



BIRDING MAP OF
**SHELDON MARSH
 STATE NATURE
 PRESERVE, OHIO**



Produced by Kenn Kaufman for the
 Black Swamp Bird Observatory, 2009.
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www.bsbo.org/birding

 = marsh grass
 = wooded area
 = dirt trail

SCALE = 1000 FEET

Birding Sheldon Marsh State Nature Preserve, Ohio

To accompany the "birding map" provided by Black Swamp Bird Observatory

Administered by the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, this area protects 465 acres of marsh, woodland, second growth, overgrown fields, and barrier beach in Erie County, just east of Sandusky. For birding, the area is best known for concentrations of migrant songbirds in spring and fall, and for various waterbirds in the marshes.

Directions to Sheldon Marsh: From Ohio State Route 2, east of Sandusky and west of Huron, take the Rye Beach Road exit and go north across the freeway to the traffic light at U.S. Highway 6. Go west on Hwy 6 approximately 0.6 miles. The parking lot for Sheldon Marsh is well marked on the north side of the road, just west of the Sawmill Creek resort.

Access: Open from dawn to dark. No entry fee. No motorized vehicles, bicycles, or pets are allowed beyond the parking lot. Two paved paths go north from the parking lot almost to the lake shore, so this area is well suited for wheelchair access. There are no permanent restroom facilities.

Notes on birding in the preserve, from the parking lot north:

Birding the southern section: From the parking lot, it is possible to walk north on either of two wide paved trails or two narrower dirt trails. Any of these can be good for finding warblers and other songbird migrants in season. The wider paved trails are better for groups of birders, giving everyone more of a chance to see everything. Early in the morning, especially on chilly days, there is likely to be more bird action in areas that the sun hits first, as on the easternmost trail. The area around the small pond is often a focus of bird activity.

Birding the central section: Half a mile north of the parking lots, the two paved trails converge and continue north along the east side of the marsh itself. From here on north there are low trees and thickets along both sides of the path, and these areas often have concentrations of migrants which can be relatively easy to see.

Several good observation points, including two well-placed wooden decks, allow good views of the extensive open marsh to the west of the road. Depending on season and water levels, this area may host many ducks, and there may be herons, egrets, and sometimes bitterns. Occasionally water levels are low enough to expose mudflats that attract shorebirds.

Birding the north section: The paved trail ends at a fenced-off small building that is off limits to the public. Just before that point it may be possible to climb up on the breakwall to look out over the lake, but the rocks here are uneven and potentially slippery and extreme caution is necessary.

A few yards to the south of this, a boardwalk leads west (left) into the woods of the barrier beach, and then out onto the beach itself. Under certain weather conditions, especially in spring, these woods may have higher concentrations of songbird migrants than the inland areas. The beach proper may have various migrant shorebirds, such as Sanderling or Ruddy Turnstone, on days when there are not too many human visitors. At some seasons it is possible to walk out along the beach for a mile toward the northwest. In late spring and summer, the beach may be closed to protect potential nesting habitat for Piping Plover and Common Tern. So far, these species are not nesting here, but the terns may be seen offshore in the warmer months and the plover might be seen as a rare migrant.