



North Carolina

## Birding Trail

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### Catawba Valley

#### 1 Riverbend Park

**Owner:** Catawba County

6700 North NC 16, Conover, NC 28613  
828-256-9157

Catawba County

[www.catawbacountync.gov](http://www.catawbacountync.gov)

**Site Description:** Begin your visit to Riverbend Park by checking out the feeders near the office for American Goldfinch, Northern Cardinal, Mourning Dove, Brown-headed Nuthatch and Song Sparrow. In winter, look for Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, Dark-eyed Junco, and White-throated and Fox Sparrows. The areas around the office parking lot can be good for migrating songbirds in the spring and fall. Walk or drive to the lower parking lot near the river. The area from the platform to the canoe access can also be a productive stop during the spring and fall migration; watch for Bald Eagle year-round. During the winter, look for gulls, ducks and herons in the river. During the breeding season, watch for Cliff Swallow, Eastern Kingbird, Osprey, Great Egret and, in late summer, migrating shorebirds. From the platform, follow the Red Trail down the river. Once you reach the Blue Trail, take it up through the early successional area. This area is very good for fall migrants and winter sparrows. Continue on the Blue Trail to the Green Trail. From here you can turn right and go back to the office, or turn left and explore more of the park.

**Species of Interest:** Bald Eagle, Broad-winged Hawk, American Woodcock, Cliff Swallow, Cedar Waxwing, Scarlet Tanager

**Habitats:** dry coniferous woodlands, oak forest & mixed hardwoods/pine, early successional, river/stream/wetland

**Access & Parking:** The park and visitor center are open 8am to 6pm, November – February; 8am to 7pm, March and October; 8am to 8pm, April – September. The park is closed on Wednesdays.

**Directions:** From I-40, take Exit 132. Take NC 16 north for 8 miles. The park entrance is on the right, just before the Catawba River crossing.

Coordinates: N 35° 49' 12" W 81° 11' 15" DeLorme (NC Gazetteer) Page: 34





North Carolina

## Birding Trail

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### Catawba Valley

#### 2 Glenn C. Hilton, Jr. Memorial Park

**Owner:** City of Hickory

2000 6<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Hickory, NC 28601  
828-322-7046

Catawba County

[www.hickorygov.com/recreation](http://www.hickorygov.com/recreation)

**Site Description:** This 59.5-acre park operated by the City of Hickory is one of the best birding spots in the area. A total of 22 warbler species have been seen in a single day in late September, after the passing of a cold front. Watch for Connecticut, Cerulean, Golden-winged, Blue-winged, Nashville, and Wilson's Warblers. Upon entering the park, continue past the playground and bear to the right to a cul de sac with limited parking. The asphalt walkway will pass a small gazebo and, bearing right, cross a bridge over the creek onto the loop boardwalk. The boardwalk trail is often a great spot for viewing migrating songbirds, wading birds, and raptors. At the furthest point on the loop is an observation platform adjacent to a cove of Lake Hickory. The woodland trails host numerous woodpeckers and nesting raptors. The trees located near the picnic shelters are particularly productive, especially in migration.

**Species of Interest:** Fish Crow, Brown-headed Nuthatch, White-throated Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Pine Siskin, Purple Finch

**Habitats:** oak forest & mixed hardwoods/pine, floodplain forest, early successional, lake

**Access & Parking:** The park is open daily during daylight hours. Park gates are closed after sunset.

**Directions:** From I-40, take Exit 123 toward Lenoir on US 321 N. Continue on US 321 to just before the Catawba River Bridge, and turn right on Old Lenoir Road. Upon crossing the railroad tracks, turn left and immediately right on 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW. Proceed up the hill to the intersection with 12<sup>th</sup> Street Drive NW. Turn left and go 1.8 miles; 12<sup>th</sup> Street Drive NW becomes 6<sup>th</sup> Street NW, crosses an arm of Lake Hickory and continues up hill. Glenn C. Hilton Jr. Memorial Park is on the right.

Coordinates: N 35° 45' 43" W 81° 21' 20" DeLorme (NC Gazetteer) Page: 34





North Carolina

## Birding Trail

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### Catawba Valley

3

#### Hickory City Park-Geitner Park Greenway

**Owner:** City of Hickory

2035 12 Street Drive NW, Hickory, NC 28601  
828-322-7046

Catawba County

[www.hickorygov.com/recreation](http://www.hickorygov.com/recreation)

**Site Description:** Hickory City Park and Geitner Park are connected by a greenway, which provides excellent birding opportunities during migration, particularly in the fall. One of the best spots along the greenway is about 0.2 miles north from Hickory City Park on the left. Scan for a variety of migrating songbirds here, especially after fall cold fronts. Watch for Connecticut, Cerulean, Golden-winged, Blue-winged, Nashville, and Wilson's Warblers. The middle section of the greenway, up to 0.3 miles south of Geitner Park, is also good for migrating songbirds and woodpeckers. A trail follows from Geitner Park to the edge of Lake Hickory, affording views of waterfowl, wading birds and other songbirds.

**Species of Interest:** Broad-winged Hawk, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Scarlet Tanager, wintering waterfowl

**Habitats:** oak forest & mixed hardwoods/pine, floodplain forest, early successional, lake

**Access & Parking:** The parks are open daily during daylight hours. Park gates are closed after sunset.

**Directions:** From I-40, take Exit 123 toward Lenoir on US 321 N. Continue on US 321 to just before the Catawba River Bridge, and turn right on Old Lenoir Road. Upon crossing the railroad tracks, turn left and immediately right on 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW. Proceed up the hill to the intersection with 12<sup>th</sup> Street Drive NW. Turn left and Hickory City Park is 0.2 miles on the left. Geitner Park is 0.8 miles on the left.

Coordinates: N 35° 45' 26" W 81° 22' 07" (Hickory City Park) DeLorme (NC Gazetteer) Page: 34





North Carolina

# Birding Trail

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## Catawba Valley

### 4 Lakeside Park

**Owner:** Town of Granite Falls

Lakeside Avenue, Granite Falls, NC  
828-396-3131

Caldwell County

[www.granitefallsrc.com/lakesidepark.html](http://www.granitefallsrc.com/lakesidepark.html)

**Site Description:** Lakeside Park is a 73-acre park at the edge of Lake Rhodhiss, the second in a series of reservoirs created by dams along the Catawba River. The 1-mile nature trail provides the best birding opportunities at the park. During the fall migration, scan the trees and shoreline for migrating songbirds. There are several viewing platforms overlooking Lake Rhodhiss. In the winter months, look for waterfowl on the lake. This park is fairly new and has not been birded extensively, so it may hold some surprises.

**Species of Interest:** Broad-winged Hawk, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Scarlet Tanager, wintering waterfowl

**Habitats:** dry coniferous woodlands, oak forest & mixed hardwoods/pine, lake

**Access & Parking:** The park is open daily during daylight hours.

**Directions:** From US 321 South, take the Granite Falls exit at Archer Street. From Archer Street, turn right on Falls Avenue. At the intersection of Main Street/US 321-Alternate, turn right. Travel for 0.2 miles and turn left on Lakeside Avenue. Go 0.8 miles and Lakeside Park is at the end of Lakeside Avenue

Coordinates: N 35° 47' 11" W 81° 26' 26" DeLorme (NC Gazetteer) Page: 34





North Carolina

# Birding Trail

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## Catawba Valley

### 5 Bakers Mountain Park

**Owner:** Catawba County

6680 Bakers Mountain Road, Hickory, NC 28602  
828-324-8461

Catawba County

[www.catawbacountync.gov](http://www.catawbacountync.gov)

**Site Description:** Bakers Mountain Park is a 189-acre property on the north side of Bakers Mountain, the highest point in Catawba County. The park office area is the best spot for birding during the spring and fall migration. Follow the 0.25-mile paved loop trail. The observation platform can be a great site for watching raptors. To reach the observation platform, take the Red Trail from the office to the junction with the Orange Trail at map stand #8. Then take the Orange Trail to the summit and the observation platform. On the way to the platform, be on the lookout for breeding birds such as Worm-eating Warbler, Blue-headed Vireo, and Ruffed Grouse.

**Species of Interest:** Golden Eagle, Blue-Headed Vireo, Hooded Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Ruffed Grouse, Worm-eating Warbler

**Habitats:** oak forest & mixed hardwoods/pine, river/stream, rocky outcrop

**Access & Parking:** The park and visitor center are open 8am to 6pm, November – February; 8am to 7pm, March and October; 8am to 8pm, April – September. The park is closed on Wednesdays.

**Directions:** From I-40, take Exit 121. Turn south on Old Shelby Road. Go 4.1 miles and turn left on Bakers Mountain Road. Go 0.75 miles and the park entrance is at the end of the road.

Coordinates: N 35° 39' 21" W 81° 24' 55" DeLorme (NC Gazetteer) Page: 34

