

Benzie Birding Map and Guide

Those interested in observing migrating waterfowl should find April, October and November prime months. The best observation points are ***Platte Point (1)*** at the mouth of the Platte River and ***Point Betsie (2)*** where you will also find the most photographed lighthouse on the Great Lakes. Platte point in the winter often holds huge concentrations of waterfowl. Over 20,000 Greater Scaup have been seen here along with thousands of Common Goldeneyes and Buffleheads as well as many other species. up to 350 common Loons per hour have been seen passing Point Betsie as well as hundreds of Long-tailed ducks and occasionally many Scoters.

The ***Elberta Marsh (3)*** and ***Betsie Bay area (4)*** are great places to see waterfowl, shorebirds, Herons and Sandhill Cranes.

Peterson Road (5) in the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore begins where Deadstream Rd. leaves off at M-22. Many woodland species may be found as you hike, bike or drive toward Lake Michigan. In June in the evenings one may listen to Hermit Thrushes singing from the woods and if you're near Lake Michigan, you can hear Common Highthawks calling overhead. The strikingly beautiful Blackburnian Warbler nests here as well as Yellow-rumped and Pine Warblers. The area near the lake is terrific for birding during migration and Platte Bay often harbors many ducks and loons.

The ***Otter Creek area (6)*** offers a fine selection of field birds along M-22 and Esch Rd., and great birding for spring warblers and other passerines in the wooded areas closer to Lake Michigan.

For canoers and kayakers, the ***Grass Lake flooding (7)*** on the upper Betsie River is a wonderful place to bird in the month of May with many Eagles, Osprey, Rails, Piedbilled Grebes, Herons and passerines such as Yellowthroated Vireos that seem to prefer more inland areas away from Lake Michigan. Canoeing or kayaking the ***Elberta Marsh (3)*** is another worthwhile trip.

Although not in Benzie County, the ***Arcadia Marsh and Lake (8)***, just a couple miles south of the county line, should not be overlooked. In both spring and fall, this area harbors many migrating waterfowl, shorebirds, cranes and many other birds. Viewing is easy from along M-22. Don't forget to drive some of the back roads in the area for more birding opportunities. In May, the forest floors are full of Trillium.

- Boat launch
- Beach
- Camping
- Biking
- Hiking
- Nordic skiing
- Downhill skiing
- Bird watching
- Golfing
- Horse riding trail
- Snowmobile trail
- Biking, hiking, skiing trail
- Betsie Valley Trail
- Beach to beach trail
- National lakeshore
- Point of interest
- Airport
- City / Village
- County border

