

Williamsburg Area Birding Locations list 1

Preface:

The greater Williamsburg area boasts a generous mixture of forested, rural agricultural, and aquatic habitats which have produced records of more than 335 bird species. Local aquatic habitats range from the tidal fresh waters of the Chickahominy and James rivers to the more saline mouth of the York River at Yorktown. The 3 major river watersheds offer a diversity of marsh and adjacent upland environs, as well as numerous associated impoundments. Below are some of the more popular spots frequented by birders. The Williamsburg Bird Club conducts field trips to many of these locations once a month, as well as walks at New Quarter Park the second and fourth Saturday of each month.

Colonial National Historic Parkway

Jamestown End

College Creek pull-off-Excellent for Brown Pelicans, waterfowl, marsh birds, nesting Ospreys and Bald Eagles, migrating hawks in the spring, and gulls and terns March-November. The brackish marsh hosts herons and egrets, Clapper Rails, Marsh Wrens, Swamp Sparrows.

Archer's Hope pull-off-Great overlook for viewing waterfowl, gulls and terns on the James River. The open areas across the road often have American Woodcock in the spring.

Jamestown Island-Excellent for Bald Eagles, dabbling ducks, and upland forest birds such as all woodpecker species, thrushes, vireos, warblers, and sparrows.

Yorktown End

Felgate's Creek pull-off-The high overlook just beyond the bridge is the best diving duck observation spot in the area. Brown Pelicans, Horned Grebes, hundreds of Ruddy Ducks, Buffleheads, and often Canvasback are here from November through March.

Indian Field Creek pull-off-The next pull-off beyond Felgate's Creek also offers excellent waterfowl viewing. This a great place for Tundra Swans, Buffleheads, and Hooded Mergansers in the winter. The only place in the area to find Boat-tailed Grackles is here, March-mid-August.

Yorktown-Excellent for Common Loons, Northern Gannets in the early spring, and many species of diving ducks such as Lesser Scaup, and Red-breasted Merganser November-March.

Local Parks

New Quarter Park-At the end of Lakes Head Drive behind the residential community of Queens Lake in York County. Open seasonally April-October. Superb upland forest with trails. All woodpecker species are here. In summer a great area for nesting Ospreys, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Summer and Scarlet Tanagers, Ovenbird and Kentucky Warbler. The view over Queens Creek may produce a Northern Harrier or Bald Eagles.

Green Springs Trail-Behind Jamestown High School off Route 5 west of Williamsburg. More than 200 species of birds have been documented here. Excellent for nesting Green Herons, Ospreys, Wood Ducks, Tree Swallows. Superb for migrants in fall and spring.

York River State Park-In upper James City County beyond Croaker. Excellent forests for thrushes, vireos, warblers, and fall and spring migrants.

Best Birding Areas Around Williamsburg list 2

Greensprings Nature Trail

A 4.7-mile soft surface hiking trail which consists of three interconnecting loops through rural land. The trail has a boardwalk over a beaver pond, is located 1/2 mile from Jamestown Island, and adjacent to Mainland Farm, the oldest continually operated farm in America. The trail is being developed through a coordinated effort utilizing volunteers from the community, various state and national grants, and local resources. Green Springs Trail is located on John Tyler Highway behind Jamestown High School. Look for nesting osprey, warblers, woodpeckers, swallows, and more.

Colonial Parkway

A 20 mile road that runs from Jamestown to Yorktown, mostly along the James and York rivers, with many parking pull-offs; expect almost anything in the varied habitats.

Jamestown Island

A 3-mile and 5-mile, one way loop road through viney woods and marshes, with parking pull-offs; excellent for woodland species and waterfowl.

Hog Island

A wildlife management area on the shore of the James River, just south of Williamsburg, in Surry County. Most easily reached by the Jamestown Ferry, with observation platforms and walking trails; great for shorebirds and waterfowl.

York River State Park

The entrance is off Route 606; York River State Park offers visitors an opportunity to experience the environment of a coastal estuary. This park is known for its rare and delicate environment, where freshwater and saltwater meet to create a habitat rich in marine and plant life. The main focus of the park is to preserve a portion of York River frontage and its related marshes while providing an area for passive day-use recreation for visitors. York River State Park served as a role model for all of Virginia's state parks in developing resource management plans. Expect just about any kind of birds except shore birds.

New Quarter Park

A 545 acre preserve that includes mature woodlands and open meadows, habitat that supports a diverse population of plants and animals. The park sits on a bluff of fossil shells and is surrounded by tidal creeks and marshes. Located at the end of Lakeshead Drive near the Queens Lake neighborhood.

Jolly Pond

Located on Route 633 off Centerville Road. Only 2 small pull-offs, but a great location for waterfowl and for swampy forest dwellers such as warblers and flycatchers.

College Woods

On the campus of the College of William and Mary, adjacent to Lake Matoaka; enter from Compton Drive off Monticello Avenue. Area supports waterfowl on the lake and species that like mature oak and beech forest.

Waller Mill Park

The entrance is on Airport Road between the intersection of Route 645 and Rochambeau Road. Picnic areas and trails through mature woods are excellent for thrushes, vireos. Warblers, flycatchers, tanagers, and more.

Governor's Land

Two islands on the shore of the James River off Route 5 near the intersection with the Chickahominy River. Protected by a conservation easement held by the Williamsburg Land Conservancy; boardwalk across marsh and trails through the woods are good for warblers, wrens, and ducks.

Bassett Hall Woods

Off of Francis Street in Colonial Williamsburg, behind Bassett Hall; stream, woods and a freshwater pond: look for wrens, thrushes, woodland birds.