

Copper Harbor Birding Trails / Areas

***Brought to you by the Brockway Inn ~ Motel & Shop
Location of "Birding Central" (9th & Gratiot Streets)***

Hunter's Point & Marina

There are 2 trailheads to Hunter's Point Park

One is just left of the boat launch at the Copper Harbor Marina. Be sure to walk along the piers and check out the quiet water around the marina for water birds such as Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Common, Hooded and Red-breasted Merganser, and Common Loon. The trail leads around the inside harbor and out to Lake Superior.

The other is a found by going a few blocks west of the marina to North Coast Shores Drive and turning right. Go until it the road T's then turn right. Take this road to the end and you will see trail signs. At this trailhead there is a handicapped accessible boardwalk leading to Lake Superior and rustic restrooms.

Either trail head will lead you to the main trail which is well signed. This is an easy hike with mostly flat walking but there are roots and rocks to navigate. The trail winds through the woods and out to beautiful pebble beaches on Lake Superior.

During their migration, many songbirds will roost here for the night in preparation for their flight over Lake Superior. This is a good spot to observe warblers and other woodland birds as well as water birds. Bald Eagle are frequently observed soaring by along the pebble beaches. Pileated, Hairy and Downy Woodpecker are common.

Brockway Mountain Drive

The drive up Brockway Mountain begins at the west end of Copper Harbor, across M-26 from the marina. The first 1/4-mile or so is a steep up, leading to the first lookout over the harbor. It continues on for about 3 more miles to the top with many pull-offs along the way, any of which are good for hawk watching. The peak allows for a 360-degree view over the forests and Lake Superior. The drive continues for another 7 miles back down to M-26 about 5 miles from Eagle Harbor.

There are a two sanctuaries along the drive; Klipfel Memorial Trail (MNA), located just east of the top and the Oren Krumm Trail (MI Audubon) near the bottom of drive on the west end. They are hilly but not too difficult and offer great views and birding.

The best hawk watching, at the peak, does not require much walking at all. Brockway sits along the Central Migration Flyway aka "Hawk Highway" and displays a spectacular spring migration. 17 North American raptors have been observed here. Common Raven can be quite entertaining as they "play" and soar like kites along the cliffs. Find a good vantage point, set up a chair and enjoy the show.

Lake Manganese & Red Trail

Turn between the Visitor's Center and the Pines Resort, head past Lake Fanny Hooe for about 1 mile to reach Lake Manganese. (Along the way, stop and check out Manganese Falls on the left). The trailhead for the Red Trail is right by the rustic restrooms and informational kiosk.

This is a pristine little lake with nice beach to walk. Water birds including Common Loon seem to enjoy the quiet lake. Other species include Spotted Sandpiper, Northern Shrike, Swamp Sparrow, and many species of flycatcher and warbler. The views are great and the bird life plenty.

The Red Trail is about 2 miles uphill to the fairway of the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge. It is a challenging hike, but well worth the effort. Ruffed Grouse are often seen along the trail. * Please note, some of the trails are mountain bike trails and they have the right of way. They are moving fast, so be aware and ready to yield for them.

Estivant Pines Nature Sanctuary (Michigan Nature Association)

From Lake Manganese head down the dirt road for about 1.2 miles, there are signs to follow. There will be a swampy area to your left and soon you will see a road to the right. Turn right there and take the very next right which will lead you to the parking area for the sanctuary. This road can be a bit rough, especially in spring. The trailhead has a map of the area.

The sanctuary is a stand of old growth White pine growing along a mixture of northern hardwoods and other boreal species. This trail is quite hilly and the ground is full of roots and rocks. Be prepared for rough terrain.

This is a good spot for warblers, kinglets, thrush and other woodland birds. Black-backed, Winter Wren, Indigo bunting, Ovenbird and Red-eyed Vireo are just a few of regulars.

Clyde's Bird Trail

Follow the signs to Grandpa's Barn Bookstore off US41 & 4th Street. Head up and park by the bookstore. Please do not drive on the trail. This is private property, Stop in the store and check out a nice variety of great books and field guides.

The trail goes through a woods area and out around a quiet pond and meadow. It is easy walking with great views of the surrounding forest and the base of Brockway Mountain.

This is one of the few accessible meadow-like habitats in the area. Many different sparrows can be seen during spring and fall migration including Vesper, Lincolns, Fox and Savannah. Sandhill cranes can often be heard if not seen nearby. The quiet pond offers up a variety of water and shore birds. Swallows, flycatchers and warblers can be found along the woods edge. It is also a good spot for Belted Kingfisher and Black-backed Woodpecker.

Fort Wilkins Trails

The park is down US41 about 2 miles from town. A motor vehicle parking permit is required.

These trails vary as they go through the woods and along Lake Superior and Lake Fanny Hooe. Most of the trails are not hilly and are easy to navigate.

The park trails offer up a variety of bird life. The ever-elusive Pileated Woodpecker is often sighted in the area. The trail along Lake Fanny Hooe is also good for blackbirds. In the spring of 2001 during an Audubon outing, 23 species of warblers were observed in one day, many within these trails.