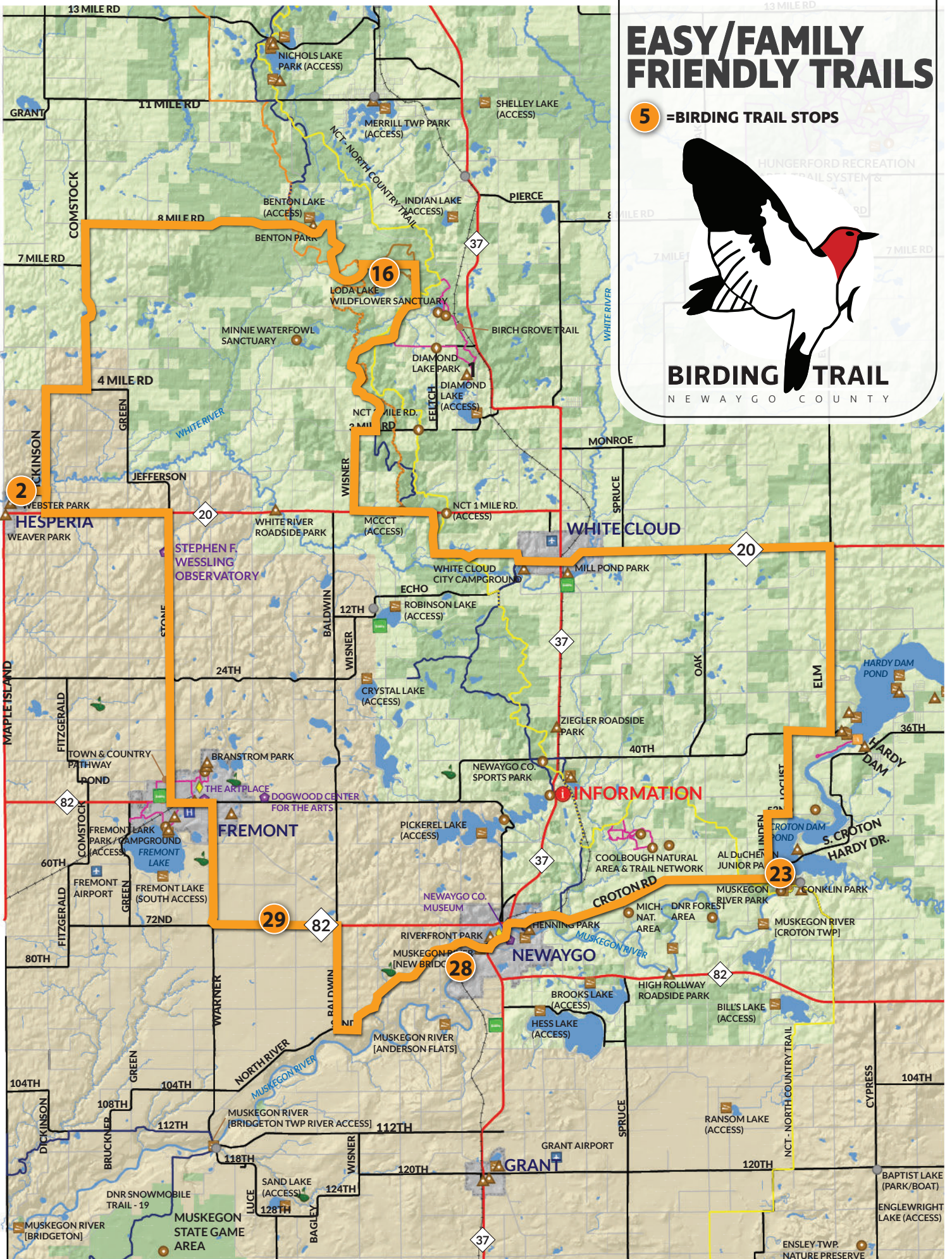


EASY/FAMILY FRIENDLY TRAILS

5 = BIRDING TRAIL STOPS



BIRDING TRAIL
NEWAYGO COUNTY



BIRDING ON EASY/ FAMILY FRIENDLY TRAILS



KEY

- PARKING
- FEE
- RESTROOM
- PICNIC TABLES
- TRAILS
- PLAYGROUND

ABOUT THE ROUTE

Sites with easy trails. These sites have either paved or wide, flat trails for easy walking.

2 Hesperia Pond/First Island

North Maple Island Road & A Street | Hesperia (43.5741713, -86.0387493)

Habitat: Riparian, floodplain, fields, woodland
Notable Species: Spotted Sandpiper, Marsh Wren, Red-shouldered Hawk

Where to explore: Located along the White River, this is Hesperia's only eBird hotspot. Park in the A Street lot and cross over to the bridge and on to the first island, then take the dock to the second island. The dock and islands give great views of the lake and the waterfowl and shorebirds that use the pond during migration. In summer look for herons, gulls, and nesting blackbirds along with several marsh species. (If you are a serious lister please be aware that Maple Island Road is the border between Newaygo and Oceana Counties. The parking lot and ballfields on the west side are in Oceana County, the pond and islands to the east are in Newaygo. The eBird hotspot is in Newaygo County.)

16 Loda Lake Wildflower Sanctuary

4794 N Felch Ave. | White Cloud (43.6392198, -85.8308387)

Habitat: Lake, wetland, creek, mixed deciduous forest
Notable Species: Broad-winged hawk, Wood Thrush, Alder Flycatcher, Pied-billed Grebe

Where to explore: Loda Lake is an area that includes a small spring-fed lake, a bog-like wetland area, a creek and riparian marshy areas, oak forest, pine plantations, and an early successional old farm site, and is the only wildflower sanctuary in the National Forest system. The sanctuary contains a self-guided walking tour trail through a variety of habitats and clocks at number two on Newaygo County's eBird hotspot list. The trail winds through oak-maple woodlands, alongside a stream and floodplain,

through old pine plantations, and on a boardwalk through a shrub swamp and emergent wetland. The shorter loop trail is approximately ½ mile; the full loop is approximately 1.5 miles long. The trail offers a moderately easy hike over relatively flat ground and offers 39 numbered viewing stations described in a trail guide. The guide contains a map of the trails and a description of the different species that may be observed at each station and can be obtained by contacting the District Office in Baldwin, Michigan. In addition to the approximately 125 species of birds reported here there have also been more than 500 species of plants identified. The sanctuary is open year-round but may not be plowed in winter.

23 Croton Dam

Croton Drive | Newaygo (43.435534, -85.665974)

Habitat: Mix of open water, riparian, woodland
Notable species: Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead

Where to explore: Croton Dam offers a variety of habitats and multiple areas to explore and ranks as the number one eBird hotspot in the county. The main attraction is the open water around the dam which attracts a wide variety of waterfowl in early spring and late fall, but the woods along the river and the North Country Trail are always good for songbirds. Access to Croton Pond, which lies above the dam, is easiest from the large Tailwater Parking area on the north side of Croton Dr west of the Muskegon River. This also serves as trailhead parking for the North Country Scenic Trail. There is also a paved ramp that allows access to the river below the dam. There are no facilities at this location, and access to the dam is strictly forbidden. This location offers ample riverside parking and access to the mature woods along the NCST as well as vault toilets at the boat launch along the river. On the south

side of river, you will find the Fishing Access parking lot with upper and lower sections connected by stairs and bisected by a paved trail, also part of the NCST. There is a restroom here and more stairs that allow access to the river below the dam.

28 Newaygo River Front Park

105 River St. | Newaygo (43.419541, -85.807544)

Habitat: Parkland, woodland, riparian
Notable Species: Orchard Oriole, Northern Waterthrush, Bald Eagle

Where to explore: The entrance drive is a great walk for wetland warblers such as Northern Waterthrush and Yellow Warbler along with Baltimore and Orchard Orioles. Head north on the paved walkway along the river, watching for raptors and herons as well as Belted Kingfisher. The riverfront walk ends at a second park at the railroad bridge and Muskegon River access.

29 Garfield Township Memorial Cemetery and Walkway

7190 Bingham Ave. | Newaygo (43.424665, -85.857876)

Habitat: Pine plantation, woodland, agricultural
Notable Species: Black-throated Blue Warbler, Willow Flycatcher, Swainson's Thrush

Where to explore: The entrance to the walkway is behind the Garfield Township Hall. The first loop of the walkway, which winds through a mature red pine stand, can be good year-round for chickadees, titmice, and robins. In spring and fall, migrant warblers abound. The second loop, connected to the first by a paved path that skirts an agriculture field, is in a mature hardwood forest that is great for flycatchers and vireos in warm seasons and woodpeckers and kinglets in winter. Over 75 species have been sighted on the trail.