

BIRD SPECIES TO SPOT AT GRAND FALLS

- Canada Goose
- Wood Duck
- Hooded Merganser
- Common Merganser
- Ruffed Grouse
- Common Loon
- Turkey Vulture
- Bald Eagle
- Broad-winged Hawk
- Spotted Sandpiper
- Herring Gull
- Mourning Dove
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
- Northern Flicker
- Pileated Woodpecker
- Alder Flycatcher
- Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
- Least Flycatcher
- Blue-headed Vireo
- Red-eyed Vireo
- Gray Jay
- Blue Jay
- American Crow
- Common Raven
- Tree Swallow
- Barn Swallow
- Black-capped Chickadee
- Boreal Chickadee
- Red-breasted Nuthatch
- White-breasted Nuthatch
- Brown Creeper
- Winter Wren
- Golden-crowned Kinglet
- Swainson's Thrush
- Hermit Thrush
- American Robin
- Cedar Waxwing
- Nashville Warbler
- Northern Parula
- Yellow Warbler
- Chestnut-sided Warbler
- Magnolia Warbler
- Black-throated Blue Warbler
- Yellow-rumped Warbler
- Black-throated Green Warbler
- Blackburnian Warbler
- Pine Warbler
- American Redstart
- Ovenbird
- Northern Waterthrush
- Mourning Warbler
- Common Yellowthroat
- Canada Warbler
- Chipping Sparrow
- Song Sparrow
- Swamp Sparrow
- White-throated Sparrow
- Dark-eyed Junco
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak
- Red-winged Blackbird
- Common Grackle
- Purple Finch
- Common Redpoll
- Pine Siskin
- American Goldfinch
- Evening Grosbeak



COMMON MERGANSER



RED WINGED BLACK BIRD

Grand Falls Hut

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GRAND FALLS HUT

Birding at the Grand Falls Hut is focused on two very different habitat types: riparian floodplain forest with scattered large hardwoods, white pine, and alder thickets along the route to the hut; and northern forest dominated by spruce and fir in which the hut is situated. As would be expected of such different habitats, the bird communities in each are dissimilar as well, providing good opportunities to compile a diverse species list over a period of several days.

Walk 1

The key landscape feature of the journey to the remote Grand Falls Hut is the Dead River. The upper 5-mile section above Grand Falls is very slow flowing—slow enough so as to be easily paddled in both directions. This easy current makes for comfortable birding conditions in a canoe, but walking the Maine Hut Trail that runs along the river bank will generally provide better opportunities to really see the birds of this area. Traveling through this bottomland forest, it would be hard to miss the song of the Red-eyed Vireo. From late spring through mid summer, this species announces its presence, stationed like sentinels every 100 yards or so, on both sides of the river.

Between the vireo songs, however, many other species can be heard and seen. In the riverside thickets look for **Eastern Kingbird**, **Yellow Warbler**, **Common Yellowthroat**, **Common Grackle**, **Song Sparrow**, and **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**. Alder thickets in wetlands that sprawl through the low-lying former farmland on both sides of the river provide habitat for the aptly-named **Alder Flycatcher** and **Swamp Sparrow**. Typical warblers of deciduous trees here include **Nashville**, **Black-and-white**, **Chestnut-sided** and **American Redstart**; while thrushes include **Hermit**, **Veery**, and **American Robin**. On or above the river itself, look for **Common Goldeneye**, **Black Duck**, **Common and Hooded Mergansers**, **Common Loon**, and **Bald Eagle**.

Just upstream from the Chappell Bridge, the river and the forest habitat changes abruptly. The only birding option along this 1.5-mile section is on foot (the pull-out is on the right bank adjacent to the island) through mature white pine, spruce, and scattered northern hardwoods. On the west bank of the bridge, the trail forks. The better choice for birding is to go straight, staying on the Maine Hut Trail. **Brown Creeper**, **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, **Pine Warbler**, and **Dark-eyed Junco** are among the species to be found in these mature pines. Continuing into stands of spruce and fir, look for **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher**; both **Black-capped** and **Boreal Chickadees**; **Magnolia**, **Black-throated Green**, **Parula**, **Blackburnian**, and **Yellow-rumped Warblers**, as well as **Ovenbird**, and **Swainson's Thrush**. Where the trail rejoins the riverbank, check exposed gravel bars for **Spotted Sandpiper**. The area of mixed forest before crossing the bridge over Spencer Stream is good habitat for **Ruffed Grouse**, **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**, **Least Flycatcher**, **Blue-headed Vireo**, **Black-throated Blue Warbler**, and **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**.

At the trail junction on the other side (north) of Spencer Stream bridge, follow the Fisherman's Trail to the right along the river. **Winter Wren** and **Blackburnian** and **Black throated Green Warblers** are found here. In .7 miles, take a left at the hut sign and walk up the hill to the Grand Falls Hut.

Walk 2

One doesn't have to walk far from the Grand Falls Hut to find birds—in fact, a walk around its “dooryard” can be very productive birding. Spending a few moments in the back viewing the forest below before dawn or after sunset in the spring and early summer can be especially rewarding for the concert of songs of **Swainson's and Hermit Thrushes** issuing from the forest. Both songs are flute-like and ethereal—the Swainson's song seeming to spiral upward. Listen also for the impossibly long and varied song of **Winter Wren** and the characteristic north woods refrain “Oh Canada, Canada, Canada” of **White-throated Sparrow**. Warblers found here include **Nashville**, **American Redstart**, **Black-throated Green**, **Blackburnian**, **Magnolia**, **Yellow-rumped**, **Canada**, and **Ovenbird**. Around the front side of the hut look for **Gray Jay** (especially in winter), **Black-capped Chickadee**, **Chipping Sparrow**, **Dark-eyed Junco**, and various seed-eating birds that may be attracted to the feeders, such as **Pine Siskin** and **Common Redpoll**.

Leaving the hut, take a left on the Maine Hut Trail. **Blackburnian**, **Parula**, and **Magnolia Warblers** are regular breeding birds in this dense area of spruce forest. At the junction with the service road on the right, follow it and continue through the gate out onto the gravel road. Though not as visually attractive as the trails surrounding the hut, the road leading out into the working forest presents the best opportunities for really seeing birds. The road is wide, allowing longer lines of sight and better angles for scanning vegetation and maneuvering. There is a lot of edge habitat where birds tend to congregate while feeding along with a wide variety of habitat types and ages. Allow two to three hours to walk this road, stopping to bird in each habitat type. By bearing left at each major intersection, one can make a two-mile loop that leads down to the Maine Hut Trail just above (north) of the bridge over Spencer Stream, returning to the Grand Falls Hut via the Maine Hut Trail.

Warbler diversity is readily evident along this route, particularly during the migration and breeding seasons. Sixteen species of these colorful little birds have been tallied so far, and another 5 or so are very likely. Among them, be alert for **Tennessee**, **Cape May**, **Blackpoll**, and **Bay-breasted**. Other northern forest specialties to look for in the spruce-fir stands include **Gray Jay** and **Boreal Chickadee**. **Black-backed Woodpecker** is also here—look for stands of dead trees with patches of bark that have been flecked off. Knowing that species' distinctive drumming is helpful in locating it. There is also some very promising habitat for **Spruce Grouse**, particularly along the road leading down to Spencer Stream. This is a good place to listen for the chattering song of **White-winged Crossbill** from the spruce-tree tops in any season, as well as for the plaintive call of an **Evening Grosbeak** passing overhead. Once common to abundant, this striking yellow, black, and white finch is now a rare but regular resident here.