River Country

located just west of Toronto, the Grand River watershed is the largest inland river system in southern Ontario, extending 240 km from Dundalk in the north to Port Maitland on Lake Erie. Covering more than 6,800 km² in area, the watershed in the north to Port Maitland on Lake Erie. Covering

so large, and running in a generally north-south orientation, the Grand River crosses no major tributaries such as the Conestogo, Speed, Eramosa and Nith rivers.

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Despite a population approaching 1 million people, 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 200 species of birds have been reported here during spring and fall migration, and close to 200 species nest.

The watershed is also home to numerous Species at Risk, including forest birds such as the Arachnothera Fruhstorfer, Hooded Warbler and Red-shoedered Hank; wetland birds like the Least Bittern and Black Tern; urban birds such as the Chimney Swift and Northern Waterthrush, 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.

Some are wheelchair accessible, while others may have “footprints” is a good motto for both groups and 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.

Let’s get started

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 200 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 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.

For more detailed information, explore the Trails Take Flight section of the Grand River Country website: www.grandrivercountry.com

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 birding 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. Being 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).

Wildlife

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 ages, 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, steps or boardwalks.

Cycling the rail-trail

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.
River Country

more than 6,800 km² in area, the watershed in southern Ontario, extending 280 km from Dundalk towards Lake Erie. Concerning more than 6,800 km² in area, the watershed in southern Ontario, extending 280 km from Dundalk into the north to Port Maitland (at Lake Erie). Covering more than 6,800 km² in area, the watershed in southern Ontario, extending 280 km from Dundalk towards Lake Erie. Concerning more than 6,800 km² in area, the watershed in southern Ontario, extending 280 km from Dundalk towards Lake Erie.

Located just west of Toronto, the Grand River watershed is the largest inland river system in Canada. It includes not only the main Grand River, but also major tributaries such as the Conestogo, Speed, Eramosa and Nith rivers.

About Grand River Country

The Grand River Country website: www.grandrivercountry.com

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 200 species of birds have been reported here during spring and fall migration, and close to 200 species nest.

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The watershed is also home to numerous Species at Risk, including forest birds such as the Acadian Flycatcher, Hooded Warbler, Little Brown and Red-sponsored Warbler, and birds of open habitats such as 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.

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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 restricted areas. The rest of the trails allow hikers and/or snowshoers in season. The level of difficulty of the trail varies somewhat, but most are easy to moderate in difficulty. Some are wheelchair accessible, while others may have moderate slopes, stairs or boardwalks.

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Trail users are asked to show consideration for the natural and human 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 nature lovers.


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

Takin’ it easy... \nOn the boardwalk...
TRAILS Take Flight.

20 favourite birding trails in the Grand River watershed.

Explore the trails in this brochure or website. Any interpretations or descriptions and expanded information can be found.

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Photo by Karl Egressy.
Cover photo: Blue-headed Vireo.

The text and trail information was derived from surveys of the Grand River Watershed TRAILS, a project of the Grand River Conservation Authority, with support of the Government of Ontario.

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The use of the information contained herein is at the discretion of the user.

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www.grandriver.ca
www.grandrivercountry.com
www.birdsontario.ca

Cover photo: Blue-headed Vireo.