



IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION - Birding Sites in Marion County

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Lake Red Rock, dam, waterfowl and gulls (eBird Hotspot)

GPS Coordinates: 41.3660922147977,-92.9749345779419

Ownership: Federal - COE

Description: The outflow of the Des Moines River is well known for unusual gulls and waterfowl. A scope is not only desirable but almost required to view the birds on the lake.

Habitat: Above the dam you will find a broad expanse of deep water where waterfowl may be found and gulls congregate to roost. Below the dam, depending on the volume of the outflow, many gravel bars provide resting spots and gulls may be swarming around the dam.

Directions: In northern Marion Co. Scope above the dam from the overlook behind the Visitor's Center at the south end of the dam (T-15), and from a small turn-in at the north end of the dam. The dam is at the southeast end of the lake. Access the spillway from the dam's south end, east side of T-15.

Amenities: Restrooms | Drinking Water | Parking | Trails | Camping | ADA Accessible Trails

Lake Red Rock--Eagle Creek Subdivision (eBird Hotspot)

GPS Coordinates: 41.3861386460058,-92.9820317029953

Ownership: None listed

Description:

Habitat:

Directions: North of the dam at Lake Red Rock, in northwest Marion Co. Take T-15, the road to the dam at the lake's southeast end, south from G-28, which skirts the north shore. Look for Bos Landon Golf Course on your left and then the Eagle Creek subdivision on your right. At the sign for Eagle Creek, follow the entrance road to its end at a cemetery, and the open water is to the right.

Amenities:

Red Rock Reservoir (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)

GPS Coordinates: 41.37229,-92.9835

Has Site Guide

Ownership: Multiple

Description: Red Rock Reservoir is a large area encompassing many of the other areas listed here. Although the dam and several recreation areas fall under the purview of the Army Corps of Engineers, other areas are managed by the state or county.

Habitat: Although a variety of habitats are found around the lake, most birders go there for water-related species. There are a number of different vantage points around the lake and each one gives the observer a little different perspective.

Directions: Various areas can be accessed by making a loop around the lake from north of Knoxville east to near Pella and back to Knoxville.

Amenities: Restrooms | Drinking Water | Parking | Trails | Camping | Cabins | ADA Accessible Trails

Red Rock Reservoir--Boxcars area (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)

GPS Coordinates: 41.4681068,-93.2324682

Ownership: State

Description: This area in the upper portion of Red Rock Reservoir is very susceptible to flooding events. It can have some interesting birding or be devoid of activity. You never know until you check. The short drive to the parking lot may have some interesting scrub species.

Habitat: In times of receding flood waters, shorebirds may be plentiful and Buff-breasted Sandpiper is a fall target.

Directions: In the northwest corner of Marion Co. Along Hwy. 14, either two miles south of Monroe (in Jasper Co.), or three miles north of G-28 at Lake Red Rock, take Carpenter St. going west; 6.5 miles west along Carpenter, after passing 72nd Ave. to the north, take 68th Ave. south to the Boxcars boat ramp area along the Des Moines River. (In the Sportsman's Atlas, 68th Ave. is not marked and appears, misleadingly, as a very short spur before Carpenter dead-ends).

Amenities: Parking |

Red Rock Reservoir--Elk Rock State Park (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)

GPS Coordinates: 41.4039973,-93.0802161

Ownership: State

Description:

Habitat:

Directions:

Amenities: Restrooms | Drinking Water | Parking | Camping |

Red Rock Reservoir--Marina Cove Recreation Area (eBird Hotspot)

GPS Coordinates: 41.4024369,-93.0095994

Ownership: None listed

Description:

Habitat:

Directions: On the north shore of Lake Red Rock in Marion Co. About 5.5 miles east along G-28 from its intersection with Hwy. 14, take the entrance road south to the marina.

Amenities:

Red Rock Reservoir--Pinchey Bottoms (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)

GPS Coordinates: 41.4597743,-93.272295

Ownership: None listed

Description:

Habitat:

Directions: In northwest Marion Co. From the town of Runnells in extreme southeast Polk Co., travel five miles south on Hwy. 316 to Dubuque St. (Dubuque St. is about four miles south of Runnells W.A.). Before reaching Dubuque you will pass the road to the town of Swan, to the east, and Dubuque will be

one more mile south from here. Proceed east on Dubuque three miles to where it curves south (right), becoming 40th St. At this point, however, take the gravel road going north, to your left. Follow this to the parking area at the water. Walking the area requires boots. Start out straight ahead north from the parking area, walking an old roadbed. The roadbed is often under shallow water in a couple of short stretches, but not deeper than standard rubber boot height. Eventually turn right (east) for more viewing, although these sections can be very mucky in places.

Amenities:

Red Rock Reservoir--Roberts Creek County Park (eBird Hotspot) (Important Bird Area)

GPS Coordinates: 41.42506,-93.05592

Ownership: County

Description: This seasonal county park provides pleasant general birding. The north part of the park, accessed by rock roads heading north on the east side of the lake, may have shorebirds in season.

Habitat: Primarily woodlands.

Directions: Along the north side of Lake Red Rock in northern Marion Co. Follow G-28 a little more than three miles east from Hwy. 14, over the causeway to the park's entrance to the north.

Amenities: Restrooms | Drinking Water | Parking | Trails | Camping |

Red Rock Reservoir--Roberts Creek County Park (boat ramps and causeway) (eBird Hotspot)

GPS Coordinates: 41.4218969,-93.0511764

Ownership: County

Description: Parking on the highway shoulder gives one a good view of any waterfowl and gulls loafing on Roberts Creek Lake.

Habitat: Open water

Directions: On the north shore of Lake Red Rock in northern Marion Co. Gulls are viewed by looking north from the causeway along G-28, about three miles east of Hwy. 14.

Amenities: Parking |

Red Rock Reservoir--Whitebreast Recreation Area (eBird Hotspot)

GPS Coordinates: 41.3825404,-93.0301666

Ownership: Federal - COE

Description: A frequent birder destination, especially in fall, Whitebreast Point has produced its fair share of rare birds including jaegers and Sabine's Gulls.

Habitat: General birding can be pleasant in the surrounding woodlands but the goal of most birders is to get out to the point and scope the lake.

Directions: In northern Marion Co. From the south end of the dam, follow T-15 three miles, first south and then curving west, to S-71. Take S-71 north (right) about three miles to the Whitebreast Point area. Turn left just before S-71 goes downhill to the water (which is itself a viewing point), and scope from--among other places--the boat ramp area off left, and Whitebreast Point itself at the end of the road, about one mile.

Amenities: Restrooms | Drinking Water | Parking | Trails | Camping |