

BIRD SPECIES TO SPOT AT POPLAR

- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
- Downy Woodpecker
- Hairy Woodpecker
- Northern Flicker
- Alder Flycatcher
- Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
- Blue-headed Vireo
- Red-eyed Vireo
- Blue Jay
- Common Raven
- Tree Swallow
- Black-capped Chickadee
- Boreal Chickadee
- Red-breasted Nuthatch
- Brown Creeper
- Winter Wren
- Golden-crowned Kinglet
- Swainson's Thrush
- Hermit Thrush
- American Robin
- Cedar Waxwing
- Nashville Warbler
- Northern Parula
- Chestnut-sided Warbler
- Magnolia Warbler
- Black-throated Blue Warbler
- Yellow-rumped Warbler
- Black-throated Green Warbler
- Blackburnian Warbler
- American Redstart
- Ovenbird
- Common Yellow-throat
- Canada Warbler
- Song Sparrow
- Swamp Sparrow
- White-throated Sparrow
- Dark-eyed Junco
- Purple Finch
- White-winged Crossbill



Poplar Stream Falls Hut

SELF-GUIDED BIRD WALKS

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POPLAR STREAM HUT

Surrounded by spruce, fir, cedar, and scattered northern hardwoods, the Poplar Stream Hut provides a good base for stalking and finding birds of the forest interior, particularly such sought-after boreal species as Spruce Grouse, Gray Jay, Boreal Chickadee, and host of colorful wood warblers.

Walk 1

A good morning walk for both birding and scenery follows the main trail down the hill from the hut, turning right toward Flagstaff. In spring and through mid-summer, listen here for the ethereal, flute-like song of **Hermit Thrushes** and the emphatic and unmistakable song of the **Ovenbird**. As the trail descends to join with the service road, listen and look for **Parula**, **Blackburnian**, and **Magnolia Warblers**. Though very active and brightly colored, these small birds may require some patience and perseverance to see as they forage through the branches.

Probably the best area for seeing birds is to continue along the service road just below the trail turnoff to Flagstaff. Here the road descends alongside Poplar Stream, and the view opens up to the edge of the spruce-fir forest on the opposite bank. Catching the sunlight as it first strikes, these far trees can be rewarding as birds forage for insects newly activated by the warmth. Look for **Black-throated Green**, **Yellow-rumped**, **Black-throated Blue**, and **Nashville Warblers** in addition to those already mentioned, plus a host of other forest birds that are drawn to this edge habitat.

After you have thoroughly birded the 100-yard stretch along the stream, continue on to the foot trail that drops left off the road just before the bridge. This trail traverses the slope through a rocky spruce forest offering plenty of cover for birds. Though birds can be hard to hear above the sound of the stream far below, listen for the impossibly long and complex song of the **Winter Wren** carrying above the din. With patience you should be able to spot one of these tiny birds as they dart low among the forest tangle.

Further along is the trail down to Poplar Falls, which if not for birds, is still well worth the descent for the spectacular setting. Then climb back up and continue along the original trail to its junction with the Maine Huts Trail returning to Poplar Stream Hut. Along the way, look for **Dark-eyed Junco**, **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**, **Purple Finch**.

Walk 2

For any birder intent on finding northern forest specialties, it's hard to imagine better boreal habitat for prospecting than the mile-long section of the Maine Huts Trail leading north toward Flagstaff. **Boreal Chickadee** and **Gray Jay** have both been found along this section, and it is likely that **Spruce Grouse** will be found here too. **Spruce Grouse** are typically so tame that they will not flush on close human approach, thus often making them difficult to spot.

Start this out-and-back walk down the main trail, bearing right at the next two junctions toward Flagstaff. For the next three-quarters of a mile out to the bridge over the beaver-flowage, the trail passes through spruce and fir stands of various ages. Looking in many places like the forest primeval with its thick carpet of mosses and *Usnea*, or "old-man's beard," hanging from the branches, these woods are breeding habitat for an array of northern birds, including **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher**, **Blue-headed Vireo**, **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, **Brown Creeper**, **Winter Wren**, **Ruby-crowned** and **Golden-crowned Kinglets**, **Swainson's** and **Hermit Thrushes**, an array of warblers, including **Nashville**, **Parula**, **Magnolia**, **Yellow-rumped**, **Black-throated Green**, **Blackburnian**, **Ovenbird**, and **Canada**, and **White-throated Sparrow**. Both **Black-capped** and **Boreal Chickadees** are here as well; the latter sings a raspier and slower version of the familiar call. Stopping for a snack along the trail just past the bridge may provide an incentive for an approach by a curious **Gray Jay** or two. Out in the beaver flowage listen and look for **Olive-sided** and **Alder Flycatchers**, **Common Yellowthroat**, **Swamp Sparrow**, and perhaps a **Hooded Merganser**.

Return the way you came, stopping often to look for movement and to listen for the thin calls of **Black-capped Chickadees** or **Golden-crowned Kinglets**. Many times other species will be moving through the forest with these birds in a mixed flock, especially after the nesting season.