

MISSISSIPPI RIVER BIRDING AUTO TOUR

FIELD TRIP OPTION [D] (Saturday Full Day or Sun AM)

Start time: 6:20 am, Approximate end time: 3:30 pm (all day trip)

Mississippi River Birding Auto Tour will cover large river, floodplain forest, scrub-swamp, ponds, sand prairie; easy afternoon hike on sand fire lane through floristic tour of sand prairie and savanna.

Trip involves nearly all driving with various stops from viewing from roadside. On Saturday there may be time for a short hike on the trails / boardwalk at Heron Bend. If so, the hiking will be easy and level and involve less than 0.25 miles distance or less. Those that didn't want to hike the trail could remain by the riverfront a view birds there.

Species expect include large river, floodplain forest, scrub-swamp, ponds, sand prairie, waterbirds including: American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, Caspian Tern, Forster's Tern, Trumpeter Swan, various dabbling ducks; egrets and herons; American Coot, Osprey, Pileated Woodpecker, swallows, Yellow Warbler, Swamp, Lark, Grasshopper and Field Sparrow.

Meet in parking lot of Nauvoo Family Inn & Suites

Trip Leader: Maury Brucker

Approximate distance that attendees will cover: 50 miles roundtrip

DIRECTIONS

From Nauvoo Family Inn & Suites - East on IL Rt. 96; road turns North to Niota [possible stop on west end of Niota]; in Niota turn left (West) on Rt. 9 and cross bridge into Ft. Madison, IA; take first right after bridge onto Rt. 61 (West) through Ft. Madison (**STAY ON Rt. 61**); road turns South; [stop at roadside table, East side]; back South on Rt. 61 [stop at ponds on West side]; back South on Rt. 61; turn left (East) into Heron Bend (Lee County Conservation Board) and follow gravel road past office, right, then left to river [stop at river]; reverse course back to South on Rt. 61; exit to left towards town of Montrose [stop at riverfront park / LUNCH]; continue along bluff road and make stops at best viewing locations; continue on bluff road through Keokuk; stay to left (river side) [stop on bluff overlooking dam for viewing]; take right (stay near river) continue through Keokuk to bridge; take left onto bridge to Hamilton, IL; after bridge take immediate left to Montrose Boat Launch [viewing below dam]; continue on main road through Hamilton; keep left (riverside); take right onto gravel drive by utility substation [view birds above locks]; return to main road / Rt. 96 North towards Nauvoo; continue North on Rt. 96 [various riverside pull offs for river viewing]; [stop at Nauvoo Flats for additional viewing]; if time permits turn left past Nauvoo Flats parking lot for additional viewing sites within lowlands / Mormon sites; return East and follow Rt. 96 through Nauvoo, road turns from North to East past temple; continue East to hotel.