

Birding the Poconos in Spring

Since the Bucks County Bird Club is not in the position to lead a trip to the Poconos this spring, we thought we could provide some locations to do a self-guided tour. Below is a re-creation of a Pocono trip the club did a few years ago led by Devich Farbotnik. The goal was a large variety of warblers including Hooded, Prairie, Blackburnian, Chestnut-sided, Black Throated Blue and Green, Parula, and the gems Cerulean and Golden Winged Warbler. Of course, there is so much more including Flycatchers, Tanagers, Thrushes and Vireos.

Since I do not know where everyone would be coming from, I will mention general directions to this region. We had met at a McDonalds in Wind Gap but that was just to consolidate the group. You can take the Northeast extension of the Pa Turnpike to I78E then get off on Rt. 33N to Stroudsburg. You can also go up Rt. 611N to I78W to Rt. 33N. You will have to spend a little time with a map to decide what is best for you.

The group stopped first on **Jerome Ln** in Stroudsburg. This is a grasslands spot good for Meadowlark and Bobolink. There is a large shoulder on the road where you can pull off and view the fields before moving on to the next spot and WARBLERS. <https://goo.gl/maps/geJPN3RRPatfoFXdA>

The next stop is in Price Twp. It is a 30-minute drive (17 miles) north to **Laurel Run Rd.**

Follow Jerome Rd a short distance and make a right on Middle rd. Middle rd. will end on Bangor Mountain Rd (Rt 191). Make a left and head north through Stroudsburg on Rt. 191. There is a jog in the center of town but remain on Rt. 191 (North 5th St.). Stay on 191 until it T's into Rt. 447 at a traffic light. Head left and 191 and 447 are running together. When the roads fork you want to continue on 447 to the right (now Creek Rd.). Watch for a right turn on to Laurel Run Rd (also considered Delaware State Forrest Rd). Be sure to turn your radio off, put your windows down and start listening. There are pull offs and parking areas along this road. Pick a few spots and walk for a bit. We had 9 different warblers along this stretch in 2019. This is the pin for the beginning of Laurel Run Rd. <https://goo.gl/maps/QKPHSJ4hgNF4Jove7>

Laurel Run ends on **Snow Hill Rd** which is stop #3. Make a right turn on Snow Hill and keep on birding! <https://goo.gl/maps/mnh1HjL6q255MPdP8> At one point along the stretch, Snow Hill makes a left turn at a 4-way intersection. If you were to go straight, you would be on Marshall's creek and a right turn puts you on Hiawatha Rd. Stay on Snow Hill. You want to bird and drive a bit on Snow Hill until it meets Rt 402. It might be helpful to have someone with good eyes and ears along so you can decide when to stop and spend a bit more time. It is a nice remote road without much traffic.

Stop #4 is in Dingman's Ferry on **Flat Ridge Rd.** <https://goo.gl/maps/qpzkiNqz4VSDRYdWA> You want to make a left turn on Rt. 402 and follow it 5 miles North to Bushkill Falls Rd. Make that right on Bushkill Falls then Flat Ridge Rd is your first left turn. We birded that stretch about as far as the first road (Coon Swamp Rd) then turned around and came back. This is the spot we got the Golden Winged Warbler (but no guarantees). If you have lots of energy, here is where you could add more stops. See *** below.

Return to Bushkill Falls Rd and make a left heading south. Follow this until it ends on Rt. 209. Make a right on Rt. 209 (Milford Rd) and follow to a left turn on River Rd. This takes you past the Delaware

Water Gap park headquarters (also known as PEEC for Pocono Environmental Education Center). The internet shows the headquarters as temporarily closed so not sure if bathrooms would be available. Plan accordingly. <https://goo.gl/maps/tW4ABAx1BC9NC1Q7> This drive is about 22 minutes (13.7 miles). Rt. 209 has some food spots if you need a stop. You would have to go past your turn on River Rd. (about 11 minutes) to find a selection (read Wawa). After your break you would want to head North on Rt. 209 and make a right on River Rd.

Stop #5 is referred to as **The Freeman Tract**. It is just down the road from the Delaware Water Gap park headquarters. As you head down River Rd. the road will curve right and the road you want is a sharp left. Go slow so you do not miss it. There is some parking along this road, but I would get out right at the beginning and look and listen there then continue down the road. This is a reliable spot for Cerulean Warblers (but no promises).

Obviously, this is not an exhaustive list of Pocono birding. There are many other spots, but this was a nice loop. It could easily fill a day depending on how long you stay at each location.

***If you were to want to add a few more spots you could go right on Bushkill Falls Rd after Flat Ridge Rd., then go right on Rt. 402. Make your first left on **Pine Flats Rd.** <https://goo.gl/maps/ufqn4dU7CJU8Z33P6> Bird along this road and follow it till it connects with **High-Line Rd.** (there is a jog in Pine Flats Rd where it forks to the right near a powerline cut). <https://goo.gl/maps/MDZe6iQoR4WMqzQX8> You make a right on High-Line and a road forks off to your left (Old Woods Rd? The maps show them running together). Here we had nesting Chestnut-sided warblers and the elusive Golden-Winged.

If you look at the maps, this list is heavy on locations in Delaware State Forrest. There are many, many wonderful spots closer to the River in Delaware Water Gap. This is meant to give you a start to some tried and true locations. In my mind, there is no better place to bird than a remote road.

In the interest of thoroughness, I should mention Old Mine Rd on the New Jersey side of the Delaware. From I80 you want exit 1 towards Millbrook/Flatbrookville. Follow River Rd North. This becomes a seasonal road that follows the Delaware River. <https://goo.gl/maps/YZtC7YoNu4XKbz34A> You could make a day out of this road alone.

I hope this is a helpful resource for birding the Pocono region. Our group did this trip at the end of May but any time in May or June should be excellent for warblers because many nest in this region. Good luck and good birding!