



# Birds of Reelfoot Lake State Park

2595 Hwy 21 E, Tiptonville, Tennessee 38079 / 731-253-9652

Reelfoot Lake is one of the best destinations for bird-watching in Tennessee. The 280-acre Reelfoot Lake State Park is part of a complex of public lands that include the Reelfoot Lake National Wildlife Refuge and the Reelfoot State Wildlife Management Area. The Reelfoot Lake area includes a mix of bottomland hardwood forest, cypress swamp, marsh, agricultural fields, and open water habitats. Over 200 species of birds have been reported from the area. During the winter, Reelfoot Lake is home to numerous bald eagles, 1000s of ducks of many different species and 100s of American white pelicans. Experienced park naturalists lead daily bald eagle and waterfowl tours and the annual Reelfoot Eagle Festival in February is a bird watching destination. During spring and fall migration, watch for migrating songbirds and shorebirds. The state park offers a variety of birding canoe floats and boat tours throughout the year.



bald eagle

## Responsible Birding

- Do not endanger the welfare of birds.
- Tread lightly and respect bird habitat.
- Silence is golden.
- Do not use electronic sound devices to attract birds during nesting season, May-July.
- Take extra care when in a nesting area.
- Always respect the law and the rights of others, violators subject to prosecution.
- Do not trespass on private property.
- Avoid pointing your binoculars at other people or their homes.
- Limit group sizes in areas that are not conducive to large crowds.

## Helpful Links

Tennessee Birding Trails  
[www.tnbirdingtrail.org](http://www.tnbirdingtrail.org)  
Field Checklist of Tennessee Birds  
[www.tnwatchablewildlife.org](http://www.tnwatchablewildlife.org)  
eBird Hotspots and Sightings  
[www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)  
Tennessee Ornithological Society  
[www.tnbirds.org](http://www.tnbirds.org)  
Tennessee State Parks Birding  
[www.tnstateparks.com/activities/birding](http://www.tnstateparks.com/activities/birding)



T E N N E S S E E  
**State Parks**  
[www.tnstateparks.com](http://www.tnstateparks.com)

## Additional Nearby State Park Birding Opportunities

Fort Pillow – Campground - Henning, TN 38041 / 731-738-5581  
[www.tnstateparks.com/parks/about/fort-pillow](http://www.tnstateparks.com/parks/about/fort-pillow)

Meeman-Shelby Forest – Cabins, Campground - Millington, Tennessee 38053 / 901-876-5215  
[www.tnstateparks.com/parks/about/meeman-shelby](http://www.tnstateparks.com/parks/about/meeman-shelby)

Paris Landing – Inn, Cabins, Campground, Restaurant – Buchanan, TN 38222 / 731-641-4465  
[www.tnstateparks.com/parks/about/paris-landing](http://www.tnstateparks.com/parks/about/paris-landing)

T.O. Fuller – Campground - Memphis, TN 38109 / 901-543-7581  
[www.tnstateparks.com/parks/about/t-o-fuller](http://www.tnstateparks.com/parks/about/t-o-fuller)

# Birding Locations In and Around Reelfoot Lake State Park

A hiking trail map and a checklist to the Birds of Reelfoot Lake State Park are available at the park.

## **Visitor's Center and Boardwalk:** 36.36338, -89.4329

0.5 Miles – Paved trail and boardwalk - Easy - Year-round

The visitor's center has a variety of animals on display including bald eagles. Search for songbirds in the trees surrounding the visitor's center. The short boardwalk runs through a swamp to the edge of the lake. From the boardwalk search the lake for waterfowl and gulls during the winter.

**Featured Birds:** waterfowl, pied-billed grebe, great blue heron, osprey, bald eagle, gulls, eastern kingbird, tree swallow, prothonotary warbler, Orchard and Baltimore orioles, and other songbirds.

## **Airpark Area and Trail:** 36.47257, -89.34395 - 1.5 Miles – Natural Surface – Easy – Year-round

Ducks are often seen here in winter. Bird the open areas around the parking lot before taking the trail through bottomland forest and swamp. Shrub thickets along the trail and roads are excellent for sparrows.

**Featured Birds:** barred owl, eastern kingbird, eastern bluebird, prothonotary warbler, common yellowthroat, and sparrows.

## **Keystone Trail:** 36.38409, -89.44754 - 1.5 Miles – Natural Surface – Easy - Year-round

Before you head out on the trail, be sure to bird from the fishing pier. The pier is a good place to see American white pelicans and waterfowl in winter. The one-way, forested trail runs along the lake but there are no convenient views of the lake from the trail. Search for woodland birds along the trail.

**Featured Birds:** from the fishing pier in winter: waterfowl, pied-billed grebe, Bonaparte's and ring-billed gulls, double-crested cormorant, and American white pelican; watch for songbirds along the trail any time of year.

## **Reelfoot Lake Campground:** 36.35198, -89.41995

Campground Trail – 0.5 Miles – Natural Surface – Easy - Year-round

The area provides views of the lake and birding in open lawns and woodlands.

**Featured Birds:** waterfowl, wading birds, gulls, double-crested cormorant, osprey, bald eagle, woodpeckers, prothonotary warbler, northern cardinal, eastern bluebird, and red-winged blackbird.

## Nearby Birding Locations

### **Lake Isom National Wildlife Refuge: Lake:** 36.2984, -89.4195

[www.fws.gov/refuge/Lake\\_Isom](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Lake_Isom) - 731-538-2481 - Year-round

The refuge consists of about 1,850 acres of cultivated farmland, bottomland forests, cypress swamp, and open water. Please refer to Refuge personnel about hunting seasons and public access dates. Access dates vary by site.

**Featured Birds:** snow and greater white-fronted goose, wood duck and other waterfowl, great blue heron, northern harrier, red-tailed hawk, bald eagle, woodpeckers, eastern bluebird, loggerhead shrike, sparrows, indigo bunting, dickcissel, red-winged blackbird, eastern meadowlark, and common grackle.

### **Reelfoot Wildlife Management Area: Ernie Pierce Road Entrance:** 36.44052, -89.41579 - Year-round

[www.tnwatchablewildlife.org/wheretowatch.cfm](http://www.tnwatchablewildlife.org/wheretowatch.cfm) [from here migrate to the Reelfoot WMA], 800-372-3928

The WMA contains cultivated fields, shrub habitats, bottomland hardwood and cypress swamp forests, freshwater sloughs, bayous, marshes, and some lake habitat. It is best to call before your visit for hunting season and public access dates. Over 130 bird species have been identified.

**Featured Birds:** waterfowl, herons and egrets, bald eagle, Mississippi kite, shorebirds, and songbirds.

### **Reelfoot Lake National Wildlife Refuge: Walnut Log Road:** 36.46683, -89.3186

[www.fws.gov/refuge/reelfoot/](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/reelfoot/), 731-538-2481 Year-round

The 2.7-mile road runs through bottomland forest to end at a viewing platform over the lake. A 0.5-mile long boardwalk is also accessed along this road. The area is excellent for forest birding. The viewing platform offers good opportunities to scan a portion of the lake. Over 200 bird species have been identified from this area.

**Featured Birds:** During the summer look for Mississippi kite, barred owl [year-round], great-crested and Acadian flycatchers, eastern wood pewee, white-eyed and red-eyed vireos, prothonotary, yellow-throated and Kentucky warblers, northern parula and summer tanager. During the winter search for waterfowl.