



Deep Down in the Bottoms



Birds of the Bottoms

The roads and trails at this site wind through forests of varying ages, including a lush bottomland hardwood forest. Depending on the time of year, there will be a variable amount of standing water in the forest. At times the area could be completely flooded. This temporary flooding provides moist soils and dense undergrowth used by many shy and retiring species.

Bottomland Hardwood Forests are Some of the Most Diverse and Threatened Habitats in the State

These complex ecosystems are formed by the intricate workings of streams and floodplains that have developed over millennia. Old growth bottomland forests often contain trees one hundred or more years old, forming intricate habitats that are not easily replaced. The constant flooding of the forest replenishes the soil's nutrients. However, because of the delicate balance required by this environment, these ancient trees will die if water stands too long.



Barred Owl/Walt Burch

Barred Owl

This stately owl is often found in bottomland hardwood forests where plentiful large trees serve as excellent roosting and nesting sites. Listen for the deep hooting question *Who-cooks-for-you?* booming from within the forest. These nocturnal creatures can also be found perched along the forest edge.



Red-headed Woodpecker/Perry Covington

Red-headed Woodpecker

These striking woodpeckers are often found in areas with dead standing timber. Look for their bright white wing flashes and white rump as they fly between trees. These beauties can also be heard quietly tapping or scraping as they forage high overhead. During the breeding season, they may utter a sharp, harsh *queark* to attract your attention.



Acadian Flycatcher/Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Greg W. Lasley

Acadian Flycatcher

One of the forest's least assuming species, the diminutive Acadian Flycatcher can be difficult to spot. However, a well-trained ear may pick up their *peace* call or their *ti ti ti ti ti* rattle. During migration, several other species of flycatchers occur in the woods creating one of the greatest identification challenges birding has to offer.



Kentucky Warbler/Bob and Martha Sargent

Kentucky Warbler

A walk along the trail is often accompanied by the *chury chury chury* song of the Kentucky Warbler. This shy bird can be very vocal in the early spring. While his song is very similar to the common Carolina Wren, identifying the call of this bird does not guarantee you'll see it immediately.

Glorious Spring Migration

Bottomland hardwood forests are at their best during spring migration when almost any songbird in the eastern United States may be found. Look for:

- Flycatchers - More than ten species can be seen. However, identifying some of them is a real challenge.
- Thrushes - Five species of *Catharus* thrush can be found as well as American Robin and Eastern Bluebird.
- Warblers - Well over thirty species of warbler are possible including such state rarities as Connecticut and Mourning warblers.
- Grosbeaks - Rose-breasted Grosbeaks can be found in the treetops and Blue Grosbeaks in the neighboring fields.

