



Audubon
LOUISIANA



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Northeast Louisiana
BIRDING GUIDE



Photography provided by Bill Stripling

A Land of

Bounty



Northeastern Louisiana offers some of the most unknown and exciting birding and wildlife viewing opportunities in the country. Exploring its mystical cypress swamps, river bottoms, wetlands, and pine forests will reward even the casual visitor with glimpses of brilliant yellow Prothonotary Warblers, fascinating Pileated Woodpeckers, beautiful Roseate Spoonbills, and breathtaking flocks of waterfowl and shorebirds that can number in the thousands.

Northeastern Louisiana is a region of wealthy natural resources, and was once part of a center of plant domestication thousands of years ago, before European colonization. This agricultural heritage lives on, built upon rich and productive soils of the Mississippi Alluvial Valley. All combined, the region's agriculture, aquaculture, and forestry generates nearly \$2 billion in annual revenues.

Despite substantial conversion of natural bottomland forest habitat to agriculture and silviculture, excellent birding opportunities remain. Many state and federal lands are managed for wildlife, including the threatened Louisiana black bear, and declining forest songbirds, such as Kentucky Warblers and Wood Thrushes. Many regional specialties can still be found in abundance. Even birding along back roads through pastures, shrublands, and aquaculture impoundments can produce a great diversity of birds in a relative small area, from Painted and Indigo Buntings, to Pectoral and Upland Sandpipers, to Wood Storks and White-faced Ibis. In addition, upland regions provide opportunities to see piney woods specialists like Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, Brown-headed Nuthatches, and Henslow's Sparrows.

HABITATS

Northeastern Louisiana can broadly be broken down into five habitat types: forest, shrub-scrub, agriculture, wetlands and water, and urban.

FOREST

Batture – Birds like Painted Buntings and Yellow-billed Cuckoo can be common in this pioneer forest community during the summer breeding season. During spring and fall migration, these forests can provide productive stopover habitat and concentrate songbirds like warblers, flycatchers, and vireos. Also, look for nesting Bald Eagles from early fall through late spring and Red-shouldered Hawks year-round. This habitat is primarily found between a river and a levee that experiences prolonged periods of flooding.

Bottomland Hardwood Forest – These forests support some of our most diverse bird communities in the region, highlighted by Swainson's Warblers, Kentucky Warblers, Summer Tanagers, Pileated Woodpeckers, and Barred Owls, among many others. Once dominant across much of low-lying areas of the region, only about 20% of bottomland forests remain in the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley. Much of what remains is on protected land, but private landowners can receive incentives through programs like the Wetlands Reserve and Healthy Forests Reserve Programs to restore bottomland hardwood forest.





Cypress-Tupelo Swamp – During the summer, Prothonotary Warblers and Northern Parulas can be thick in these areas, and also watch for Yellow-throated Warblers. In the winter, Golden-crowned Kinglets and Brown Creepers can be surprisingly common compared to other forested habitats. Rusty Blackbirds are also often associated with these forests, but more often are seen foraging in nearby wet agricultural lands, parks, and yards. These forests can be extensively flooded, only drying during droughts, and are often associated with water bottoms within bottomland hardwood forest systems.

Riparian Forest – Associated with smaller streams, these seasonally flooded forests are usually denser with more vertical structuring, and are favorite haunts of birds like Louisiana Waterthrushes and Worm-eating Warblers during the summer. In winter, look for Fox Sparrows and Winter Wrens, which are much harder to find in other habitats.

Mesic Hardwood Flatwoods – This regionally rare habitat is only found along the Macon Ridge in West Carroll, Richland, Franklin, and Morehouse Parishes. It is characterized by saturated soils and dominant trees include mockernut hickory, blackgum, and a variety of oaks. Although the mid-story and understory tree, shrub, and herbaceous community are relatively diverse, the bird communities are often similar to habitats surrounding these remnant stands.



Mixed Hardwood-Loblolly Forest – These upland forests are dominant along the western edge of the region. In some areas, prescribed burning is used to control hardwood trees and facilitate the growth of more fire-adapted pines, as well as an understory comprised of herbaceous and scrub-shrub vegetation. Common piney woods birds include the Brown-headed Nuthatch and Pine Warbler, but Bachman's Sparrow, a rapidly declining species, and the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker can also be found year-round in well managed stands. In most areas, however, fire is not a dominant management practice, but even so, these hardwood forests support a variety of bird species like the Eastern Towhee, Brown Thrasher, and White-eyed Vireo.







SCRUB-SHRUB

Scrub-Shrub Swamp – These habitats can be excellent for colonial-nesting waterbirds, such as Little Blue Heron, Green Heron, and both night-heron species. Poorly drained and frequently flooded, scrub-shrub swamp are often found at the margins of swamp forests and bayous, and are dominated by shrubs like buttonbush.

Regenerating Forest – Depending on the successional stage, species like Northern Bobwhite, Prairie Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Indigo Buntings can be quite common. Never dominant in the region, these habitats are important to species that depend on early successional growth.



OPEN WATER AND WETLANDS

Sandbars – Sandy bars along bends in larger rivers are particularly extensive within the banks of the Mississippi River. Kept mostly unvegetated or in an early successional stage by high water events and scouring, this unique habitat is colonized by only a few species of plants. Along the Mississippi River, sandbars provide nesting habitat for Threatened Least Terns.

Upland Lakes – The upland reaches of the region have several large man-made and natural lakes that provide excellent fishing, boating, and other recreational activities, including birding.



Marsh Lakes – Shallow lakes with emergent wetland vegetation provide excellent habitat for waterfowl and long-legged wading birds, like herons and spoonbills. In these marshes, look for King Rails year-round, Least Bitterns during the summer, and Sedge and Marsh Wrens in winter.

Swamp Lakes – Shallow stagnant lakes with large cypress trees can support impressive nesting rookeries of wading birds.

AGRICULTURE

Northeastern Louisiana is an agriculturally dominated landscape, with productive soils supporting a variety of crops, forestry products, and fruit. In summer, look for fallow fields supporting breeding Eastern Meadowlarks and Dickcissels, as well as migrating Bobolinks. In winter, American Pipits, Horned Larks, and even Lapland Longspurs can be found in open fields. During migration, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher and the occasional Western Kingbird can be found along cotton fields. Aquaculture, including catfish and crawfish ponds, can attract wading birds, like Roseate Spoonbills, all three species of ibis, a variety of herons and egrets, and Osprey and Bald Eagles.



URBAN

Being slightly warmer than surrounding natural areas, and with homeowners offering feeders and bird-friendly gardens, a surprising diversity can be supported in human-modified landscapes. In particular, winter hummingbirds like the Rufous Hummingbird are becoming more frequent in the region, and feeders can attract a variety of attractive birds like American Goldfinches, Dark-eyed Juncos, Chipping Sparrows, and Brown-headed Nuthatches.





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Habitat

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	Winter (Dec-Feb)	Spring (Mar-May)	Summer (Jun-Aug)	Fall (Sep-Nov)	Habitat
Black-bellied Whistling Duck	r	u	u	r	1,3,4
Fulvous Whistling-Duck			r		3,4
Greater White-fronted Goose	c	u		c	3,4
Snow Goose	c	u		c	3,4
Ross's Goose	u	r		u	3,4
Cackling Goose	u				3,4
Canada Goose	u	u	u	u	3,4,5
Trumpeter Swan	x				3,4
Tundra Swan	x				3,4
Wood Duck	c	c	c	c	1,3,4
Gadwall	c	c	r	c	3,4
American Wigeon	u	u		u	3,4
American Black Duck	x				3,4
Mallard	c	c	u	c	3,4
Mottled Duck	r	r	r	r	3,4
Blue-winged Teal	u	c	r	u	3,4
Northern Shoveler	c	c	r	c	3,4
Northern Pintail	u	u		u	3,4
Green-winged Teal	c	c	r	c	3,4
Canvasback	u	u		u	3,4
Redhead	u	u	r	u	3,4
Ring-necked Duck	c	c		c	3,4
Greater Scaup	r	r		r	3,4
Lesser Scaup	c	c		c	3,4
Surf Scoter	x				4
Long-tailed Duck	x	x			4
Bufflehead	c	u		c	4
Common Goldeneye	r	r		r	4
Hooded Merganser	c	u	r	c	3,4
Common Merganser	x			x	4
Red-breasted Merganser	r			r	4
Ruddy Duck	c	u	r	c	3,4
Northern Bobwhite	u	u	u	u	1,2,3
Wild Turkey	u	u	u	u	1,2
Red-throated Loon				x	4
Common Loon	r	r		r	4
Pied-billed Grebe	c	c	u	c	3,4
Horned Grebe	r	r		u	4
Red-necked Grebe				x	4
Eared Grebe	r			r	4

	Winter (Dec-Feb)	Spring (Mar-May)	Summer (Jun-Aug)	Fall (Sep-Nov)	Habitat
Wood Stork		r	u	u	3,4
Magnificent Frigatebird			x		4
Neotropic Cormorant	r		r	r	3,4
Double-crested Cormorant	c	c	u	c	3,4
Anhinga	u	u	u	u	1,4
American White Pelican	u	u	r	u	4
Brown Pelican	x				4
American Bittern	r	u	r	r	3,4
Least Bittern		r	r	r	4
Great Blue Heron	c	c	c	c	1,3,4,5
Great Egret	c	c	c	c	1,3,4,5
Snowy Egret	u	c	c	c	1,3,4
Little Blue Heron	r	c	c	c	1,3,4
Tricolored Heron	r	r	u	r	1,3,4
Reddish Egret			x		4
Cattle Egret	r	u	c	u	1,3,4,5
Green Heron	r	c	c	c	1,3,4
Black-crowned Night Heron	r	u	u	u	1,3,4
Yellow-crowned Night Heron		u	u	u	1,3,4
White Ibis	u	u	c	u	1,3,4
Glossy Ibis			r	r	1,3,4
White-faced Ibis	r	u	u	u	1,3,4
Roseate Spoonbill	r	r	u	u	1,3,4
Black Vulture	c	c	c	c	1,3,5
Turkey Vulture	c	c	c	c	1,3,5
Osprey	u	u	u	u	1,4
White-tailed Kite					1,3
Swallow-tailed Kite		r	r		1
Golden Eagle	x	x			3,4
Mississippi Kite		c	c	r	1,2,5
Northern Harrier	c	c		c	3,4
Sharp-shinned Hawk	u	u		u	1,2,3,4,5
Cooper's Hawk	u	u	u	u	1,2,3,4,5
Bald Eagle	c	c	u	c	1,4
Red-shouldered Hawk	c	c	c	c	1,4
Broad-winged Hawk		u	u	u	1
Swainson's Hawk				r	3,4
Red-tailed Hawk	c	c	c	c	1,2,3,4,5
Rough-legged Hawk	x				3,4
Virginia Rail	r	r		r	4

	Winter (Dec-Feb)	Spring (Mar-May)	Summer (Jun-Aug)	Fall (Sep-Nov)	Habitat
Sora	r	r		r	4
Purple Gallinule		r	r		4
Common Gallinule	u	u	u	u	4
American Coot	c	c	u	c	3,4
Sandhill Crane	u	r		r	3
Black-necked Stilt	r	u	u	u	3,4
American Avocet	r		r	u	3,4
Black-bellied Plover	r			r	3,4
American Golden-Plover		r		r	3
Semipalmated Plover		r	r	r	3,4
Killdeer	c	c	c	c	3,4,5
Spotted Sandpiper	u	u	u	u	4
Solitary Sandpiper		u	u	u	4
Greater Yellowlegs	u	u	u	u	3,4
Willet				r	3,4
Lesser Yellowlegs	u	u	u	u	3,4
Upland Sandpiper		r	r	r	3
Whimbrel			r	r	3,4
Ruddy Turnstone				r	3,4
Red Knot		x		x	3,4
Stilt Sandpiper	r	r	r	u	3,4
Sanderling				r	3,4
Dunlin	r	r		r	3,4
Baird's Sandpiper			r		3,4
Least Sandpiper	u	u	u	u	3,4
White-rumped Sandpiper		r			3,4
Buff-breasted Sandpiper		r		r	3
Pectoral Sandpiper		u	u	u	3,4
Semipalmated Sandpiper		r	u	u	3,4
Western Sandpiper	r		u	u	3,4
Short-billed Dowitcher			r		3,4
Long-billed Dowitcher	u	u	r	u	3,4
Wilson's Snipe	c	c	r	c	3,4
American Woodcock	u	r	r	u	1,3
Wilson's Phalarope		r	r	r	4
Bonaparte's Gull	u	r		u	4
Laughing Gull	x				4
Franklin's Gull			r	x	4
Ring-billed Gull	c	u		c	3,4
Herring Gull	r			r	3,4

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	Winter (Dec-Feb)	Spring (Mar-May)	Summer (Jun-Aug)	Fall (Sep-Nov)	Habitat
Bridled Tern			x	x	4
Least Tern		r	u		4
Caspian Tern		r	r	r	4
Black Tern			u	r	3,4
Forster's Tern	c	r	r	u	3,4
Rock Pigeon	c	c	c	c	3,5
Band-tailed Pigeon	x				1,5
Eurasian Collared-Dove	c	c	c	c	3,5
Inca Dove	u	u	u	u	3,5
Common Ground-Dove	r				2,3
White-winged Dove	r	u	u	r	3,5
Mourning Dove	c	c	c	c	1,2,3,4,5
Yellow-billed Cuckoo		c	c	c	1
Black-billed Cuckoo			r	r	1
Greater Roadrunner		r	r		1,2
Barn Owl	r	r	r	r	3
Eastern Screech-Owl	u	u	u	u	1
Great Horned Owl	c	c	c	c	1,2,5
Burrowing Owl	x				3
Barred Owl	c	c	c	c	1,5
Long-eared Owl				x	1,3
Short-eared Owl	r				3
Common Nighthawk		u	u	u	3,5
Chuck-will's-widow		u	u		1
Eastern Whip-poor-will		r			1
Chimney Swift		c	c	c	1,5
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	r	c	c	c	1,2,5
Black-chinned Hummingbird		r			5
Anna's Hummingbird	x			x	5
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	x			x	5
Rufous Hummingbird	r			r	5
Calliope Hummingbird	x			x	5
Belted Kingfisher	c	c	c	c	4
Red-headed Woodpecker	c	c	c	c	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	c	c	c	c	1
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	c	c		c	1
Downy Woodpecker	c	c	c	c	1,5
Hairy Woodpecker	u	u	u	u	1
Red-cockaded Woodpecker	r	r	r	r	1
Northern Flicker	c	c	u	c	1

	Winter (Dec-Feb)	Spring (Mar-May)	Summer (Jun-Aug)	Fall (Sep-Nov)	Habitat
Pileated Woodpecker	c	c	c	c	1
American Kestrel	c	u	r	c	1,2,3,4
Merlin	u	u		u	3,4
Peregrine Falcon	r	r		u	3,4
Olive-sided Flycatcher			r	r	1
Eastern Wood-Pewee		c	c	c	1
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher		r	r	r	1
Acadian Flycatcher		c	c	c	1
Alder Flycatcher		u	u	r	1
Willow Flycatcher		x	x	x	1
Least Flycatcher		u		u	1
Eastern Phoebe	c	c	r	c	1,2,5
Say's Phoebe	x				3
Vermilion Flycatcher	r				3,4
Great Crested Flycatcher		c	c	c	1
Western Kingbird				x	3
Eastern Kingbird		c	c	c	1,2,3,4
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher		r	r	r	2,3
Loggerhead Shrike	c	c	c	c	2,3,4,5
White-eyed Vireo	r	c	c	c	1,2
Bell's Vireo			x		2
Yellow-throated Vireo		c	c	c	1
Blue-headed Vireo	u	u		u	1,2
Warbling Vireo		u	r	r	1
Philadelphia Vireo		c		u	1
Red-eyed Vireo		c	c	c	1
Blue Jay	c	c	c	c	1,2,5
American Crow	c	c	c	c	1,2,3,4,5
Fish Crow	c	c	c	c	1,2,3,4,5
Horned Lark	u	u	u	u	3
N. Rough-winged Swallow		c	c	c	3,4
Purple Martin	u	c	c		3,4,5
Tree Swallow	u	c	c	u	3,4
Bank Swallow		u	r	u	3,4
Barn Swallow	x	c	c	c	3,4,5
Cliff Swallow		c	c	c	3,4,5
Cave Swallow				x	3
Carolina Chickadee	c	c	c	c	1,2,5
Tufted Titmouse	c	c	c	c	1,2,5
Red-breasted Nuthatch	u	r		u	1

	Winter (Dec-Feb)	Spring (Mar-May)	Summer (Jun-Aug)	Fall (Sep-Nov)	Habitat
White-breasted Nuthatch	u	u	u	u	1
Brown-headed Nuthatch	u	u	u	u	1
Brown Creeper	c	u		c	1
House Wren	c	c		c	1,2
Winter Wren	c	c		c	1
Sedge Wren	u	u		u	4
Marsh Wren	u	u		u	4
Carolina Wren	c	c	c	c	1,2,3,5
Bewick's Wren	r			r	2
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	u	c	c	c	1,2
Golden-crowned Kinglet	c	c		c	1
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	c	c		c	1,2
Eastern Bluebird	c	c	c	c	2,3
Mountain Bluebird	x				3
Veery		u			1,2
Gray-cheeked Thrush		u			1,2
Swainson's Thrush		c		r	1,2
Hermit Thrush	c	c		c	1,2
Wood Thrush		c	c	u	1,2
American Robin	c	c	c	c	1,2,3,5
Gray Catbird	u	c	u	c	1,2
Brown Thrasher	c	c	c	c	1,2
Northern Mockingbird	c	c	c	c	1,2,3,4,5
European Starling	c	c	c	c	3,5
American Pipit	c	u		u	3
Sprague's Pipit	r				3
Cedar Waxwing	c	c	x	u	1,2,5
Lapland Longspur	u				3
Ovenbird		u		u	1,2
Worm-eating Warbler		u	u	u	1,2
Louisiana Waterthrush		u	u	u	1,2,4
Northern Waterthrush		c	r	c	1,2,4
Blue-winged Warbler		c	r	c	1,2
Golden-winged Warbler		u		u	1,2
Black-and-white Warbler	x	c	c	c	1,2
Prothonotary Warbler		c	c	u	1,2
Swainson's Warbler		u	c	r	1,2
Tennessee Warbler		c		u	1,2
Orange-crowned Warbler	c	c		c	1,2
Nashville Warbler		c		c	1,2

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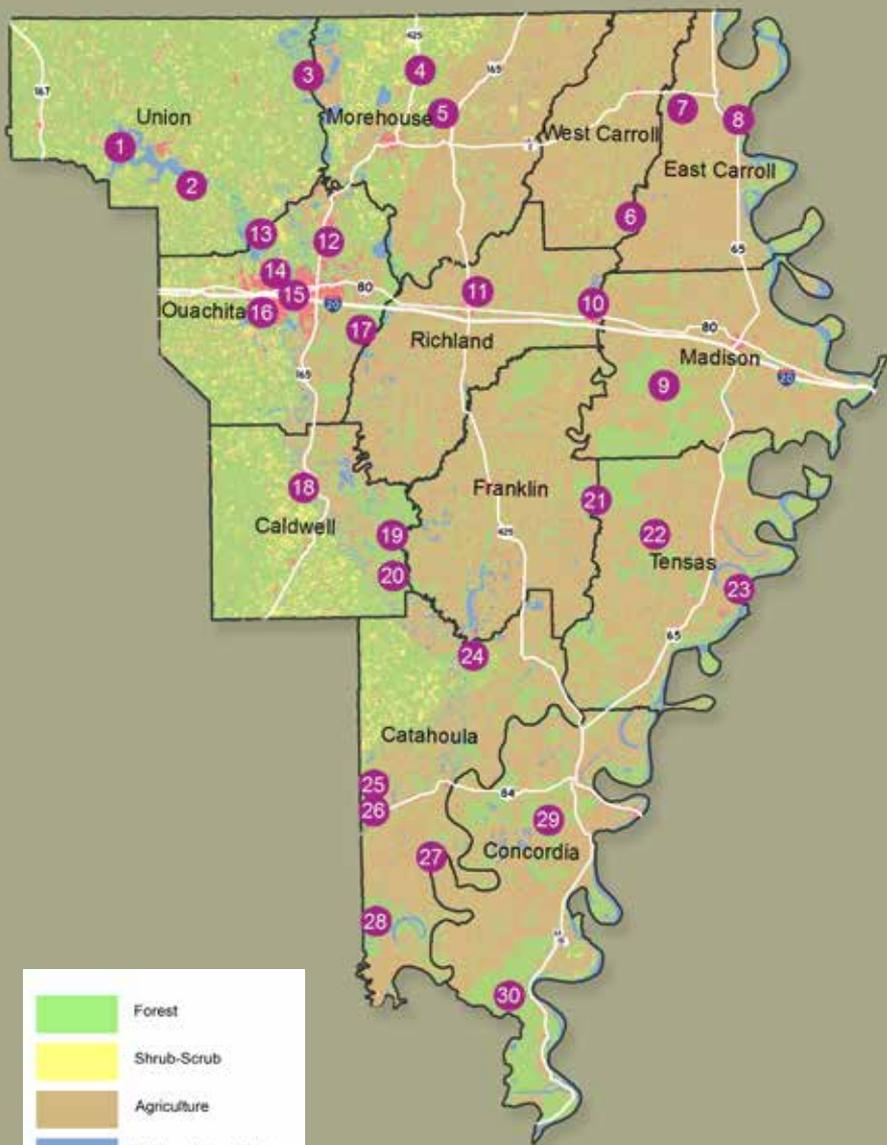
	Winter (Dec-Feb)	Spring (Mar-May)	Summer (Jun-Aug)	Fall (Sep-Nov)	Habitat
Mourning Warbler		u			2
Kentucky Warbler		c	c	c	1,2
Common Yellowthroat	c	c	c	c	2,4
Hooded Warbler		c	c	c	1,2
American Redstart		c	u	c	1,2
Cerulean Warbler		u		r	1,2
Northern Parula		c	c	c	1,2
Magnolia Warbler		c		c	1,2
Bay-breasted Warbler		u			1,2
Blackburnian Warbler		u		r	1,2
Yellow Warbler		c	u	u	1,2
Chestnut-sided Warbler		c	r	r	1,2
Blackpoll Warbler		r			1,2
Palm Warbler	r	r		u	1,2
Pine Warbler	c	c	c	c	1,2,5
Yellow-rumped Warbler	c	c		c	1,2,5
Yellow-throated Warbler		c	c	c	1,2
Prairie Warbler		c	c	r	1,2
Black-throated Green Warbler		c		c	1,2
Canada Warbler		u		c	1,2
Wilson's Warbler		u		c	1,2
Yellow-breasted Chat		c	c	u	2
Spotted Towhee	x				2
Eastern Towhee	c	c	c	c	2
Bachman's Sparrow	r	r	r	r	1
Chipping Sparrow	c	c	u	c	1,2,3,5
Clay-colored Sparrow				r	2
Field Sparrow	c	c	r	c	2,3
Vesper Sparrow	u	u		u	2,3
Lark Sparrow		r	u	r	2,3
Savannah Sparrow	c	c		c	2,3
Grasshopper Sparrow	r			r	2,3
Henslow's Sparrow	r	r		r	1
Le Conte's Sparrow	u	r		u	2,3
Nelson's Sparrow				r	4
Fox Sparrow	c	u		u	1,2
Song Sparrow	c	c		c	2,3,5
Lincoln's Sparrow	u	u		u	2,3
Swamp Sparrow	c	c		c	2,3,4
White-throated Sparrow	c	c		c	1,2,5

	Winter (Dec-Feb)	Spring (Mar-May)	Summer (Jun-Aug)	Fall (Sep-Nov)	Habitat
Harris's Sparrow				x	2
White-crowned Sparrow	c	u		c	2,3
Dark-eyed Junco	c	c		c	2,3,5
Summer Tanager	x	c	c	c	1,2
Scarlet Tanager		c		u	1,2
Northern Cardinal	c	c	c	c	1,2,3,5
Rose-breasted Grosbeak		c		c	1,2
Blue Grosbeak		c	c	c	1,2
Indigo Bunting	x	c	c	c	1,2
Painted Bunting		c	c	u	1,2
Dickcissel		c	c	r	2,3
Bobolink		u			3
Red-winged Blackbird	c	c	c	c	2,3,4
Western Meadowlark	r				3
Eastern Meadowlark	c	c	c	c	3
Yellow-headed Blackbird	x				3
Rusty Blackbird	c	u		u	1,4
Brewer's Blackbird	c	r		r	3
Common Grackle	c	c	c	c	1,2,3,4,5
Boat-tailed Grackle	x				4,5
Great-tailed Grackle	x				3,5
Bronzed Cowbird	x				5
Brown-headed Cowbird	c	c	c	c	1,2,3,4,5
Orchard Oriole		c	c	u	1,2
Baltimore Oriole		c	c	c	1,2
House Finch	c	c	c	c	3,5
Purple Finch	u	u		r	1,5
Red Crossbill	x				1
Pine Siskin	u	u		r	1
American Goldfinch	c	c	r	c	1,5
Evening Grosbeak	x				1
House Sparrow	c	c	c	c	2,3,5



NORTH EAST LOUISIANA BIRDING SPOTS

- 1 Lake D'Arbonne State Park & Lake Overlook
- 2 Bayou D'Arbonne Lake Spillway
- 3 Upper Ouachita National Wildlife Refuge
- 4 Chemin-A-Haut State Park & Ben Lilly Conservation Area
- 5 Handy Brake National Wildlife Refuge
- 6 Poverty Point World Heritage Site
- 7 Bayou Macon Wildlife Management Area
- 8 Grant's Canal Park & Lake Overlook
- 9 Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge
- 10 Poverty Point Reservoir State Park
- 11 Floy McElroy Wildlife Management Area
- 12 Black Bayou Lake National Wildlife Refuge
- 13 D'Arbonne National Wildlife Refuge
- 14 Kiroli Park
- 15 Ouachita River, South of Forsythe Park
- 16 Cheniere Lake Park
- 17 Russell Sage Wildlife Management Area
- 18 Columbia Lock & Dam (West Side) Recreation Area
- 19 Fort Necessity Recreation Area
- 20 Boeuf Wildlife Management Area
- 21 Big Lake Wildlife Management Area
- 22 Buckhorn Wildlife Management Area
- 23 Lake Bruin State Park
- 24 J. C. "Sony" Gilbert Wildlife Management Area
- 25 Catahoula National Wildlife Refuge
- 26 Little River Recreation Area
- 27 Jonesville Lock & Dam Recreation Area
- 28 Dewey Wills Wildlife Management Area
- 29 Bayou Cocodrie National Wildlife Refuge
- 30 Richard K. Yancey Wildlife Management Area



Bird watching is one of the fastest growing activities in America. In the State of Louisiana, bird watching is considered an agritourism activity and is covered under the Agritourism Limited Liability Law (La. R.S. 9:2795.5) passed by the Louisiana Legislature in 2008. The law assists agritourism operators who might be vulnerable to lawsuits and who have difficulty in obtaining liability insurance. The law limits the liability of an agritourism professional for injuries that occur through no fault of the agritourism professional. An agritourism professional who qualifies can complete a plan of operation and submit the plan to the LSU AgCenter's Agritourism Coordinator. Once approved, the plan is forwarded to the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry for certification. The process takes less than six weeks to complete.

For more information go online: www.lsuagacenter.com/agritourism

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