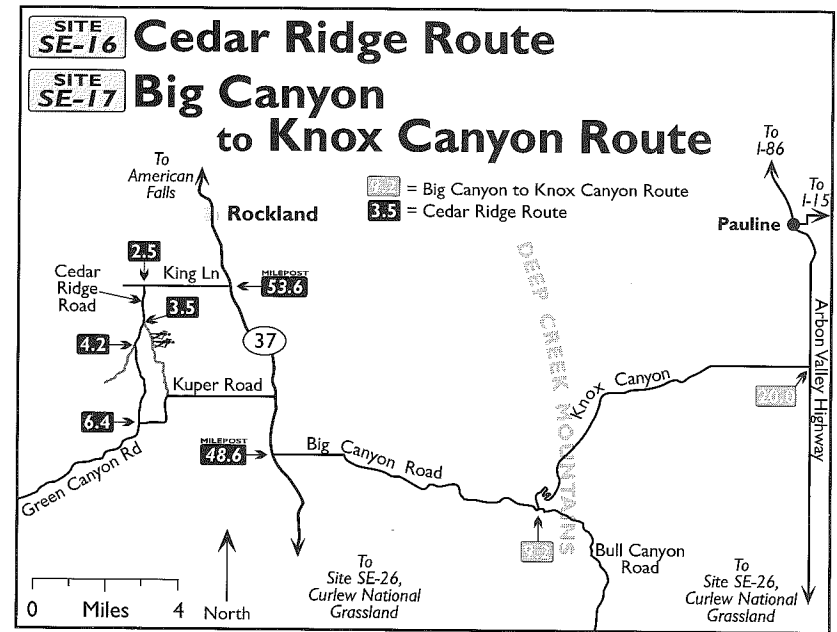


entrance, with each side going for about 0.5 mile to a dead end. A total of 104 species have been seen at Cherry Springs, of which at least 55 nest. Local breeders include Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks, Western Screech-Owl, Great Horned and Northern Saw-whet Owls, Common Poorwills, Calliope and Broad-tailed Hummingbirds, Willow Flycatchers, Rock and House Wrens, Gray Catbirds, Cedar Waxwings, Orange-crowned, Virginia's, Yellow, MacGillivray's, and Black-throated Gray Warblers, Yellow-breasted Chats, Black-headed Grosbeaks, Lazuli Buntings, Green-tailed Towhees, Brewer's, Chipping, Fox, and Song Sparrows, Bullock's Orioles, Cassin's and House Finches, Pine Siskins, and American and Lesser Goldfinches. Several species also winter here, although the area can seem deserted if the wind is blowing. In fall and winter watch for Ruffed Grouse, Golden Eagles, Great Horned Owls, Downy Woodpeckers, American Dippers, Winter Wrens, Black-capped and Mountain Chickadees, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Song Sparrows, and Dark-eyed Juncos.

Back on Mink Creek Road, continue south to mile 1.4, then take paved Scout Mountain Road (a.k.a. FR 001) to the left (east), and follow it uphill. This road is open from May to November and leads 5.5 miles to Justice Park Campground at the base of Scout Mountain. There are many trails that can be birded in this area, including Crestline Motorcycle Trail, which starts in the picnic area. This trail has produced Flammulated Owls, Northern Pygmy-Owls, and several Common Poorwills on summer evenings. Great Horned Owls frequently call in this general area, and even a Great Gray Owl was heard once. Species that can be seen at the picnic area and campground are Ruffed and Blue Grouse, Northern Goshawk, Hairy Woodpecker, Red-naped Sapsucker, Cordilleran and Hammond's Flycatchers, Common Raven, Clark's Nutcracker, Mountain Chickadee, Brown Creeper, Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Hermit Thrush, Red Crossbill, and Pine Siskin. Lincoln's Sparrows nest at the small marshy area near the campground entrance. Although Scout Mountain Road is closed during winter, snowshoes and cross-country skis can help in finding Northern Goshawks, Sharp-tailed, Blue, and Ruffed Grouse, Steller's Jays, Mountain Chickadees, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Townsend's Solitaires, Northern Shrikes, Red Crossbills, and Pine Siskins.

OTHER:

A checklist, a map, and more information can be obtained from the FS (208/236-7500) in Pocatello. Pocatello is a full-service community.



CEDAR RIDGE ROUTE

Author: Dave Burrup

Site SE-16 — Map SE-16/SE-17

Highlights: Gray Flycatcher, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher

Major Habitats: Juniper, Farmland

Location: Power Co., 15 miles south of American Falls

Spring: *** **Summer:** *** **Fall:** * **Winter:** N/A

Spring and summer birding in this corner of the Sublett Mountains can easily produce 50 to 70 bird species. Birding in late summer and fall is less productive. Most of the birds seen will be various sparrows, which are present throughout the fall period. Whenever you visit, access is a bit tricky! You'll need a high-clearance, 4-wheel-drive vehicle to complete the entire 13-mile-long journey. Luckily, the best birding area is relatively easy to access.

DIRECTIONS:

From Rockland follow ID 37 south 2 miles. At milepost 53.6 zero your mileage and turn right (west) onto graveled King Lane. At mile 2.5 turn left (south) on Cedar Ridge Road. Most land along this route is private, but Cedar Ridge itself is an island of public (BLM) land.

BIRDING:

The best birding is in the first 1.5 miles of Cedar Ridge Road. Stop often to investigate the Utah Juniper habitat for Western Scrub-Jays, Gray and Dusky Flycatchers, Juniper Titmice, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Mountain Bluebirds, and Chipping and Brewer's Sparrows. Be sure to scan farmland for Sharp-tailed Grouse, Horned Larks, and Vesper Sparrows.

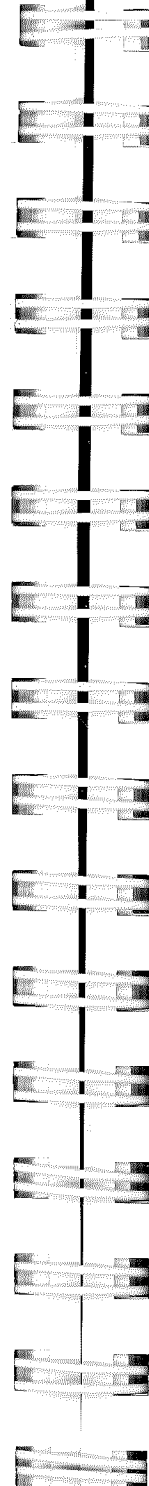
A very productive hike can be taken at mile 3.5. Walk the primitive side road that heads left (east) to the top of Cedar Ridge, and go as far as you like—but please leave all gates as you found them. With luck, you may be able to find Ash-throated Flycatchers, Pinyon Jays, Black-throated Gray Warblers, and Lark Sparrows.

At mile 4.2 stay left (southeast) on Cedar Ridge Road (signed). At mile 6.4 Cedar Ridge Road ends at the junction of Kuper Road and Green Canyon Road. Kuper Road will lead you east to ID 37 in about 4.5 miles.

Good birding is available on Green Canyon Road. Be aware that Green Canyon Road soon becomes a primitive, narrow mountain trail with few pull-outs. High-clearance vehicles are necessary. This road is not accessible until late spring, and it becomes impassable with very little rain; beware of thunder-showers. If you do go into Green Canyon, look there for Calliope Hummingbirds, Virginia's and MacGillivray's Warblers, and Green-tailed and Spotted Towhees. In stands of Douglas-fir and Quaking Aspen, expect Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers, Red-naped Sapsuckers, and Tree Swallows. Approximately 5.4 miles up Green Canyon Road, you'll pass over a shelf of loose rock requiring a 4-wheel drive. You may want to turn around at the top of Green Canyon (6 miles from Cedar Ridge Road). The rest of Green Canyon Road hangs off the mountain-side with very few pull-outs.

OTHER:

This area is heavily hunted in October and November and is best avoided then. Fuel, lodging, and food are available in American Falls. Undeveloped campsites can be found in Green Canyon. Developed campsites are available in American Falls and in Massacre Rocks SP. Twin Springs Campground has primitive campsites at ID 37 milepost 32.5. For a map and more information, contact the BLM (208/236-6860) in Pocatello. See also Big Canyon to Knox Canyon Route, the next site.

**BIG CANYON TO KNOX CANYON ROUTE**

Author: Dave Burrup

Site SE-17 — Map SE-16/SE-17

Highlights: Williamson's Sapsucker, Virginia's Warbler

Major Habitats: Farmland, Mixed Conifer Forest, Deciduous Forest

Location: Power Co., 20 miles south of American Falls

Spring: ** **Summer:** ** **Fall:** * **Winter:** N/A

This 20-mile route climbs Big Canyon, crosses the crest of the Deep Creek Mountains, and descends through Knox Canyon. Along the way, the vegetation changes rapidly from sagebrush to Curl-leaf Mountain Mahogany to Quaking Aspen to Subalpine Fir forest. This habitat diversity attracts a great variety of birdlife, as well as supporting a diverse community of wildflowers and butterflies.

DIRECTIONS:

From Rockland follow ID 37 south 7 miles. At milepost 48.6 turn left (east) on graveled Big Canyon Road (signed) and zero your mileage.

The main road along this route is good gravel and is accessible by passenger car. Don't attempt this journey until the road dries out (mid-June in some years).

There are several side roads in the canyons, but these can be very rough; some are posted private property. Those that are not posted offer great hiking opportunities.

BIRDING:

At the lower ends of both canyons, look for Mourning Doves, Horned Larks, Vesper, Brewer's, and Lark Sparrows, Western Meadowlarks, and Brewer's Blackbirds in the farmland. In juniper, sagebrush, and Chokecherry communities, watch for Dusky Flycatchers, Juniper Titmice, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Mountain Bluebirds, Green-tailed and Spotted Towhees, Virginia's and MacGillivray's Warblers, and Lazuli Buntings. Pay particular attention to the scattered springs and stock ponds, since they are often the birdiest areas.

At mid-elevations you'll be in Quaking Aspen/Douglas-fir forest. Regular nesters include Downy Woodpeckers, Red-naped Sapsuckers, Tree and Violet-green Swallows, Mountain Chickadees, Cedar Waxwings, Hermit and Swainson's Thrushes, Orange-crowned and Yellow-rumped Warblers, Warbling and "Solitary" Vireos, Western Tanagers, and Cassin's Finches.

At the highest elevations search Douglas-fir/Subalpine Fir communities for Hairy Woodpeckers, Williamson's Sapsuckers, Broad-tailed Hummingbirds, Cordilleran Flycatchers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and Red Crossbills.

At mile 7 a road heads up a side canyon on the left (north) which is worth hiking. At mile 7.3 a logging-road on the right (south) continues up Big Canyon

while the main road begins a steep climb to the top. Stay on the main road. At mile 9.1 is a parking area and logging road on the right (south), where you can hike to the ridgetop. At mile 9.2 Bull Canyon Road goes off to the right (southeast). Stay left along the ridgetop. At mile 9.4, bear right and descend through Knox Canyon. At mile 20 turn left (north) onto paved Arbon Valley Highway and drive 4 miles into Pauline to end this route.

OTHER:

This area is heavily hunted in October and is then best avoided for birding. Fuel, lodging, and food are available in American Falls. Undeveloped campsites are available in both canyons. Developed campsites can be found in American Falls and in Massacre Rocks SP. Additional information and a map can be obtained from the BLM office (208/236-6860) in Pocatello.

SPRINGFIELD PONDS

Author: Chuck Trost

Site SE-18 — Map SE-18/SE-19

Highlights: Waterfowl, Shorebirds

Major Habitats: Wetland

Location: Bingham Co., Springfield

Spring: *** **Summer:** * **Fall:** *** **Winter:** **

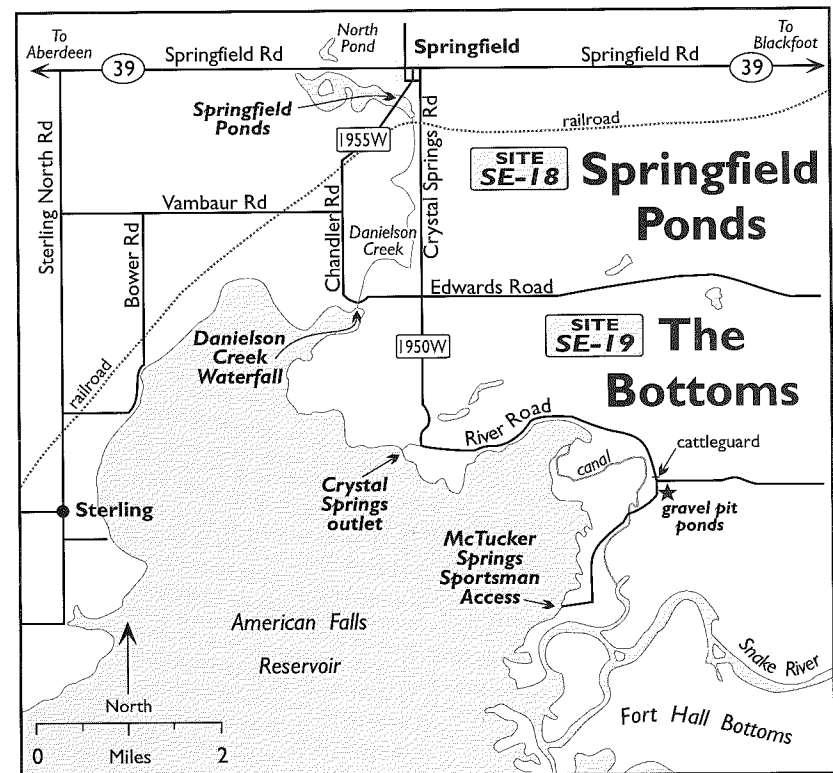
Springfield Ponds is a 30-acre bird sanctuary bordering the small town of Springfield. Because no hunting is allowed, waterfowl congregate here during fall and early winter. The ponds still receive a lot of disturbance from fishermen, however. The best time to visit is early morning or during inclement weather. The ponds are spring fed and are usually ice free even during cold snaps.

DIRECTIONS:

Springfield Ponds are on the south and west side of Springfield. The ponds are separated by ID 39 and Chandler Road (a.k.a. 1955 W). Access to the west and south sides of the ponds is limited by private property.

BIRDING:

Hundreds of birds stage on and around the ponds during spring migration. It's not unusual to find nine diving duck species in addition to the occasional rarity such as Oldsquaw, White-winged or Surf Scoter, or Harlequin Duck. In April, American Avocets and Black-necked Stilts can be found at the north pond, and migrant Dunlins, Stilt Sandpipers, Long-billed and Short-billed (rare) Dowitchers, and Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs should be looked for, also. Watch for Caspian Terns and Ospreys, especially just after the ponds have been restocked with fish.



The marsh and Russian-olive patches to the southeast of the ponds offer good birding, but they do take some effort to access. From ID 39 milepost 33.2 turn south onto Crystal Springs Road (a.k.a. 1950 W) and go 0.2 mile. Park as soon as you cross the railroad, then walk to the right (west) along the edge of the railroad embankment.

During winter look for waterfowl (including Trumpeter Swans) and Bald Eagles at the ponds, and for Marsh Wrens and Virginia Rails in the marshy areas. If you're lucky, you may find Hooded Mergansers on Danielson Creek (see map). Northern Shrikes are regular winter residents, and both Northern Mockingbirds and Blue Jays have wintered in Springfield. In good berry years, thousands of Bohemian Waxwings and European Starlings winter in the Russian-olives. When this happens, there is frequently a Sharp-shinned Hawk or a Merlin nearby. You may also find a Varied Thrush mixed in with the American Robin hordes, or a Harris's or White-throated Sparrow among the plentiful White-crowned Sparrows. Roosting Barn Owls are another possibility.

OTHER:

There is a small store in Springfield for picnic needs, but—alas—no beer is sold on Sundays. See also Sportsmans Park (p. 261) and The Bottoms, the next site.

THE BOTTOMS

Author: Chuck Trost

Site SE-19 — Map SE-18/SE-19

Highlights: Cattle Egret, Northern Goshawk, Shorebirds

Major Habitats: Wetland, Deciduous Forest

Location: Bingham Co., 3 miles southeast of Springfield

Spring: *** **Summer:** *** **Fall:** *** **Winter:** **

The "Bottoms" refers to the northeastern corner of American Falls Reservoir. In spring large expanses of flooded wetland attract migrating waterfowl. From July to late fall there are huge mudflats, with new habitat being exposed daily. Thirty-one shorebird species have been seen here, some in large numbers. Ponds, Russian-olive thickets, and cottonwood forests round out this phenomenal birding site.

DIRECTIONS:

The Bottoms is public land (BOR). Easy access, however, is limited to Danielson Creek Waterfall and McTucker Springs Sportsman Access. Most of the birding is at McTucker Springs.

To find Danielson Creek Waterfall from ID 39, turn south at milepost 33.2 onto Chandler Road (a.k.a. 1955 W) and go southwest 2 miles to the overlook. Note that Chandler and Crystal Springs Road start next to each other but head in slightly different directions (see map).

McTucker Springs Sportsman Access is 4.3 miles southeast of Springfield. To get there from ID 39, turn south at milepost 33.2 onto Crystal Springs Road (a.k.a. 1950 W) for 2.5 miles, then turn left (east) on River Road for 1.8 miles, and cross the cattle-guard. You now have a choice: go straight (east) to bird the gravel-pit ponds, or go right (southwest) for about 1 mile to the boat launch on the Snake River. The road to the boat launch is good gravel. During low water, many birders and fishermen drive beyond the boat launch, out onto the mudflats. *Soft sand and bottomless mud call for very prudent driving! If the mudflats are wet—don't go.* Under any conditions, stay well back from the water's edge. If you insist on being too adventurous, wrecker service is available in Aberdeen, American Falls, and Blackfoot!

BIRDING:

March is the peak of spring waterfowl migration on The Bottoms. Thousands of Northern Pintails court in the shallow bays, as do many other dabblers and both Tundra and Trumpeter Swans. Large flocks of Snow Geese (usually with a handful of Ross's Geese mixed in) can be found feeding in nearby wheat fields.

In summer American White Pelicans dominate The Bottoms' shallows, often pirating fish from unlucky Double-crested Cormorants. Both Clark's and Western Grebes nest near deeper water, while Eared Grebes can be seen in the shallower portions. Watch also for long lines of Cattle Egrets and White-faced Ibises as they fly overhead. Several Great Egrets nest nearby; Snowies are abundant. In cottonwoods look for Gray Catbirds and Black-headed Grosbeaks.

Thousands of molting ducks congregate at The Bottoms during fall, attracting Peregrine and Prairie Falcons. The real excitement however, begins as mudflats become exposed. By August, there are at least *eight miles* of shorebird habitat exposed. Huge flocks of peep, (mostly Western and Baird's Sandpipers) feed here, and even Whimbrels have been seen. Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs are common to abundant; check these flocks for Stilt Sandpipers. Marbled Godwits number in the hundreds during July and August. Rare species present have included American Golden-Plover, Snowy Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Red Knot, and Short-billed Dowitcher!

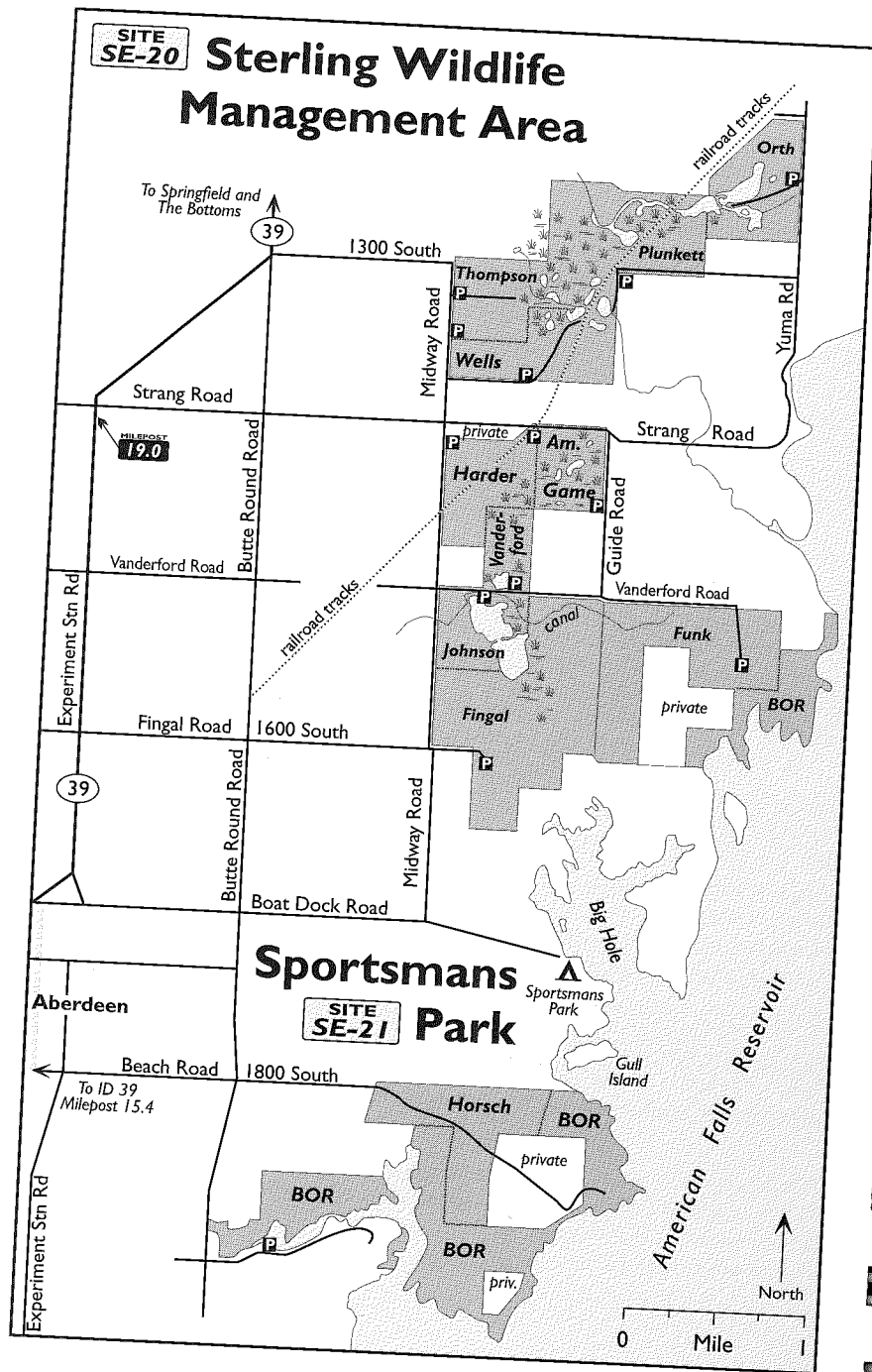
McTucker Springs' brushy habitat harbors fall and winter flocks of American Tree and White-crowned Sparrows. Harris's Sparrows can often be found mixed in, with Spotted Towhees nearby. Russian-olive thickets support Northern Flickers and American Robins all winter (watch for Varied Thrushes) and can attract thousands of Bohemian and Cedar Waxwings. All three accipiters hunt the McTucker Springs area during winter, with Northern Goshawks being particularly prominent. Keep an eye out for Bald Eagles and Merlins.

McTucker Springs' gravel-pit ponds are highly disturbed by fishermen and relatively sterile bird-wise. The ponds may still be worth a quick look, however, since migrating Common Loons do stop over, and both Western and Clark's Grebes sometimes forage there.

Cottonwoods lining the Snake River and McTucker Springs are good for spring owling. Flicker holes are prized by nesting Western Screech-Owls and Northern Saw-whet Owls. Great Horned Owls are also common.

OTHER:

Primitive camping is permitted around the gravel-pit ponds. Fuel, food, and lodging are available in Blackfoot, Springfield, Aberdeen, and American Falls. Pocatello is the closest full-service community. For maps and more information, contact the BOR (208/678-0461) in Burley.



STERLING WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

Author: Dave Burrup

Site SE-20 — Map SE-20/SE-21

Highlights: Swainson's Hawk, Long-eared and Short-eared Owls

Major Habitats: Wetland, Farmland, Grassland

Location: Bingham Co., 4 miles east of Aberdeen

Spring: *** **Summer:** *** **Fall:** *** **Winter:** **

Sterling WMA is managed by IDFG and BOR. The WMA covers 3,300 acres; it is broken-up into 11 segments, forming three "blocks." Each segment has at least one public access and parking area. Because of the complexity of land ownership, a good map is essential.

DIRECTIONS:

The starting point for all three "blocks" is Aberdeen. To reach the Horsch block from Aberdeen, turn east onto Beach Road at ID 39 milepost 15.4. The block begins 2.8 miles east of Aberdeen; American Falls Reservoir is 4 miles east of Aberdeen. Loop roads to the north and south of Beach Road are open to the public, but are impassable when wet and are frequently blocked by irrigation equipment. Be aware that there are several private-land inholdings in this area.

The remainder of the WMA is accessed by Strang Road. From Aberdeen go north 3 miles on ID 39. Just past milepost 19, turn right (east) on Strang Road for 2 miles to the intersection with Midway Road (a.k.a. 2500 W). To the northeast of this intersection is the Orth-Plunkett-Thompson-Wells block, and to the south is the Harder-American Game-Vanderford-Johnson-Fingal-Funk block.

BIRDING:

There are three major habitats: wetland/Russian-olive thickets, cultivated farmland, and pasture (which comes in both wet and dry versions). The best birding strategy is simply to sample some of each.

WETLAND HABITAT

Wetland areas offer the most-diverse birding. Common nesting species include Northern Harrier, Sora, Virginia Rail, Short-eared Owl, Marsh Wren, Common Yellowthroat, Song Sparrow, and Red-winged and Yellow-headed Blackbirds. During migration 15 to 20 waterfowl species may be seen. Roosting Barn Owls can sometimes be found in cattail marshes. Extensive wetlands are found on the Orth, Plunkett, Thompson, Wells, American Game, Vanderford, and Johnson segments. The Johnson segment offers a handicapped-accessible observation blind and year-round open water.

FARMLAND AND PASTURE HABITAT

On farmlands and in both dry and irrigated pastures, look for summering Red-tailed and Swainson's Hawks, American Kestrels, Western Meadowlarks, and Brown-headed Cowbirds, and for resident Ring-necked Pheasants and Gray Partridge. During migration be sure to check the tree and shrub windbreaks on the Thompson and Wells segments for a wide assortment of songbirds.

Russian-olive thickets are used as nesting and roosting sites for Great Horned and Long-eared Owls, Black-billed Magpies, and Eastern Kingbirds. In winter, the patches are popular with European Starlings, Bohemian and Cedar Waxwings, and American Robins. American Tree Sparrows are commonly found in brush patches throughout the area in late fall and winter. All of this avian prey attracts Merlins, Prairie Falcons, Sharp-shinned Hawks, Northern Goshawks, and Northern Shrikes. In sagebrush patches look for Loggerhead Shrikes (summer) and Rough-legged Hawks (winter).

Farmland and grassland habitat is most abundant on the Fingal, Funk, Johnson, and Horsch segments.

OTHER:

To obtain a Sterling WMA brochure (which includes a nice map showing the different land ownerships), write or visit Area Manager, Sterling Wildlife Management Area, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, 1345 Barton Road, Pocatello, Idaho 83204-1819; or call 208/232-4703. If you forgot to get a brochure ahead of time, you might look for one at the information station 0.5 mile south on Midway Road from the Strang Road/Midway Road intersection.

Fuel and food are available in Aberdeen. Developed camping is available at Sportsmans Park, 3.5 miles east of Aberdeen. Lodging is available in Blackfoot or American Falls.

Much of the WMA is marshland with difficult walking-conditions; knee-high waterproof footwear is almost a must. From late spring to late summer hordes of mosquitoes are present. Expect lots of hunters during October and November.

SPORTSMANS PARK

Author: Dave Burrup

Site SE-21 — Map SE-20/SE-21

Highlights: Common Tern, Shorebirds

Major Habitats: Wetland

Location: Bingham Co., 3 miles east of Aberdeen

Spring: *** **Summer:** *** **Fall:** *** **Winter:** *

Sportsmans Park is a developed site with camping, boating, and picnic facilities, located on American Falls Reservoir's "Big Hole Bay." This area is often disturbed by boaters and fishermen, but it still yields annual sightings of over 150 species.

DIRECTIONS:

From Aberdeen follow ID 39 north about 1 mile. At milepost 17 turn right (southeast) on Experiment Station Road. After 0.2 mile turn left (east) on East Boat Dock Road (a.k.a. 1700 S) and follow it 2.5 miles to Sportsmans Park.

BIRDING:

The year's birding here begins in late March with the return of Common Loons and some twenty duck species. By early May, the large nesting colony of Ring-billed and California Gulls on nearby "Gull Island" is back in operation. Associated with this colony are Forster's, Caspian, and Common Terns. If Big Hole Bay is flooded, spring migration also brings various grebes, American White Pelicans, Double-crested Cormorants, and diving ducks. Migrating songbirds are found in park trees and brush along the shoreline.

Although shorebird spring migration is generally unimpressive here, vagrant Snowy Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, and Dunlin have been seen near Gull Island. Fall migration is much more spectacular, with up to 30 species attracted to mudflats exposed by the reservoir's drawdown. Drawdown usually begins in July, but it's typically August before extensive habitat is present. In July look for Least and Western Sandpipers. Baird's Sandpipers arrive in large flocks around the first week of August. Watch for Stilt Sandpipers mixed in with Lesser Yellowlegs during August and September. Marbled Godwits are common in July and August, while Black-bellied Plovers and American Golden-Plovers are uncommon in September and October. Great Blue Herons, Great and Snowy Egrets, and Black-crowned Night-Herons are also attracted to the mudflats. You may even find a vagrant Arctic Tern in August or September.

OTHER:

For maps and more information, contact BOR (208/226-2217) in American Falls. Lodging is available in American Falls and Blackfoot. Fuel and food are available in Aberdeen seven days a week. Developed camping can be had at Sportsmans Park.