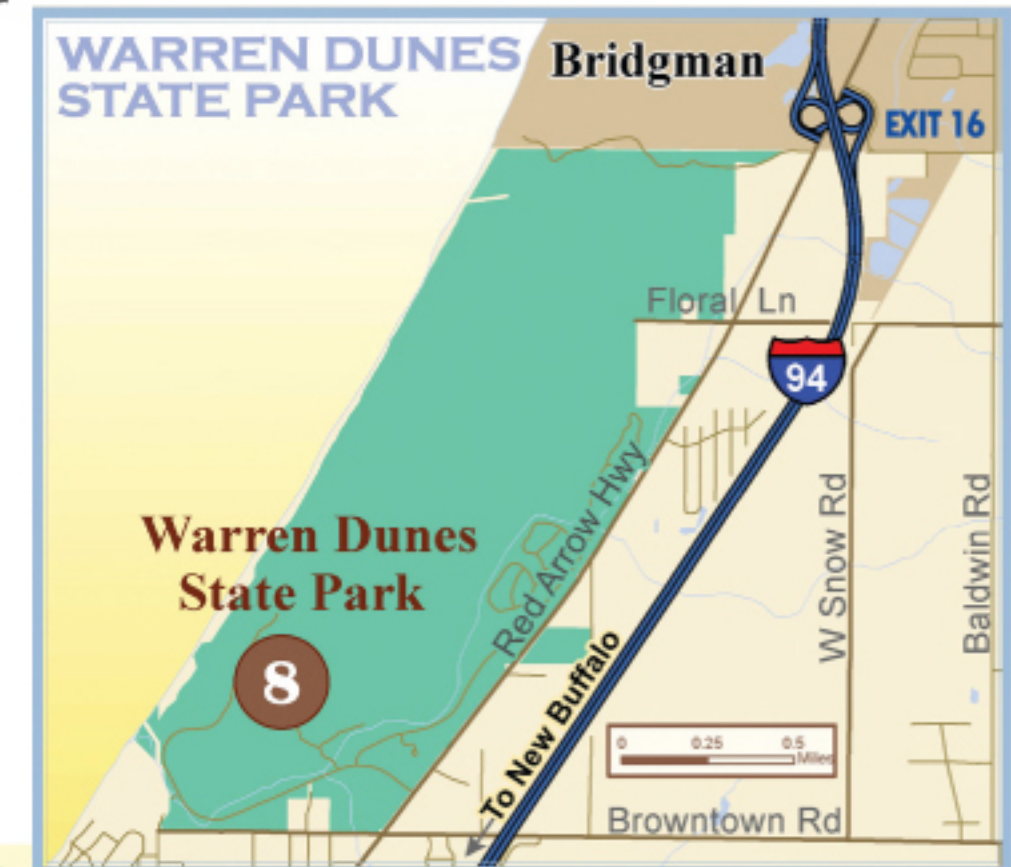


6 The **Three Oaks Water Treatment Ponds** have a long history of hosting interesting birds and should be visited at any time of year the water is open. In addition to regularly occurring **waterfowl**, the ponds can host **migrant shorebirds** when water levels are low and **Purple Martins** nest in the nest boxes here. Some of the rarities that have been observed include **Little Blue Heron, Hudsonian Godwit, Arctic Tern, Little Gull, Parasitic Jaeger** and **Yellow-headed Blackbird**. The ponds are surrounded by a tall chain link fence, but the middle and south lagoons can be seen through the fence from the bird viewing area on the east side of Schwark Road, to the north of U.S. 12 and the railroad crossing. Park in the pull

off area and walk up to the fence to view the lagoons.

7 **Warren Woods State Park** includes mature floodplain forest along the Galien River and an impressive stand of old growth Beech-Maple forest. It is an excellent location to search for **woodland species** and **warblers** during spring migration. **Hooded Warblers** are usually present in the upland forest north of the river, while **Yellow-throated** and **Cerulean Warblers, Louisiana Waterthrush** and many other species are often present near or along the river. The official park entry is on the north side of Elm Valley Road, between Schwark Road on the west and Three Oaks Road on the east. Follow the access road north to the parking area and then hike the trail to the north. You will eventually come to the Galien River where a pedestrian bridge provides access to unmarked trails on the north side of the river. Birding can be excellent from the bluff overlooking the river, from the bridge, and from the trails on the north side of the river.

8 **Warren Dunes State Park** features wooded and open dunes and extensive beachfront along Lake Michigan. **Waterfowl, gulls, terns** and **shorebirds** can often be viewed from the beach area, which is reached by following the main park road west to the lakefront parking areas. However, the favored area of local birders is located at the quieter, northern end of the park in the vicinity of the Organizational Youth Camping Area. To reach this area, drive north of the main entrance on Red Arrow Highway to Floral Lane (1.5 miles). Turn west, park in the trailhead parking lot on the right and walk to the west end of Floral Lane, birding along the way. This will lead to the start of the Yellow Birch Trail, just inside the woods at the base of the dunes. From here the trail loops north around a wetland and ends up back in the youth camping area. Virtually all of Michigan's **migrant warblers** are seen here annually and several breed, including **Hooded** and **Canada**. Several pairs of **Prairie Warblers** have nested in the park's open dune blowouts in recent years and the wooded dunes have hosted summering **Worm-eating Warblers** and **Summer Tanagers**. For updated information on locations of these species, check with local nature center staff or subscribe to the Berrien Birding Club listserv. (Sign on information is available on the "Birding" page at www.berriencounty.org/parks.)



9 Grand Mere State Park is an extensive undeveloped area of open and wooded dunes. To begin birding, follow the paved trail west of the parking area at the end of the access road off of Thornton Road. This can be very good for **woodland migrants** in spring and fall. You will eventually find many side trails that allow explorations of Grand Mere's forests and dunes, but few are marked, so exercise caution if you start wandering. Several northern breeding warblers nest here including **Black-throated Green**, **Black-and-white** and **Canada**, but Grand Mere is also often host to species with southern affinities, such as **Hooded Warbler** and occasionally **White-eyed Vireo**. Just to the north, North Lake Township Park offers a good location to view **waterfowl** during spring migration.

10 Silver Beach County Park is adjacent to the South Pier at the St. Joseph River mouth. From the beach you can scan the lake and shoreline for birds. Walking out on the pier (weather and wave conditions permitting) allows a closer view of birds sitting or flying offshore. Silver Beach can be a good birding location in the early morning during spring and fall, but on summer days the beach crowds usually move the birds to less heavily used beach areas, such as Tiscornia Beach to the north. Directional signs to Silver Beach can be found in downtown St. Joseph. A park entrance fee is charged from spring through fall.

11 Tiscornia Beach Park is adjacent to the North Pier on the north side of the St. Joseph River mouth. It is an excellent area for scanning the lake and beaches north of the river for regular and uncommon **water and shorebird migrants** and it is very easy to walk out onto the North Pier from here (weather and wave conditions permitting). Tiscornia has become the favored Berrien County lake watch location for local birders in recent years, as well as one of the best known birding locations in southwest Michigan. This fame is due to the long list of rarities that have been recorded here, which in recent years have included species as diverse as **Ancient Murrelet** and **Magnificent Frigatebird**! It is a bit of a winding route to the park entrance, but directional signs can be found beginning on M-63 to the north of the St. Joseph River. A park entry fee is charged from spring through fall.

12 Jean Klock Park provides another area of public access along Berrien County's Lake Michigan shore. The wide sandy beach here is often host to resting flocks of **gulls** and **terns** – and as is the case with many of Berrien County's beaches; it can be a great spot to try your luck in mid-to-late summer with **large shorebird species** such as **Willet**, **American Avocet**, **Marbled Godit** or **Whimbrel**. The park entrance is on Klock Road, to the west of M-63. A park entry fee is charged from spring through fall.

13 The Brown Sanctuary is owned by Sarett Nature Center and is located downstream along the Paw Paw River. It includes floodplain forests and a large marsh. Depending on water levels the marsh may be host to **waterfowl or shorebirds** in season, while a variety of **woodland migrants** may be present along the ridge and in the floodplain forest. The floodplain forest is also host to **Prothonotary Warblers** in spring and early summer. The entrance is located at the junction of Wood Street and Crystal Avenue. Park in front of the gate. To reach the marsh overlook platform, turn right after walking through the gate and follow the trail ahead and then left along the ridge until you see the platform on your right. To reach the floodplain and the lower marsh blind continue on the trail across the old field area and then descend along the old road to the river. More information about birding here can be obtained from staff at Sarett.

14 Sarett Nature Center is well known for its extensive wetland boardwalk system, but the nature center offers a diversity of other habitats and is an excellent location to search for birds at any time of year. In spring and early summer **Prothonotary Warblers** nest along the Paw Paw River and **Orchard Orioles** are sometimes present near the entrance. **Long-eared** and **Northern Saw-whet Owls** are located some winters in the pine plantation across the road from the entrance and in the cedars along the trails below the interpretive center. The prairie areas located along Benton Center Road to the south of the entrance have been host to **Bobolinks**, **Dickcissels** and **Grasshopper Sparrows** in recent summers, as well as a few **Henslow's Sparrows**. A variety of other species may be found by exploring the many trails, particularly during migration periods – and be sure to enjoy the Treetop Tower Trail for eye-level views of birds in the forest canopy! The nature center staff sponsor regular birding field trips and can provide information on recent sightings at the feeders and along the trails. The main entrance is on Benton Center Road, north of Red Arrow Highway (0.6 mile). A daily entrance fee is charged to non-members.

15 Love Creek County Park & Nature Center features mostly upland habitats, including areas of mature Beech-Maple forest. **Acadian Flycatchers** and **Louisiana Waterthrushes** nest in the wooded stream ravines and **Pileated Woodpeckers** are often seen. The wooded trails and forest edges can be very good in season for **migrant songbirds**. The park also includes old field areas and **White-eyed Vireos** and **Yellow-breasted Chats** are present some summers. The nature center building features observation windows where **woodland birds** can be seen at the feeders. Love Creek is also the sponsor of the **Berrien Birding Club**, so it's a good location to check for local birding information and upcoming birding events. The park entrance is on Huckleberry Road, north of Pokagon Road (0.8 mile). A daily park entry fee is charged.

16 Fernwood Botanical Garden & Nature Preserve is located on the east bank of the St. Joseph River and features forests, gardens, an arboretum and a restored tall grass prairie. The gardens and woodland edges near the visitor center are excellent areas to search for **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds**, **orioles**, **Scarlet Tanagers** and many **woodland migrants**. Additional **woodland species** can also be found by exploring the trails that head west to the river and north to the preserve area and a variety of **feeder species** can be seen from the nature center observation window. The nature center staff sponsor regular birding field trips and can provide information on recent sightings and trail recommendations. A daily entry fee is charged to non-members. The Fernwood entrance is on Range Line Road, north of Walton Road (1.7 miles)

17 The Mud Lake Bog Preserve can be a good location for a spring birding stop when traveling across southern Berrien County. **Woodland residents** and **migrants** may be found in the trees and shrubs around the parking lot and along the boardwalk trails. **Yellow-breasted Chats** and **White-eyed Vireos** are present some years and **Sandhill Cranes** nest in the bog – although they can be incredibly inconspicuous! **Red-shouldered Hawks** also nest nearby and should be watched for overhead. If you arrive before dawn in mid to late spring, be sure to listen for **bitterns**, **rails**, and **Barred** and **Eastern Screech Owls**. The entrance is on the north side of Elm Valley Road, east of Boyle Lake Road (1.0 mile).

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fernwood

Merlin silhouette, Matt Hysell

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BERRIEN COUNTY BIRDING DESTINATIONS



Yellow-throated Warbler,
Darlene Friedman; Lakeshore
birders, Charles McKelvy