



HAPPY HAWK CABIN BIRD WATCHING GUIDE

493 CROW DR, MARSHALL, AR 72650

**BUFFALO NATIONAL RIVER
OZARK MOUNTAINS**

Nestled in the heart of the Ozark Mountains, the Buffalo National River region is home to over 200 bird species across four distinct habitat types.

The Buffalo National River corridor supports an extraordinary array of avian life, from majestic Bald Eagles soaring above limestone bluffs to tiny Ruby-throated Hummingbirds darting through wildflower meadows. Whether you're an experienced birder or just beginning your journey, the diverse habitats surrounding Happy Hawk Cabin offer endless opportunities for discovery and wonder.

From the misty river bottoms at dawn to the forested ridgetops at sunset, each habitat reveals its own cast of feathered residents. Listen for the haunting call of the Barred Owl at dusk, watch Great Blue Herons fish along Grinder's Ferry, or spot colorful warblers flitting through the spring canopy.

This guide introduces you to 50 remarkable species you may encounter during your stay. Use it to identify birds by sight and sound, learn their preferred habitats, and understand when to look for seasonal visitors versus year-round residents.

WELCOME

HABITAT TYPES



Discover four unique habitats teeming with birdlife

RIVER & STREAM HABITATS

The Buffalo National River and its tributaries create rich riparian zones where herons, kingfishers, and wood ducks thrive. These waterways provide essential feeding grounds, nesting sites, and migration corridors. Watch for Great Blue Herons stalking the shallows and Belted Kingfishers diving for fish near Grinder's Ferry.



FOREST & WOODLAND HABITATS

The Ozark forests surrounding Happy Hawk Cabin range from dense hardwood canopies to mixed pine-oak woodlands. These habitats support woodpeckers, warblers, thrushes, and owls. Listen for the flute-like song of the Wood Thrush at dawn and watch for Pileated Woodpeckers in mature timber stands.

BIRDWATCHING HOTSPOTS

01 GRINDER'S FERRY

GPS: 35.9546, -92.7374

Our home base! Excellent river access with Great Blue Herons, Belted Kingfishers, and Wood Ducks. Watch for Bald Eagles soaring above the bluffs, especially in winter months.

02 TYLER BEND

GPS: 36.0050, -92.7360

Visitor center area with diverse habitats. Forest trails yield Pileated Woodpeckers and Wood Thrushes. River overlooks perfect for spotting raptors and waterfowl year-round.

03 BUFFALO POINT

GPS: 36.0456, -92.6043

Bluff-top trails and river access. Summer Tanagers in oak forests, Cliff Swallows nesting on rock faces. Evening brings Chuck-will's-widow calls echoing through the valley.

RIVER BIRDS



Commonly spotted along the Buffalo National River

GREAT BLUE HERON

The largest heron in North America, standing up to 4 feet tall. Look for this majestic gray-blue wading bird along river edges and shallow waters near Grinder's Ferry. Year-round resident with slow, deliberate movements while hunting fish and frogs. Distinctive S-curved neck in flight.



GREEN HERON

A small, stocky heron with a greenish-black cap and rich chestnut neck. Found along wooded streams and quiet ponds throughout the Buffalo National River area from spring through fall. Known for using bait to catch fish—one of few tool-using birds. Listen for its sharp "skeow" call.

RIVER BIRDS



*Buffalo National River
Ozark Mountains*

BELTED KINGFISHER

Found along rivers and streams year-round, the Belted Kingfisher is unmistakable with its blue-gray plumage and distinctive shaggy crest. Listen for its loud, rattling call as it patrols waterways near Grinder's Ferry. Watch for it hovering over the Buffalo River before diving headfirst to catch fish.



WOOD DUCK

Often called America's most beautiful duck, the Wood Duck inhabits wooded streams throughout the Buffalo National River region year-round. Males display stunning iridescent plumage with a distinctive crested head pattern. Look for them in quiet backwaters and flooded timber areas along the river corridor.

RIVER BIRDS

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Common waterfowl of the Buffalo National River

MALLARD

Rivers and ponds • Year-round
The Mallard is one of the most recognizable ducks along the Buffalo National River. Males display a striking iridescent green head, yellow bill, and chestnut breast, while females wear mottled brown plumage for camouflage. These adaptable waterfowl can be spotted dabbling for aquatic plants and invertebrates in calm river pools and backwater areas near Grinder's Ferry.



SPOTTED SANDPIPER

River shores • Spring through Fall
Watch for this distinctive shorebird's constant tail-bobbing motion as it forages along rocky riverbanks. The Spotted Sandpiper earns its name from the bold dark spots covering its white breast during breeding season. These agile birds teeter along the water's edge, picking insects and small crustaceans from the shoreline throughout the Buffalo River corridor.

RIVER BIRDS



Birds commonly seen along the Buffalo National River

KILLDEER

Found in open areas near water throughout the year, the Killdeer is one of the most recognizable shorebirds along the Buffalo National River. Look for its distinctive two black breast bands and listen for its loud, namesake "kill-deer" call. These clever birds are famous for their broken-wing display to lure predators away from nests.



BALD EAGLE

The majestic Bald Eagle frequents the Buffalo National River corridor, especially during winter and spring months. Watch for these magnificent raptors soaring above the river cliffs or perched in tall sycamores. Adults display the iconic white head and tail with a massive 6-7 foot wingspan. Best viewing spots include Grinder's Ferry and Tyler Bend.

RAPTORS



Hawks of the Ozark Mountains

RED-TAILED HAWK

Open areas • Year-round
One of the most common hawks in North America, the Red-tailed Hawk is frequently spotted soaring over the open valleys and ridges near Happy Hawk Cabin. Look for their broad, rounded wings and distinctive rusty-red tail catching the sunlight. Their piercing "kee-eeee-arr" call echoes across the Ozark landscape.



BROAD-WINGED HAWK

Forests • Spring-Fall
This compact, crow-sized hawk prefers the dense forests of the Buffalo National River region. During fall migration, thousands gather in spectacular "kettles" riding thermal currents. Identify them by their broadly banded black and white tail and reddish-brown barred breast. Listen for their high-pitched whistle.

RAPTORS

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Masters of the Ozark skies

TURKEY VULTURE

Soaring overhead • Year-round
One of the most recognizable birds in the Buffalo River skies, the Turkey Vulture soars effortlessly on thermal currents with its distinctive V-shaped wing position. Look for its dark plumage, red featherless head, and silvery flight feathers visible from below. These essential scavengers help keep the ecosystem clean.



BLACK VULTURE

Soaring overhead • Year-round
Often seen alongside Turkey Vultures, the Black Vulture is distinguished by its shorter tail, gray wrinkled head, and white patches near the wingtips. They fly with quick, choppy wingbeats between glides and hold their wings flat when soaring. Watch for them circling over the Ozark ridges.

NIGHT BIRDS

11



Nocturnal hunters of the Ozark forests

BARRED OWL

Found in dense forests year-round, the Barred Owl is one of the most vocal owls in the Ozarks. Listen for its distinctive "who cooks for you, who cooks for you all" call echoing through the Buffalo River valley at dusk. This large owl has dark brown eyes and a rounded head without ear tufts. Best spotted near mature bottomland forests around Happy Hawk Cabin.



GREAT HORNED OWL

The Great Horned Owl is the most powerful owl in the region, found in various habitats year-round. Recognized by its prominent ear tufts and yellow eyes, this fierce predator hunts everything from rabbits to other owls. Listen for deep hooting calls "hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo" at dawn and dusk. Common near cliff habitats and forest edges throughout the Buffalo National River area.

NIGHT BIRDS

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Nocturnal species of the Buffalo National River

EASTERN SCREECH OWL

Habitat: Woodlands and forest edges

Season: Year-round resident

This small owl with distinctive ear tufts is a master of camouflage, blending perfectly with tree bark. Listen for its haunting trilling call echoing through the Ozark forests at dusk. Despite being common near Happy Hawk Cabin, they're rarely seen due to their excellent camouflage.



CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW

Habitat: Forest edges and open woods

Season: Spring through summer

This nocturnal bird is more often heard than seen, repeating its namesake "chuck-will's-widow" call throughout warm summer nights along the Buffalo River. Larger than its cousin the Whip-poor-will, it hunts moths and other insects in flight during darkness.

NIGHT BIRDS

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Listen for these distinctive voices of the Ozark woodlands

WHIP-POOR-WILL

Open woods • Spring-Summer

This elusive nocturnal bird is named for its distinctive, repetitive call that echoes through the Ozark forests at dusk and dawn. Listen for its namesake "whip-poor-will" song near forest edges and clearings around Happy Hawk Cabin. Rarely seen but often heard, this master of camouflage rests on the forest floor during daylight hours.



WOOD THRUSH

Mature forests • Spring-Summer

Widely considered to have one of the most beautiful songs of any North American bird, the Wood Thrush fills the Buffalo National River forests with its flute-like, ethereal melody. Look for its distinctive spotted breast and rusty-brown back in the shaded understory of mature deciduous forests near streams and ravines.

FOREST BIRDS



*Seen near Happy Hawk Cabin
Buffalo National River Region*

HERMIT THRUSH

Found in forests during winter months, the Hermit Thrush is a shy songbird with a beautifully spotted breast and distinctive rusty-colored tail. Listen for its ethereal, flute-like song echoing through the quiet Ozark woodlands. Often seen foraging on the forest floor among fallen leaves.



AMERICAN ROBIN

One of North America's most familiar birds, the American Robin thrives in various habitats year-round near Happy Hawk Cabin. Easily identified by its bright orange breast and cheerful song, robins are often seen hopping across lawns and forest clearings searching for earthworms and berries.

FOREST BIRDS



Wrens of the Ozark Woodlands

CAROLINA WREN

Found in forest understory and dense brush, the Carolina Wren is a year-round resident of the Ozark Mountains. This rusty-brown bird with a distinctive white eyebrow stripe delivers one of the loudest songs for its size—a ringing "teakettle, teakettle, teakettle" that echoes through Happy Hawk Cabin's woodlands. Look for them hopping along fallen logs and investigating brush piles.



HOUSE WREN

A small, energetic brown bird, the House Wren arrives in spring and stays through summer in thickets and woodland edges near the Buffalo National River. Despite its plain appearance, this tiny songster produces a remarkably bubbly, cascading song that fills the morning air. Watch for them actively hunting insects among dense vegetation and nesting in natural cavities.

FOREST BIRDS



*Forest Canopy Songbirds
of the Ozark Mountains*

RED-EYED VIREO

Found in the forest canopy from spring through summer, the Red-eyed Vireo is one of the most persistent singers in the Ozark woodlands. This olive-green bird with a distinctive white eyebrow stripe can sing thousands of songs per day. Listen for its repetitive, robin-like phrases echoing through the treetops near Happy Hawk Cabin.



BLUE-HEADED VIREO

A striking songbird of mixed forests, the Blue-headed Vireo visits the Buffalo National River region from spring through fall. Easily identified by its bold white "spectacles" around the eyes and blue-gray head, this vireo moves deliberately through branches hunting insects. Its sweet, whistled song adds melody to woodland walks.

FOREST BIRDS



*Seen near Happy Hawk Cabin
Buffalo National River, Arkansas*

WHITE-EYED VIREO

Found in dense thickets and tangled undergrowth throughout the Buffalo National River region from spring through summer. This secretive songbird is more often heard than seen, with its distinctive emphatic song. Look for the striking yellow spectacles around its pale white eyes and olive-green plumage. Often forages low in vegetation near Grinder's Ferry and wooded stream edges.



BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER

One of North America's smallest songbirds, this energetic bird flits through the treetops of Ozark forests from spring through summer. Watch for its distinctive long tail, which it constantly flicks from side to side. The blue-gray plumage and white eye ring make it identifiable even at a distance. Listen for its high-pitched, wheezy calls as it hunts tiny insects among the canopy near Tyler Bend and Lost Valley trails.

FOREST BIRDS



Year-round woodland residents near Happy Hawk Cabin

TUFTED TITMOUSE

This charming gray songbird with its distinctive pointed crest is a year-round resident of the Ozark woodlands around Happy Hawk Cabin. Listen for its clear, whistled "peter-peter-peter" call echoing through the forest. Tufted Titmice are curious and bold, often approaching feeders and investigating their surroundings with bright black eyes.



CAROLINA CHICKADEE

One of the most beloved birds of the Buffalo National River region, the Carolina Chickadee is easily recognized by its black cap and bib contrasting with white cheeks. These acrobatic little birds are year-round forest residents, often seen hanging upside down while foraging. Their cheerful "chick-a-dee-dee-dee" call is a constant companion on woodland trails.

COLORFUL BIRDS



Stunning blue species found near Happy Hawk Cabin

EASTERN BLUEBIRD

Open areas and meadows, year-round resident. This beloved songbird features a brilliant blue back and wings contrasting with a warm rusty-orange breast. Males are more vibrantly colored than females. Often seen perched on fence posts or nest boxes, scanning for insects. Their soft, melodious warble is a welcome sound across Happy Hawk Cabin's open fields.



INDIGO BUNTING

A summer jewel of the Ozarks, the male Indigo Bunting appears entirely brilliant blue in sunlight, though actually black with light refraction creating the color. Found along field edges and brushy areas from spring through fall. Listen for their energetic, paired-phrase song from exposed perches. Females are plain brown. Best spotted in early morning when males sing from the highest available perch.

COLORFUL BIRDS



*Seen near Happy Hawk Cabin
Buffalo National River*

SCARLET TANAGER

Forest canopy | Spring-
Summer

One of the most stunning birds in the Ozarks, the male Scarlet Tanager displays brilliant red plumage contrasted with jet-black wings and tail. Despite their vivid coloring, they can be surprisingly difficult to spot as they forage high in the forest canopy. Listen for their robin-like song with a distinctive burry quality.



SUMMER TANAGER

Oak forests | Spring-Summer

The Summer Tanager is the only completely red bird in North America. Males are a rosy-red throughout, while females display yellow-olive plumage. Common in the oak forests around Happy Hawk Cabin, they're known for catching bees and wasps in flight, beating them against branches before eating.

COLORFUL BIRDS



*Seen near Happy Hawk Cabin
Buffalo National River,
Arkansas*

NORTHERN CARDINAL

Found in various habitats throughout the Buffalo National River region year-round. The male is unmistakable with his brilliant red plumage and distinctive crest. Females are warm brown with reddish tinges. Listen for their loud, clear whistles echoing through the Ozark woodlands. Often seen at forest edges and near Happy Hawk Cabin feeders.



BLUE JAY

A bold and intelligent resident of Ozark woodlands year-round. Easily identified by striking blue plumage with white and black markings. Known for their loud "jay" calls that announce their presence throughout the forest. These clever birds cache acorns and are important for oak forest regeneration. Commonly spotted near Grinder's Ferry and throughout the cabin area.

COLORFUL BIRDS



Buffalo National River's most vibrant species

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH

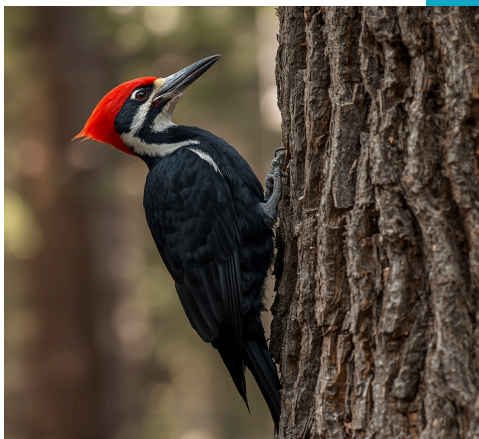
Habitat: Weedy fields, meadows, and open areas with thistle and sunflowers

Season: Year-round resident

Identification: Males display brilliant lemon-yellow plumage in summer with black cap and wings. Females are olive-yellow. Winter birds are duller brown-olive.

Behavior: Undulating flight pattern, often calling "per-chik-o-ree" in flight. Feeds primarily on seeds.

★ Seen near Happy Hawk Cabin



PILEATED WOODPECKER

Habitat: Mature deciduous and mixed forests with large dead trees

Season: Year-round resident

Identification: Crow-sized woodpecker with striking red crest, black body, and white stripes on face and neck. Both sexes have red crest; males have red mustache stripe.

Behavior: Creates large rectangular holes in trees. Loud, resonant drumming and distinctive "wuk-wuk-wuk" call echoes through forest.

★ Seen near Happy Hawk Cabin

WOODPECKERS



*Seen near Happy Hawk Cabin
Buffalo National River*

RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER

Habitat: Woodlands throughout the Buffalo River region
Season: Year-round resident
Despite its name, the red belly is often hidden. Look instead for the striking red cap and distinctive black-and-white "zebra" striped back. Listen for its rolling "churr" call echoing through the Ozark forests near Happy Hawk Cabin.



DOWNY WOODPECKER

Habitat: Various wooded habitats
Season: Year-round resident
The smallest woodpecker in North America, the Downy is easily identified by its compact size, short bill, and clean white back patch. Frequently visits feeders and is often seen hitching along tree branches in search of insects.

WOODPECKERS



*Buffalo National River region
Ozark Mountains, Arkansas*

HAIRY WOODPECKER

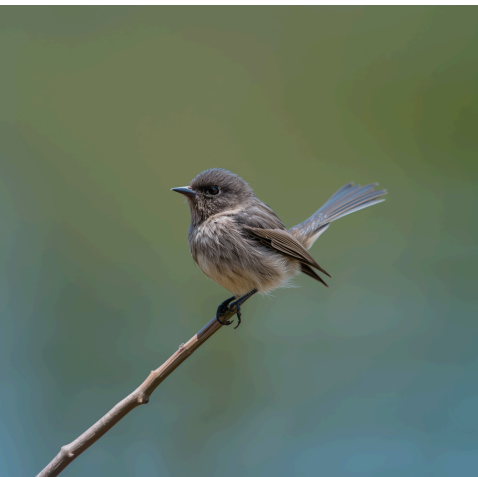
A year-round resident of the Buffalo National River forests, the Hairy Woodpecker is often confused with its smaller cousin, the Downy. Look for its notably longer bill and larger overall size. Listen for its sharp "peek" call and rapid drumming on dead trees. Frequently spotted along forest trails near Tyler Bend and Steel Creek. Seen near Happy Hawk Cabin



NORTHERN FLICKER

This distinctive woodpecker prefers open woods and forest edges throughout the Ozark Mountains. Unlike other woodpeckers, Flickers often feed on the ground, probing for ants. Watch for their undulating flight pattern revealing bright yellow wing flashes. Year-round residents, they're commonly seen in Boxley Valley and near Grinder's Ferry. Seen near Happy Hawk Cabin

FLYCATCHERS



*Seen near Happy Hawk Cabin
Buffalo National River*

EASTERN PHOEBE

Found near water and bridges year-round, the Eastern Phoebe is one of the easiest flycatchers to identify by its distinctive tail-bobbing behavior. This hardy bird often nests under cabin eaves and bridge overhangs. Listen for its namesake "fee-bee" call echoing along the Buffalo River. One of the first migrants to return in spring.



GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER

A striking flycatcher of the forest canopy, the Great Crested Flycatcher arrives in spring and stays through summer. Look for its lemon-yellow belly, rusty-red tail feathers, and raised crest. This cavity-nester is famous for incorporating shed snakeskins into its nest. Listen for its loud "wheep" calls ringing through the Ozark woodlands.

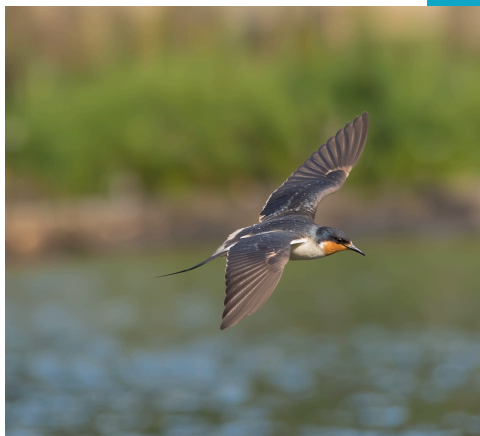
FLYCATCHERS & SWALLOWS



Aerial Insect Hunters of the Buffalo National River

EASTERN KINGBIRD

Open areas • Spring-Summer
 This bold flycatcher is easy to identify by its distinctive white tail band and dark gray-black upperparts. Known for its aggressive behavior, the Eastern Kingbird fearlessly defends its territory against much larger birds, including hawks and crows. Watch for them perched on fences and exposed branches near Grinder's Ferry.



BARN SWALLOW

Open areas • Spring-Summer
 The most widespread swallow in the world, the Barn Swallow is instantly recognizable by its deeply forked tail and graceful, acrobatic flight. With its rusty-orange underparts and steel-blue back, this elegant bird catches insects on the wing over the Buffalo River. Look for their mud nests under bridges and cabin eaves.

SWALLOWS

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*Seen near Happy Hawk Cabin
Buffalo National River,
Arkansas*

TREE SWALLOW

Found near water from spring through summer, the Tree Swallow is a graceful aerial acrobat with stunning iridescent blue-green plumage on its back and wings. Watch for them swooping low over the Buffalo River, catching insects in flight. They nest in tree cavities and readily use nest boxes placed near water.



PURPLE MARTIN

The largest swallow in North America, the Purple Martin is a welcome sight in open areas around Happy Hawk Cabin from spring through summer. Males display deep, dark purple plumage that appears almost black in low light. These social birds nest in colonies and are beloved for consuming large quantities of flying insects.

SPARROWS

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Winter sparrows commonly seen near Happy Hawk Cabin

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW

Look for this handsome sparrow in the forest understory during winter months. Distinguished by its bold white throat patch and striking black-and-white striped head pattern, with a small yellow spot between the eye and bill. Listen for its clear, whistled "Oh-sweet-Canada-Canada" song echoing through the woods near Happy Hawk Cabin.



DARK-EYED JUNCO

A common winter visitor to the Buffalo National River region, the Dark-eyed Junco is easily recognized by its slate-gray upperparts contrasting sharply with a clean white belly. Watch for the flash of white outer tail feathers as it flies. Often seen foraging on the ground in small flocks, these charming birds frequent feeders and forest edges throughout the Ozark Mountains.

SPARROWS



Common sparrows of the Buffalo River region

SONG SPARROW

Found in thickets and brushy areas year-round, the Song Sparrow is one of the most common and widespread sparrows in North America. Look for its heavily streaked breast with a distinctive central spot. Its melodious song, a series of notes followed by a trill, can be heard throughout the day near Happy Hawk Cabin.



FIELD SPARROW

A delicate sparrow of overgrown fields and meadows, the Field Sparrow is present year-round in the Buffalo River region. Identify it by its distinctive pink bill, plain face, and rusty cap. Its song is a series of accelerating whistles, like a bouncing ball. Best spotted in the open fields near Boxley Valley and Erbie.

BIRDWATCHING TIPS

**BEST TIME: EARLY MORNING
HOURS (6-10 AM) OFFER PEAK
BIRD ACTIVITY**

**EXPLORE HABITATS: MOVE
BETWEEN RIVER, FOREST,
CLIFF, AND FIELD AREAS**

**USE TECHNOLOGY: DOWNLOAD
THE MERLIN BIRD ID APP FOR
EASY IDENTIFICATION AND
EBIRD (TRACK SIGHTINGS)**

**BRING ESSENTIALS: PACK
BINOCULARS AND A RELIABLE
FIELD GUIDE**

**BE PATIENT: STAY QUIET, MOVE
SLOWLY, AND LET THE BIRDS
COME TO YOU**

BIRD SIGHTING CHECKLIST

- GREAT BLUE HERON
- GREEN HERON
- BELTED KINGFISHER
- WOOD DUCK
- MALLARD
- SPOTTED SANDPIPER
- KILLDEER
- BALD EAGLE
- RED-TAILED HAWK
- BROAD-WINGED HAWK
- TURKEY VULTURE
- BLACK VULTURE
- BARRED OWL
- GREAT HORNED OWL
- EASTERN SCREECH OWL
- CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW
- WHIP-POOR-WILL
- WOOD THRUSH
- HERMIT THRUSH
- AMERICAN ROBIN
- CAROLINA WREN
- HOUSE WREN
- RED-EYED VIREO
- BLUE-HEADED VIREO
- WHITE-EYED VIREO

At Happy Hawk Cabin, we believe that watching birds is really about watching yourself slow down, breathe, and reconnect with the natural world.

There is something profoundly healing about sitting quietly in nature, waiting for a flash of color or a distinctive call. At Happy Hawk Cabin, you'll discover that birdwatching is more than a hobby—it's a meditation.

The Ozark Mountains have a way of slowing time. As morning mist rises from the Buffalo River, you'll find yourself fully present, attuned to every rustle in the underbrush and every song echoing through the forest canopy.

Each bird sighting becomes a small gift—a moment of connection with creatures who have called these ancient hills home for millennia. The thrill of spotting a Pileated Woodpecker or hearing a Wood Thrush's flute-like song stays with you long after you leave.

We invite you to unplug, breathe deeply, and let the natural world reveal its wonders at its own pace. Whether you're a seasoned birder or picking up binoculars for the first time, the Buffalo National River region offers an experience that nourishes the soul.

May your time at Happy Hawk Cabin bring you peace, wonder, and memories of wings against an Ozark sky.

***THE JOY OF
BIRDWATCHING***

A BIRDPWATCHER'S PARADISE

HAPPY HAWK CABIN

493 CROW DR, MARSHALL, AR 72650

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