



Explore Murphy Hill

Murphy Hill was planned as the site of another TVA power plant. The plant was never built and wildlife has benefited as a result. This large complex of habitats is easily accessible and offers excellent birding.

1 Mixed Deciduous Forest

Several areas of Murphy Hill are dominated by extensive forest that host nesting Barred Owls and Red-shouldered Hawks along with numerous woodland songbirds.

2 Open Fields

These large grassy expanses host Eastern Meadowlark and Northern Bobwhite nests each summer. The winter months bring Northern Harriers and scores of different sparrows to test your birding skills.

3 Mid-successional Growth

The age of this usually brushy habitat is between young fields and older forests. This mid-successional growth is home to Yellow-breasted Chats, Indigo Buntings, and Prairie Warblers during spring and summer.

4 Small Ponds

One of the few enhancements to the property was the construction of several small ponds near the river. These attract a number of shallow water-loving waterfowl and numerous Pied-billed Grebes each year.

5 Tennessee River/Guntersville Reservoir

Scan the open waters of Guntersville Reservoir for a variety of species, from the common American Coot to the rare Eared Grebe.



Prairie Warbler/USFWS, Steve Maslowski

Prairie Warbler

The Prairie Warbler is an attractive songster often found near young pine trees. Its bright yellow breast can be spotted from a distance, and its distinctive rising buzzy song can be easily heard. Later in the summer, while silently tending their nests, Prairie Warblers are much less conspicuous.



Blue-gray Gnatcatcher/Terry Hartley

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher

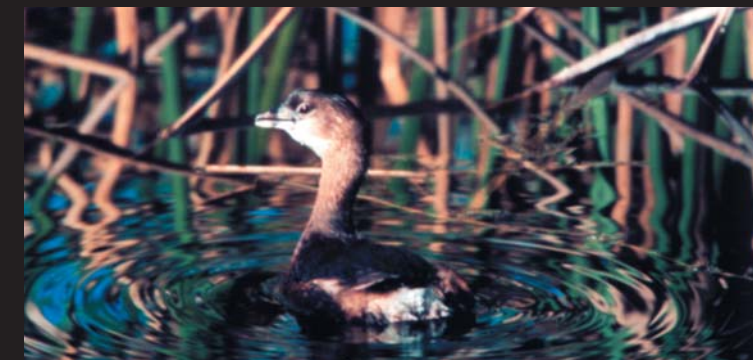
This attractive little fellow prefers the transition zone at the forest's edge. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers also travel in small flocks with the more common Carolina Chickadee and Tufted Titmouse. Listen for the gnatcatcher's buzzy *pwee* call since their small size can make them tricky to spot.



Great-crested Flycatcher/Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Isidor Jeklin

Great-crested Flycatcher

This bird's distinctive *queeep* call will often betray its presence high in the canopy. Careful observation might find the bird perched overhead or perhaps tending to its nest in a tree hollow closer to eye level.



Pied-billed Grebe

Pied-billed Grebe

The Pied-billed Grebe is Alabama's most widespread grebe with a few pair breeding each year. Their numbers increase substantially in the winter when more birds migrate into the area. The best way to spot a Pied-billed Grebe is to scan the water edges. Little ripples are a clue to its presence.