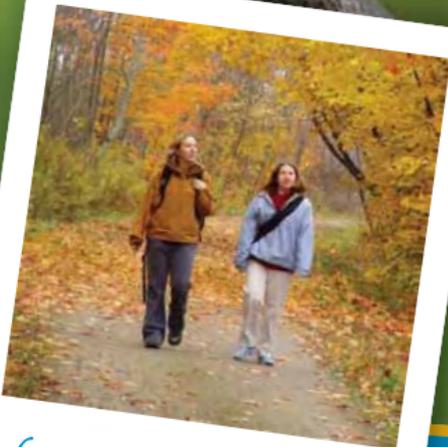
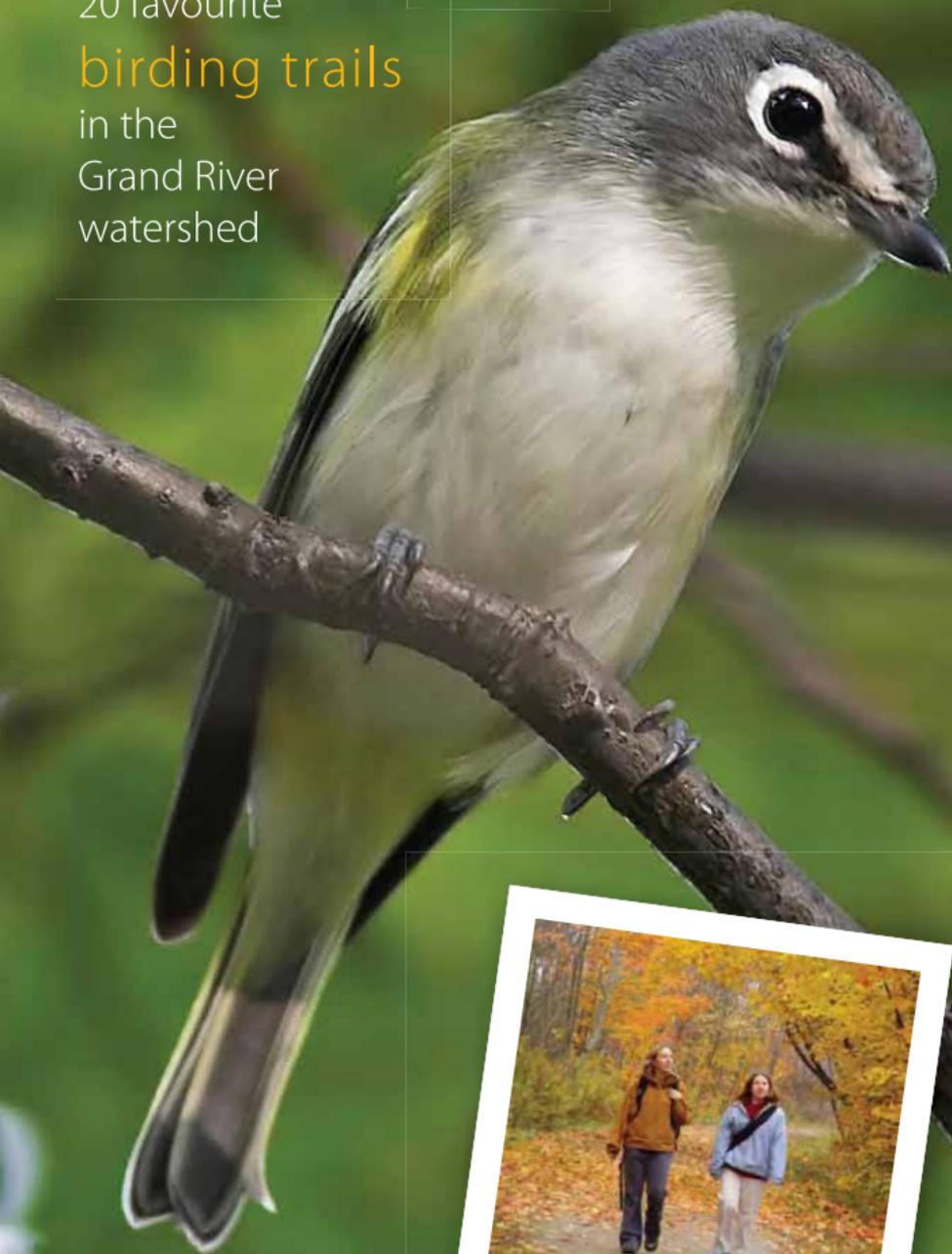


TRAILS

take

Flight

20 favourite
birding trails
in the
Grand River
watershed



favourite birding trails

Grand River
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About Grand River Country

Located just west of Toronto, the Grand River watershed is the largest inland river system in southern Ontario, extending 280 km from Dundalk in the north to Port Maitland on Lake Erie. Covering more than 6,800 km² in area, the watershed includes not only the main Grand River, but also major tributaries such as the Conestogo, Speed, Eramosa and Nith rivers.

Being so large, and running in a generally north-south orientation, the Grand River crosses no less than four Climate Zones and two Forest Zones. Despite a population approaching 1 million people, with major urban areas and intensive agriculture, there is a surprising array of important natural habitats and scenic landscapes. In 1994 the Grand

was officially designated a Canadian Heritage River, in recognition of its significant natural and human heritage.



Birding in the Grand River Watershed

Bird watching, or “birding” as it is increasingly known, is growing in popularity everywhere. **The Grand River watershed has much to offer the birder, and the trails of the watershed provide wonderful opportunities to enjoy this activity in all seasons.** More than 290 species of birds have been reported here during spring and fall migration, and close to 200 species nest.

Many birds are habitat-specific, and the selected 20 trails represent a variety of habitats, including: rivers and lakes, wetlands, coniferous and deciduous forests, meadows and open fields, and regenerating farmland and scrubby edges (which are surprisingly rich in bird life).

The watershed is also home to numerous **Species at Risk**, including forest birds such as the Acadian Flycatcher, Hooded Warbler and Red-shouldered Hawk; wetland birds like the Least Bittern and Black Tern; urban birds such as the Chimney Swift and Common Nighthawk; and birds of more open habitats like the Red-headed Woodpecker, Short-eared Owl and Golden-winged Warbler. Bald Eagles nest at both the northern and southern extremes of the watershed, and can be seen in winter along open, “ice-free” areas of the river.

The website gives more in-depth data including locator maps for each trail, printable detailed maps of the individual trail routes, as well as comprehensive trail descriptions and expanded listings of the bird species to be found.



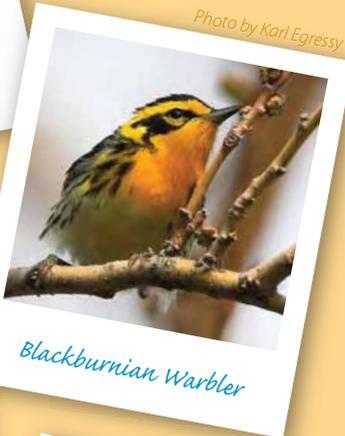
Bald Eagle



Green Heron



Red-bellied Woodpecker



Blackburnian Warbler



Red-breasted Nuthatch



Saw-whet Owl



For more detailed information, explore the **Trails Take Flight** section of the Grand River Country website:

www.grandrivercountry.com



Photo by Jeff Berlin

Trails in the Grand River Watershed

The Grand River watershed is blessed with an abundance of hiking and/or cycling **trails that offer some of the best ways to experience the river's natural and historic attractions.** Most of the trails in this publication are free for use, making these healthy activities available to people of all age, income and ability levels.

Most trails are multi-use, primarily for **walking, cycling** (bicycles, not motorbikes), and **cross-country skiing.** Two of the trails allow horses and/or snowmobiles in season. The level of difficulty of the trails varies somewhat, but most are easy to moderate in difficulty. Some are wheelchair accessible, while others may have moderate slopes, stairs or boardwalks.

There are two major trail systems that dominate the watershed, and representative sections are included in our selection of 20 trails. The first is the Grand Valley Trail, which runs from north to south almost the entire length of the watershed. The other is the Trans-Canada Trail, which in its broader scope allows one to walk from one coast of Canada to the other! Many local trails in the Grand River watershed are integrated into the southern Ontario loop of the Trans-Canada Trail.



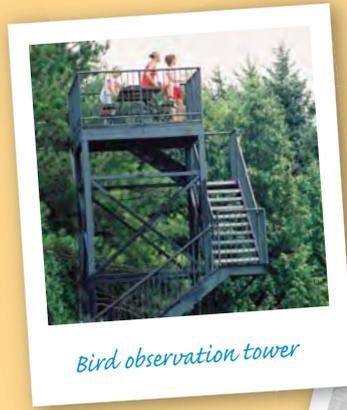
Along the Grand River



Cycling the rail-trail



Feeding Chickadees on the boardwalk



Bird observation tower



Snowshoe the trails

Photo by Janet Baine

Let's get started

Beginning birders should beware that birding can become a life-time addiction! A reputable nature store will offer appropriate advice on binoculars and field guides for bird identification. Joining one of the local nature clubs or hiking clubs can expand your knowledge and interest.

To experience the trails in comfort, wear clothing suitable to the season and footwear appropriate to the trail conditions. Bring a drink and a snack, but leave pets and noisy behaviour at home (birds tend to stay still and hide, or take flight if a threat is perceived).

Trail users are asked to show consideration for the natural environment by staying on the formal trail path. "Take nothing but pictures, and leave nothing but footprints" is a good motto for both groups and solitary users.

"The Grand's trails provide first class birding opportunities, and an excellent cross-section of the area's diverse bird life."

Mike Cadman, Co-editor, Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario, 2001-2005.



Mallard family

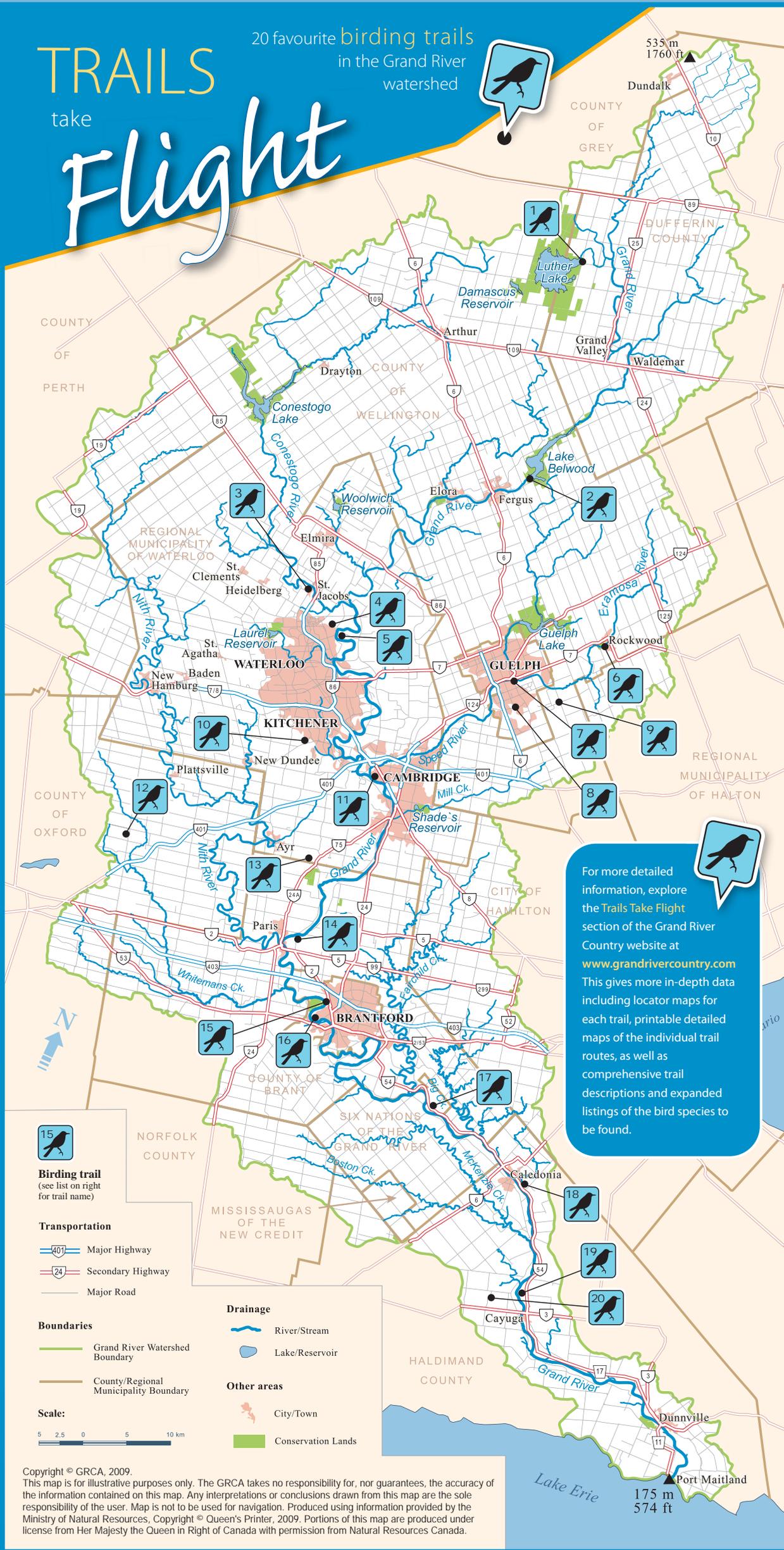
Photo by Ashley Hockenberry

TRAILS

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20 favourite birding trails
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For more detailed information, explore the **Trails Take Flight** section of the Grand River Country website at www.grandrivercountry.com. This gives more in-depth data including locator maps for each trail, printable detailed maps of the individual trail routes, as well as comprehensive trail descriptions and expanded listings of the bird species to be found.

Trail name & location

- Luther Marsh Bootlegger Trail**
Grand Valley
(Grand River Conservation Authority)
- Elora Cataract Trailway**
Belwood to Orton
(Grand River Conservation Authority)
- Mill Race Trail**
St. Jacobs
(Grand River Conservation Authority)
- RIM Trail – Walter Bean Trail**
Waterloo
(City of Waterloo)
- Snyder's Flats Trail**
Grand Valley
Trail/Bloomingdale
(Grand River Conservation Authority)
- Gilbert MacIntyre Memorial Trail**
Rockwood Conservation Area
(Grand River Conservation Authority)
- Eramosa River Trail**
Guelph
(City of Guelph)
- Arboretum Trails**
Guelph
(University of Guelph)
- Starkey Hill Trail**
Arkell (near Guelph)
(Grand River Conservation Authority)
- Huron Natural Area Trail**
Kitchener
(City of Kitchener)
- Linear Trail**
Cambridge (Preston)
(City of Cambridge)
- Chesney Wilderness Area**
West of Drumbo
(Grand River Conservation Authority)
- F.W.R. Dickson Wilderness Area**
South of Cambridge
(Grand River Conservation Authority)
- Cambridge to Paris Rail-Trail**
Glen Morris to Paris
(Grand River Conservation Authority)
- SC Johnson Trail – Blue Circle Loop**
Brantford
(City of Brantford)
- Gordon Glaves Memorial Pathway**
Waterworks Park, Brantford
(City of Brantford)
- Six Nations Nature Trail**
Ohsweken
(Six Nations Tourism)
- Rotary Riverside Trail**
Caledonia to York
(Caledonia Rotary Club)
- Ruthven Riverside Trail**
Cayuga
(Ruthven Park National Historic Site)
- Taquanyah Nature Centre**
West of Cayuga
(Grand River Conservation Authority)

15
Birding trail
(see list on right for trail name)

Transportation

- 401 Major Highway
- 24 Secondary Highway
- Major Road

Boundaries

- Grand River Watershed Boundary
- County/Regional Municipality Boundary

Scale:



Drainage

- River/Stream
- Lake/Reservoir

Other areas

- City/Town
- Conservation Lands

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Disclaimer

Maps and text in this brochure and the accompanying website are for illustrative and general information purposes only. Trail routes, conditions, access and permitted uses may change over time. Neither the partners in the Grand River Country Tourism Alliance, nor the managers of trails included in this production, guarantee the accuracy of information contained in the maps and text of this brochure or website. Any interpretations or conclusions drawn from the maps and text are the sole responsibility of the user. Dress according to weather conditions, never hike alone or beyond your abilities, and remember that safety is a personal responsibility.

Credits

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ACTIVE2010

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GUELPH FIELD NATURALISTS

www.guelphfieldnaturalists.org

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Grand River



COUNTRY.COM

Exploring the trails in this brochure is just one of the ways that you can experience a "Grand Adventure" in the great outdoors this year.

Contact:

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Toll-free (866) 900-4722



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scenery
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hospitality.*



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