

Best Birding

in the Greater Fort Collins Area



Western Tanager.
Photo: Stephanie Montgomery

Provided by

Bird Conservancy
of the Rockies

Connecting People, Birds and Land
www.birdconservancy.org



Broad-tailed Hummingbirds are seasonal visitors to the foothills of the Front Range. Photo: Robert Martinez.

Horsetooth Mountain Open Space

This scenic 2,711-acre park (which includes Culver, Soderberg, and Hughey Open Spaces) varies in elevation from 5,430 to 7,255 feet. Features include foothill grasslands, ponderosa pine forests, rock outcrops and riparian habitat.

Directions – From College Ave., drive west on Harmony Rd. which becomes CR 38E. Watch for parking area on right after passing Horsetooth Reservoir, about 6 miles from College Ave.



Bright yellow plumage makes the Yellow-breasted Chat one of the more conspicuous birds that are seen at Lory State Park. Photo: Lee Farrell.

Lory State Park

Just north of Horsetooth Mountain, **Lory State Park** has similar habitat with many scenic trails. Well Gulch Nature Trail and Arthur's Rock Trail are popular with visitors and birds alike.

Directions – Take US 287 north to County Road 54G (LaPorte Ave). Go through the town of LaPorte and turn left onto County Road 52E. Turn left again at County Road 23N, go 1.4 miles. Take a right on Lodgepole Drive and drive 1.6 miles to the park entrance.



Keep an eye out for Colorado's State Bird, the Lark Bunting! Photo: Bill Schmoker.

Pawnee National Grasslands

Pawnee National Grasslands mostly consist of shortgrass prairie habitat. The Crow Valley Campground also has large deciduous and coniferous trees that attract migrant songbirds in the spring and fall.

Directions – Take Highway 14 east from Fort Collins for 44 miles to Briggsdale. Turn left on County Road 77. The entrance to the campground is a short distance on the left side of the road.



Soapstone Prairie is a paradise for grassland birds like Baird's Sparrow. Photo: Andy Bankert

Soapstone Prairie Natural Area

Soapstone Prairie is extraordinary with more than 28 sq. miles of wide-open vistas, nearly pristine grasslands, miles of trails and world-renowned cultural resources. Bison were introduced to the Prairie in 2016. In 2018, Baird's Sparrow confirmed to be breeding at Soapstone, the first ever record for this species in Colorado.

Directions – Drive north on I-25 from Fort Collins to exit 288 for Buckeye Rd. Drive west almost 6 miles. After Rawhide Energy Plant, turn north on CR 15 for two miles

Get Involved

Volunteer and help us monitor and research bird populations, engage people of all ages in nature through educational programs, assist with banding birds, and many other activities. Training is provided.

Register to become a volunteer at:
[birdconservancy.org/volunteer](http://www.birdconservancy.org/volunteer)

Join our flock and help birds thrive! Donations help address urgent conservation needs, ensuring birds and healthy lands exist for future generations. Your gift supports the work of biologists, ecologists and educators across the Rocky Mountains, Great Plains, Mexico and beyond.

"Chip in" for birds online at:
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See for yourself!

Stop in and tour our **Environmental Learning Center** at Barr Lake State Park. Enjoy our educational programs and witness firsthand how we are changing lives and landscapes by connecting people, birds and land.



Bird Conservancy
of the Rockies

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Look for American White Pelicans at City Park from spring to late summer. Photo: Bill Schmoker.

City Park/Grandview Cemetery

Grandview Cemetery has large spruce and fir trees that host high-elevation bird species. During migration and winter, Sheldon Lake in **City Park** attracts numerous waterfowl and gulls.

Directions—From College Ave. drive west on Mountain Ave. past Shields Ave. To access City Park, turn south on Jackson Ave. to Oak Ave. To access Grandview Cemetery, continue straight on Mountain Ave. until it ends at the cemetery (a few blocks past Jackson Ave.)



Look for colorful migrants during the annual spring and fall migrations. Lazuli Bunting photo: Stephanie Montgomery

Dixon Reservoir/Pine Ridge Natural Area

The riparian woodland at the north end of the lake is a favorite migrant trap of Fort Collins' birders.

Directions—From Fort Collins, go west on Prospect Rd. for 3 miles, turn south on Overland Trail, then west on CR 42G for 1 mile. Turn left into driveway for Pine Ridge Natural Area.



Male American Goldfinches are in full colorful splendor in Lee Martinez Park during the summer months. Photo: John Carr.

Lee Martinez Park

A nice park near Old Town along the Poudre River with walking and biking trails. This can be a great spot for migratory songbirds as well as breeding grassland and riparian bird species.

Directions—From College Ave., drive west on Cherry St. a few blocks. Turn north on Sherwood St., which will curve down to a parking area.



Mature trees along the Poudre River attract many bird species, including Eastern Screech-Owls. Listen for their haunting, trill-like calls after dark!

Running Deer Natural Area & Colorado State University Environmental Learning Center

Running Deer Natural Area has wetlands, grasslands and shrubs and can be an excellent spot to find Yellow-headed Blackbirds, Sora, Virginia Rail and American Bittern.

Colorado State University's ELC is a large area that has numerous ponds, wetlands, secondary growth forest, cottonwood trees, and shrubby grasslands. This is an excellent place to observe migrating songbirds in the spring and fall.

Directions—For Running Deer, look for the sign on the south side of Prospect Rd, west of the Colorado Welcome Center. The ELC can also be accessed via the Colorado Welcome Center by hiking southwest less than a mile through Running Deer Natural Area, or via Environmental Dr. on the east end of Drake Rd. where it turns south to become Ziegler.



Bobcat Ridge sits along the migratory corridor of hawks and other raptors. Red-tailed Hawk Photo by John Carr

Bobcat Ridge Natural Area

Bobcat Ridge features foothill grasslands, ponderosa pine forests, red rocks and riparian habitats. In addition to the great birding on the ground, this is a great spot to observe migrating raptors in the spring and fall.

Directions—From Fort Collins, take Harmony Road west, which turns into CR 38 E. Follow CR 38 E to Masonville. Go left (south) at the Masonville Mercantile onto CR 27. Follow CR 27 about 1 mile to CR 32 C; head west about 1 mile to the Bobcat Ridge parking lot.



A small group of Bobolinks have been breeding regularly for the last several years near the park's southeastern trailhead off Overland. Photo by Bill Schmoker.

Reservoir Ridge Natural Area

This natural area features grasslands and foothill shrubland habitat that suits many shortgrass prairie birds.

Directions - Reservoir Ridge can be accessed from several locations on either Overland Trail or County Road 23 north of the CSU Foothills Campus.



Downy Woodpeckers are a common sight along the Spring Creek Trail. Photo by Heriberto Verdugo-Munguia

Spring Creek Trail

This is a pleasant walking and biking trail along idyllic Spring Creek. This long riparian habitat winds its way through the heart of Fort Collins.

Directions—The trail begins near Prospect Rd. and Timberline Rd. where it leaves the Poudre River Trail and continues southwest to near Overland Trail and Horsetooth Rd.



Western Tanagers commonly breed in Gateway Natural Area. Photo by Stephanie Montgomery.

Gateway Natural Area

During the winter, this is one of the best local spots to observe American Dippers. In the spring, summer and fall, the site features breeding and migratory birds that inhabit the mixed coniferous forest and riparian habitat.

Directions—Follow US 287 a few miles northwest of Fort Collins; turn west on State Highway 14 for 5 miles. Look for the sign on the right side of the road southwest to near Overland Trail and Horsetooth Rd.