

## Flagstaff Birding Destinations

If you're looking for something with less walking that wouldn't take as much time, then **Frances Short Pond** is a great place to go. This is near downtown Flagstaff at Thorpe Park, and is a lovely short walk, and a great place to bring some scopes and chairs and sit for a while watching the birds that visit the water.

If you would like a scenic walk, then I recommend **Picture Canyon**. This is an area that has loop trails (a short loop and a long loop--the short loop usually takes about 4 hours for me when I'm birding it and is about 1.5 miles, with some slight uphill and downhill grades and one short section of about 3 switchbacks up a hill that are somewhat steep and include a rocky stair) that follow along the Rio de Flag on the East side of Flagstaff. You can find it on Google Maps as "Picture Canyon Natural and Cultural Preserve" and the trailhead shows up on El Paso Flagstaff Road--there is plenty of parking at the trailhead. It includes a short waterfall, a huge diversity of birds and habitat, and also historic petroglyphs carved into the rock.

The **Museum of Northern Arizona** is one of the top birding hot spots in Flagstaff, so I would highly recommend that the birders and non-birders field trip there together, and then the birders can tromp behind the museum where there are bird feeders and the Rio de Flag waterway. This is a marvelous spot for warblers, finches, hummingbirds, flycatchers, and our common woodland species like nuthatches, Steller's Jays, Mountain Chickadees, and it's also a good spot for some of the rarities around Flagstaff.

The **Arboretum** is also a great birding destination, due to the blooming native plants and the ponds, so take your time walking around and exploring there, and definitely bring your binoculars! (Watch the meadows and the wooded hillsides north and east of the Arboretum's ground for American Kestrels!)

- An alternate walk would be **Kachina Wetlands**. This takes 2-3 hours at an easygoing casual birding pace, but can take as much time as you want, of course, and the walking path is almost completely flat and depending on how you circle the ponds, can be anywhere from half a mile to a mile. It's located south of Flagstaff, about a 15-minute drive--take the I-17 south, use the Kachina Village Exit, turn right on Kachina Blvd and a quick right onto Tovar Trl, and then park on the northeast corner of Tovar Trail and Lohali Trail in the little wooded area. This area is more exposed, so definitely bring a hat, but it is an artificial wetland with beautiful views of Mt Humphrey and it attracts an amazing variety of waterfowl, shorebirds, swallows, and a myriad of other birds.