

Belding Wildlife Management Area Trail Guide



Belding Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is a **birding hotspot!** Over 100 different species of birds have been seen here. Below are just some of the birds you might see or hear on your visit.

In the Meadow - Red-winged blackbirds, song sparrows, field sparrows and wild turkeys make their nests **on the ground**. Tree swallows, bluebirds and house wrens raise their young in the **nest boxes**.

Meadow edges - Blue-winged warblers and common yellowthroats nest **on the ground** under the shrubs. Rose-breasted grosbeaks, gray catbirds and yellow warblers nest **in the shrubs** while Baltimore orioles hang their pouch-like nests from branches that reach out over the field.

Forest- birds nest in all layers of the forest:

Ground - towhees, ovenbirds, veeries, waterthrush, woodcock and black-and-white warblers

Shrub layer - red-eyed vireos, American goldfinch, wood-pewees and mourning doves

Canopy – red-shouldered hawk, pine warbler, scarlet tanager and yellow-throated vireo

Tree cavities – nuthatches, barred owls, great-crested flycatchers, woodpeckers, chickadees

Underneath bark – brown creepers (and bats!)



The Louisiana waterthrush nests on the banks of the Tankerhoosen River at Belding WMA.

The Tankerhoosen River at Belding WMA is fed by cold springs, and hemlocks line the river keeping the water cool enough to sustain wild trout populations. Louisiana and northern waterthrush make their nests on the ground along the edge of the river and its tributaries. Kingfishers perch on dead branches over the river to catch fish, while great blue herons wade into the deeper pools to stalk their prey.

Habitat improvement projects have increased the species diversity at Belding WMA. One of the species that has benefited from this work is the eastern towhee (below). The New England population of the eastern towhee has declined by about 90% in recent decades. This is just one of the species that depends on young forest to raise its young, and one of our many ground nesters. Habitat projects at Belding WMA have created the shrub and tree seedling layer that these birds require.



Eastern towhee female (left) and male (right)

Other species that occur at Belding WMA include a wide variety of butterflies and moths, native bees and beetles, several species of frogs and salamanders, painted and snapping turtles, fisher, mink, jumping mice, coyotes, fox and deer. Fishing, bird watching and hiking are popular at Belding WMA. Connecticut Forest and Park Association maintains the Shenipsit Trail and the Belding Path as part of the blue-blazed hiking trail system.

For a safe and enjoyable visit, please observe the following rules:

- Trail opens at sunrise and closes at sunset.
- Please stay on marked trail.
- Dogs must be on a leash *at all times*.
- Carry out what you carry in.
- Motorized vehicles, bikes, and horses are prohibited.
- Fires and camping are not allowed.
- Collecting of plants and wildlife or feeding of wildlife are prohibited.
- Introduction of plants and animals is prohibited.

Be careful of poison ivy along the trails and check yourself thoroughly for ticks.

For more information, visit us at
www.ct.gov/deep/belding

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