



North Carolina

Birding Trail

mountains • piedmont • coast

Roan Mountain

1 Yellow Mountain Gap

Owner: Pisgah National Forest

Roaring Creek Road, north of Spruce Pine, NC
828-652-2144

Avery County

www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc

Site Description: Yellow Mountain Gap is a gateway into the greater Roan Mountain area. Most trails are in the form of old roads and only receive occasional vehicle activity; therefore, maintenance is minimal. An exception to this is the Appalachian Trail. The Appalachian Trail (AT) Barn Shelter is a favorite AT shelter destination. Views from the shelter into North Carolina are spectacular. Breeding Vesper Sparrow can be observed on the high elevation grassy bald of Little Hump Mountain, an adjacent location east of Roaring Creek Road along the AT. Several high elevation openings in the gap are maintained as wildlife openings by the NC Wildlife Resources Commission. Mid-May through early June is a good time to observe Golden-winged Warbler, Willow Flycatcher and Alder Flycatcher. Breeding species include Black-throated Green, Black-throated Blue, Canada, Chestnut-sided, Hooded, Worm-eating and Yellow Warblers, Ovenbird, American Redstart, Wood Thrush, Blue-headed and Red-eyed Vireos, Scarlet Tanager, Least Flycatcher, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Ruffed Grouse, Barred Owl and Broad-winged Hawk. During the breeding season, watch for Peregrine Falcon, Vesper Sparrow, Black-billed Cuckoo and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, which have been observed nearby in adjacent areas.

Species of Interest: Ruffed Grouse, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Willow Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Golden-winged Warbler

Habitats: spruce-fir forest, northern hardwood/cove forest, oak forest & mixed hardwoods/pine, early successional, river/stream

Special Concerns: Birders must stay on designated trails or roads as there are several special ecosystems, Threatened, Endangered, or Regional Forester's Sensitive species and habitats within the Roan Mountain area. Please obey all signs. Hunting is allowed on Pisgah National Forest during certain times of the year. Birders should be aware of current hunting regulations and seasons, and take adequate safety precautions during those times. For more on hunting precautions, see the hunting season information at the beginning of this guide.

Access & Parking: The site can be accessed daily during daylight hours.

Directions: From Spruce Pine, take NC 19E north for 15 miles and turn left on Roaring Creek Road. Travel to the end of Roaring Creek Road, which transitions from paved to gravel road and ends at small parking area and locked Forest Service gate (~ 4.0 miles). Note that NC 19E has many sharp curves and the speed limit varies considerably. Roaring Creek Road also has many sharp curves and the gravel road at the upper end of Roaring Creek can be muddy and slick after heavy rains.

Coordinates: N 36° 07' 00" W 82° 02' 55"

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Roan Mountain

2 Bakersville Creek Walk

Owner: Town of Bakersville

NC 226, Bakersville, NC 28705
828-688-2113

Mitchell County

<http://bakersville.com>

Site Description: This 1-mile greenway system runs through the town of Bakersville along Cane Creek, past open fields, wooded areas and managed areas with picnic tables and overlooks for fishing. The riparian corridor is narrow with dense vegetation in many places, and hosts Yellow Warbler, Orchard and Baltimore Orioles, Cedar Waxwing and Song Sparrow during the breeding season. In spring and fall, check for migrating songbirds, including Louisiana and Northern Waterthrushes, Common Yellowthroat, Indigo Bunting, and Red-eyed and Blue-headed Vireos. Black-throated Green and Tennessee Warblers, Scarlet Tanager, Chimney Swift and Red-tailed Hawk are common here, as well. While parked at the Bowman Middle School parking area, you may cross the road at the crosswalk into a shrubby field that follows the creek. This town property is available for birding and has dense cover for Common Yellowthroat, Indigo Bunting, Orchard Oriole, Willow Flycatcher and a variety of other species. Be careful crossing the road.

Species of Interest: Belted Kingfisher, Blue-headed Vireo, Louisiana Waterthrush, Wood Thrush, Yellow Warbler, Baltimore Oriole

Habitats: dry coniferous woodlands, early successional, river/stream

Special Feature: This greenway is also a great place to stage a visit to Roan Mountain, straddling the NC/TN border. While Roan Mountain State Park and many areas of the National Forest there are in Tennessee, the 6,000+ foot peak supports extensive spruce/fir forest and miles of grassy bald. Red Crossbill, Vesper Sparrow, Golden-winged Warbler, Alder Flycatcher, Northern Saw-whet Owl, and Golden-crowned Kinglet are just a few of the summer residents found there. Follow NC 261 north from Bakersville for 12.7 miles to the parking lot at Carver's Gap. If visiting Roan Mountain, also see the account for the Yellow Mountain Gap access to Roan Mountain. Detailed information on visiting the Roan Highlands can be found on the TN State Parks Website.

Access & Parking: The site can be accessed daily during daylight hours.

Directions: From Spuce Pine, take NC 226 north for 9 miles to Bowman Middle School. Just after the Bowman Middle entrance, turn left into the small parking area with a mosaic hand painted tile sign for Rhododendron Park. Additional parking is located 0.2 miles farther on NC 226, at the State Historic Marker sign on the left.

Coordinates: N 36° 00' 54"

W 82° 09' 28"

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Roan Mountain

3 Spruce Pine Riverside Park

Owner: Town of Spruce Pine

305 Tappan Street, Spruce Pine, NC 28777
828-765-3912

Mitchell County

www.sprucepine-nc.gov

Site Description: The paved Riverside Walk follows along the Toe River for approximately 0.5 miles. The path affords good viewing opportunities for Spotted and Solitary Sandpipers, Great Blue and Green Herons, Belted Kingfisher, Baltimore Oriole, Eastern Kingbird, Chipping and Song Sparrows, Yellow Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, and Rough-winged and Barn Swallows. Red-eyed, Blue-headed and Yellow-throated Vireos are also present during the breeding season. In spring and fall, the river corridor provides good habitat for migrating songbirds, including Black-throated Green, Hooded and Tennessee Warblers. Resident woodpeckers include Downy, Pileated and Red-bellied Woodpeckers and Northern Flicker. Chimney Swifts are common overhead. At the downstream end of the park, look in the shrubby area for American Goldfinch, Indigo Bunting and Song Sparrow.

Species of Interest: Spotted Sandpiper, Eastern Kingbird, Rough-winged Swallow, Cedar Waxwing, Northern Parula, Baltimore Oriole

Habitats: dry coniferous woodlands, river/stream

Access & Parking: The site can be accessed daily during daylight hours.

Directions: From US 19, turn on NC 226 North for about 0.3 miles, to Town Hall on the left. Turn right on Summit Avenue. After 0.1 miles, turn left on Tappan Street and follow it to the park.

Coordinates: N 35° 54' 50"

W 82° 04' 12"

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Roan Mountain

4 Linville Falls

Owner: Blue Ridge Parkway

Blue Ridge Parkway Milepost 316
828-765-6082

Avery, Burke Counties

www.nps.gov/blri

Site Description: There are two main trails at Linville Falls; each starts at the visitor center and provides birding opportunities and views of the waterfall. The Plunge Basin Trail is the most difficult. This steep trail leads a strenuous 0.8 miles into the gorge below the waterfall. About halfway down, a spur trail cuts off to provide a view from the cliff beside and above the falls. The most popular trail is the Erwin's View Trail. This more moderate trail travels 0.8 miles along the Linville River and across a couple of its tributaries before going through mature pine/hemlock forest and ending on hemlock bluffs overlooking the river and gorge. A variety of birds, including Osprey, Belted Kingfisher and Wood Duck, may be seen along the river. Along the trails, watch for Blackburnian, Black-throated Green, Black-throated Blue, Hooded and Black-and-white Warblers, Ovenbird, Northern Parula, Louisiana Waterthrush, Dark-eyed Junco, Downy and Pileated Woodpeckers, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Scarlet Tanager and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Red Crossbill and Swainson's Warbler have been observed along the gorge and Peregrine Falcon nest nearby.

Species of Interest: Golden-crowned Kinglet, Louisiana Waterthrush, Northern Parula, Swainson's Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler

Habitats: dry coniferous woodlands, oak forest & mixed hardwood/pine, rocky outcrop, river/stream/creek

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: Trails leave from the parking area and are open year round. The visitor center and restrooms are open daily during daylight hours from May – October.

Directions: From Newland, travel south on NC 194 to the intersection with US 221, approximately 3.9 miles. Take a slight right to follow US 221 south approximately 5.5 miles to the Blue Ridge Parkway. Take the entrance ramp and turn north (left). Travel 1 mile to the spur road leading to the campground and visitor center. Turn right and follow the spur road 1.4 miles to end at the parking lot.

Coordinates: N 35° 57' 19" W 81° 55' 41"

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