



# DISCOVER OUR WILD SIDE

VIRGINIA BIRDING AND WILDLIFE TRAIL



## MOUNTAIN AREA

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND INLAND FISHERIES



# VIRGINIA BIRDING AND WILDLIFE TRAIL

## MESSAGE FROM GOVERNOR



Welcome to the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail! I invite you to experience the wild places and diverse natural resources of western Virginia—from high-elevation mountaintops and cool streams to lush lowland valleys and rivers. Last year, we opened the Coastal phase of the Trail, providing access to hundreds of wildlife viewing sites throughout eastern Virginia. The response from Virginians and visitors has been tremendous. Our vision of a statewide trail—the first of its kind in the United States—will truly open the door to the Commonwealth's exquisite natural wonders.

As Virginia's 69th Governor, I am committed to preserving and enhancing our natural heritage, from the Cumberland Gap to the Chesapeake Bay, for future generations of Virginians. Conservation and responsible stewardship must serve as the cornerstones for these efforts.

As you travel the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail, I encourage you to stop along the way and discover our wild side. Enjoy your experiences and the natural world that brings us both solitude and excitement. Welcome!

Governor Mark R. Warner



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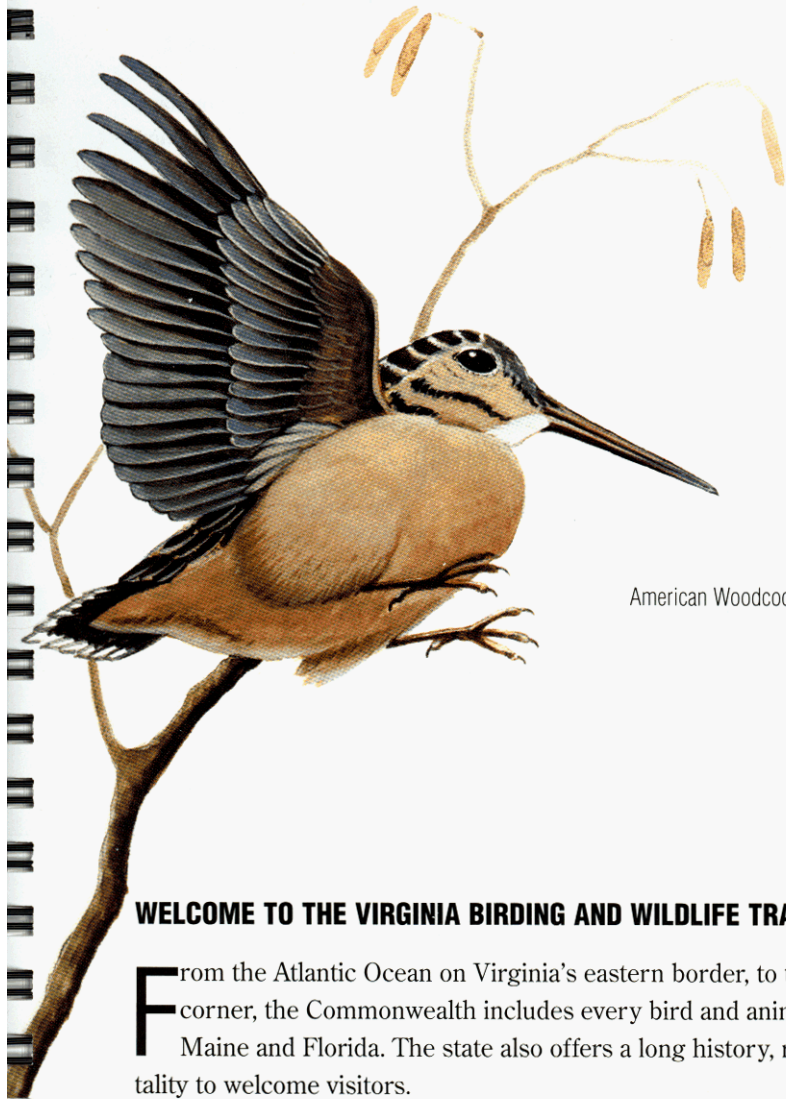


### Credits:

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### About the Artist – Carl C. "Spike" Knuth

Spike Knuth's career as a wildlife artist is both the result and the sign of a deep and enduring fascination with the natural world. As a boy in Wisconsin, much of his time was spent at Okauchee Lake, sketching birds and fishing. By the time he was twelve, Spike had discovered two things: that the variation in nature was "never ending"; and that trying to capture that variation made him happy. Time and different jobs led him to experiment with different media: patterns of paint, patterns of words, images burned into film. Although many would say that his efforts have been successful; Spike feels that it would take "seven lifetimes" to study and set down the wildlife around him. Spike was a contributing editor, writer and wildlife artist to Virginia Wildlife for 30 years and recently retired from the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.



American Woodcock

## WELCOME TO THE VIRGINIA BIRDING AND WILDLIFE TRAIL!

From the Atlantic Ocean on Virginia's eastern border, to the towering Mt. Rogers at its southwest corner, the Commonwealth includes every bird and animal habitat that occurs naturally between Maine and Florida. The state also offers a long history, rich culture, and tradition of warm hospitality to welcome visitors.

Within Virginia's 43,000 square miles of diverse natural habitat, you can find some 400 species of birds, 250 species of fish, 150 species of terrestrial and marine mammals, 150 species of amphibians and reptiles, and a wide variety of aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates. The Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail celebrates this diversity. In fact, it is the first statewide program of its kind in the United States. In Virginia, three phases of the trail link wildlife viewing sites throughout the state.

The Mountain Phase is the second to be developed. It features expansive mountain vistas, endless forest trails, large inland reservoirs and a taste of the western Piedmont. Here are 34 trail loops for you to explore. Be on the lookout for birds, butterflies, snakes, turtles, dragonflies and much more!

## USE THIS GUIDE FOR NAVIGATION

Before leaving on your journey, visit the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail web site to make sure you have the most up-to date information: [www.dgif.state.va.us](http://www.dgif.state.va.us). The web site is updated regularly to indicate any changes to the trails.

This guide provides a detailed description of both the loops and the sites located along those loops, so you know what to expect. For each loop, you will find a map, directions, and contact information. Each site description includes history, best season to visit, special features, and possible side trips. Symbols indicate services and activities available at each site.

Begin with the general map of the Mountain Phase, showing all loops with their distance from each other. Then look more closely at the details of each individual loop. You may want to supplement this guide with local maps.

As you travel, look for the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail logo. There is also a three-part number posted at each site that corresponds to the same number on the site map in this guide. For instance, **Site MFR01** is Caledonia Farm: M stands for Mountain Phase; FR stands for Front Royal loop; and **01** stands for the Caledonia Farm site.

## ASK FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Check Resources and Opportunities at the end of this book for specific contact information.
- Contact the Virginia Tourism Corporation at 1-866-VABIRDS (822-4737) for extra copies of trail loop and site maps.
- Contact the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries at (804) 367-1000 or [www.dgif.state.va.us](http://www.dgif.state.va.us) about wildlife resources, lakes, public fishing opportunities, and state wildlife management areas.
- Contact the Virginia Department of Transportation at (804) 367-ROAD or [www.virginiaDOT.org](http://www.virginiaDOT.org) for highway travel information.

## RESPECT VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

### 1. Increase your viewing opportunities by:

- using binoculars, spotting scopes and viewing blinds for a closer look
- moving slowly and quietly to minimize disturbance
- passing up scented lotions and colognes which can broadcast your presence
- staying clear of nests and dens so parents will not abandon young
- recognizing animal alarm signals and behavior changes
- avoiding artificial calls and lures which disrupt natural animal behavior
- resisting the impulse to offer human food, which can cause animals expecting handouts to become aggressive



## 2. Film and photograph wildlife responsibly by:

- using a telephoto lens from a vehicle or viewing blind
- avoiding the urge to chase, herd, flush or make noises
- leaving plants and other natural features alone



## 3. Be considerate of others by:

- asking permission to watch wildlife on private land
- observing all rules and regulations
- ask permission to access private property
- closing gates and returning property to the condition it was when you arrived
- waiting your turn to view or photograph animals
- leaving your own pets at home or in the car
- staying on trails and roads to minimize your impact on the environment
- pulling off the road as far as possible when you are watching wildlife and being aware of local traffic

## 4. Increase your enjoyment and involvement by:

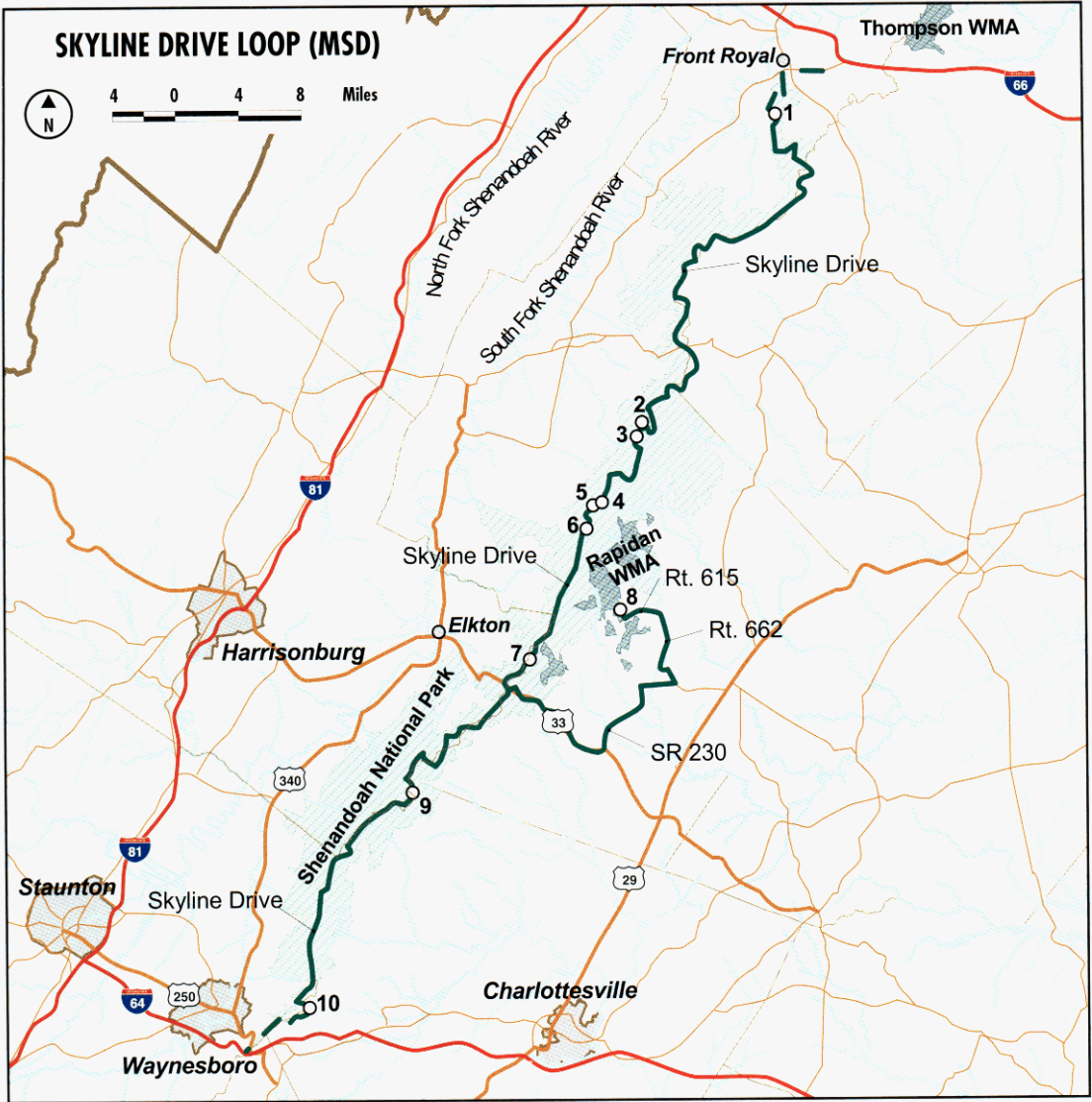
- researching your trips ahead of time
- participating in wildlife and habitat conservation
- helping others become responsible wildlife watchers
- Some of this information was adopted from the Watchable Wildlife, Inc. Wildlife Watcher's Code of Ethics and the American Birding Association Principles of Birding Ethics

*Some of this information was adopted from the Watchable Wildlife, Inc. Wildlife Watcher's Code of Ethics and the American Birding Association Principles of Birding Ethics*

	<b>Bike Trails</b>		<b>Interpretive Trail</b>
	<b>Camping</b>		<b>Lodge</b>
	<b>Environmental Study Area</b>		<b>Lookout Tower</b>
	<b>Fee</b>		<b>Parking</b>
	<b>Food</b>		<b>Phone</b>
	<b>Handicap Accessible</b>		<b>Picnic</b>
	<b>Hiking Trails</b>		<b>Restrooms</b>
	<b>Information</b>		<b>Site is only viewable by boat</b>
	<b>Interpretive/Nature Programs</b>		<b>Viewing Blinds</b>
	<b>Wildlife (WL) Facts</b>		<b>Wildlife Watching (WW) Tips</b>

**Map:**    Access to/from major highway    Site access walking only

# SKYLINE DRIVE - LOOP DESCRIPTION



**S**kyline Drive needs no introduction. The 105-mile road traces the crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains through Shenandoah National Park, taking the visitor into one of the largest wilderness areas in eastern North America. Numerous overgrown orchards, building foundations and stone fence lines crisscross the park, attesting to the settlements that once stood there. Today, this area is resplendent with verdant forest and species such as white-tailed deer, black bear, and red fox. Located less than two hours from Washington D.C., the drive is a very popular spot year-round. In spring, numerous songbirds can be found preparing to breed after they return from their winter vacations further south. As spring turns to summer and the temperatures begin to climb, the drive along wildflower-lined roadsides to higher elevations provides respite from the heat. Through the summer progression, bear cubs and white-tailed fawns can be seen learning to forage with their mothers as dragonflies and butterflies team around meadows. Once fall



arrives, the birds start returning south again. Watch for concentrations of raptors following the ridgelines along the drive. In late October, the leaves begin to turn, providing a spectacle of color famous across the globe. Once the leaves fall, the air gets crisp and spectacular views of the Shenandoah River, Massanutten Mountain, and the Allegheny Mountains accompany travelers along their journey. Skyline Drive is perfect for a few days away from the city or a lifetime of exploration.

**Site MSD01 Fox Hollow Discovery Trail, Shenandoah National Park**

Directions: From I-66 in Linden (Exit #13) go south to SR 55 West. Turn right on SR 55 and follow it 5.0 miles into Front Royal. At the intersection with US 340 turn left and follow US 340 South. Approximately 0.5 miles south of Front Royal, turn left into Shenandoah National Park and take Skyline Drive south 4.0 miles to the Dickey Ridge Visitor Center. The trail starts on the east side of the road across from the Visitor Center.

⚠️ ⓘ P ? \$

**Site MSD02 Stony Man Trail, Shenandoah National Park**

Directions: Continue south on Skyline Drive 37.7 miles to the entrance of Skyland Lodge and turn right. Parking for the trail will be on the right.

⚠️ ⓘ P ? \$

**Site MSD03 Limberlost Trail, Shenandoah National Park**

Directions: From Skyland, go south on Skyline Drive 1.2 miles to the Limberlost Trail on the left.

P ? \$ ♿

**Site MSD04 Dark Hollow Falls Trail, Shenandoah National Park**

Directions: From Limberlost Trail, continue south on Skyline Drive 7.6 miles to parking area on the left. The trail is across the street from and slightly north of the Big Meadows Visitor's Center.

P \$

**Site MSD05 Big Meadows, Shenandoah National Park**

Directions: From Dark Hollow Falls, the Big Meadows Visitor's Center is directly across the street.

⚠️ ⓘ P ? \$

**Site MSD06 Milam Gap to Tanners Ridge Fire Road**

Directions: Continue south 1.4 miles on Skyline Drive from Big Meadows to the parking area on the right.

P \$

**Site MSD07 South River Falls Trail, Shenandoah National Park**

Directions: Return to Skyline Drive and go south approximately 10.0 miles to the parking area on left.

P \$

**Site MSD08 Rapidan WMA**

Directions: From South River Falls Trail, continue south on Skyline Drive for 2.7 miles to the intersection of Skyline Drive and US 33. Turn left and travel east 7.7 miles to US 33 Business into Stanardsville. Follow US 33 Business 1.1 miles to SR 230; turn left and go 7.2 miles to Rt. 662. Turn left onto Rt. 662 and travel 5.3 miles to Rt. 615; turn left and continue 2.4 miles to parking area on right.

P ?

**Site MSD09 Frazier Discovery Trail**

Directions: From Rapidan Wildlife Management Area, return to Skyline Drive and turn south. Follow Skyline Drive 13.4 miles to the Loft Mountain Visitor Center. The trail begins across the street from the visitor's center.

⚠️ ⓘ P ? \$

**Site MSD10 Beagle Gap, Shenandoah National Park**

Directions: Return to Skyline Drive and continue south about 20.4 miles to Beagle Gap Area on the left.

P ?

To return to the interstate, continue south on Skyline Drive for 4.5 miles to the end of Skyline Drive and the beginning of the Blue Ridge Parkway. Take I-64 east to the Thomas Jefferson Loop or west to the Forest Trails Loop.

# SKYLINE DRIVE - SITE DESCRIPTIONS

For information on lodging and services in the local area, please contact:

Charlottesville-Albemarle Convention and Visitors Bureau  
(877) 386-1102 or (434) 293-6789  
Email: shore@charlottesville.org  
www.charlottesvilletourism.org

Harrisonburg-Rockingham Convention and Visitors Bureau  
(540) 434-2319 or (540) 433-1497  
Email: hrcvb@planetcomm.net  
www.hrcvb.org

Charlottesville Regional Chamber of Commerce  
(434) 295-3141  
Email: tim@cvillechamber.com  
www.cvillechamber.org

Luray-Page County Chamber of Commerce  
(540) 743-3915  
Email: uraypage1@earthlink.net  
www.luraypage.com

City of Waynesboro  
(540) 942-6644  
Email: crookshanksII@ci.waynesboro.va.us  
www.waynesboro-online.com

Madison Chamber of Commerce  
(540) 948-4455  
Email: chamber@madison-va.com

Front Royal-Warren County Chamber of Commerce  
(540) 635-3185  
Email: kwalker@rmaonline.net  
www.frontroyalchamber.com

Nelson County Chamber of Commerce  
(434) 263-5971  
www.NelsonCounty.com

Greater Augusta Regional Chamber of Commerce  
(540) 949-8203  
Email: becarter@ntelos.net  
www.augustachamber.org

Nelson County Department of Economic Development and Tourism  
(800) 282-8223 or (434) 263-5239  
Email: mcorum@nelsoncounty.org  
www.nelsoncounty.com

Greene County Chamber of Commerce  
(434) 985-6300  
Email: grnmail@cstone.net

Shenandoah Valley Travel Association  
(540) 740-3132  
Email: info@svta.org  
www.shenandoah.org

Harrisonburg-Rockingham Chamber of Commerce  
(540) 434-3862  
Email: christinem@hrchamber.org  
www.hrchamber.org

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## Site MSD01 Fox Hollow Discovery Trail, Shenandoah National Park

**Site Contact:** Shenandoah National Park, (540) 999-3582

**Web Site:** www.nps.gov/shen/index.htm

**Site Access:** Daily, sunrise-sunset; admission fee

**Motor Coach Access:** Yes

**Description:** Elevation: 1938 ft.

The Fox Hollow Discovery Trail serves as an excellent introduction to the forests along Skyline Drive. This easy 1.2-mile walk takes the visitor to an old homestead and cemetery reminding us that Shenandoah National Park has actually returned to forest after being heavily cleared only 70 years ago. Birds to look for along the trail include hairy woodpecker, northern flicker, Carolina chickadee, tufted titmouse, Carolina wren, northern cardinal, red-eyed vireo and eastern towhee. Turkey vultures and occasionally black vultures can be seen soaring overhead. In the open areas near the beginning of the trail look out for indigo bunting and American goldfinch. In the spring, American redstart may be quite abundant in certain areas.

The small spring situated roughly halfway along the trail is a good place to search for pickerel frog and several species of salamander. Frogs can often be seen in the spring while salamanders may be found by turning over a few rocks just downhill. Butterflies abound among the wildflowers along the trail. Search for hackberry emperor, great spangled fritillary, and eastern tiger and spicebush swallowtails as you meander through the woods.



## Site MSD02 Stony Man Trail, Shenandoah National Park

**Site Contact:** Shenandoah National Park, (540) 999-3582

**Web Site:** www.nps.gov/shen/index.htm

**Site Access:** Daily, sunrise-sunset; admission fee

**Motor Coach Access:** Yes

**Description:** Elevation: 3765 ft.

The trail to the Stony Man cliffs is an easy upward amble that leads the visitor to a magnificent view of the Shenandoah Valley





Black Bear

and the Allegheny Mountains to the west. Stony Man is the second highest peak in Shenandoah National Park. This higher elevation introduces visitors to a different plant and animal community, which can be seen as you ascend to the peak. Next to the trail notice the change in conifers. Red spruce and balsam fir have replaced white pine and hemlock of the lower slopes, and mountain laurel rules the undergrowth. Birds to search for along the trail include common raven, red-eyed and blue-headed vireos, black-and-white and hooded warblers, scarlet tanager, eastern towhee and dark-eyed junco. Other wildlife that may appear along the hike includes white-tailed deer, which are incredibly tame within the park- but please don't approach them, and the occasional timber rattlesnake.



**Site** MSD03 Lamberlost Trail, Shenandoah National Park

**Site Contact:** Shenandoah National Park, (540) 999-3582

**Web Site:** [www.nps.gov/shen/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/shen/index.htm)

**Site Access:** Daily, sunrise-sunset; admission fee

**Motor Coach Access:** Yes

**Description:**

Elevation: 3377 ft.

The Lamberlost Trail leads the visitor to high elevation wetlands along a walking trail. This 1.3-mile trail provides numerous opportunities for wildlife watching not the least of which is the almost fearless white-tailed deer grazing all around. The higher elevation of this area provides for exciting birding. Species such as Blackburnian, black-throated blue, hooded, and chestnut-sided warblers, veery, Acadian flycatcher and rose-breasted grosbeak all breed here. The dense stands of spruce provide perfect cover for retiring species such as Cooper's hawk and barred owl, which on occasion dart from cover to pick off their prey from along the trail. Listen in spring when the woods resonate with the booming of ruffed grouse. Along the length of the trail there are several moist boggy areas that host numerous salamanders.



# SKYLINE DRIVE - SITE DESCRIPTIONS

## Site MSD04 Dark Hollow Falls Trail, Shenandoah National Park

**Site Contact:** Shenandoah National Park, (540) 999-3582

**Web Site:** [www.nps.gov/shen/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/shen/index.htm)

**Site Access:** Daily, sunrise-sunset; admission fee

**Motor Coach Access:** Yes

**Description:** Elevation: 3429 ft.

The Dark Hollow Trail is a little steep in places, but the 1.4-mile loop (optional) trek to Dark Hollow Falls is well worth the trip. The broad path is well maintained as it leads the visitor over the edge of the main ridge along the stream course. At the height of the spring runoff, these falls are an impressive site as water cascades 70 feet down the side of the mountain. Birds to search for as you descend the trail include ovenbird, red-eyed vireo, gray catbird, scarlet tanager, eastern towhee and dark-eyed junco. Keep a careful lookout for common ravens soaring overhead or perhaps just croaking out of sight.

Butterflies intermix among the blooming wildflowers along the trail. Search for eastern tiger swallowtail, great spangled fritillary, common wood-nymph and red-spotted purple.

One of the most exciting parts of any walk in Shenandoah National Park is the possibility of the seeing large mammals rarely encountered elsewhere. The white-tailed deer are clearly the most obvious and few visitors will leave with out seeing a few. Other species to be on the alert for include bobcat and black bear. Black bear is a specialty of Skyline Drive, reaching one of the highest densities to be found in Virginia. Late summer is one of the best times to search for bear. This is after the cubs have been born and when the bears congregate around the few perennial water sources in the park. Dark Hollow Trail follows one of these perennial streams making a bear sighting very possible. However, be respectful and extremely cautious of these megafauna; although they might seem indifferent to your presence, they are very alert to their surroundings and especially protective of their young.



## Site MSD05 Big Meadows, Shenandoah National Park

**Site Contact:** Shenandoah National Park, (540) 999-3582

**Web Site:** [www.nps.gov/shen/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/shen/index.htm)

**Site Access:** Daily, sunrise-sunset; admission fee

**Motor Coach Access:** Yes

**Description:** Elevation: 3548 ft.

Big Meadows is aptly named since it's the largest open area in the entire park. The meadows location directly across from the Big Meadows Visitor's Center makes it easily accessible. The large grassy plain makes a fresh change from the forest landscape. The meadows host numerous sparrows with chipping, field and song sparrows all being numerous and easy to spot. Other residents of the meadow include eastern bluebird, indigo bunting, eastern towhee and American goldfinch. The clear open view of the sky makes raptor watching easy. Look for

turkey and black vultures, red-tailed hawk and American kestrel. During migration large numbers of broad-winged hawks and the occasional bald or golden eagle can augment these species.

Big Meadows is incredible for the butterfly enthusiast. The acres of blooming wildflowers support a wide assortment of species including eastern tiger, black, pipevine and spicebush swallowtails, great spangled and variegated fritillaries, silver spotted skipper, common wood-nymph, orange sulphur and American copper. Dragonflies are less numerous although black saddlebags can often be seen skimming across the meadow.



## Site MSD06 Milam Gap to Tanners Ridge Fire Road

**Site Contact:** Shenandoah National Park, (540) 999-3582

**Web Site:** [www.nps.gov/shen/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/shen/index.htm)

**Site Access:** Daily, sunrise-sunset; admission fee

**Motor Coach Access:** No

**Description:** Elevation: 3235 ft.

The Appalachian Trail from Milam Gap to the Tanners Ridge Fire road takes the visitor through deep-rooted home sites with few remaining remnants other than numerous apple trees now gone wild. However, these former orchards provide great foraging for white-tailed deer while hosting a great variety of bird life. In the spring, several species of warbler breed along the trail and can be heard loudly proclaiming their territory. As the summer progresses the singing gradually stops and once the year's chicks are hatched, the birds leave their territories and move around more freely. In late summer the warblers join with the rowdy Carolina chickadees and tufted titmouse to search for food and the occasional screech owl to scold. Search these mixed flocks for red-eyed and blue-headed vireos, ovenbird, worm-eating, black-and-white, hooded and chestnut-sided warblers. Some of the forest residents tend not to associate with chickadee and titmouse. Look for veery and wood thrush to be out on their own exploring the leaf litter for worms and other tasty morsels. While exploring this trail listen carefully for the high-pitched squeaks of eastern chipmunk and the lower churring growls of gray squirrel. Both of these native residents can make exciting noises that can often lead the unwary in search of non-existent birds.



## Site MSD07 South River Falls Trail, Shenandoah National Park

**Site Contact:** Shenandoah National Park, (540) 999-3582

**Web Site:** [www.nps.gov/shen/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/shen/index.htm)

**Site Access:** Daily, sunrise-sunset; admission fee

**Motor Coach Access:** Yes

**Description:** Elevation: 2954 ft.

This 3.3-mile loop trail that takes visitors to the South River Falls and then returns via the South River Fire Road, is touted as one of the best areas for breeding birds found along Skyline



Drive. A walk along this loop in late spring or early summer could produce over half-a-dozen breeding warblers including cerulean, Blackburnian, and black-throated blue warblers, northern parula, Louisiana waterthrush, and American redstart. Other species to be on the look out for include white-breasted nuthatch, red-eyed and blue-headed vireos, scarlet tanager, rose-breasted grosbeak, and eastern towhee. Don't forget to search for butterflies en route, such as spicebush, pipevine and black swallowtails, great spangled fritillary, common wood-nymph and red-spotted purple. As elsewhere in the park, keep on the look out for mammals such as white-tailed deer, bobcat and black bear.



## Site MSD08 Rapidan WMA

**Site Contact:** Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Region V Office, (540) 899-4381

**Web Site:** [www.dgif.state.va.us/hunting/wma/rapidan.htm](http://www.dgif.state.va.us/hunting/wma/rapidan.htm)

**Site Access:** Daily, sunrise-sunset

**Motor Coach Access:** No

**Description:** Elevation: 1556 ft. The Rapidan Wildlife Management Area (WMA) provides access to the eastern slopes of the Blue Ridge abutting Shenandoah National Park. The WMA is composed of six large tracts, not all of which are accessible by car. Several of the tracts are connected to Skyline Drive via fire roads and hiking trails. Rapidan WMA provides access to some of the more pristine parts of the eastern Blue Ridge, taking the wildlife enthusiast away from the sometimes-crowded Skyline Drive. Species to be encountered in this area are similar to those seen from a distance along the drive including many woodpecker species, flycatchers, vireos, white-breasted nuthatch, eastern bluebird, gray catbird, black-and-white, hooded, and worm-eating warblers, ovenbird, American redstart, scarlet tanager and eastern towhee. Butterflies are also numerous and eastern tiger, black, pipevine, spicebush swallowtails, great spangled and variegated fritillaries, red-spotted purple and a variety of skippers and azures can all be found easily.



## Site MSD09 Frazier Discovery Trail

**Site Contact:** Shenandoah National Park, (540) 999-3582

**Web Site:** [www.nps.gov/shen/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/shen/index.htm)

**Site Access:** Daily, sunrise-sunset; admission fee

**Motor Coach Access:** Yes

**Description:** Elevation: 2852 ft. The Frazier Discovery Trail is a relaxed 1.3-mile loop taking the visitor to several picturesque overlooks on Loft Mountain. The trail passes through woodland of varying ages providing diverse species habitats. As you slowly climb the trail keep an eye out for eastern towhee rustling in the leaf litter. In the late summer, the adults are joined by their brood of curious young that will often hop into view. Another retiring skulker that may

appear is the gray catbird. These are more often heard as they give their characteristic meowing from inside a dense bush. Warblers such as black-and-white, hooded and worm-eating should be listened and watched for. Depending on the time of year they may be singing or foraging with the more numerous Carolina chickadees and tufted titmice. The numerous flowering plants encountered along the trail entice a variety of butterflies. Search through the myriad of dark swallowtails for the slower flying red-spotted purple; or carefully inspect every bloom for the inconspicuous skippers, blues and hairstreaks.



## Site MSD10 Beagle Gap, Shenandoah National Park

**Site Contact:** Shenandoah National Park, (540) 999-3582

**Web Site:** [www.nps.gov/shen/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/shen/index.htm)

**Site Access:** Open daily, sunrise to sunset; admission fee required along Skyline Drive.

**Motor Coach Access:** Yes

**Description:** Elevation: 2523 ft. Designated primarily as a hawk-watching site, in the fall look for numerous broad-winged hawks as they fly southward to their wintering grounds. Other hawks, such as sharp-shinned, Cooper's, and red-tailed hawks are also observed in the fall months. Osprey and bald eagle might be seen later in the fall. Look for migrant falcons, such as peregrine falcon, American kestrel, and even merlin, as well. The open vista can also be conducive for distant views of other wildlife. Pulling out a spotting scope and surveying the surrounding forest may produce views of bobcat, coyote, red fox and black bear.



### WW Tip

As a beginner, be sure to keep your eyes open. Start by looking at distinctive markings, size of different body parts; watch the animal move. After it's gone, check in the field guide.



### WL Fact

Although the black bear is the largest terrestrial mammal in Virginia, with adult males exceeding 500 pounds, the young weigh less than a half-pound at birth.

## WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

*Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries Mission Statement:* To manage Virginia's wildlife and inland fish to maintain optimum populations of all species to serve the needs of the Commonwealth; to provide opportunity for all to enjoy wildlife, inland fish, boating, and related outdoor recreation; and to promote safety for persons and property in connection with boating, hunting and fishing.

Through on-going research and management, Department of Game and Inland Fisheries biologists and cooperators improve our knowledge of wildlife and its relationship to the environment. Surveys and inventories provide basic information about wildlife distributions around Virginia. Management activities, including habitat manipulation, are the foundation of long-term conservation and restoration of populations.

Please continue to support the future of our wildlife resources by purchasing a hunting or fishing license, or by making a tax-deductible contribution to Virginia's Nongame Wildlife Fund (Nongame Program, P.O. Box 11104, Richmond, VA 23230-1104, payable to "Nongame Program, Treasurer of Virginia"). Your investment now conserves our wildlife resources for generations still to come.

## RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries  
4010 West Broad Street  
Richmond, VA 23230  
(804) 367-1000  
[www.dgif.state.va.us](http://www.dgif.state.va.us)

Virginia Tourism Corporation  
901 East Byrd Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
(800) 321-3244  
[www.virginia.org](http://www.virginia.org)

Virginia Department of Transportation  
1221 East Broad Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219  
(804) 786-2801  
[www.virginiadot.org](http://www.virginiadot.org)

**Virginia Fish and Wildlife Information Service:** For more information about Virginia's wildlife resources, visit the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries' online wildlife information system by pointing your browser to [www.dgif.state.va.us](http://www.dgif.state.va.us) and clicking on Wildlife then clicking on Wildlife Information and Mapping Services, then click on *Wildlife Information Online*. The service provides tools to help you develop a species list by searching around a geographic point, look up information about a specific species, or generate a list of wildlife species for a selected county, U.S. Geological Survey 7.5' quadrangle, or watershed. This service is free and will complement your trip to the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail with just the right information. For more information on the Virginia Fish and Wildlife Information Service, contact the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries at (804) 367-1000.

**WildlifeMapping:** *WildlifeMapping* is a citizen-based monitoring program developed by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries for people who enjoy watching wildlife and recording their observations. The data are incorporated into the agency's information systems and help fill in gaps about wildlife distributions. During a short workshop, you will learn to identify species, classify habitats, find your location on a map, and the protocols for submitting your data. Later, attend Advanced Training sessions about hawks, salamanders, estuarine habitats and more to refine your skills as a wildlife watcher. Join hundreds of Virginians in this unique partnership by becoming a WildlifeMapper! For more information about *WildlifeMapping*, contact the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries at (804) 367-1000.



## Books

American Birding Association. 1997. *A Birder's Guide to Virginia*. American Birding Association, Inc. Colorado Springs, CO, 280pp.

DeLorme, Inc. *Virginia Atlas and Gazetteer*, P.O. Box 298, Yarmouth, ME 04096, (207) 846-7000; [www.delorme.com](http://www.delorme.com)

Duda, M.D. 1994. *Virginia Wildlife Viewing Guide*. Falcon Press Publishing Co., Inc. Helena and Billings, MT and Defenders of Wildlife, Washington, DC. 95 pp.

## Festivals, Web Sites, and Other Information

### **Birds and Blossoms Festival**, *First part of May*

Norfolk Botanical Garden, 6700 Azalea Garden Road, Norfolk, Virginia 23518-5337  
(757) 441-5830  
[www.virginiagarden.org](http://www.virginiagarden.org)

### **Eastern Shore Birding Festival**, *First weekend in October*

P.O. Box 460, Melfa, Virginia 23410  
(757) 787-2460  
[www.esvachamber.org/festivals/birding/](http://www.esvachamber.org/festivals/birding/)

### **Shenandoah Valley Birding Festival**, *First Saturday in October*

Northern Shenandoah Valley Audubon Society  
**Location:** War Memorial Building, Jim Barnett Park, Winchester, Virginia  
**Contact:** 400 Blandy Farm Road, Boyce, Virginia 22620  
540-667-6778  
[www.audubon-nsvas.org](http://www.audubon-nsvas.org)

**American Birding Association:** For information about enjoying and protecting birds across the United States and bird watching ethics, visit online at [www.americanbirding.org](http://www.americanbirding.org).

**Leave No Trace, Inc.:** "Take Only Memories, Leave Only Footprints." For information about responsible recreation in the outdoors, visit online at [www.lnt.org](http://www.lnt.org).

**Virginia Audubon Council:** For information about birds, bird conservation, and local birding activities, visit online at [www.virginiaaudubon.org](http://www.virginiaaudubon.org).

**North American Butterfly Association:** For information about butterflies, including illustrations and photographs, as well as on-going research, visit online at [www.naba.org](http://www.naba.org).

**Virginia Herpetological Society:** For information about Virginia's reptile and amphibian species, visit online at [fwie.fw.vt.edu/VHS/](http://fwie.fw.vt.edu/VHS/).

**Virginia Museum of Natural History:** For information about Virginia's natural resources, visit online at [www.vmnh.org](http://www.vmnh.org).

**Virginia Society of Ornithology:** For information about Virginia birds and links to local bird clubs and chapters, visit online at [www.ecoventures-travel.com/vso/](http://www.ecoventures-travel.com/vso/).

**Watchable Wildlife, Inc.:** For more information about wildlife viewing and nature appreciation, visit online at [www.watchablewildlife.org](http://www.watchablewildlife.org).

# WILDLIFE VIEWING DIARY

**Animal Viewed**

**Date**

**Time**

**Location & Loop**

**Notes**

**Animal Viewed**

**Date**

**Time**

**Location & Loop**

**Notes**

**Animal Viewed**

**Date**

**Time**

**Location & Loop**

**Notes**

**Animal Viewed**

**Date**

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