

OPEN ALL (or most) of the YEAR

Pig's Eye Regional Park, St. Paul, MN – <https://www.twincities.com/2017/10/24/st-paul-biggest-park-nobody-knows-pigs-eye-regional-daytons-bluff/>

This is the biggest park that no one knows about. It's not easy to find and the dirt parking lot is unmarked. Once you find the trail, it will take you over a bridge over Battle Creek and pass acres of tall prairie grass where you can see Pig's Eye Lake. The heron rookery sits on a far shore. In the spring it is wet and muddy and in the summer there are ticks. There is also unfettered wildlife from turkeys to coyote.

Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary - <https://www.nps.gov/miss/planyourvisit/ventosanctuary.htm>

A tiny sanctuary east of downtown St. Paul, while near the Mississippi, there is no access to the river due to the railroads that use the area. There are walking trails and nice views of the St. Paul skyline upriver. Nearby is Indian Mounds Regional Park, Battle Creek Regional Park and the Mississippi River Visitor Center.

University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, Chaska, MN <http://www.arboretum.umn.edu/>,

Rose gardens, perennial gardens, annuals, magnolia trees in the spring and fall color in the autumn, a Japanese garden and a Chinese garden. Lots to photograph.

Pioneer Village, Thief River Falls, MN - <https://visittf.com/location/peder-engelstad-pioneer-village/>
Open Memorial Day through Labor Day

Sax-Zim Bog, Meadowlands, MN, www.moumn.org/sax.zim This a favorite location for birders. In the winter see Northern Owls and backyard birds of the Northern variety.

Crex Meadows Wildlife Refuge, near Grantsburg, WI - <https://www.crexmeadows.org/>

A popular place for photographers, in the spring as the ice begins to break up you may see otters, in the late spring lupine can dominate the prairies and in the fall Sandhill cranes congregate. You could also see deer, wolves, red fox, golden eagles, pine siskin and sharp-tailed grouse. Crex Meadows also has a photo club and events year round.

Fish Lake Wildlife Area, near Grantsburg, WI <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/WildlifeAreas/fishlake.html>

Along with Crex Meadows, the Fish Lake Wildlife Area comprises the Glacial Lake Grantsburg Wildlife Management Complex. The southern part of this lake contains huge sedge marshes.

Kasota Prairie SNA (<https://www.exploreminnesota.com/things-to-do/3869/kasota-prairie-sna>) ,

Kasota, MN – lots of habitat for open-country birds like horned larks and upland sandpipers. In early spring there are pasque flowers and prairie violets and in the summer stargrass, lobelia and sunflowers.

Como Park Zoo & Conservatory – indoors or out, this is a great place to take photos of flora and fauna.
<http://www.comozooconservatory.org/>

Vince Shute Wildlife Sanctuary - www.americanbear.org, one of the best places to photograph wild black bear. Open May to September, Tuesday through Sunday. Photo workshops are sometimes available during the season

