



BIRDING BACKPACK GUIDE

A JOINT PROJECT OF THE FEMINIST BIRD CLUB - MADISON
CHAPTER AND MADISON PUBLIC LIBRARY & FOUNDATION

[MADPL.ORG/BIRDINGBACKPACKS](https://madpl.org/birdingbackpacks)

MEET YOUR GUIDES



Feminist Bird Club - Madison Chapter

The Feminist Bird Club is a birdwatching club dedicated to promoting inclusivity in birding while fundraising and providing a safe opportunity for members of the LGBTQIA+ community, BIPOC, and women to connect with the natural world. The Madison chapter was founded in 2019 and offers monthly outings that are open to everyone who supports their mission, no birding experience required!

Get in contact with the Feminist Bird Club - Madison Chapter:

feministbirdclubwi@gmail.com



@FeministBirdClubWI



@FeministBirdClub





WHAT'S IN THE BACKPACK?



In addition to this guide, Birding Backpacks include:

- 1 pair of binoculars for adults
- 1 pair of binoculars for kids
- 1 Sibley's field guide for adults
- 1 youth field guide from Madison Audubon



Madison Public Library is now offering Birding Backpacks thanks to a generous donation from the Feminist Bird Club-Madison Chapter. In 2022, the Feminist Bird Club joined the Great Wisconsin Birdathon to raise funds to purchase backpacks of birding equipment to have available at each of the Madison Public Library locations.

The Feminist Bird Club - Madison Chapter raised over \$4,000 during the Birdathon, with 50% of their funds supporting Wisconsin's highest priority bird conservation projects, and 50% funding the birding backpack project. Additional funds from the Madison Public Library Foundation also support the project.

The goal of this project is to eliminate the cost barrier that can come with trying a new hobby like birding by providing all of the equipment needed to explore nature through birding.

**SIBLEY
BIRDS
EAST**

Written and Illustrated by David Allen Sibley





USING BINOCULARS FOR THE FIRST TIME

Binoculars are an incredible tool for seeing birds up close, but everyone's eyes are different. We suggest you make these small adjustments when you head into the field:



- Start by raising the binoculars to your eyes. If the eyepieces are too far apart, fold the binoculars until the image you see becomes a unified circle.
- If the image is blurry, use your finger to adjust the focus knob at the center of the binoculars. Expect to use the focus knob frequently, as you'll be looking at things that are varying distances away.
- Struggling to get a clear, stable view? Check the eye relief by swiveling the eye cups up or down on the binoculars. If you're not wearing glasses, you want the eye relief to be swiveled up. This creates some distance between your eye and the lens for easier viewing. If you are wearing glasses, you want the eye relief to be lowered. Your glasses do the job of providing that extra space between your eye and the lens.



FINDING BIRDS WITH BINOCULARS



Focusing your binoculars is one thing, but getting them situated on a bird you want to see is another! Here are some tips to help you spot birds:

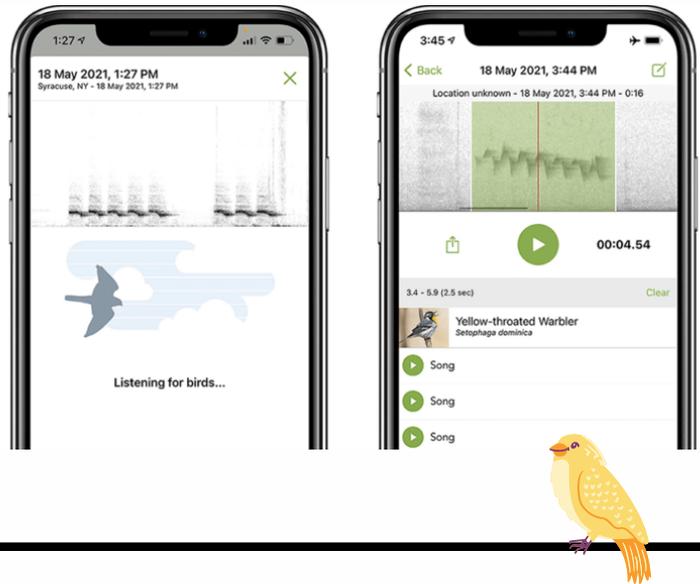
- If you see a bird or object you want to look at, do your best to not take your eyes off it. Keep your eyes on the bird and slowly raise your binoculars to your face. When you do this, the image you'll see in the binoculars will be the same area your eyes were trained on.
- Use visual markers in the field to guide you. You can follow the trunk of a tree upwards until you find the branch the bird is on, or you can identify a distant landmark (like a telephone pole, tower, or fence post) that is aligned with where you're trying to look.
- Sometimes putting your binoculars down is the most helpful thing! If a bird is moving around a lot, looking with just your eyes will help you follow that movement and more easily get a sense of where you want to look.

RESOURCES FOR THE JOURNEY

Merlin Bird ID

Download Merlin Bird ID to help you identify birds. It's not foolproof, but it can use your location and the time of year to narrow in on what you might be seeing or hearing. Record a bird call, upload a photo, or answer some short questions about what you saw to get some potential bird suggestions. Bonus: Merlin Bird ID also serves as a free field guide on your phone!

merlin.allaboutbirds.org



eBird

Explore the world of eBird. See what other birders in the area are finding, discover new birding hotspots, learn about what to expect in each season, and maybe, if you're up for it, start submitting your sightings, too. eBird is one of the world's largest community science platforms, so your birding can help support scientists studying our feathered friends!

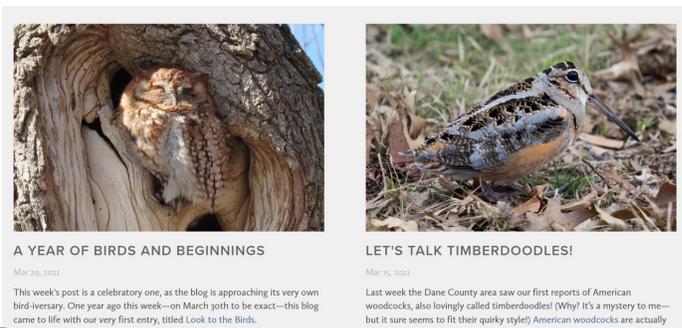
www.ebird.org



Entryway to Birding Blog

Check out Madison Audubon's Entryway to Birding blog for local Madison birding tips and guidance for getting started with this hobby.

madisonaudubon.org/entryway-to-birding



 Go online to madpl.org/birdingbackpacks to find links to each resource.



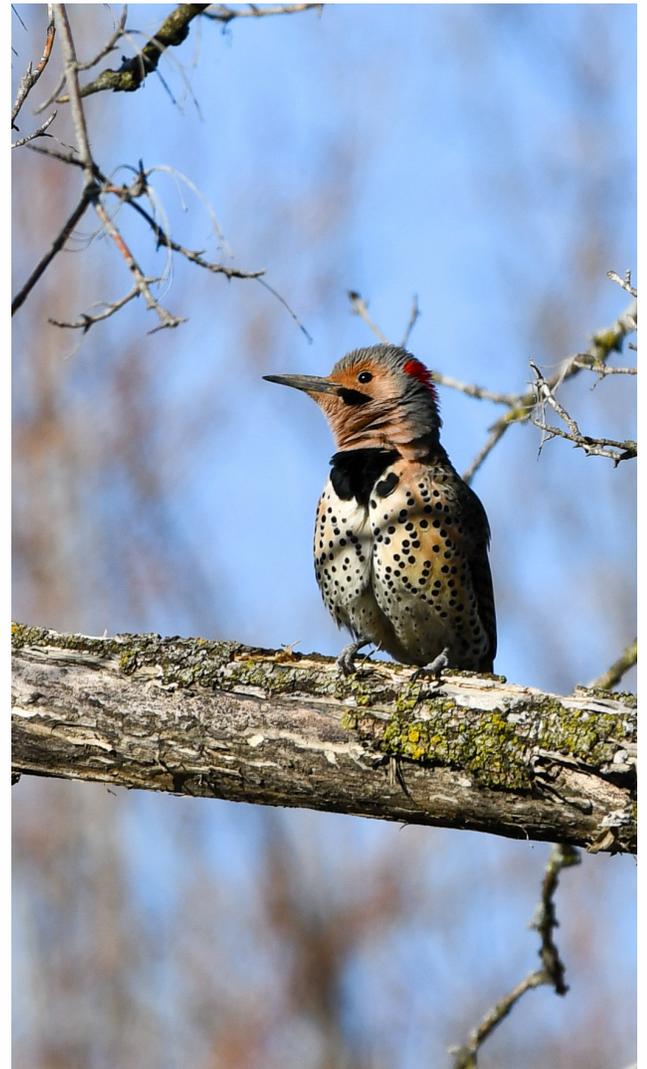
WHERE THE BIRDS ARE

Now that you've got everything you need to try birding, all that's left to do is try it! But, where do you start? The Feminist Bird Club - Madison Chapter has put together this helpful guide to finding birds in the city. The following pages offer multiple spots near each Madison Public Library location where you can explore nature and look for birds.

Even in the middle of the city, there are some great birding locations. Have fun!

Each section includes:

- Birding hot spots near a Madison Public Library location
- Transportation information for getting from the library to the location by bus, bike, car, or on foot
- A short description of each destination's accessibility conditions
- A write-up that shares what birds people might expect to find at each destination in four different seasons



ALICIA ASHMAN LIBRARY



Alicia Ashman Library is located at 733 N. High Point Rd on Madison's southwest side, in a strip mall just 5 minutes from neighboring Middleton, WI.

BLUE JAY



OWEN CONSERVATION PARK

6021 OLD SAUK RD

Details:

- Distance from Alicia Ashman Library: 1.8 miles
- Drive: 5 min
- Bus: 16 min (#15 runs every 30 min, includes 6 min walk)
- Walk: 36 min
- Bike: 10 min

Accessibility:

This location has a parking lot with accessible parking spaces. The terrain on the paths is mowed and can be slightly uneven. This park is on a hill and the trails have rolling terrain. Restrooms are available.

◀◀ Birding Guide ▶▶

If you're visiting Owen Conservation Park in the **winter**, the leafless trees make it easier to spot Great Horned Owls and Barred Owls hiding in the woods, so investigate all the lumps and bumps you see on those branches! Woodpeckers like Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, and Red-bellied Woodpecker will be frequently seen flying between trees, and if you look carefully, you might spot a Brown Creeper, a master of camouflage that looks like moving bark as it creeps up a tree!

Spring is an active time at Owen. Tiny, fast, and fluttery Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets will kick off the season, and by May there will be bright, colorful warblers flitting in the trees and bushes as they search for insects. These warblers only stay for a brief period as they travel through, but **summer** leaves us with our resident nesting birds! Look for bright blue Indigo Buntings, orange and black Baltimore Orioles, and bright red Scarlet Tanagers that will stick around Owen through breeding season.

As **fall** approaches, our migratory warbler friends will return to Owen. If you're searching for them among the thick leaves, listen for the "chicka-dee-dee-dee" calls of Black-capped Chickadees to guide you, because as the saying goes "Where chickadees call, look for warblers in the fall!"



Want to see what birds other people are spotting at this park?
Check out the eBird Hotspot page for this location: ebird.org/hotspot/L200672



BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE

STRICKER'S POND

7214 LONGMEADOW RD

Details:

- Distance from Alicia Ashman Library: 1.0 mile
- Drive: 5 min
- Bus: 15 min (#15 runs every 30 min, includes 10 min walk)
- Walk: 20 min
- Bike: 5 min

Accessibility:

Stricker's Pond features a flat, paved trail on which you can traverse around the entire pond. A brief section through the woods is crushed limestone. There are no restrooms available.

◀◀ Birding Guide ▶▶

Stricker's Pond is a small gem tucked into a neighborhood. The water, woods, and marsh mean you can find a variety of birds here no matter the season. In the **winter**, the pond will freeze over and the most common birds will be year-round residents, like chickadees, nuthatches, finches, and crows.

Magic happens in the **spring** when the pond opens and attracts all kinds of migrants. Look for migrating waterfowl like Buffleheads, Hooded Mergansers, and Red-Breasted Mergansers, among the resident Mallards. You might even spot a Common Loon! Keep an eye on the shorelines for Spotted Sandpiper and Solitary Sandpiper as they bob along the edges looking for food. Green Herons and Great Blue Herons will also be common here, especially as the weather warms.

The woods that border the pond are a great place to look for colorful warblers in May like Yellow Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, and more. By **summer**, most warblers will have left and resident, nesting birds will remain and be plentiful. The white, spherical bird houses you see are Purple Martin houses, home to the large, shiny purple swallows that like to feed over the water. As **fall** returns, more waterfowl and gulls may be found on the pond, and warblers will return. But don't forget to look up, too! Migrating raptors like Broad-winged Hawks, Osprey, and Bald Eagles may be found overhead.



Want to see what birds other people are spotting at this park?
Check out the eBird Hotspot page for this location: ebird.org/hotspot/L300429

CENTRAL LIBRARY



Central Library is located at 201 W. Mifflin Street in the middle of downtown Madison. The location is close to public transportation, the State Capitol building and many other sites of interest in Madison.

SCARLET TANAGER

CAPITOL SQUARE

2 E MAIN ST

Details:

- Distance from Central Library: 0.1 mile
- Drive: N/A
- Bus: N/A
- Walk: 2 min
- Bike: 1 min

Accessibility:

Sidewalks are wide, paved, and have curb cuts at every corner. Accessible parking spaces are available on the street and in nearby parking garages. There are public restrooms in the capitol building during the hours it is open.

◀◀ Birding Guide ▶▶

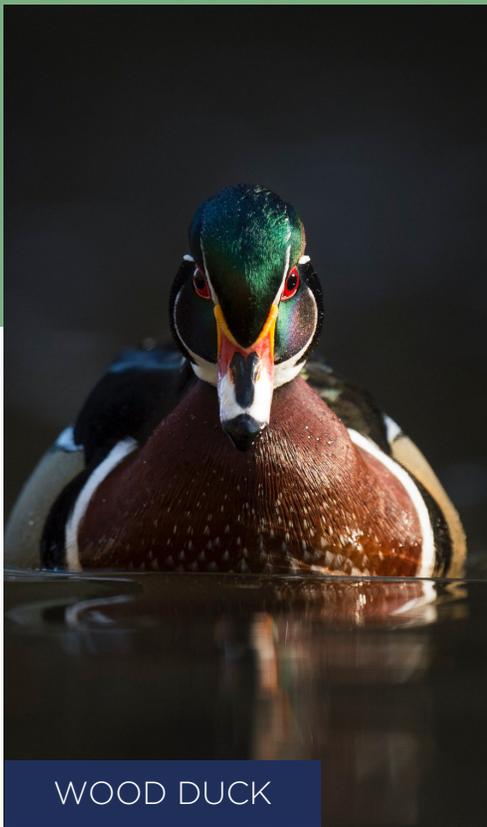
Just a block away from Central Library is the Capitol Square and it's home to an urban park that surrounds the state capitol building, with lots of trees for shade over an open lawn. In the **winter**, look for common urban birds that enjoy being around people, like House Sparrows and European Starlings. Black-capped Chickadees and Northern Cardinals can brighten any winter day! Cardinals will start singing in February and are a brilliant flash of color among the cityscape.

In **spring**, more birds arrive with the warming weather. Look for returning Common Grackles and Red-Winged Blackbirds that arrive in March. By April and May, things get even busier as colorful warblers like the Yellow-rumped Warbler, Yellow Warbler, and American Redstart begin to return. Check the lawn's trees for warblers and other migratory species, like Scarlet Tanagers.

By **summer**, migration has slowed and resident birds take the state. Look and listen for fast flying, twittering Chimney Swifts as they flit above the square, and listen for the squawk of Ring-billed Gulls as they fly between the lakes. By **fall**, more migratory species will pass through again, and because the Capitol is located between two lakes, it's a good spot to see flyovers of large groups of Canada Geese or Tundra Swans. And don't forget to check the square's trees again, as our small and lovable warbler friends will be passing through on their way south!



Want to see what birds other people are spotting at this park?
Check out the eBird Hotspot page for this location: ebird.org/hotspot/L6439377



JAMES MADISON PARK

614 E GORHAM ST

Details:

- Distance from Central Library: 0.7 miles
- Drive: 5 min
- Bus: 10 min (#2 or #5, runs every 30 min, includes 3-5 min walk)
- Walk: 13 min
- Bike: 8 min

Accessibility:

This park has paved sidewalks that run adjacent to the shore of Lake Mendota, along the edges of the park, and a few that cut across the park's ample lawn. The terrain is mostly flat but the lawn has gentle, rolling inclines. Restrooms are available.

◀◀ Birding Guide ▶▶

James Madison Park is an urban park on the southwest shore of Lake Mendota. In the **winter**, before the lake freezes, it is a great place to look for waterfowl, including large flocks of Tundra Swans, plus small ducks like Bufflehead and Common Goldeneye. Bald Eagles can often be seen hunting the water before it freezes over. Throughout the park, look for Dark-eyed Juncos, adorable sparrows sometimes called “snow birds” because of their fondness for winter weather!

In the **spring**, early migrants like Red-winged Blackbirds will return and small, tiny Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets may be found flitting in the trees. As the water opens on Lake Mendota, check for migratory ducks like Redheads and Lesser Scaup. You might even see a Common Loon further out on the lake. And don't forget to check the park's trees in May for Yellow Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, and more!

Summer brings the excitement of baby birds, and the park's resident Mallard and Canada Goose families will mean an abundance of ducklings and goslings to observe. You'll also want to check the sky for flyovers of American White Pelicans, a species whose summer frequency has increased in Madison over the last decade. When **fall** starts to set in, check the water for more migratory waterbirds and peep those trees for migrating warblers who will be fueling up on their journey south.



Want to see what birds other people are spotting at this park?
Check out the eBird Hotspot page for this location: ebird.org/hotspot/L6773459

MGE BLOUNT GENERATING STATION CAPITAL CITY BIKE PATH & LIVINGSTON ST



Details:

- Distance from Central Library: 1.0 mile
- Drive: 5 min
- Bus: 15 min (#4 or #7, runs every 20 min, includes 5 min walk)
- Walk: 20 min
- Bike: 8 min

Accessibility:

There is a paved multi-use path that runs adjacent to this location and nearby sidewalks with curb cuts along Livingston Street. Streetside parking is available along Livingston. There are no restrooms.

◀◀ Birding Guide ▶▶

Why might a power plant be an exciting birding location, you ask? There happens to be a nest box for Peregrine Falcons located at this site!

The best viewing spot for the nest box is near the intersection of the Capital City Bike Trail with South Livingston Street. The nest box is on the southeast corner of the power plant building at the rightmost edge of a line of windows. The last window will be an open box, with a small ledge and perch where you might spot a Peregrine Falcon perched. If they aren't home, they may be hunting nearby so scan around! The best time to see these rare birds at and around the nest box is from late **winter** through late July, though they are occasionally seen here throughout the year.

The Peregrine Falcon population suffered catastrophic declines due to the use of the pesticide DDT in the 1950s and 1960s. Wisconsin added it to the state Endangered Species List in 1975, but through conservation efforts, this species is making a recovery. This species is still considered Endangered in Wisconsin, but nest boxes like this help! Peregrine Falcons have been breeding in the MGE nest box since 2009 and have fledged around 50 baby falcons.



Want to see what birds other people are spotting at this park?
Check out the eBird Hotspot page for this location: ebird.org/hotspot/L13941493

GOODMAN SOUTH MADISON LIBRARY



Goodman South Madison Library is located at 2222 S. Park St on the city's southside. Goodman South Madison Library is connected to the Urban League of Great Madison and is close to other southside staples like Literacy Network, Madison College, Centro Hispano and more.



AMERICAN ROBIN

PENN PARK

2101 FISHER ST

Details:

- Distance from Goodman South Library: 0.3 miles
- Drive: 2 min
- Bus: N/A
- Walk: 6 min
- Bike: 2 min

Accessibility:

This location has a parking lot with accessible parking spaces and paved sidewalks that meander through the park. The terrain on the paved paths and lawn is flat and even. Restrooms are available.

◀◀ Birding Guide ▶▶

Just a block away from Goodman South is Penn Park, a small urban park where you can spot some local birds. In the **winter**, look for slate-colored Dark-eyed Juncos, a sparrow that visits only in the **winter**. You might also spot residents like Black-capped Chickadees, Northern Cardinals, American Crows, and several species of woodpeckers that may be pecking away at tree trunks.

As the weather starts to warm and **spring** arrives, Red-winged Blackbirds will return and you might hear them call “Conk-la-reeee!” In May, check the trees on the eastern border of Penn Park for migratory warblers like the black, white, and yellow Yellow-rumped Warbler; black and orange American Redstarts; or sunny Yellow Warblers. In **summer**, nesting species like American Robins—our state bird!—are a common and charismatic species to look for, as well as Barn Swallows that may be nesting under the shelter eaves.

In late August as **fall** arrives, migratory species will pass through again. Listen for honking calls of Canada Geese or Tundra Swans as they fly over the park on their way to Lake Monona. Fall is also a great time to look for nesting American Goldfinches in the park, a species that nests later than most songbirds, and resident Black-capped Chickadees who hanging out with migratory warblers.



Want to see what birds other people are spotting at this park?
Check out the eBird Hotspot page for this location: ebird.org/hotspot/L19942325

RED-TAILED HAWKS



QUANN PARK

316 BRAM ST

Details:

- Distance from Goodman South Library: 0.6 miles
- Drive: 4 min
- Bus: N/A
- Walk: 13 min
- Bike: 4 min

Accessibility:

There is a dog park within the grounds of Quann Park, so expect to see off-leash dogs within the fencing. Outside the fencing, dogs must be on-leash. From the Bram Street entrance, there is a paved multi-use path that will take you into the park along the west edge of the community gardens. The terrain is flat. Restrooms are available.

◀◀ Birding Guide ▶▶

A short walk or bus ride takes you to Quann Park, a large urban park bordered by Wingra Creek and the Alliant Energy Center complex, where you can find both a fenced in dog park but also birdy areas to explore! In the **winter**, the open and scrubby habitat Quann Park provides makes it a good place to look for American Tree Sparrow and Dark-eyed Juncos. A less common bird you might find in the winter is a Northern Shrike, which might be seen perching at the top of lone trees or along shrub lines.

Early **spring** will bring returning Red-winged Blackbirds and Sandhill Cranes, and tiny Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets that will favor the tress on the west side of the park. In May, be sure to look and listen for warblers along that treeline, like Magnolia Warbler, Nashville Warbler, or Black-and-white Warbler.

When **summer** arrives, resident Mallards and Canada Geese will bring lots of fluffy yellow ducklings and goslings to the park, especially along Wingra Creek. It's also a good time of year to look for Savannah Sparrow, which enjoys the open, grassy areas you'll find here. When **fall** sets in, keep your eyes on the open skies for migrating raptors and resident Red-tailed Hawks, and check those trees along the west edge of the park for returning warblers.



Want to see what birds other people are spotting at this park?
Check out the eBird Hotspot page for this location: ebird.org/hotspot/L1547871

TURVILLE POINT CONSERVATION PARK

1202 OLIN-TURVILLE CT



BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER

Details:

- Distance from Goodman South Library: 1.6 miles
- Drive: 6 min
- Bus: N/A
- Walk: 33 min
- Bike: 10 min

Accessibility:

The trails at this park are a mixture of crushed limestone, dirt, and grass. They are unpaved and the terrain has uneven sections. Turville Point also has some rolling terrain with a few gentle hills. There is a dedicated large parking lot with accessible spaces. There are no restrooms available.

◀◀ Birding Guide ▶▶

In **winter**, this location is an excellent spot to look and listen for the deep, soft “hoo hoo hoo” call of Great Horned Owls at dawn and dusk. Madison’s owl species will begin their courtship, mating, and nesting season in the winter so the cold months are great to look for them! At Turville Point, if the lake isn’t frozen over, check for large flocks of Tundra Swans and other migratory waterfowl like Common Goldeneye.

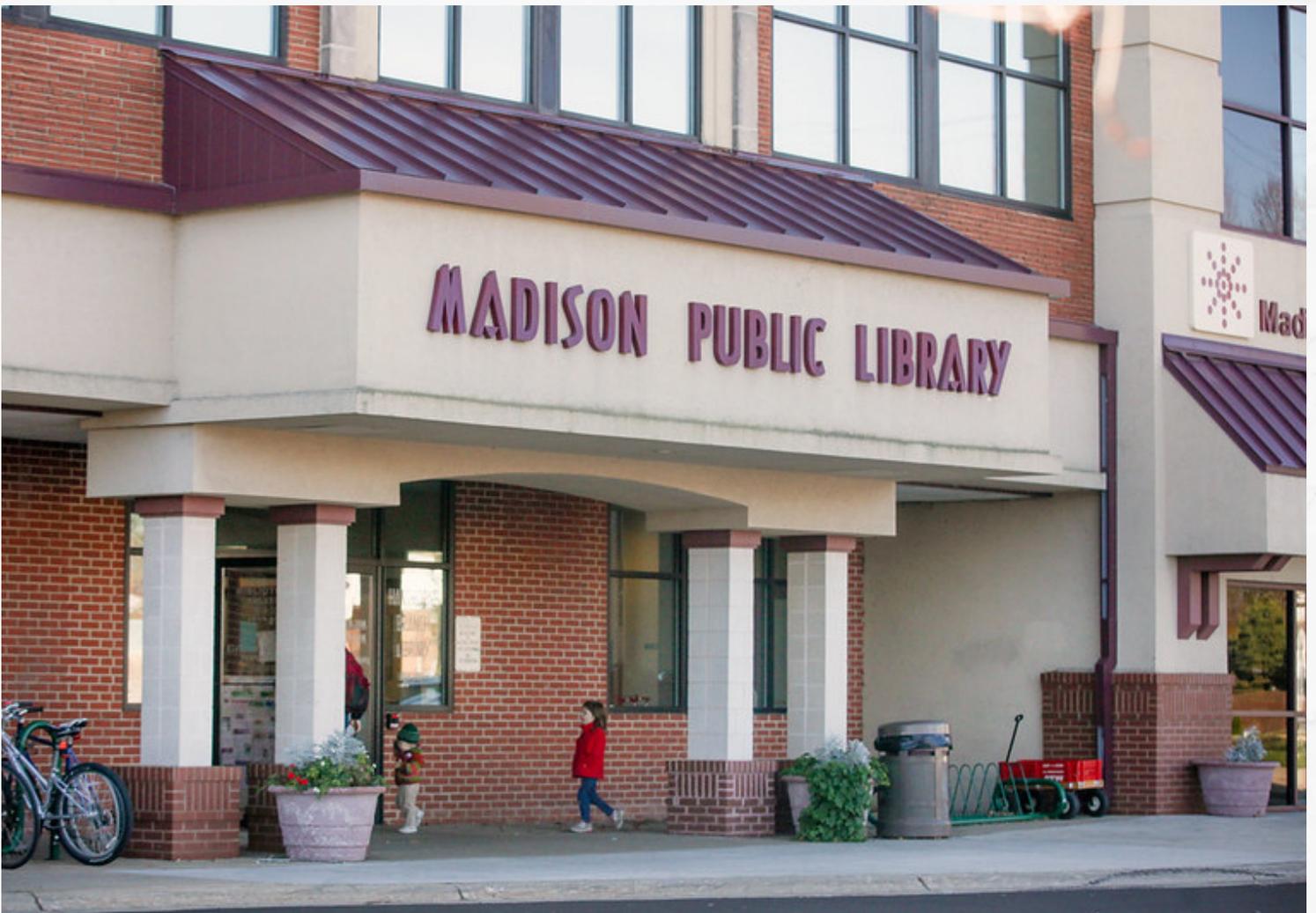
In early **spring**, migratory birds like the Eastern Phoebe will arrive. Watch for this bird bobbing its tail and calling it’s name “FEE-bee!” In May, this location will be hopping with warblers. Over 35 different species of warblers have been seen here, including Black-throated Green Warbler, Northern Parula, and Prothonotary Warbler.

Summer provides lots of colorful forest birds to search for, like brilliantly blue Indigo Buntings, orange and black Baltimore Orioles, and deep red Scarlet Tanagers. Forested areas like this will also mean you’ll frequently hear the call of an Eastern Wood-Pewee, repeatedly whistling its name, “Pee-weeeeeee!” When **fall** returns, check these woods again for warblers and birds arriving to overwinter here, like Brown Creepers, who will crawl upwards along the bark of trees.



Want to see what birds other people are spotting at this park?
Check out the eBird Hotspot for Turville Point at: ebird.org/hotspot/L275314

HAWTHORNE LIBRARY



Hawthorne Library is located at 2707 E Washington Ave on the city's near East side.



SANDHILL CRANE

O.B. SHERRY PARK

22 LEON ST

Details:

- Distance from Hawthorne Library: 1.1 miles
- Drive: 4 min
- Bus: 10 min (#4 or #15, runs every 20 min, includes 5 min walking)
- Walk: 21 min
- Bike: 6 min

Accessibility:

This park has paved, multi-use trails that meander through the park and along Starkweather Creek. The terrain is flat. There are no restrooms.

◀◀ Birding Guide ▶▶

Head down Milwaukee Street to O.B. Sherry Park, where you can see a variety of birds along Starkweather Creek. For a longer outing with a variety of habitats, follow the bike path along the creek towards Garver Feed Mill. If you're here in **winter**, look for residents like Black-capped Chickadees, Northern Cardinals, and Downy Woodpeckers. Visiting near dawn or dusk might result in hearing the soft "hoo hoo hoo" of a Great Horned Owl or the trilling of an Eastern Screech Owl.

Spring will bring Red-winged Blackbirds, Song Sparrows, and Killdeer, especially along the habitat near the creek. As May approaches and spring migration heats up, check the park's trees for colorful migratory songbirds like Yellow-rumped Warblers and Baltimore Orioles. **Summer** will bring nesting birds like American Robins, Gray Catbirds, and House Finches—see if you can spot their nests in the trees and bushes! You may find some cute Mallard ducklings along the creek.

At the end of August, as we head into **fall**, warblers that nested farther north will pass through again as they make their way south. Listen for Canada Geese and Sandhill Cranes flying overhead, and watch the sky for raptors such as Red-tailed Hawks and Cooper's Hawks.



Want to see what birds other people are spotting at this park?
Check out the eBird Hotspot page for this location: ebird.org/hotspot/L9015490



TENNEY PARK

402 N. THORNTON AVE

Details:

- Distance from Hawthorne Library: 1.5 miles
- Drive: 8 min
- Bus: 15 min (#6, runs every 30 min, includes 10 min walking)
- Walk: 31 min
- Bike: 12 min

Accessibility:

This park has paved, multi-use trails that meander through the park and around the lagoon. Small sections of the trail are crushed limestone. A large, concrete pier that has paved sidewalks and frequent benches will take you out on the water. The terrain is very flat. Restrooms are available.

◀◀ Birding Guide ▶▶

Tenney Park is situated along the shore of Lake Mendota with scenic bridges, a lagoon, and beaches. The variety of habitat makes it a great birding spot. In the **winter**, before Lake Mendota has frozen over, scan the water along the beach and breakwater for migratory waterfowl like Tundra Swans, American Coots and different species of ducks. You may also see Bald Eagles hunting over the open water! Check the trees for woodpeckers and the elusive, camouflaged Brown Creeper that blends in with the bark as it scuttles up a tree.

In early **spring**, Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets will flit through the trees and Red-winged Blackbirds will start calling “Conk-la-reee!” Listen for the thin, high-pitched calls of Cedar Waxwings, who love the berry-laden trees, and the “O Sweet Canada” song of White-throated Sparrows in the bushes.

Summer is full of nesting birds, like the Cliff Swallows that nest under the bridges at Tenney Park in mud-formed structures, or the Purple Martins that nest in the white, spherical bird houses installed here. You might also see other swallow species snatching bugs over the lake, Green Herons creeping along the marshy edges of the water, or hear the loud rattling call of a Belted Kingfisher flying by. When **fall** approaches, the trees will attract migratory warblers and the lake will attract more waterfowl, especially near the mouth of the Yahara River.



Want to see what birds other people are spotting at this park?
Check out the eBird Hotspot page for this location: ebird.org/hotspot/L356316

LAKEVIEW LIBRARY



Lakeview Library is located at 2845 N. Sherman Ave on the city's North side. Lakeview is right off of bustling Sherman Ave and is close to Willy Street Co-Op, Goodwill and some great local food spots.



PURPLE MARTIN

WARNER PARK

2930 N. SHERMAN AVE

Details:

- Distance from Lakeview Library: 0.4 miles
- Drive: 3 min
- Walk: 10 min
- Bike: 2 min
- Bus: N/A

Accessibility:

Warner Park has a large parking lot with accessible parking spaces and curb cuts to access the wide, paved asphalt trails that circle the park. The multi-use paved trails at Warner are smooth and mostly flat with the occasional gentle incline. There are also mowed trails that go through woodland and prairie that may have more uneven terrain. Restrooms are available.

◀◀ Birding Guide ▶▶

Warner Park is right across the street from the Lakeview Library and a beautiful, birdy destination to explore. In the **winter**, check the trees for Wisconsin's resident woodpeckers like Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, and Red-bellied Woodpeckers.

As the weather warms and **spring** arrives, you'll see more bird activity with the open water. Look around the marshy habitat to find several swallow species, like Barn Swallows, Tree Swallows, Northern Rough-winged Swallows, and Purple Martins. In the grass fields, look for the resident Sandhill Cranes slowly meandering across the lawns or small Killdeer calling their name, "Kill-deer, kill-deer!"

As **summer** arrives, nesting season will be in full swing. Bald Eagles have nested at Warner Park before, so look for a very large stick nest at the top of the trees near the water. American Robins and Gray Catbirds will be prolific near the woods, but around the water, keep your eyes peeled for the large Great Blue Herons, the tiny Common Yellowthroats darting through reeds, and the loud Red-winged Blackbirds. When **fall** sets in, migratory birds will pass through again, so be sure to check the pond and nearby Lake Mendota for migratory waterfowl like ducks, geese, and swans!



Want to see what birds other people are spotting at this park?
Check out the eBird Hotspot page for this location: ebird.org/hotspot/L865217

HERMIT THRUSH

GOVERNOR'S ISLAND

GOVERNOR'S ISLAND PKWY



Details:

- Distance from Lakeview Library: 2.8 miles
- Drive: 10 min
- Walk: 55 min
- Bike: 15 min
- Bus: N/A

Accessibility:

There is a large dirt parking lot at the entrance. The wide, crushed limestone trail that loops this site is very flat, but there are narrow side trails that may have more uneven terrain. There are no restrooms.

◀◀ Birding Guide ▶▶

Governor's Island is a tucked away, hidden gem of a birding spot on the Northside. It's surrounded by water that is often slow to freeze during the **winter**, which makes it a great place to look for Tundra Swans and migratory waterfowl like Common Mergansers, Buffleheads, and Canvasbacks before the lake fully freezes—and Bald Eagles that like to hunt among the ducks. Its woods are a great place to search for birds you'll find climbing on tree bark, like White-breasted Nuthatches and well-camouflaged Brown Creepers.

Spring will bring migratory warblers and songbirds galore - over 30+ warbler species have been reported here! Check the water as you work your way around the island, looking for Common Loon and migratory ducks.

The woods remain active in the **summer**, with lots of flycatchers like Eastern Wood-Pewees, Eastern Phoebes, Great Crested Flycatchers, and Eastern Kingbirds all found here. Nesting birds like Yellow Warbler and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher can be found in the woods, while nesting Bank Swallows (who build their nests along the island's cliffsides), can be found zooming over the water. More species will fill the woods in **fall** as migratory warblers and thrushes return, so look both high in the trees for warblers but low on the ground for skulky species like Swainson's Thrush, Hermit Thrush, or Ovenbirds.



Want to see what birds other people are spotting at this park?
Check out the eBird Hotspot page for this location: ebird.org/hotspot/L357270

MEADOWRIDGE LIBRARY



Meadowridge Library is located at 5726 Raymond Rd on the city's southwest side. Meadowridge Library is close to the Meadowood Neighborhood Center, Akira Toki Middle School and Meadowood Park.

GRAY CATBIRD



ELVER PARK

1250 MCKENNA BLVD

Details:

- Distance from Meadowridge Library: 1.5 miles
- Drive: 4 min
- Walk: 30 min
- Bus: 10 min (#50, runs every 30 min, includes 2 min walking)
- Bike: 8 min

Accessibility:

This location has a parking lot with accessible parking spaces. The mowed terrain can be slightly uneven. This park is on a hill and the trails have rolling terrain that reflects that. Restrooms are available. For nearby paved, flat trails, take the crosswalk to Greentree Chapel Hills Park, where you'll find a prairie restoration and pond.

◀◀ Birding Guide ▶▶

While you may know Elver Park for its disc golf course, basketball courts, or splash pool, it's also a great place to see a variety of birds because of its woods, open meadows and prairies, and ponds. If visiting in the **winter**, listen for the tapping sound of resident woodpeckers, and look for pops color from Northern Cardinals and White-breasted Nuthatches. Investigate any suspicious looking tree branches to see if you might spot an owl hiding in the woods.

Spring will bring returning migratory birds, like Red-winged Blackbirds, Common Grackles, and resident Sandhill Cranes. Warming weather will welcome Great Blue Herons, Mallards, and geese to the ponds. May will bring many warbler species and colorful birds like Baltimore Orioles and Blue-gray Gnatcatchers to the woods.

As **summer** sets in, listen and look for birds that will nest at the park, like Gray Catbirds, House Finches, Eastern Kingbirds, Song Sparrows, and House Wrens. The shelters may house nesting Barn Swallows under the eaves. Keep your eyes peeled for baby birds, especially around the ponds. When **fall** arrives, look for incoming sparrows like American Tree Sparrow and Dark-eyed Junco, and don't forget to keep your eyes on the sky for flyover raptors, like Red-tailed Hawks or Turkey Vultures!



Want to see what birds other people are spotting at this park?
Check out the eBird Hotspot page for this location: ebird.org/hotspot/L3058898

MONROE STREET LIBRARY



Monroe Street Library is a small but mighty library located at 1705 Monroe St. Monroe Street is located on the popular and busy Monroe St, near to the UW-Madison Campus, Monroe St Arts Center and Mystery to Me bookstore.



VILAS PARK

702 S RANDALL AVE

Details:

- Distance from Monroe Street Library: 0.4 miles
- Drive: 3 min
- Bus: N/A
- Walk: 8 min
- Bike: 3 min

Accessibility:

This park spans a large area and has several access points, all with medium-sized parking lots and accessible parking spaces. Streetside parking is often available along nearby N Wingra Dr as well. Paved multi-use paths are found throughout the park, and you can also walk along Vilas Dr., a low-traffic road near the edge of the water. Restrooms are available.

«« Birding Guide »»»

Vilas Park's variety of habitats make it a great birding destination no matter the season. In the **winter**, listen for the soft hooting of Great Horned Owls at dawn and dusk. If there's open water on Lake Wingra, scan the lake for migratory waterfowl, including ducks, grebes, mergansers, and American Coots.

Spring will bring Sandhill Cranes and Red-winged Blackbirds back, and you might spot a Common Loon on the lake. Migration picks up in late April and May, which makes it a great time to look for warblers in the trees and bushes, like the bright and sunny Yellow Warbler. Be sure to check Wingra Creek, near the Arboretum's entrance, for bright white Great Egrets that love to gather there.

Summer is a great time to focus on resident nesting birds, like American Robins, Gray Catbirds, Indigo Buntings, and Baltimore Orioles. When August approaches and **fall** sets in, more migratory species will pass through, so keep checking Lake Wingra for waterfowl and those woods for migratory warblers that will be feasting on bugs before their journey south.



Want to see what birds other people are spotting at this park?
Check out the eBird Hotspot page for this location: ebird.org/hotspot/L712207

BLUE-HEADED VIREO



HOYT PARK

3902 REGENT ST

Details:

- Distance from Monroe Street Library: 1.6 miles
- Drive: 6 min
- Bus: N/A
- Walk: 33 min
- Bike: 12 min

Accessibility:

This park has a large, paved parking lot with accessible parking spaces. There are many trails that loop through this park, but only one of them is paved asphalt and wheelchair accessible. The other trails are a mix of dirt, grass, and crushed limestone. This park has many unique rock formations and one section includes stone stairs (with a railing) that descends into a lower area of the park. Restrooms are available.

◀◀ Birding Guide ▶▶

Hoyt Park is a popular spot to listen for hooting Great Horned Owls and Barred Owls at dawn and dusk. In the **winter**, pay attention to lumpy looking tree branches to see if you can pick out an owl's silhouette. You can find Wisconsin's resident woodpeckers enjoying the woods here all season long, and if you see what looks like moving bark on a tree, odds are you've spotted a Brown Creeper, a master of camouflage.

Early **spring** will bring migratory birds like Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and the warming weather will soon invite lots of flycatcher species like Least Flycatchers and Eastern Phoebes. Hoyt is a phenomenal place to look for lots of warbler species, but as you're looking, don't forget about colorful vireos like Yellow-throated Vireo, Red-eyed Vireos, and Blue-headed Vireos that might be foraging among them. Then give your neck a break by looking on the ground for elusive thrushes like the Swainson's Thrush, Hermit Thrush, or Wood Thrush.

In the **summer**, colorful friends like Indigo Buntings, Scarlet Tanagers, Baltimore Orioles, and Barn Swallows will stick around Hoyt Park. When **fall** arrives, our migratory friends will return. Listen for the call of Black-capped Chickadees who may be hanging among fall warblers. As the saying goes, "Where chickadees call, look for warblers in the fall!"



Want to see what birds other people are spotting at this park?
Check out the eBird Hotspot page for this location: ebird.org/hotspot/L1178160

PINNEY LIBRARY



Pinney Library is located at 516 Cottage Grove Rd on Madison's eastside. Pinney is a modern building just off of Monona Drive near Olbrich Botanic Gardens, the Lussier Family East YMCA and the Goodman Community Center.



RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD

OLBRICH PARK

3527 ATWOOD AVE

Details:

- Distance from Pinney Library: 1.0 mile
- Drive: 4 min
- Bus: 13 min (#38, runs every 30 min, includes 6 min walking)
- Walk: 20 min
- Bike: 7 min

Accessibility:

This park covers a large area, so there are multiple spots to enter. Find a large parking lot with accessible parking spaces near the intersection of Atwood Ave and Walter St. You can also find ample streetside parking along Lakeland Ave to the north. The lawn is mowed and the terrain is flat, with the exception of the sledding hill on the far north end. Restrooms are available.

◀◀ Birding Guide ▶▶

While you may know Olbrich Park for its sledding hill, basketball courts, or boat rentals, it's also a great place to see a variety of birds, from waterfowl to warblers. In the **winter**, before Lake Monona has frozen over, scan the water for migratory waterfowl like Tundra Swans, American Coots, Common Mergansers, Buffleheads, Lesser Scaup, and more. Bald Eagles can often be found frequenting patches of open water to hunt.

Early **spring** will bring Red-winged Blackbirds and Sandhill Cranes back to the park, and Common Loons to the water. Late April and May heats up with spring migration, bringing warblers and other migratory songbirds. Check the Olbrich Park interior boat launch on Starkweather Creek for a great spot to see Yellow Warblers, Baltimore Orioles, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, and vireos.

Summer's nesting season means you might spot nesting Gray Catbirds, American Robins, and Eastern Kingbirds enjoying the park. When **fall** arrives in August, start checking the lake again for migratory waterbirds and the trees for fall warblers. They won't look as colorful as they did in the spring, but they'll be just as cute as they feast on bugs to fuel up for their migratory journey south.



Want to see what birds other people are spotting at this park?
Check out the eBird Hotspot page for this location: ebird.org/hotspot/L8013559



ACEWOOD PARK

1402 ACEWOOD BLVD

Details:

- Distance from Pinney Library: 1.2 miles
- Drive: 4 min
- Bus: N/A
- Walk: 25 min
- Bike: 8 min

Accessibility:

This park does not have a designated parking lot, but ample streetside parking is available. Most of the park is open, mowed lawn with no designated trails but there is a paved multi-use trail section of the Capital City Path that

borders the pond and goes through woodland habitat. That trail is accessed off nearby Leo Dr. The terrain is flat. There are no restrooms.

◀◀ Birding Guide ▶▶

Acewood Park is a small neighborhood park with an open field, basketball court, and playground, and it's bordered by 40 acres of conservation lands that provide excellent bird habitat. In the **winter**, check the park's trees for resident woodpeckers like Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, and Red-bellied Woodpecker. You'll also find winter favorites like Dark-eyed Juncos, Black-capped Chickadees, and colorful Northern Cardinals.

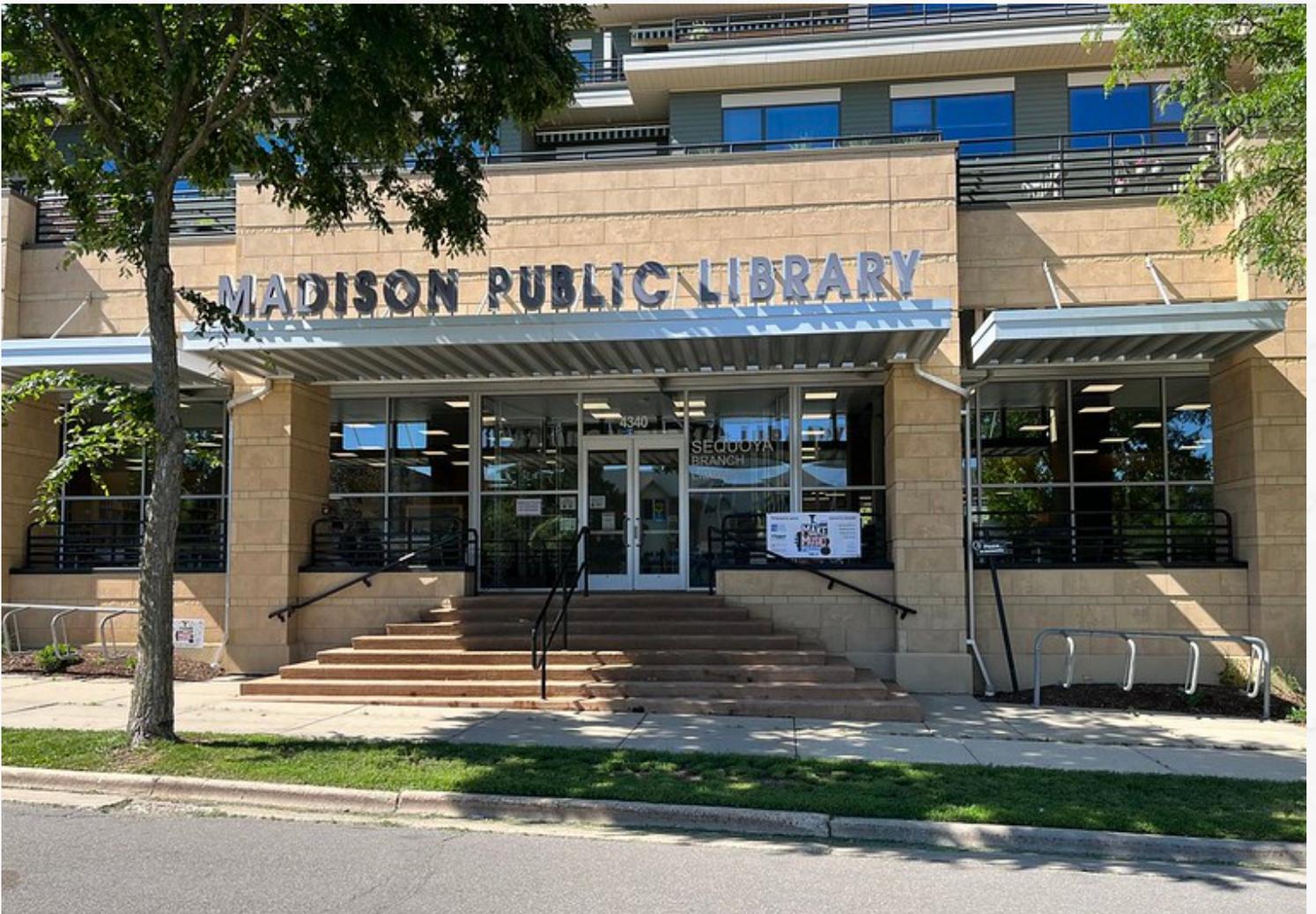
Spring will bring Sandhill Cranes back to the park, along the territorial Red-winged Blackbirds. Check the pond for waterfowl like Mallards, Wood Ducks, and Blue-winged or Green-winged Teal. The treeline along the park can be a great spot to check for Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets and White-throated Sparrows.

Summer will bustle with nesting activity, so look for young Sandhill Crane colts and check the pond for ducklings and goslings. Listen for the calls of resident Song Sparrows and the chattering House Wrens, and don't forget to check the sky for the M-shaped wings of an Osprey or the white head of a Bald Eagle soaring by. **Fall** is a great time to keep your eyes on the sky for migrating raptors, and also to check those woods for returning warblers.



Want to see what birds other people are spotting at this park?
Check out the eBird Hotspot page for this location: ebird.org/hotspot/L8842239

SEQUOYA LIBRARY



Sequoia Library is located at 4340 Tokay Blvd on the city's West side near Midvale Elementary School, the UW-Arboretum, and Hilldale Shopping Mall.

GREAT HORNED OWL



FOREST HILL CEMETERY

1 SPEEDWAY RD

Details:

- Distance from Sequoia Library: 1.4 miles
- Drive: 7 min
- Walk: 28 min
- Bike: 10 min
- Bus: 13 min (#6, every 30 min, includes 8 min walking)

Accessibility:

There is no parking lot at this location, but you can park along the edge of the entrance road to the cemetery, on Speedway Rd, or on adjacent neighborhood side streets. The roads are paved asphalt. The terrain is flat with some gentle inclines, with the exception of an uneven hiking trail that enters the woods at the edge of the cemetery. There are no restrooms available.

◀◀ Birding Guide ▶▶

A cemetery? On a list of birding destinations? It's more common than you think! Cemeteries in urban areas often provide islands of good habitat within a cityscape and can attract lots of birds.

In the **winter**, listen for Great Horned Owls giving soft, deep hooting calls at dawn and dusk. Males and females will call back and forth, performing a duet. Because this species nests in February, they are more vocal with their courtship in the winter season. The cemetery also has lots of conifers that attract winter finches, like Pine Siskins, Red Crossbills, and White-winged Crossbills. Look at the tops of conifer trees to see if there are finches eating seeds from the cones. The crossbills will use their unique bills to crack open the cones, so you might even hear them crunching away!

When **spring** arrives, listen for Northern Cardinals calling—one of the first birds to begin singing in the spring. The conifers here will also attract Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, plus warblers that like to be among pines, like Cape May Warbler, Pine Warbler, and Black-throated Green Warbler. **Summer** will welcome nesting, resident birds like American Robins and Gray Catbirds, and you'll likely hear Eastern Wood-Pewees calling their name, "Pee-weeeee!" When **fall** arrives, check the trees for chickadees and warblers hanging out together, and look to the sky for raptors soaring overhead.



Want to see what birds other people are spotting at this park?
Check out the eBird Hotspot page for this location: ebird.org/hotspot/L1407441



NORTHERN CARDINAL

SPRING TRAIL POND

3606 NAKOMA RD

Details:

- Distance from Sequoia Library: 1.0 mile
- Drive: 5 min
- Walk: 20 min
- Bike: 6 min
- Bus: 15 min (#7 from Odana Rd, runs every 30 min, includes 10 min walking)

Accessibility:

This location has a small, paved parking lot with one accessible parking space. There are no paved or marked trails, aside from a stepping stone path that helps you cross from one side of the pond to the other. The mowed grass areas are open to explore. There are no restrooms.

◀◀ Birding Guide ▶▶

Spring Trail Pond and the adjacent trails are part of the UW-Madison Arboretum and are just a mile walk from the Sequoia Library. This is a popular destination in **winter**, because it has open water all winter thanks to its underground springs! Look for Mallards, Canada Geese, domestic ducks, and maybe even an overwintering Belted Kingfisher taking advantage of the open water. The brushy areas around the pond are a haven for winter sparrows, like White-throated Sparrows, American Tree Sparrows, Fox Sparrows, and Dark-eyed Juncos.

In **spring**, look for Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles, and check along the edges of the water for tiny brown and furtive Winter Wrens. Warblers will arrive in May, so check the trees and bushes for Palm Warblers bobbing their tails and Common Yellowthroats near the pond edge. **Summer** is good for spotting Green Herons and Great Blue Herons among the marshy habitat, and for spotting swallows like Tree Swallows and Barn Swallows snatching up insects above the water.

When **fall** arrives, you might find new waterfowl species on this small pond, like Gadwalls or small black and white Buffleheads joining the resident Mallards. Warblers will return on their journey south, and you can also see resident species that love to bathe in the pond's shallow pools, like American Goldfinches, Blue Jays, and Northern Cardinals.



Want to see what birds other people are spotting at this park?
Check out the eBird Hotspot page for this location: ebird.org/hotspot/L2565737

OTHER MADISON PUBLIC LIBRARY RESOURCES

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eBooks and Audiobooks

Checkout eBooks and Audiobooks from the Wisconsin Digital Library using the Libby App.

Madison BCycle Community Pass

Check out a FREE Madison BCycle electric bike for a week using our Community Pass.

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Seed Library

Pick up FREE flower, produce and herb seed packets from four library locations

There are so many unique resources that are only available at the library!



Go online to madpl.org to explore library resources.



THANK YOU



This birding backpack project was made possible thanks to a partnership between the Feminist Bird Club-Madison Chapter (FBC), the Madison Public Library, and the Madison Public Library Foundation. Funds for this project were raised by FBC members during the Great Wisconsin Birdathon. Copies of the Madison Audubon's "Bird Guide for Kids" were graciously donated by Madison Audubon, and the Madison Public Library Foundation donated an additional nine birding backpacks to support this project.

BELTED KINGFISHER



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