

TIPS ON TRIPS

Birding Takes Flight With Families

(NAPSA)—If yours is like a growing number of other families, you'll want your next vacation to be for the birds—literally.

Bird-watching has become a favorite pastime for vacationers across the country, with people of all ages picking up binoculars and turning their attention to the trees, shrubs or wherever else a nest might be found.

In fact, a recent report from the Outdoor Industry Association found that more than 23 million Americans ages 6 and older participated in wildlife viewing in just one year. Try these tips for planning a family birding trip:

Getting Started

Warm up to bird-watching by keeping an eye on birds around the neighborhood or the bird feeder in the backyard. From there, pick up a few inexpensive tools of the trade. They include some good maps; a notebook and pencil for jotting down field marks, sightings and habitat notes; a field guide; binoculars designed for bird-watching; a checklist and a camera to keep track of sightings.

Know Where To Go

Check out areas such as The Alleghenies, an outdoor recreation destination in south-central Pennsylvania that provides year-round bird-watching opportunities. The region is situated in the migratory path of species including warblers, vireos, thrushes and flycatchers, making for a 365-day birding experience. The area's wooded hills and deep valleys are also home to more than 250 species of birds—from bald eagles to great horned owls.



Family vacationers can enjoy world-class birding in The Alleghenies.

Get Involved

Birders can fly solo or flock together to have fun and learn from one another. Visitors to The Alleghenies can even join guided walks organized by a local birding club, such as Juniata Valley Audubon Society, Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society or State College Bird Club.

Learn More

To learn more about birding, visit www.thealleghenies.com. The site provides detailed descriptions of birding areas, as well as useful interactive search tools to uncover hot spots by region and bird species.

There's also an Alleghenies birding brochure, which contains a Life Wish List designating the species that are located at each bird-watching destination. To request a free copy, call (800) 458-3433. The area is within a relatively easy driving distance from major airports and cities such as Akron, Baltimore, Harrisburg, Lancaster, New York City, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Washington, D.C.