



North Carolina

Birding Trail

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New River

1 Shady Grove Gardens at the Peak

Owner: Brent Cochran and Susan Wright

2278 West Peak Road, Creston, NC 28615
828-297-4098

Ashe County

www.shady-grove-gardens.com

Site Description: Shady Grove Farms is a nice mix of open grassy areas, early successional shrubby areas, and young forest. These habitats support a variety of high-elevation shrubland species like Golden-winged Warbler, which are easily seen and heard here in May and most of June. In some years, Brewster's Warbler hold territories here. A pair or two of Black-billed Cuckoo are usually present in summer and fall migration (August). Yellow-breasted Chat and Alder Flycatcher are also present in most years. Gray Catbird, Field Sparrow, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Indigo Bunting and Eastern Towhee are all common breeders. The farm is nestled under the shadow of the Peak, one of the high Amphibolite Mountains in northwest North Carolina. Common Raven nest here and are regularly seen and heard from the farm, as are resident Broad-winged, Red-tailed and Cooper's Hawks. Migrant songbird numbers can be good in fall and spring, especially in the denser, wetter portions of the farm.

Species of Interest: Black-billed Cuckoo, Alder Flycatcher, Common Raven, Golden-winged Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat

Habitats: northern hardwood/cove forest, early successional, river/stream/wetlands

Access & Parking: The site is open to visitation on Sunday and Monday; visitors must call ahead to arrange a visit and schedule a guided walk (fee). Check the Website for details.

Directions: From Boone, travel north on US 421 for 14 miles. Turn right on NC 67/88 in Trade, TN. Travel for 7.5 miles to West Peak Road, on the right. Follow West Peak Road for 2.5 miles until the pavement ends. The farm is the first property on the left after the pavement ends. Signs for Shady Grove are on the bar along the road.

Coordinates: N 36° 24' 37" W 81° 39' 07"

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2 Green Valley Park

Owner: Green Valley Park, Inc.

Big Hill Road, Boone, NC
828-262-0979

Watauga County

www.greenvalleypark.org

Site Description: Green Valley Park is a private, not-for-profit community park. The 20-acre park includes a large stretch of New River frontage, open fields, brushy borders and wetland features. There are two loop trails that cover the entire park, so make sure to work both trails. The upper trail winds its way through some hawthorn thicket and early successional areas that are good habitat for migrating and breeding sparrows. The shorter Blackburn Trail has good close access to the riparian border, a weedy field and a willow thicket. Baltimore Oriole, Yellow Warbler, Willow Flycatcher, and Tree, Barn, and Northern Rough-winged Swallows are common in the breeding season. At the edges of the park near agricultural lands, look for Indigo Bunting, Field Sparrow, and other early successional species. These areas can be great for large numbers of migrant sparrows, buntings, and others during fall migration. The park is a good spot to see migrating Tennessee Warblers in the fall. Look for them, and other migrant warblers, tanagers, grosbeaks and thrushes, along the willow borders of the river and feeder streams. In early spring, the New River often hosts migrating waterfowl like Hooded and Red-breasted Mergansers, Wood Duck and American Black Duck. The park is also a very good location to see the fall migration of Common Nighthawk and Chimney Swift; in most years, several hundred birds a night can be observed in the evenings from late August until Labor Day.

Species of Interest: Spotted Sandpiper, Willow Flycatcher, Cedar Waxwing, Tennessee Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Baltimore Oriole

Habitats: early successional, river/stream, bog/wetlands

Access & Parking: The park is open daily during daylight hours. Park in the upper formal parking area, or turn into the lower field for grass parking and quicker access to the river.

Directions: From Boone, travel east on US 221 North/US 421 South. Turn left on NC 194 at the New Market Shopping Center. Proceed north approximately 5 miles to Big Hill Road and Green Valley School. Turn right on Big Hill Road and travel 2.5 miles to the intersection with Tom Jackson Road. Turn left to remain on Big Hill Road. At the foot of the hill, pass the bridge over River Road. About 300 yards beyond the bridge is the signed entrance to Green Valley Park, on the right.

Coordinates: N 36° 17' 16" W 81° 36' 41" DeLorme (NC Gazetteer) Page: 13





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3 E.B. Jeffress Park

Owner: Blue Ridge Parkway

Blue Ridge Parkway Milepost 272
828-295-7591

Wilkes County

www.nps.gov/blri

Site Description: E.B. Jeffress Park is named for the man who successfully persuaded the federal government to position the Blue Ridge Parkway on its present location. The Cascades parking area, restroom and picnic area are at Milepost 271.9. The 1.2-mile Cascade Trail begins at the restroom and forms a loop that goes down to a viewing overlook above the cascades on Fall Creek. This trail runs through an oak forest along the ridge and enters into a cove hardwood forest near the creek. The 0.5-mile Tompkins Knob Trail begins at the far (south) end of the parking area and passes through mixed hardwood forest to the Tompkins Knob parking area (Milepost 272.5) and the Jesse Brown Cabin and Cool Springs Baptist Church. Jeffress Park offers nice opportunities to see migrating birds in spring and summer residents, including Eastern Wood-Pewee, Hooded, Canada, Black-throated Blue and Black-throated Green Warblers, Eastern Towhee, Wood Thrush, White-breasted Nuthatch and Dark-eyed Junco.

Species of Interest: Wood Thrush, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Hooded Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Scarlet Tanager

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

Special Concerns: Sections of the Blue Ridge Parkway are often closed during the winter months due to snow and ice. Other temporary closures may occur following storms as a result of hazardous road conditions. It is best to call ahead to get current road conditions (828-298-0398). The use of tapes to attract birds is prohibited. This site can be very busy on summer weekends; it's best to visit early before crowds arrive.

Access & Parking: The site is open daily, except during Parkway closures. Restrooms are available from May 1 – November 1.

Directions: From Boone, travel east on US 221 North/US 421 South about 11 miles to Deep Gap. Turn right on the Blue Ridge Parkway entrance ramp before crossing under the Parkway. At the top of the ramp turn left on the Parkway and proceed 5 miles to Milepost 272.

Coordinates: N 36° 14' 46"

W 81° 27' 29"

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New River

4 Lewis Fork Overlook

Owner: Blue Ridge Parkway

Blue Ridge Parkway Milepost 270.2
828-271-4779

Wilkes County

www.nps.gov/blri

Site Description: The Lewis Fork Overlook provides beautiful panoramic views east from the Blue Ridge Parkway to the Yadkin River valley. Cerulean Warblers are a highlight for this site and are usually found during spring at Milepost 270.5, a short 0.3 mile walk south on the Parkway from the Overlook. Many warbler species, including Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, Black-and-white Warblers, Ovenbird and American Redstart breed at this site and still others can be found during migration. Also be on the lookout for Pileated and Downy Woodpeckers, Eastern Phoebe, Wood Thrush, Blue-headed and Red-eyed Vireos, Scarlet Tanager and White-breasted Nuthatch.

Species of Interest: White-breasted Nuthatch, Wood Thrush, Cerulean Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Scarlet Tanager

Habitats: northern hardwood/cove forest

Special Concerns: Sections of the Blue Ridge Parkway are often closed during the winter months due to snow and ice. Other temporary closures may occur following storms as a result of hazardous road conditions. It is best to call ahead to get current road conditions (828-298-0398). The use of tapes to attract birds is prohibited.

Access & Parking: The site is open daily, except during Parkway closures. Parking is available at designated overlooks.

Directions: From Boone, travel east on US 221 North/US 421 South about 11 miles to Deep Gap. Turn right on the Blue Ridge Parkway entrance ramp before crossing under the Parkway. At the top of the ramp, turn left on the Parkway and proceed 7 miles to the Lewis Fork Overlook at Milepost 270.2.

Coordinates: N 36° 15' 43" W 81° 26' 26" DeLorme (NC Gazetteer) Page: 14





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5 Mount Jefferson State Natural Area

Owner: NC State Parks

1481 Mount Jefferson State Park Road, West Jefferson, NC 28694
336-246-9653

Ashe County

www.ncparks.gov

Site Description: Mount Jefferson rises abruptly to more than 1,600 feet above the surrounding landscape. The Mount Jefferson State Natural Area has 2 miles of moderate to strenuous trails, all above 4,000 feet in elevation, that cross through a variety of natural communities. Beneath the canopy of oak and chestnut is an understory of Catawba rhododendron, mountain laurel, flame azalea and dogwood. The bird life in this high-elevation forest includes several species not seen at lower elevations. During the breeding season, watch for Chestnut-sided, Canada and Black-throated Blue Warblers, as well as Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Dark-eyed Junco and White-breasted Nuthatch nesting in the woodlands. Their melodies are often heard with the song of the Veery at dusk and dawn. The wing beats of flushed Ruffed Grouse often surprise hikers along the trail. Rock outcroppings provide spectacular views for birds of prey, though hikers should be aware of hazards associated with cliffs.

Species of Interest: Least Flycatcher, Veery, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Canada Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak

Habitats: northern hardwood/cove forest, oak forest & mixed hardwoods/pine, rocky outcrop, heath bald

Access & Parking: The park is open 9am to 5pm, November – February; 9am to 7pm, March, April, September, October; 9am to 8pm, May – August. A public vehicle area is provided at the end of the Mount Jefferson State Park Road, adjacent to the Summit Trail. Vehicular access may be restricted during inclement weather.

Directions: Mount Jefferson State Natural Area is located off NC 221 in West Jefferson. Turn on Mount Jefferson State Park Road. Road signs are posted on NC 221.

Coordinates: N 36° 23' 52" W 81° 28' 53"

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6 New River State Park

Owner: NC State Parks

US 221 N Access Road, Laurel Springs, NC 28644
336-982-2587

Ashe, Alleghany Counties
www.ncparks.gov

Site Description: New River State Park encompasses over 2,300 acres along 26.5 miles of the New River in Ashe and Alleghany Counties. The park offers excellent birding during all seasons and is classified as an Important Bird Area by Audubon North Carolina. The New River habitat corridor supports a remarkable 110 species of breeding birds. A paddle trip down the New River is a great way to see a variety of waterbirds, ducks and an occasional Osprey. The state park offers three main access areas that are easily available to the public: US 221, Wagoner Road and Kings Creek. At each of these accesses, canoeists can leave their vehicles and launch a canoe. Short trails follow along the river and forests at the US 221 and Wagoner Road Access Areas. A walk along these trails can be especially rewarding in spring, when migrating songbirds are returning to the area, including Red-winged Blackbird, Yellow Warbler, Northern Parula and Chipping Sparrow. The Alleghany Access, accessible only by canoe, offers both hiking and camping and is well worth a visit.

Species of Interest: Black-billed Cuckoo, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Willow Flycatcher, Warbling Vireo, Golden-winged Warbler, Orchard Oriole

Habitats: oak forest & mixed hardwoods/pine, early successional, floodplain forest, river/stream

Access & Parking: The park is open from 8am to 6pm, November - February, 8am to 8pm March - April; 8am to 8pm, September - October; 8am to 9pm, June - August. The visitor center is open daily from 8am to 5pm.

Directions: To the US 221 Access/Visitor Center: Just east of Jefferson, take US 221/NC 16 north. At the NC 16/US 221 split, stay on US 221. Follow US 221 for approximately 7.5 miles to the park access on the right. To the Wagoner Access: From Jefferson, take NC 16S/NC 88E approximately 5 miles. Turn left at Wagoner Baptist Church, onto Wagoner Access Road. Follow Wagoner Access Road to the park entrance. Contact the park office for other access information.

Coordinates: N 36° 27' 22" W 81° 20' 13" (US 221 Access) DeLorme (NC Gazetteer) Page: 14

