Despite its small size, Delaware encompasses six well-defined ecological regions. The state is home to a diverse range of habitats, from coastal marshes and beaches to inland forests and streams. Wildlife enthusiasts will enjoy visiting Delaware's many parks and preserves, where you can spot a variety of birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. For more information: www.delawarebirdingtrail.org or call 502-793-9912.

Maine Birding Trail

And although the state has a smaller land area than the others included in this series, all of the rest of the New England states combined, with miles of wild coastline and vast tracts of wilderness offering plenty of room to roam. The state's birding trail is divided into 14 separate loops, showcasing the wide range of natural habitats here. Many visitors will be eager to explore the north woods, looking for creatures more typical in Canadian boreal zones. Here you can find hulking bald eagles, chickadees, colorful pine grosbeaks, northern cardinals, and black-capped chickadees. Other trail loops weave through hardwood forests, blueberry barrens, beaver ponds, and coastal marshes. Of course, prominent among Maine's main attractions are the offshore islands, and this trail includes multiple departure points for boat trips heading out to seek seabirds like terns, guillemots, and puffins. For more information: www.essexheritage.org/birding or contact the Essex National Heritage Area Birding Trail (802-747-7900).

Essex National Heritage Area Birding Trail, Massachusetts

Essex County, Massachusetts, is not a huge tract of land, but it encompasses some of the country's most renowned birding spots. inland forests and grasslands support a wide variety of nesting birds in summer, as well as long-distance migrants like brilliant scarlet tanagers and flashily black-and-rufous bobolinks. Nearby, the coastal regions come into their own during spring and fall migration seasons, and the riverfront at Newburyport is thronged with gulls and waterfowl during the colder months. While nearby Plum Island's dunes, fields, and marshes often play host to snowy owls, ghostly visitors from the Arctic. Rockport's shorefront offers incredible birding in winter. Little flocks of intricately patterned harlequin ducks hug the shoreline and seabirds like razorbills, kittiwakes, and gannets come in close to shore when the wind is right. For those who wish to pursue seabirds in their own element, this trail includes information on how to boat trips out to Stellwagen Bank, a marine sanctuary frequented by deep-water birds like shearwaters or storm-petrels. For more information: www.essexheritage.org/birding or contact the Essex National Heritage Commission (978-740-0444).

Connecticut River Birding Trail, New Hampshire And Vermont

The Connecticut River's upper stretch marks the meandering border between these two New England states, and it also links a series of more than 120 fine birding sites on the trail. Many migration concentrations are in beautiful fall colors, and a visit in spring or summer will give you a chance to glimpse such colorful songbirds as rose-breasted grosbeaks, tiger-striped Cape May warblers, and fiery scarlet tanagers. Many of these birds stay put for the winter, and a dozen species may be present simultaneously on the Niagara River near the falls. Most will be common species, such as boisterous herring gulls and dainty little Bonaparte's gulls, but there is usually a scattering of un-common birds like pale Iceland gulls or even mega-rarities like the pinkish Ross's gull from Siberia. After donning your parkas and gloves, you will also be rewarded with thousands of ducks, such as canvases, scap, redheads, goldeneyes, and buffleheads, as well as hooded mergansers, red-breasted mergansers, and harlequin ducks. For more information: www.buffalodaubud.org/publications/BuffaloAudubonNatureTourism.pdf or contact Buffalo Audubon Society (716-547-3228).

Rhode Island Coastal Birding Trail

Rhode Islanders have heard every cliche about their state's small size, but they know they can find big numbers of birds without venturing beyond their bor- der. Coastal Maine is a bit larger, but it is still easy for small groups of birders to tour the state in a day. At more than 100 miles long, and once briefly classified as one of the Great Lakes, Lake Champlain is an impressive body of water separating Vermont and New York. At more than 100 miles long, and once briefly classified as one of the Great Lakes, Lake Champlain is an impressive body of water separating Vermont and New York. At more than 100 miles long, and once briefly classified as one of the Great Lakes, Lake Champlain is an impressive body of water separating Vermont and New York. One of the first states to develop a statewide birding trail, Virginia set a model for others by dividing its natural riches into three distinct regions, each with its own loop. The coastal section has a southern flavor to its birdlife. Along the beaches and barrier islands, sock- black brown Wilson's plovers roam the sand dunes, shift-voiced red-tailed hawks glide over the salt marshes, and black Skimmers that would perch on a wooden fence in the woods. All are regular visitors. Great noisy flights of tundras swirls furnish a major annual spectacle in late fall and early spring as they follow the river to and from wintering grounds on Chesapeake Bay. For more information: http://web1.audubon.org/trailMaps or contact Audubon Pennsylvania (717-213-6880).

Virginia Birding And Wildlife Trail

One of the first states to develop a statewide birding trail, Virginia set a model for others by dividing its natural riches into three distinct regions, each with its own loop. The coastal section has a southern flavor to its birdlife. Along the beaches and barrier islands, sock-black brown Wilson’s plovers roam the sand dunes, shift-voiced red-tailed hawks glide over the salt marshes, and black Skimmers that would perch on a wooden fence in the woods. All are regular visitors. Great noisy flights of tundras swirls furnish a major annual spectacle in late fall and early spring as they follow the river to and from wintering grounds on Chesapeake Bay. For more information: http://web1.audubon.org/trailMaps or contact Audubon Pennsylvania (717-213-6880).