

Enjoy winter birding with online Berrien County, Michigan destinations map

An online map including descriptions of popular and productive locations to view birds among Berrien County's diverse upland, woodland and Lake Michigan shoreline habitats is available online.

Posted on **January 7, 2014** by **Joanne Davidhizar** (http://msue.anr.msu.edu/experts/joanne_davidhizar), Michigan State University Extension, Michigan State University Product Center

Berrien County, Mich. has a long history as a birding area due to the abundant diversity of bird species. Residents, tourists and school groups will be able to enjoy and learn about birds with this resource. According to a 2006 survey conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, millions of Americans enjoy viewing, feeding and providing habitat for wildlife, particularly birds.

To aid in bird viewing, an online version of the [Berrien County, Michigan birding destinations map](http://swmpc.org/berrien_birding_.asp) (http://swmpc.org/berrien_birding_.asp)

was developed last year by the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission with local partners. The project was enabled by a grant from the David and Joyce Stewart Fund of the Kalamazoo Community Foundation in honor of James and Jenette Mullins.

“Spring is clearly the most popular season for birding, but birds can be found at any season in southwest Michigan - even in winter,” says Kip Miller, Naturalist at County of Berrien Love Creek Park. “While the numbers of species present is far less in winter, this is the time to see several birds of the Arctic that have migrated south to our region. Rough-legged Hawks and Snow Buntings are two examples of such species, but the Snowy Owl tends to be the species that generates the most excitement from birders and non-birders alike. This winter is proving



to be a good one for finding these Arctic owls in our area, as there have recently been multiple reports of sightings along the Lake Michigan shore and in large open agricultural areas.”

[Michigan State University Extension \(/\)](#) educator Mary Bohling explains that unlike most other owl species, Snowy Owls are most often found on the ground or just a few feet off the ground because their traditional arctic tundra home has few trees.

The map is the result of collaborative efforts by the [Southwest Michigan Planning Commission \(http://www.swmpc.org/\)](#) , [Berrien County Parks \(http://www.berriencounty.org/parks/index.php\)](#) , Berrien Birding Club, [Fernwood Botanical Garden and Nature Preserve \(http://www.fernwoodbotanical.org/\)](#) , [Michigan State University Extension \(/\)](#), [Sarett Nature Center \(http://www.sarett.com/\)](#) , Berrien Community Foundation, The Pokagon Fund, Frederick S. Upton Foundation and the David and Joyce Stewart Fund of the Kalamazoo Community Foundation in honor of James and Jenette Mullins.

To obtain a paper map by mail, contact the [Southwestern Michigan Tourist Council \(http://swmichigan.org/\)](#) at 269-925-6301, or info@swmichigan.org (<mailto:info@swmichigan.org>) .

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