

Places to Go To View & Photograph Wildlife

Thank you to Paul Ice, Jerry Fritsch and Richard Jones for this information.

Winter

Jan/Feb is a good time to see eagles, as they breed during this time. *Alton, IL (see special section below)* & *Land Between the Lakes, KY* get good numbers. Land Between the Lakes offers van and boat tours for eagles (Jan/Feb). You can also see (captured) elk and bison up close there anytime, but Oct-Feb is when the male elk have antlers. Land Between the Lakes also has (wild) Fallow Deer.

Mid-late Feb: duck / geese / swans migrate North. *Ottawa NWR* and *Magee Marsh (Ohio) State Park*, along Lake Erie. Massive numbers along Mississippi fly-way. If you go to Alton for eagles, look up for thousands of Snow Geese migrating. You may also see pelicans.

You can see Sandhills migrate north at the end of February - early March at *Ewing Bottoms*, near Seymour, IN. Also, fewer numbers at near-by *Muscatatuck NWR*. Muscatatuck is also good for geese, ducks, some swans, hawks, owls, deer and otters, as well as being a good spot for birds.

Ewing Bottoms

The main attraction at the Ewing Bottoms in Indiana is the rather large numbers of Sandhill Cranes that spend January and February in the bottoms. The number of Sandhill cranes diminishes over the season. At its peak it may exceed 10,000. In the midst of the Sandhills there can be a Whooping Crane. This bird is color banded and has a radio transmitter band on one leg. This bird has been seen on previous occasions with Sandhill Cranes. It appears to be one of the Whooping cranes that were part of the experimental flock that were raised in Wisconsin and led to Florida by ultralight aircraft. Each year they return on their own to Wisconsin. There may be also a few eagles and tundra swans.

Directions:

Drive US Route 50 west from Lawrenceburg, IN. After passing the Muscattatuck National Wildlife Refuge and Seymour, IN, you will enter the small town of Brownstown, IN. In Brownstown route 50 makes a sharp right turn. Continue on 50 a few blocks, until you come to a sign marking the right turn to the town of Ewing. Drive half a mile to Ewing. At the center of this town make a left and descend toward the River. After crossing the bridge you are in the bottoms. Drive around on the county roads as the cranes may be along different roads on different days. Watch for cranes in the air to help find them. They usually will land in last year's cornfields. They aren't hard to find.

Spring

Magee Marsh (Ohio) State Park is the best place to see large numbers of warblers, and other song birds, that migrate north around Mother's Day.

A lot of bird and butterfly photography can be done April-June at *Eastfork (Ohio) State Park*, as well as *Ault Park (Cincinnati)* and *Winton Woods, Sharon Woods* and *Miami Whitewater (Hamilton Co)* parks. If you take seed, Sharon Woods has a bird blind.

You can use *Cincinnati Nature Center* to shoot frogs, butterflies and birds. *Oxbow*, by Lawrenceburg, IN, is a great place for herons and other waterfowl.

Fernald (OH)Wetlands is a good place for swans, ducks, hawks and butterflies. While there are public paths in the Fernald wetlands, here's a hint, contact them ahead of time and ask for a naturalist/guide. If you do this, you may be able to go on paths not generally open to the public. At Fernald, be prepared to hike a bit carrying your gear.

Fall

First two weeks of November, massive numbers of Sandhill Cranes (and maybe Whooping Cranes if you are lucky) at Jasper-Pulaski State Park, IN are present as they migrate South.

Other notes:

Mid-April brings the Midwest's best photo contest at Hocking Hills, OH. www.shootthehills.com. This is the best time to capture the waterfalls here. A good place to stay is one of the cabins.

Alton, Illinois

Alton's web-site - <http://www.visitalton.com/index.cfm>

The site will probably start featuring the Eagle information closer to January. There are several eagle events already on the calendar if you scroll down to January.

This is where Paul Ice takes a lot of eagle photos each winter. It is roughly six hours from northern Kentucky but it can be closer to 5 ½ hours if you don't stop much. The wildlife refuge across the river from Alton where much of the photography can happen is the Riverlands Migratory Birds Sanctuary. In addition to the eagles, you will find lots of swans and usually several hundred pelicans that have stopped there for migration. Website: <http://www.mvs.usace.army.mil/Rivers/RMBS.html>

The remaining area is found by driving up Rt. 1 following the river. Eagles will be found on the river side where there are trees and on the cliff side of the road up in the trees. The road has signs to be aware of eagle watchers stopped along the highway.

From Alton, IL you can be in downtown St. Louis in roughly 20-30 minutes if you want to get down to the Arch area. Other things in the area include the Zoo which may be free and if you are there early enough there is free parking on the street. There is also the Lone Elk Park on the south-west side of St. Louis. The compound is all fenced in and you drive through. They have two areas - one with the elk and the other with buffalo. Website: <http://www.co.st-louis.mo.us/parks/LoneElk.html>

In the same basic area of the Lone Elk Park is the Endangered Wolf Center which was started as an off-shoot of the St. Louis Zoo. It makes a good trip to hit both of these places in the same day since they are in the same area. Website: <http://www.endangeredwolfcenter.org/home>