

Audubon Society of Kalamazoo Local Birding Spots

Al Sabo Land Preserve – City of Kalamazoo

6310 Texas Drive, Kalamazoo, MI 49009

Access: Open to the public, dawn to dusk

Accessibility: Wide paved & mostly level trail from parking lot northeast to 12th St. Remainder of trails are mostly dirt or sand of mild to moderate slope, with some rutting on bicycle trails. Use caution when walking bicycle trails.

Notes: This is a large, mostly wooded park, popular for exercise, but at over 700 acres does not often feel crowded. Pine plantations are intermixed with oak-dominated hardwoods and a few meadows. eBirders have reported 186 species here. Check sunlit wooded edges in Spring & Fall for warblers and other migrants. Fox Sparrow is a regular migrant here; Sandhill Cranes, Cooper's Hawks, and Bluewinged Warblers have nested here in recent years. The west branch of Portage Creek runs through the back (north end), where swans, ducks, geese, and cranes can be found. Northern Pintail, American Black Duck, and other ducks show up in the Winter. Barred Owls are occasionally seen.

https://www.texastownship.org/261/Al-Sabo-Land-Preserve https://maps.app.goo.gl/RC548Dw2XrctGz3N7

Arthur E. & Mildred H. Woollam Nature Preserve – Kalamazoo County

6278 Texas Dr, Kalamazoo, MI 49009

Access: Daily admission fee or annual pass, Saturday & Sunday 9am-Sunset; Opening all week beginning May 2025. The annual pass is accepted at all county parks.

Accessibility: Six miles of dirt trails with moderate slopes, some wet spots; modern restrooms. Notes: Former Boy Scouts of America property. Over 200 acres, mostly woodland, encompassing Bass Lake, a smaller pond, and some wetland areas adjacent to Al Sabo Land Preserve. Watch for Wild Turkeys along southern edges bordering farm fields. Barred Owl has been found here. Trail map: https://www.kalcounty.com/parks/woollampreserve/Woollam%20Brochure%20Current%20Facilities. pdf

https://www.kalcounty.com/parks/woollampreserve/ https://maps.app.goo.gl/J3rT2ciWe2DJnzo3A

Asylum Lake Preserve – City of Kalamazoo

3836 S Drake Rd, Kalamazoo, MI 49008

Three entrances: Drake Road South of Stadium Drive; Parkview Ave. East of Drake Rd; 3700 Winchell Ave

Access: Open to the public, dawn to dusk

Accessibility: Mostly dirt trails of moderate slope. Some lakeside trails can be muddy during wet seasons.

Notes: Good habitat diversity with lakes, woodlands, orchards, and prairie across 275 acres. eBirders have reported 189 species here, including Sora, Virginia Rail, Great Horned Owl, Grasshopper Sparrow, American Woodcock, Common Loon, Dickcissel, and Connecticut Warbler.

https://wmich.edu/asylumlake https://maps.app.goo.gl/F5gN3fZP21YZWVhF9 https://www.asylumlakepreservationassociation.org/

Bishop's Bog Preserve – City of Portage

9920 S Westnedge Ave, Portage, MI 49024

Access: Open to the public, dawn to dusk

Accessibility: Paved walkways of minor slope lead to boardwalk through marsh, and through woods to Eliason Preserve to the South. Boardwalk leads through bog to Schrier Park.

Notes: Mix of bog, swamp, and woodland habitats. Sandhill Crane, Wood Duck, Barred Owl, Great Horned Owl, and Swamp Sparrow are a few of the possible species here.

https://www.portagemi.gov/Facilities/Facility/Details/Bishops-Bog-Preserve-1 https://maps.app.goo.gl/AFhDdEpddM5C8oR77

Bow in the Clouds Preserve – Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy
3401 Nazareth Rd, Kalamazoo, MI 49048
Access: Open to the public 7:30am-5:30pm
Accessibility: See website link below. Construction in 2025 may disrupt access, but will ultimately improve access for all.
Notes: Diverse wetland/forest habitats with plant life perhaps more impressive than bird life.

https://swmlc.org/project/bow-in-the-clouds-preserve/ https://maps.app.goo.gl/Ly9cTjMFKbctqa1P8

Cold Brook County Park – Kalamazoo County

14467 E MN Ave, Climax, MI 49034

Access: Daily admission fee or annual pass, 7am-sunset. The annual pass is accepted at all county parks.

Accessibility: 2.5 miles of trails

Notes: Shorebirds, wading birds, ducks, raptors, and songbirds are all possible here. Marsh Wren has been known to nest here; a Least Bittern was reported in 2024. Other recent notables include Wilson's Snipe, Dunlin, Sora, Virginia Rail, and Eastern Screech-Owl.

https://www.kalcounty.com/parks/coldbrook/ https://maps.app.goo.gl/3GKb6iQvdz9EqcYo9 Eliason Nature Reserve – City of Portage

1614 W Osterhout Ave, Portage, MI 49024

9190 Portage Industrial Dr, Portage, MI 49024

Access: Open to the public, 7am-10pm daily

Accessibility: Trailheads at both addresses. 1.6 mile paved trail connecting to Bishop's Bog to the north. A boardwalk trail connection going east to Schrier Park is planned.

Notes: 141 acres of upland and wetland habitats including part of Bishop's Bog, one of the largest remaining relic bogs in southern Michigan. Good thrush habitat. Barred Owl and Great Horned Owl have been seen here. eBirders have reported 97 species here, with highlights including Red-shouldered Hawk, Veery, and Rusty Blackbird.

https://www.portagemi.gov/facilities/facility/details/eliasonnaturereserve-11 https://maps.app.goo.gl/5rJ7cbwcmvWwzzBL7

Fort Custer Recreation Area – Michigan Department of Natural Resources

5163 Fort Custer Drive, Augusta MI, 49012

Access: Year-round, free with state recreation passport, or daily entry fee

Accessibility: Paved and gravel roads within the park; trails are mostly dirt with mild slopes, a few have moderate slope.

Notes: Over 3 thousand acres of second growth forest and remnant prairie with small lakes and Kalamazoo River access; over 40 miles of trails. One of the premier birding locations in the county with a variety of habitats. Cerulean Warblers, Orchard Orioles, Red-headed Woodpeckers, and Yellow-breasted Chats breed here, and other eBird rarities are regularly reported. The Whitford/Lawler Lake parking lot is a good starting point for hikes covering multiple habitats. Look for Orchard Orioles and unusual sparrows here in the warmer months. The bike parking lot is a good area to find Cerulean and other warblers. Be alert for bikers on some trails. Get a map:

http://www.michigandnr.com/Publications/PDFS/RecreationCamping/fort_custer_map.pdf https://www.michigandnr.com/parksandtrails/Details.aspx?type=SPRK&id=448 https://maps.app.goo.gl/MHdzj1dRAxxjS2hE6

Gourdneck State Game Area – Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Area 1 (NW) 4554-4650 Vanderbilt Ave, Portage, MI 49024

Area 3 (SE) West U Ave just east of Wiley Veggie Farm (1335 W U Ave, Schoolcraft, MI 49087) Access: Open to the public

Accessibility: Gravel or dirt parking areas; very few trails to be found; gravel road in Area 3 from U Ave to Hogsett Lake boat ramp.

Notes: These are public hunting areas – be cautious. Area 3 has more varied habitats. A hike along the gravel road can be productive. The woods & scrub around the U Ave parking area can provide good spring warbler activity. Good location to try owling.

Area 1 (NW) https://maps.app.goo.gl/xGmnw521EWMZk2QH9

Area 3 (SE) <u>https://maps.app.goo.gl/RgdpXb77QFTmxKa96</u>

https://www2.dnr.state.mi.us/publications/pdfs/huntingwildlifehabitat/SGA/Gourdneck_SGA_map.pd f

Gull Lake

The largest inland lake in the Kalamazoo area, Gull Lake can be a prime destination for waterfowl, although viewing locations are limited. A few privately owned properties seem to tolerate birders, although courtesy and respect are required:

<u>Gull Lake Country Club</u>: 9725 W Gull Lake Dr, Richland, MI 49083 – Paved parking area and sidewalks allow good views of the upper west side.

<u>Kellogg Biological Station – Michigan State University</u>: 3700 E Gull Lake Dr, Hickory Corners, MI 49060 – Paved parking lots and walkways, and broad lawns, allow good views along a stretch of the eastern shoreline in mid-lake.

<u>Public Boat Launch</u>: 15984 Baseline Rd, Hickory Corners, MI 49060 – Offers views of the very northern end of the lake. Park along Baseline Road east of Gull Lake Drive.

Kalamazoo Nature Center

7000 N Westnedge Ave, Kalamazoo, MI 49009

Access: Admission Fee or Membership Required; Trails open 9am-6pm daily

Accessibility: The paved Kalamazoo River Valley Trail parallels Westnedge Avenue in front of the Nature Center. Sixteen mapped dirt trails range from easy to difficult – fourteen miles of trails through woods, wetlands, and prairie. Trails 6-7 lead to an overlook along the Kalamazoo River, which borders the property on the east side.

Notes: The Kalamazoo Nature Center grasslands are recognized by the State of Michigan as an Important Bird Area (IBA). eBird reports listed 181 species here. Bald Eagles have nested here. Willard Rose Prairie hosted Sedge Wren and Henslow's Sparrow in 2024. Orchard Oriole, Golden-winged, Blue-winged, Prothonotary and Hooded Warblers were also recorded in 2024.

https://naturecenter.org/

https://maps.app.goo.gl/f2D5TuQjK2vqUye79 Trail Map: https://naturecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/2022-Trail-map.pdf

Kalamazoo River Valley Trail – North from Mosel Avenue – Kalamazoo County

7000 N Westnedge Ave, Kalamazoo, MI 49009

Access: Open to the Public

Accessibility: Wide paved trail; this section features fairly level terrain, with a railroad spur crossing along Mosel Ave, a railroad crossing 1.6 miles north of Mosel, and crosses Westnedge Ave 2.3 miles north of Mosel. Parallel parking spots are available along Commerce Lane just north of Mosel Ave. between Sav A Lot and the Kalamazoo River. The KRVT parallels Mosel on the north side for 0.2 miles, turning north just after the railroad crossing.

Notes: Lots of wooded, brushy, wetland, and riverine habitat here along the Kalamazoo River corridor for about 2 miles. Great Blue Herons have used Glenn Allen Island for nesting in this area. Yellow-rumped Warblers and Winter Wrens can be found in late fall. Twenty-three warbler species have been reported here, including Prothonotary and Connecticut. Other notable species have included Rusty Blackbird, American Woodcock, Red-Shouldered Hawk, Sora, Philadelphia Vireo, and Fox Sparrow.

https://www.kalcounty.com/parks/krvt/ https://maps.app.goo.gl/C352iYKeLDRtpx2v8

Kal-Haven Trail State Park – West from 10th Street – State of Michigan

4143 10th St N, Kalamazoo, MI 49009

Access: Open to the Public

Accessibility: Wide, graded gravel trail, mostly level with slight slopes, occasionally small burrows. The 10th street trailhead features a large, paved entry and parking lot, with pit toilets. Road crossings have gravel roadside parking areas as well.

Notes: Lots of bicycle and recreational use, including snowmobiles when snow cover is sufficient. Nice mix of habitat from 10th Street to 8th Street, including woodland, woodland ponds and edges, and wetland. Audubon Society of Kalamazoo has conducted Tuesday morning trail walks during April, May, September, and October for decades along this stretch, recording 163 bird species. Highlights have included 30 warbler species, Yellow-breasted Chat, Philadelphia Vireo, Sedge Wren, Red-Shouldered Hawk, Barred & Great Horned Owls, and Common Raven.

https://www2.dnr.state.mi.us/ParksandTrails/Details.aspx?id=353&type=SPTR https://kalhaven.org/ https://maps.app.goo.gl/nZoFwAgfG4AAoAsc7

Kellogg Experimental Forest – Michigan State University

7060 N 42nd St, Augusta, MI 49012

Access: Open 8am-7pm April 1st – October 31st, 8am-5pm November 1st – March 31st

Accessibility: Gravel parking lot; gravel & dirt trails vary in width and slope.

Notes: Mostly wooded habitat consisting of hardwood and evergreens, with Augusta Creek running through the property. Good location for Red-breasted Nuthatch; Pine Siskins and crossbill species can appear here during irruptive years. 142 bird species have been reported here, with recent highlights including Purple Finch, Eastern Screech-Owl, and Rusty Blackbird.

https://www.canr.msu.edu/kelloggforest/index

https://maps.app.goo.gl/knjTebdbqFJg4XRMA

Map:

https://www.canr.msu.edu/kelloggforest/uploads/Kellogg%20Forest%20Visitor%20Parking%20Map.p df

Kleinstuck/Little Sisters Preserve – Western Michigan University

1700 Chevy Chase Blvd, Kalamazoo, MI 49008

2100 Stearns Ave, Kalamazoo, MI 49008

Access: Open to the public

Accessibility: Paved parking areas; dirt & gravel trails. From the Chevy Chase entrance to the central loop, and around the loop, trails are mostly flat to mild slopes. Secondary trails through the woods include some moderate to steep slopes. Trails can sometimes be muddy.

Notes: Relatively small at 60 acres, busy, but packing in some almost inaccessible habitats, this little gem is a Spring migrant trap and more. Hairy Woodpeckers have multiple territories here; Barred Owls and Cooper's Hawks often nest here too. Pileated Woodpecker is common. Fairly reliable spot for Winter Wren during migration. Over two hundred bird species have been reported, including 36 warbler species. (In 2024, 31 warbler species were reported to eBird.) Recent year oddities have included White-winged Crossbill, American Bittern, and White-eyed Vireo.

https://wmich.edu/kleinstuck

https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u483/2015/Site Klienstuck SmallTrailMap GIS .p df

https://www.stewardsofkleinstuck.org/

Lillian Anderson Arboretum – Kalamazoo College

7787 W Main St, Kalamazoo, MI 49009

Access: Open to the public, dawn to dusk

Accessibility: Paved parking area with some slope; 140 acres of rolling woods, marsh, and wetland with 5 miles of dirt trails and boardwalk ranging from fairly level to steep trails. Some trails can be wet. Notes: eBirders have reported 146 species at this location, including 24 warbler species. Woodpeckers, thrushes, flycatchers, and vireos are well represented in season, and ducks can be found occasionally. Notable sightings have included Rusty Blackbird, Barred Owl, Red-shouldered Hawk, and Sedge Wren. In the fall of 2020, a Least Bittern was photographed here, and in the spring of 2023 a Sora was noted.

Adjacent to Oshtemo Township Park (7275 West Main Street, Kalamazoo, MI 49009). The Arboretum Parking lot can fill quickly; the township parking lot behind the Oshtemo Township Hall to the east provides additional parking and access points.

https://arboretum.kzoo.edu/ https://maps.app.goo.gl/jEW1BnqFrZEskze39 https://arboretum.kzoo.edu/visit/trail-maps/

Mayor's Riverfront Park – City of Kalamazoo
251 Mills St, Kalamazoo, MI 49048
Access: Open daily 8am-Sunset
Accessibility: Paved parking lots and trails, mostly level to mild slopes, public restrooms

Notes: Located along the south side of the Kalamazoo River with the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail running alongside. Tree-lined river corridor bordered by (currently) open fields, a bit of woodland, brushy areas, industry, and grassy former landfill. Birding along the KRV trail going east provides a mix of habitats, with a mix of woodland, grassland, and raptor species expected, and ducks, warblers, and other migrants in season. Ospreys have been known to nest in this area. Watch for shorebirds and waterfowl on gravel bars in the river. Look for distant views of Eastern Meadowlarks in the former landfill area to the southeast – there are few breeding areas left for this species around Kalamazoo. The parking lot between the baseball stadium and the river allows direct access to the KRV trail.

https://www.kzooparks.org/Parks-Facilities/Mayors-Riverfront-Park https://maps.app.goo.gl/EZdCxGjDTnRp4puf6

McLinden Nature Trails – Comstock Township/City of Kalamazoo 7405 E H Ave, Kalamazoo, MI 49048 Access: Open to the public, 7am-8pm Accessibility: Gravel parking lot; several miles of trails Notes:

https://maps.app.goo.gl/8dbPcSDP4qH425cB6

Paw Paw Prairie Fen Preserve – The Nature Conservancy

Van Kal Ave at S Street, Mattawan, MI 49071

Access: Open to the public

Accessibility: Small gravel parking lot; several miles of dirt trails through moderately rolling terrain, with a few wet spots and steeper slopes.

Notes: Over 100 acres of prairie fen with adjacent wetlands and a bit of woods. Plant life is as interesting as the wildlife, but don't ignore the birds. Over 170 species have been recorded, including 28 warbler species as of 2024. Interesting finds have included Rusty Blackbird, Common Nighthawk, Sedge Wren, Yellow-breasted Chat, Grasshopper Sparrow, American Woodcock, and a Northern Shrike in the winter of 2023.

https://www.nature.org/en-us/get-involved/how-to-help/places-we-protect/paw-paw-prairie-fenpreserve/

https://www.nature.org/content/dam/tnc/nature/en/documents/MI PawPaw Guide Digital.pdf https://maps.app.goo.gl/Vce1K6Y3SQGtZ6KC7

Portman Nature Preserve – Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy

28779-27815 49th Ave, Paw Paw, MI 49079

Access: Open to the public, dawn to dusk

Accessibility: Gravel parking area; two miles of dirt trails of moderate to steep slopes.

Notes: Popular local walking destination covering 189 scenic acres. Woodland trails touching small eutrophic Mud Lake, larger Lime Lake, fen wetland, upland forest, and other wetland habitats. Not uncommon to have a Bald Eagle or other raptors flying over; good birding during migration. eBirders

have reported 178 species here – not bad for a relatively new preserve. Sora, Northern Shrike, Sedge Wren, Olive-sided Flycatcher, and Common Gallinule are among the highlights seen here.

Trail Map: <u>https://swmlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Portman-Trail-Map.pdf</u> <u>https://swmlc.org/project/portman-nature-preserve/</u> https://maps.app.goo.gl/Wmya4Hwnf8hMyf8f9

910 E Milham Ave, Portage, MI 49024
Lovers Lane Access Point: 424 E Kilgore Road
Celery Flats Access Point: 7335 Garden Ln, Portage, MI 49002
Access: Open to the public 7am-9pm daily
Accessibility: Paved parking lots; wide paved walkways on mostly level terrain, except moderately sloped approaches to elevated bridge across Milham Ave. Occasional railroad noise.
Notes: Linear park spanning 3.5 miles from the Portage city center to Kilgore Rd along Portage Creek with mix of woodland, wetland, overgrown stream, urban park, and railroad right-of-way. Good birding during migration periods, with warbler fallouts possible. Wood lots are limited in size, allowing good visibility of birds in flight. Fruiting plants along the creek can hold birds like Robins, Bluebirds, and Waxwings through the Winter season.

https://www.portagemi.gov/facilities/facility/details/Portage-Creek-Bicentennial-Park-19 https://maps.app.goo.gl/4wy1u3rPyJ6GwHCZ7

Prairie View County Park – Kalamazoo County

Portage Creek Bicentennial Trail – City of Portage

899 E U Ave, Vicksburg, MI 49097

Access: Daily admission fee or annual pass, 7am-sunset. The annual pass is accepted at all county parks.

Accessibility: A flat paved lane (no auto traffic allowed) leads north from the park entrance 0.3 miles with prairie/savanna habitats on either side; otherwise gravel roads & parking lots, and 2.5 miles of dirt trails; shoreline views of Hogsett and Gourdneck Lakes.

Notes: Check sunlit trees around the entrance, adjoining parking lot, and paved lane for migrating songbirds in autumn. Warbler fallouts have been observed here in September. A Clay-colored Sparrow maintained a territory along the lane in 2024. Users of eBird have logged 159 species here, including 24 warbler species. A Louisiana Waterthrush was reported here in early July 2024. Other notables include Northern Shrike (November 2023), Philadelphia Vireo, and American Woodcock.

<u>https://www.kalcounty.com/parks/prairieview/</u> <u>https://www.kalcounty.com/parks/prairieview/Praire%20View%20Map.pdf</u> <u>https://maps.app.goo.gl/z8mLwXHVsvGHFGgWA</u>

River Oaks County Park – Kalamazoo County

9202 E Michigan Ave, Galesburg, MI 49053

Access: Daily admission fee or annual pass, 7am-sunset. The annual pass is accepted at all county parks.

Accessibility: A 6.5 mile trail loop more or less follows the perimeter of the park. The Kalamazoo River Valley Trail passes through the park along the Morrow Lake/Kalamazoo River shoreline.

Notes: A good mix of habitats harboring a broad range of species including ducks, terns, wading birds, shorebirds, rails, raptors and songbirds. One of the few good vantage points for viewing waterfowl on Morrow Lake. Users of eBird have recorded 192 bird species here, including 23 warbler species. Notable species include Chimney Swift, Purple Martin, Marsh Wren, American Woodcock, Virginia Rail, Sora, Forster's Tern, Great Egret, and Common Gallinule. Beyond these lie the chance for some rare pass-throughs like Yellow-headed Blackbird, American Avocet, and American White Pelican.

https://www.kalcounty.com/parks/riveroaks/

https://www.kalcounty.com/parks/riveroaks/River%20Oaks%20Map.pdf https://maps.app.goo.gl/BifyZ8YG6dCLe63d9

Schrier Park – City of Portage

850 W Osterhout Ave, Portage, MI 49002

Access: Open to the public, dawn to dusk

Accessibility: Just over a mile of paved, wood chip, and boardwalk trails with mild slopes. Boardwalk trail connects to Bishop's Bog trail to the North.

Notes: Mostly woodland habitat. Users of eBird have recorded 79 species here, notably Red-Shouldered Hawk (July 2024) and Barred Owl (April 2024).

https://www.portagemi.gov/Facilities/Facility/Details/Schrier-Park-21 https://maps.app.goo.gl/JDxaDgwF9daei8QU8

Spring Valley Park – City of Kalamazoo

2606 Mt Olivet Rd, Kalamazoo, MI 49004

Access: Open daily 8am-sunset

Accessibility: More than 3 miles of wide paved pathways through 186 acres of moderately rolling terrain, with restrooms & drinking fountains.

Notes: Over 180 acres encompassing a small lake and pond surrounded by woodland and groomed parkland. eBirders have reported 137 species here, including 17 warbler species. Highlights have included Horned Grebe, Osprey, Orchard Oriole, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Common Nighthawk, Fox Sparrow, Chimney Swift, and Rusty Blackbird. Evening Grosbeaks were heard here in November 2022.

https://www.kzooparks.org/Parks-Facilities/Spring-Valley-Park https://maps.app.goo.gl/N98MCZCmTnpSqBN77

Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery – State of Michigan

34270 Co Rd 652, Mattawan, MI 49071

Access: Open daily

Accessibility: Paved parking area; wide level gravel trails circle around rearing ponds, with a few smaller dirt trails through wooded areas, also mostly level but sometimes wet.

Notes: A premier birding destination in our area, with a variety of habitats attracting waterfowl, wading birds, songbirds, raptors, and shorebirds. Riparian woodland area is ideal for woodpeckers; Red-headed Woodpeckers show up occasionally. Owls, eagles, and hawks are regularly seen, and Osprey have nested in the area. Common Nighthawks are occasionally seen on summer evenings. Least Bitterns nested here in 2024. Ponds are drained on an irregular basis, providing shorebird habitat. Wilson's Snipe is a good bet when this happens. Tundra Swans are often around in late fall. As of 2024, eBirders have reported 236 species here, including 31 warbler species (27 warbler species in 2024 alone). Little Blue Heron and Red-necked Phalarope have made brief stops here recently, so watch for surprises and carry a camera.

https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/managing-resources/fisheries/hatcheries/wolf-lake https://maps.app.goo.gl/PD4AMcqAjVXKTVv58 https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/-/media/Project/Websites/dnr/Documents/VisitorCenters/WolfLakeTrailMap.pdf?rev=6d414eff47094c 7cae7a69271e061087&hash=5C6BBC182C5214A4C01874A4D29BCE72