

Popular Birding Places

Dry Fork Trail, Flume Trail (lowland riparian forest)

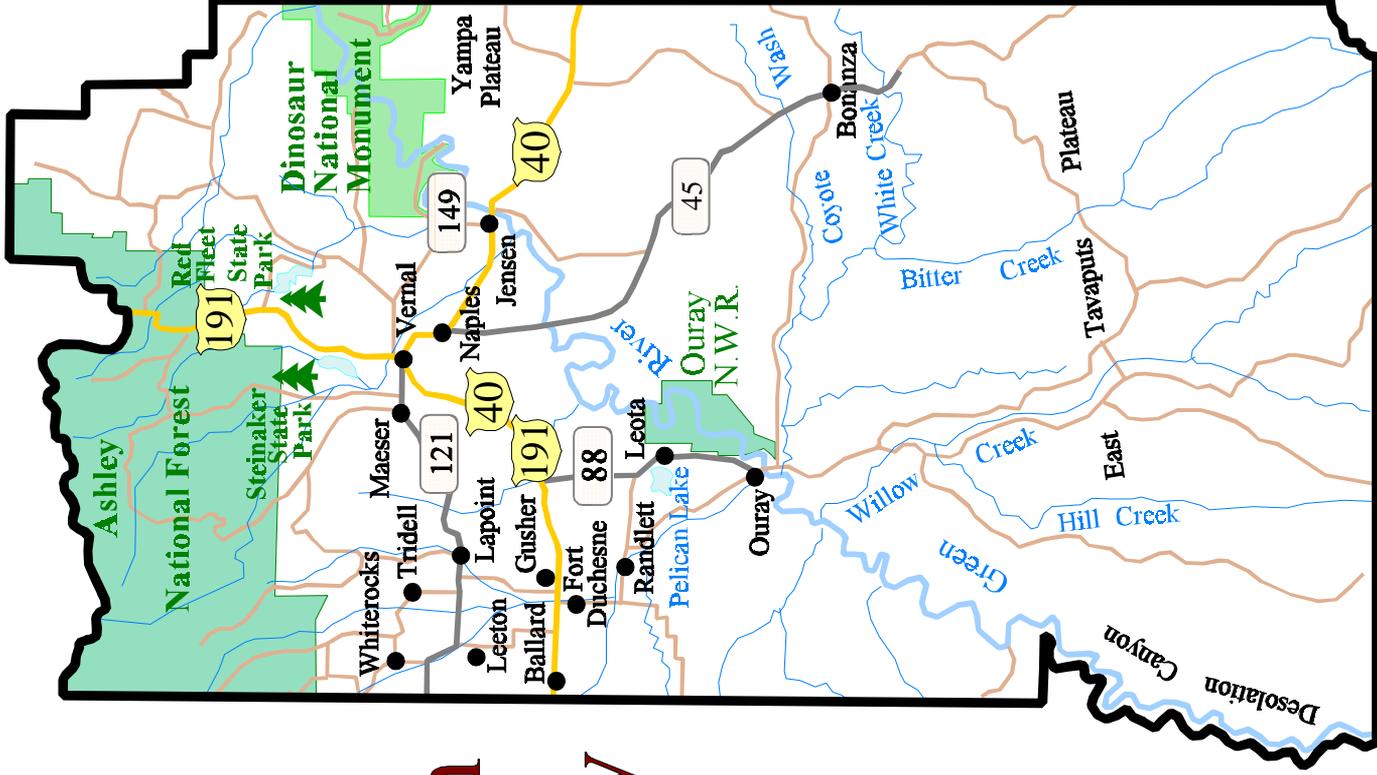
Directions: Go west on 500 North Street (UT 121) in Vernal to 3500 West Street and turn north. This road leads to Dry Fork Canyon.

Comments: There is a new trail along Dry Fork creek, on BLM land between the cattle guard and the Forest Service boundary. This has always looked like great habitat for birding, especially in the spring, but access was kind of a hassle because of traffic on the road and activity in the many small camping areas on the east side of the creek. The trail is on the west side of the creek and is much more pleasant walking. The diverse vegetation and riparian habitat should make it a great spot for seeing migrants as well as a pretty diverse group of residents and breeders. I know from past experience that **flammulated owls** occur in the area.

Dry Fork Trail - I call it that because it parallels Dry Fork Creek - but it's called the Flume Trail on all the signs because it leads to an historic flume site several miles past the Forest Service boundary. It's a nice hike and gets into fairly thick coniferous forest further up. **Blue and ruffed grouse** can be seen on some of the upper parts of the trail. The lower part is probably the best overall birding though, since it has the most diverse vegetation and more riparian influence due to some springs in the area. (*Kathy Paulin*)

Dry Pond

Directions: From UT 40 (about 14 miles SW of Vernal), go south on the road leading to Ouray (UT 88). After about 8 miles, turn right on the road to Randlet. Go less than 3 miles and turn left on the Pelican Lake turnout. Go about 2 miles to where the road takes a sharp turn to the left. The pond is on the right side of the road.



Uintah County



Green River Campground

Directions: Go north of Jensen on UT 149 about 7 miles to the west entrance of Dinosaur Nation Monument. The Green River Campground is about 4 miles from the entrance station. (The path going north to Split Mt. Campground is good for birding.)

Hy Slaugh's Pond

Location: 1800 E. 5000 S. in the Davis area of Ashley Valley [near Naples].

McKinney's Pond

Directions: To get there, take Hwy 40 east through Vernal. On the far side of town, watch for Economy Carpet on your left. Turn left immediately past their store. This is just a little pond and section of canal sandwiched in between a couple houses and some industrial buildings - don't expect a hike. (*Kathy Paulin*)

Comments: The owners feed all winter and have been instrumental in establishing a permanent flock of **Wood Ducks** in Ashley Valley. The Wood Ducks are there most of the year.

McKinney's Pond is also good for spring warblers - in addition to the typical spring mix, we saw a Northern Waterthrush and a Myrtle race YRWA last year. (*Kathy Paulin*)

Montes Creek Reservoir

Directions: Go about 2 miles east of Roosevelt on US 40. Turn north on Montes Creek Road and go about 3 miles to the reservoir. (*Montes Hollow in on the west end of the reservoir and Lynn Haslem Reservoir is on the east end.*)

Ouray National Wildlife Refuge

Directions: Go west of Vernal on US 40/191 and turn south on UT 88. Go 12 miles to the refuge. (*Checklist available*)

Oxbow Pond

Directions: The oxbow pond just South of the Green River bridge on the new Bonanza highway (UT 45). Just across the bridge you'll find a gravel pit on the right (west) side of the road -- the pond is on the far side of the pit. Access is good most of the year. (*Michael Weber*)

This is a good one - a great variety of birds (waterfowl, marsh birds and songbirds) can be seen there especially in the spring. (*Kathy Paulin*)

Pelican Lake

Directions: Go west of Vernal on US 40/191 and turn south on UT 88. Go 8 miles to 6000 South Street and turn right to the north end of the lake.

Red Mountain

It's a bit of a hike to get up to the ponderosa, but once you're there it's worth it for the view and the birds. (*Michael Weber*)

Directions: Take 2500 West north out of Vernal. It becomes the Taylor Mtn. Road. The 2-track leading off it is maybe 0.5 mile past the Forest boundary. (*Kathy Paulin*)

The short but steep access is from the north (go up Taylor Mountain road and shortly after the Forest boundary, you'll see the dirt track leading off toward the red bluffs). Longer but not so steep is to follow a 2-track up the SW

flank of the mountain. (*Michael Weber*)

Comments: Right now [fall], the trees are full of nuthatches (both red and white breasted). They're at least as numerous and easy to see as the mountain chickadees, maybe even more so. It would be a good spring hike too, since in the breeding season, mature ponderosa pine stands are one of the most productive forest types around for song birds - second only to riparian areas for total number of species (based on some point count surveys the Forest Service has done around here). (*Michael Weber*)

Remember The Maine Park

Directions: Go north on US 191 (Vernal Avenue) to Maeser Highway (500 North) and turn left. Go 4 miles to 3500 West and turn right following the signs to Dry Fork Canyon. Go 3.7 miles to the park on the right side of the road.

Comments: Peregrines sometimes nest on the cliff face above the park. (*Kathy Paulin*)

Split Mountain Campground

Directions: Go north of Jensen on UT 149 about 7 miles to the west entrance of Dinosaur Nation Monument. The Split Mountain Campground is about 2.5 miles from the entrance station. (The path going south to Green River Campground is good for birding)

Steinaker Reservoir - north end

This stand of cottonwoods isn't very big but it can be productive. (*Kathy Paulin*)

Directions: The reservoir is located next to US 191 about 3 miles north of Vernal

Comments: To bird the stand of cottonwoods at the north end of Steinaker Reservoir: Park at the beginning of the new trail they're constructing, just off the highway (there are some new outhouses there and the beginnings of interpretive signs). Follow the graded trail around the end of the reservoir, and when it ends bushwhack on to the next little parking lot and outhouse. From there, you can walk back on the paved road and watch for desert birds, or retrace your steps thru the riparian.

Spring birds I've seen there: gray catbird, Virginia's warbler, yellow-rumped warbler, Wilson's warbler, yellow warbler, willow flycatcher, lesser goldfinch, Am. goldfinch, lazuli bunting, Bullock's oriole, western tanager, Swainson's hawk, Cooper's hawk, long-eared owl, spotted and green-tailed towhees, song sparrows, red-winged and yellow-headed blackbirds, chipping sparrows, Brewer's sparrows, tree, barn and violet-green swallows, more... There were two active owl nests there last year, and I think the Cooper's hawk nested too. Plus lots of ducks and some marsh birds. This fall [1998], the trees seem to be full of red-naped sapsuckers [little explosion in 1998 -- not necessarily typical]. (*Michael Weber*)

"Utah Birds"

Print Center - May 2001

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