

# Birding Around South Mountain



Driving along the roads of **Michaux State Forest** in June, you can hear bird songs drifting out from the interior forests. These singing birds are secretive species that require large blocks of mountain woodlands to breed like the Wood Thrush, Veery or Ovenbird.

Walking the trails, you may catch a glimpse of the vibrant yellow and black of a Hooded Warbler or the startling crimson of the Scarlet Tanager. You may even hear the distant call of the large Pileated Woodpecker.

Though the high breeding densities of these “core-forest” species is the reason **South Mountain was designated as one of the Audubon Society’s Important Bird Areas**, there are a great diversity of other types of ecosystems throughout the South Mountain area that offer a wonderful array of birdwatching in brushy, field, wetland or open-water habitats.

*There are always birds to watch somewhere in South Mountain any time of the year!*

**Scarlet Tanager** is a species found nesting in undisturbed areas of the Michaux State Forest.

Look for **Eastern Towhees** in brushy openings throughout the region.

**Louisiana Waterthrush** are found along the same high quality, headwater streams as brook trout.

The crow-sized **Pileated Woodpecker** makes large, oval holes in dead and living trees which can be seen throughout the mature forests of South Mountain.

Look for **Red-shouldered Hawks** in wet woods along rivers and streams, and around the edges of large wetland areas.

Old fields near wetlands are ideal places to watch the March courtship displays of the **American Woodcock**.

The **Wood Thrush’s** melodic, flute-like song can be heard driving along forest roads in June and July.

An occasional **Common Loon** can be found visiting the reservoirs of South Mountain, along with the more common ducks and other water birds.

The only North American warbler with an orange throat, the **Blackburnian Warbler** can be found nesting in South Mountain’s conifers.

**Red-headed Woodpeckers** are not common in south-central Pennsylvania, but can be found in recent timber clearings within Michaux State Forest.

Songbird migrants that nest farther north in Pennsylvania or Canada, like the **Black-throated Blue Warbler**, can be found around South Mountain during migration.

**Hooded Warblers** require a healthy forest understory with dense shrubs for nesting.

**22. Glatfelter Tract Map**

- GATE
- Ⓜ RECREATIONAL AREA ACCESS / PARKING
- 🔥 FIRE TOWER
- 🏠 STATE PARK OFFICE
- 👁 VISTA
- 🛖 SHELTER
- 🛖 CABIN
- 🏕 PICNIC AREA

**Michaux State Forest**  
dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/stateforests/michaux

### 1. State Game Lands 169

Gameland Road, Newville, PA 17241  
This 2,500-acre property is a diverse area with wetlands and the Conodoguinet Creek bordering its eastern end, and varied upland habitats. The aquatic habitats bring in wading birds, osprey, waterfowl, and migrating shorebirds, especially when the ponds are low in mid to late summer exposing mudflats. The wetlands attract rails, and the weedy fields are very good for migrating sparrows. American Woodcock can be found in the spring. Visitors to state game lands should always wear a safety orange vest during hunting seasons, and this site could have hunters from September through February. *For more information: [visitcumberlandvalley.com/listings/State-Game-Lands-169](http://visitcumberlandvalley.com/listings/State-Game-Lands-169)*

### 2. Big Spring Creek Greenway

Big Spring Road, Newville, PA 17241  
**Big Spring Creek Greenway** provides for a little bit of everything depending on the season. Because the Big Spring itself doesn't freeze, winter is a great season to visit. American Widgeon, Gadwall, American Black Duck, and even Blue-winged Teal and Cackling Goose may be found mixed in with the Canada Geese and Mallards. It is also not unusual to find a variety of songbird species that normally winter farther south. In the summers, check out the various parking areas along the greenway up to Newville. Willow Flycatchers are common and both Yellow-billed and Black-billed Cuckoos can be found. Ospreys are common migrants both spring and fall, and American Bald Eagles make occasional appearances in the fall. Great Blue Herons and Belted Kingfishers are plentiful all year long. *For more information: [visitcumberlandvalley.com/listings/Big-Spring-Creek-Greenway](http://visitcumberlandvalley.com/listings/Big-Spring-Creek-Greenway)*

### 3. Children's Lake

409 Front Street, Boiling Springs, PA 17007  
**Children's Lake** in downtown Boiling Springs is a large, spring-fed lake that stays open year-round for resident and migrant waterfowl. A healthy flock of resident domestic and crossbreed ducks and geese are present, as are a few Mute Swans and seasonal migrating visitors. Trees surrounding the lake are also used by many species of songbirds for nesting and during migration. The Appalachian National Scenic Trail (A.T.) runs along the lake through the town, and makes for a convenient and diverse habitat walk south past historic furnace remains, through a small riparian woodlands, and through farm lands. *For more information: [visitcumberlandvalley.com/listings/Children-s-Lake](http://visitcumberlandvalley.com/listings/Children-s-Lake)*



### 4. Mount Holly Marsh Preserve

1 Yates Street, Mt. Holly Springs, PA 17065  
South side of Mt. Holly Springs  
This site is a matrix of wetland, meadow, and upland forest habitats with trails winding throughout. Geese, numerous species of ducks and herons, kingfisher, and woodcock are common. Raptors include Red-shouldered Hawk and an occasional Harrier. *For more information and a trail map: [ccpa.net/3650/Mount-Holly-Marsh-Preserve](http://ccpa.net/3650/Mount-Holly-Marsh-Preserve)*

### 5. Huntsdale Fish Hatchery & Enck's Mill Pond

195 Lebo Road, Carlisle, PA 17015  
The historic part of the hatchery has abandoned ponds lined with tall trees; attracting a wide variety of water and riparian species. Dabbling ducks are common, and Wood Ducks nest here. Black-crowned Night-Heron are found roosting in spring and early summer. In migration, look for rails, American Bittern, Osprey, and swallows. It is also a reliable location for Rusty Blackbird in spring. SR 233 to Pine Rd., east to Sheaffer Drive. The current hatchery will be on the left. Park on right, and walk around Hidden Pond and wetland areas on the east side of Sheaffer Drive. The nearby Enck's Mill Road Pond, located just to the east of Huntsdale, is also worth checking for migrant waterfowl. This pond can be observed from the roadside. Return to Pine Road, turn left (east) and go 0.7 mile and turn left (north) on Enck's Mill Road. Go 0.2 mile and pull to the side of the road to scan the pond. *Restroom facilities at hatchery visitor's center, daily 8:00 AM - 3:30 PM. For more information: [visitcumberlandvalley.com/listings/Huntsdale-State-Fish-Hatchery](http://visitcumberlandvalley.com/listings/Huntsdale-State-Fish-Hatchery)*

### 6. King's Gap Environmental Education Center

500 Kings Gap Road, Carlisle, PA 17015  
Sixteen miles of numerous trails wind through more than 1,400 acres and many diverse habitats. A great place to see all the species of woodpeckers, as well as most of the species of birds that pass through or nest in the forests of South Mountain. Wood Thrushes and Scarlet Tanagers abound. *Restroom facilities in several places. Download their Recreational Guide trails map as well as the Common Birds guide from their maps page: [dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/findapark/kingsgap](http://dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/findapark/kingsgap)*



### 7. Pine Grove Furnace State Park

1100 Pine Grove Road, Gardners, PA 17324  
A variety of habitats are found here, including streamside forests, lakes, wet woods, and hemlock groves. Find Neotropical migrants, including thrushes, warblers and tanagers, along the rail-trail in the Laurel Lake area. The lakes are a magnet for waterfowl and wading birds. Winter birding is good here due to the conifers; look for winter finches, crossbills, and six species of woodpeckers. *Restroom facilities in several places. Download a park map for parking and trail options: [dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/findapark/pinegrovefurnace](http://dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/findapark/pinegrovefurnace)*

### 8. Camp Michaux

Michaux Road, Gardners, PA 17324  
At the intersection of Michaux and Bunker Hill roads are the historic remains of a variety of buildings spanning nearly 200 years. Clearings and trails crisscross this area providing a variety of edge habitat mixed with streams and conifer forests, resulting in a high variety of bird species. *Walk the A.T. here or download a detailed "walking tour" map: [historicalsociety.com/uploads/CAMPMPRevisedWalkingTour.pdf](http://historicalsociety.com/uploads/CAMPMPRevisedWalkingTour.pdf)*

### 9. Big Flat

2751 Shippensburg Road, Biglerville, PA 17307  
Use the Appalachian Trail parking lot along Shippensburg Road. Walk around perimeter of parking lot for open brushy species like Eastern Towhee, American Goldfinch, and Grey Catbird; or walk the A.T. in either direction for forest birds like chickadees, peewees, or tanagers. *Restroom facilities are a half mile south on Shippensburg Road at the Recreation Area.*

### 10. Thompson Hollow Road

215 Forest Road, Shippensburg, PA 17257  
Half way between Shippensburg and Whitmer roads is a timber cut on the south side of **Thompson Hollow Road**. Look for Baltimore Orioles and Red-headed Woodpeckers. Pines are attracting a wide assortment of birds.

### 11. Milesburn Road

Milesburn Road, Shippensburg, PA 17257  
Following Burd Run, this stretch of **Milesburn Road** is a good place to see or hear warblers in spring and fall. Two pull off areas by gates are safe places to park.

### 12. Flatrock Plantation

992 Ridge Road, Shippensburg, PA  
A large burn area is slowly growing back on the west side of Milesburn Road at the intersection of Ridge Road. Old field and scrub species abound, along with Common Nighthawks, raptors and songbird migrants. Look for the yellow gate in the deer enclosure fence to get inside.

### 13. Long Pine Run Reservoir (Rec. Area)

Parking for the reservoir is 1.4 miles up Milesburn Road from Pine Grove Road (Rte. 233) March and November is the best time to see migrating ducks, geese, and other water birds. In the summer, look for an occasional loon, along with herons, several species of swallows, and Red-shouldered Hawks. Osprey and eagles occasionally appear looking for fish. Trails circle the lake.

### 14. Old Chambersburg Reservoir

About 1 mile north of Milesburg Road along Pine Grove Road  
Along 233, this drained reservoir is in the early stages of regrowth, with tree seedlings planted along a restored creek. Old field and meadow species abound here, including Field Sparrow, American Goldfinch, and Tree Swallow. Park alongside 233 at a pull-off by the bridge over Long Pine Run and follow a scenic, unimproved trail through a hemlock grove to the old reservoir area.



Singing **Field Sparrows** are a common summer sound in the shrubby habitat of the **Old Chambersburg Reservoir** and other field/ young-forest areas.

### 15. Quarry Gap Road

Quarry Gap Road, Fayetteville, PA 17222  
Bordering the northeast side of Caledonia State Park and following Hosack Run, **Quarry Gap Road** is a great place to see and hear Wood Thrush and Veery, as well as other thrushes during migration. Due to the wet forest area, other Neotropical songbirds abound.

### 16. Caledonia State Park

101 Pine Grove Road, Fayetteville, PA 17222  
With 12 different trails adding up to 10 miles of hiking, you can choose from very easy to more difficult terrain. Streams, ponds, and varying forest types offer a great variety of birds any time of the year. *A trail guide and restroom facilities are available at the park office. Download a park map for information and trails: [dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/findapark/caledonia](http://dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/findapark/caledonia)*



### 17. New Baltimore Road Recreation Area

500 Baltimore Road, Fayetteville, PA 17222  
To dead end gate and parking area  
Parking area close to Route 30 for several trail loops through mixed open and forest habitat. Kiosk signs show trails that are good for general birding year round. *Restroom facilities nearby at Caledonia State Park office.*

### 18. Mt. Cydonia Road/Irishtown Road

700 Mt. Cydonia Road, Fayetteville, PA 17222  
The north half of the road borders the Mt. Cydonia Ponds Natural Area, where birding is restricted to the road only due to the many protected vernal ponds. This is a great stretch for all-around spring and fall migrants, including Louisiana Waterthrush, Kentucky and other warblers, many species of migrating songbirds.

### 19. Mt. Alto State Park

Mont Alto, PA 17237  
A small park with one, short forested trail. This is a good place to find woodland birds and take a rest stop. *Picnic and restroom facilities are available here. For more information: <http://dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/findapark/montalto>*



### 20. Old Forge Picnic Area

Old Forge Road, 17261 — just south of Staley Road and north of the Camp Penn United Methodist Church  
Open picnic area along Tumbling Run and the Appalachian Trail. This wet forest area is attractive to a high diversity of birds and creekside trails make it a great place for birding. *Restroom facilities.*

### 21. Gum Springs Road

638 Gum Springs Road, Fairfield, PA 17320  
The combination of open fields and wet areas make an attractive habitat for American Woodcock. To watch the courtship display of males in March, park on north end of **Gum Springs Road**, walk down the haul road across stream and pipeline to large open area. Woodcocks are most actively displaying dusk-to-dark.

### 22. Glatfelter Tract

660 Mount Hope Road, Fairfield, PA 17320  
This site has diverse habitat areas within a short walking distance. The highlight is several large blocks of shrub/scrub providing nesting habitat for "early successional" forest birds, such as Eastern Towhee, Indigo Bunting, and Ruffed Grouse. A short driveway just north of Lower Gum Springs Road leads to a parking area in a large scrub area. North along Mt. Hope Road are parking areas for trail access to explore old fields, small ponds, and mature forests.



**Ruffed Grouse** finds a natural nesting habitat along the **Glatfelter Tract**.

### 23. Strawberry Hill Nature Preserve

1537 Mount Hope Road, Fairfield, PA 17320  
With ten miles of trails on 609 acres, a diversity of habitats and birdwatching opportunities abound. *Restroom facilities. Find information, directions and a downloadable trail map: [strawberryhill.org](http://strawberryhill.org)*



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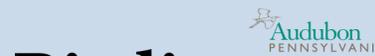
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