



Flock to These Bird-Centric Destinations in the New Year

January 5 Is National Bird Day ... and Here's Where You Can Find Some Feathered Friends

(January 3, 2020) – We acknowledge that it's early in the new year and most folks probably aren't even back at their desks yet.

But you know what they say about the early bird getting the worm? In case you ARE back to work this week, we want to throw some fun facts in your direction and perhaps plant some (bird) seeds for future stories.

First fun fact: Sunday, January 5 is **National Bird Day**.

Second fun fact: MBPR loves taking smaller destinations under our wing and helping to share their stories.

Third fun fact: We represent destinations that are home to interesting (and often rare) bird species, and there are interactive ways for visitors to spend time with these fine feathered friends.

What this all means is that today we're using National Bird Day as our excuse to talk to you about these places, all of which would make a great story any time of the year.

Take a gander below to learn more ... (Yes! It's a goose pun to usher in the new year!)

Great Smoky Mountains, Tennessee

When you think of [Dollywood](#), you think of roller coasters, delicious food, great entertainment and everyone's favorite songstress, right? Do you think "bird sanctuary"? If not, it's time for a little education ... which is exactly what [Eagle Mountain Sanctuary](#) is all about. Through a unique partnership with Dollywood and Dolly Parton herself, the [American Eagle Foundation](#) is headquartered right here at the park. **Since 1991 they've offered a sanctuary to the largest gathering of non-releasable bald eagles in the world.** Today there are between 16 and 20 birds in the sanctuary, and they come here because they've had injuries or other circumstances that prevent them from returning to the wild. In addition to getting a close look at these magnificent birds in the sanctuary, which is within the theme park's grounds, as part of their park admission guests can also enjoy a free-flying birds of prey show in the [Wings of America Theater](#). The 45-minute show, which is offered several times a day during the park's high season, is a way to educate millions of people about the plight of eagles and other birds.

Fort Delaware State Park, Delaware

Situated on the southern half of Pea Patch Island near aptly named Delaware City, Delaware, (part of [Greater Wilmington & The Brandywine Valley](#)), [Fort Delaware](#) is a moated Civil War fort. On the opposite side, at the island's northern tip, **visitors can find the largest mixed rookery of herons and egrets anywhere on the East Coast.** The island is a 10-minute passenger ferry ride from Delaware City. Though there's not public access to the immediate nesting area, an observation platform

provides a great view of the birds' comings and goings. It makes perfect sense that Delaware City is home to the [American Birding Association](#), because this region is an important stop on many migratory pathways, making the state a spectacular destination for birders and wildlife lovers.

Louisiana's Cajun Bayou, Louisiana

More popularly referred to as "[Louisiana's Cajun Bayou](#)," Lafourche Parish, which is located about 45 minutes from New Orleans, is a birdwatcher's paradise. Thousands of migratory birds pass through each spring and fall as they traverse the Gulf Coast Louisiana Flyway. Believe it or not, **there are nearly 500 bird species in Louisiana, and almost all of them can be spotted along the Gulf Coast.** Most guests will easily catch glimpses of egrets, herons, spoonbills, ducks, and a variety of songbirds. And best of all, coastal Louisiana is a top population center for bald eagles, so it's very likely you'll spot our national symbol here at home in the Bayou. Some of the best ways to see these feathered friends are on swamp tours, at the [Leeville Fishing Pier](#) or on the boardwalk at the [Wetlands Acadian Cultural Center](#).

Terrebonne Parish, Louisiana

This region along Louisiana's coast is a bird-lover's haven, offering plenty of opportunities for birdwatchers all year long. The region around the town of [Houma](#) is a popular nesting area for bald eagles, and the best ways to see them are through [Cajun Man's Swamp Tours](#) or Adventures' Eagle Photography Tours. But perhaps even more interesting is **a rare species of bird called the "limpkin."** A pair of these brown shorebirds with long beaks has been wintering in Houma for the past few years, perhaps because their favorite food is the apple snail, an invasive species that has been creating havoc along the waterways in this area and endangering inshore fish species. The limpkins have found Mother Nature's "all-you-can-eat" buffet here in the bayous, and fingers are crossed that they'll return for their fourth annual tour this month – not only because they're beautiful but also because they rid the bayous of those pesky snails.

Anderson, South Carolina

South Carolinians love the happy chirping of *Thryothorus ludovicianus*, the "Carolina wren," which is described by ornithologists as a "small but chunky" songbird that has a rusty underside, white eye stripe and upright tail. The species is very much at home in urban areas, where they're likely to build a nest in a hanging plant and communicate with their peers with a loud call that sounds like "tea-kettle, tea-kettle, tea-kettle." No matter what the weather and regardless of the time of year, it's always possible for birdwatchers to spot Carolina wrens throughout the town of [Anderson](#). That's because **artist Zan Wells created a flock of bronze statues** that appear up and down Main Street. Through a privately funded program aimed at highlighting public art and good works that benefit Anderson, there are now 24 statues that provide a "bird's eye" view of sites around downtown. Visitors can pick up a brochure called "A Little Birdie Told Me" and follow the wrens all over town.

Lake Jocassee, South Carolina

Lake Jocassee is a pristine reservoir in the [Oconee](#) region of upstate South Carolina's mountains. Four mountain rivers and dozens of creeks empty into the lake, which is home to bald eagles and horned grebes. And though their species more typically winter along the coast, **about 150 loons opt to winter here in the lake.** The size of the reservoir makes it ideal for studying the birds' health and habits. Brooks and Kay Wade, who operate [Jocassee Lake Tours](#), began a [loon research program](#) as a winter activity four years ago and it's developed into an impressive experience. Each winter about 20 volunteers can join the Wades and scientists as they conduct their research; the

program sells out every year. (They welcome media guests, so let us know if you'd like to be on the list for next winter!)

Negril, Jamaica

Jamaica is home to a variety of interesting creatures, from crocodiles found in the Black River to mongooses found ... well, wherever they can track down a tasty treat. [Sunset at the Palms](#), an adults-only, all-inclusive resort on the western side of the island in Negril, "the Capital of Casual," is a haven for nature-lovers. Here guests stay in treehouse-style rooms within a lush jungle, where they can experience nature as easily as walking out their door. The resort offers a fascinating garden tour each week, but you don't need a guide to experience some of the island's most beautiful wildlife, including an array of sprightly hummingbirds. Several species are at home here at the resort, but **it's the colorful "doctor bird," a type of hummingbird found only in Jamaica and the country's official symbol**, which is perhaps most appreciated by guests.

Cooperstown, New York

We don't feel right talking about birds without mentioning our clients in Cooperstown, the home of the [National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum](#). All year long, visitors can celebrate the accomplishments of **three Major League birds** – Blue Jays (Toronto), Cardinals (St. Louis), and MBPR's favorite, Orioles (yay, Baltimore!). The museum also pays homage to a bird who's in a flock unto himself, the one-of-a-kind San Diego Chicken. One of the mascot's (huge) costumes is on display at the museum.

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