

Birding Locations and Highlights

Birding is great all over Prudence Island due to the abundance of conservation land (about 85% of Prudence is preserved), but here are a few highlights:

South End: The entire south end of the Reserve is excellent for land birds, especially in spring and fall. Walk any of the roads, particularly Seal Rock Road, T-wharf Road, and Albro Farm Road for your best chance at migratory species and resident songbirds. Also at the south end you can find the Pine Barren habitat, which is your most likely place for Red-breasted Nuthatches and Prairie Warblers. Woodcock are present and displaying throughout the south end from March-May, beginning around sundown. The shoreline can produce many species of waterfowl particularly in the winter, and Oystercatchers can be seen in the spring and summer. If you turn right down Albro Farm Road from T-wharf Road, there is a large area with many dead snags – this is excellent in the spring and fall for falcons like Merlin and Kestrel. Osprey and Red-tailed Hawks are also present in this area. The fields near the Reserve headquarters attract Kestrel, Barn Swallow, Tree Swallow, Eastern Phoebe, and Eastern Bluebird just to name a few.

West Side: Head to the west side of the island towards Nag Marsh and Chase Way Beach. This area can produce great looks at any of the salt marsh species expected in our region – egrets, ibis, herons, sparrows, and shorebirds. From late spring through early fall, the shrubs and upper marsh are home to Eastern Kingbird, Eastern Phoebe, and Willow Flycatcher.

Potter Pond/Potter Cove: Abundant waterfowl in the winter months, especially Bufflehead, Red-breasted Merganser, and Common Goldeneye.

Forested Trails: There are several trails that run through the middle of the island, most connecting to one another making for a lovely hike. Depending on the time of year that you visit, you may see (or hear) species like Eastern Wood Peewee, Wood Thrush, Veery, Ovenbird, and any of the five species of woodpeckers present on the island. Spring and fall will produce a variety of songbirds from warblers to orioles to vireos. Eastern Screech Owl and Great-horned Owl have also been seen and/or heard along these trails.

North End: A wide variety of habitats from meadow to coastal scrub to salt marsh, the north end can produce a variety of birds. Fall and winter are excellent for sparrows and waterfowl but be sure to wear orange from November-January due to hunting season. Spring and summer (which can be very buggy with ticks, mosquitoes and greenhead flies so take precautions if hiking in this area and avoid high grass) produce lots of wading birds including the uncommonly seen Tri-colored Heron as well as the expected songbirds during migration and breeding season.