

This DRIVING TOUR OF THE SAX-ZIM BOG is provided as a convenience to help you as you visit the Bog. The driving directions, road names and numbers, and the distance values have been extensively reviewed and are believed to be accurate. The entire route is approximately 73 miles. Enjoy your tour of the Bog!

****REMINDER:** Great Gray Owls, grouse and mammals are always more active at dawn and dusk.

Section A - this section is approximately 2.4 miles.

1. Starting from US 53, approximately 0.2 miles north of mile marker 33 (this is approximately 6 miles south of Cotton, MN), turn west on **Lake Nichols Road** (CR232). Watch for northern owls, shrikes, and Canada Jays in the spruce bog along this road. You also may want to stop and listen for Boreal Chickadees and Black-backed Woodpeckers along this bog stretch, but pull off on the shoulder as the road can be semi-busy. Continue 2.4 miles to the "T" junction and turn right (north, then west).

Section B - this section is approximately 4.2 miles.

2. After another 1.2 miles you will reach the **public access to Nichols Lake** on the left. If there is open water, check for lingering waterfowl. The road continues another 3 miles west through good bog habitat popular with Canada Jays, Great Gray Owls, winter finches and other bog specialties.

Section C - this section is approximately 2.0 miles.

3. Turn left (south) on **Highway 7** and continue approximately 2 miles to the intersection with CR133. Watch for Great Gray Owls and other raptors on the power poles, but be very careful if you slow down or stop on this relatively busy road.

Section D - this section is approximately 4.0 miles.

4. Turn right (west) on CR133 and drive for 2.9 miles, watching for owls and other raptors (again this is a busy road, make sure to check your rearview mirror before slowing or stopping, and pull well off the road if you stop). Turn right (north) on **Blue Spruce Road** (CR211) and continue 0.25 miles to the **Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk** at the Warren Nelson Memorial Bog. There is a small pullout near the sign where the 900-foot boardwalk begins. Walk this boardwalk and keep an eye out for Black-backed Woodpecker, American Three-toed Woodpecker (rare), Canada Jays, crossbills, Snowshoe Hares. Continue 0.75 miles to the **Morse's Feeders** at the intersection of Blue Spruce Road (CR211) and Swenson Road (CR155/CR740). These feeders are popular with redpolls, Pine Grosbeaks, Evening Grosbeaks (occasionally), nuthatches, woodpeckers (Downy and Hairy), and there are often Ruffed Grouse in the area as well. On the west side of Blue Spruce Road look for the **Warren Nelson Memorial Bog** and the home of the future (spring 2018) Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk.

Section E - this section is approximately 3.1 miles.

5. Turn around and drive south from the Morse feeders back to CR133 and turn right (west). After about 2 miles turn right (north) on Little Whiteface Road (CR5965). The Abramson's Feeders are located 0.2 miles north on Little Whiteface Road and are worth checking as well. South of this intersection, CR47 heads south and west adjacent to some excellent bog habitat and is worth checking for wintering owls and Ruffed Grouse if time allows later in the day.

Section F - this section is approximately 4.0 miles.

6. Turn around and return to CR133 turning right (west). Driving 1 mile on CR133 will bring you to **CR229** (for the first 0.2 miles, then continue straight on CR29). Turn right (north) at

the Jehovah's Witnesses church and head north 2.7 miles to **Correction Line Road** (CR202). This route passes through open fields, worth checking for Rough-legged Hawks, Snow Buntings, Black-billed Magpies and rarely Snowy Owls. Sharp-tailed Grouse occur in this area as well, and can often be spotted at dawn or dusk perched in bare trees. Also check for **Sharp-tailed Grouse below the feeder** at the last house on the right, 0.6 miles before Correction Line Road (address is 8110 Hwy 29). Turn left (west) on Correction Line Road (CR202) at the "T" and continue a short distance to Owl Avenue (also CR202), where you will turn right (north).

Section G - this section is approximately 2.4 miles.

7. For the next 2 miles on **Owl Avenue** (CR202) you will pass through good spruce bog habitat. Watch for owls, Canada Jays, Boreal Chickadees, White-winged Crossbills and woodpeckers. After these 2 miles you will reach the intersection with Overton Road (CR980), and another 0.4 miles north of this intersection (where Owl Avenue veers to the right) you will find the *Friends of Sax-Zim Bog Welcome Center* on the left.

Welcome Center Section - this section is approximately 0.0 miles.

8. At the *Welcome Center* you will find a variety of feeders popular with finches, jays, woodpeckers, nuthatches and other winter songbirds (the Center is open daily from 10am until 3pm mid December through mid March, but you can view the bird sighting information 24/7). The Center itself is a great place to warm up, buy souvenirs, get up to date bird sightings, and meet other birders and photographers, and there are hiking/snowshoe trails as well as primitive restroom facilities.

Section H - this section is approximately 1.7 miles.

9. Once you have warmed up, head north again on **Owl Avenue** (CR202) 1.7 miles to Arkola Road (CR52). This stretch can be excellent for wintering Great Gray and Northern Hawk Owls, as well as Canada Jays and other bog species.

Section I - this section is approximately 6.4 miles.

10. Turn right (east) on **Arkola Road** (CR52). The road passes through excellent bog habitat for the next 1.5 miles and you should watch for owls, finches, Canada Jays, and other typical bog species. This is a good stretch to get out and pishh or squeak for Boreal Chickadee (year-round) and White-winged Crossbills (some years). Arkola Road continues east through agricultural land, and the next few miles can be good for Rough-legged Hawks, Sharp-tailed Grouse, and rarely Snowy Owls. After a total of 5.4 miles on Arkola Road you will reach the intersection of Arkola Road (CR52) and Highway 7, where you should turn right (south) and proceed 1 mile to Kelsey Whiteface Road (CR745).

Section J - this section is approximately 0.4 miles.

11. Turn left (east) on **Kelsey Whiteface Road** (CR745) and proceed 0.4 miles to **Loretta's Feeders** on the right. Here you can park and walk along a short trail lined with a variety of feeding stations, popular with chickadees, nuthatches, redpolls, jays, grosbeaks and woodpeckers. Keep an eye out for Black-billed Magpies and Ermine (rare) at one of the rib cages.

Section K - this section is approximately 2.5 miles.

12. After you have stretched your legs, continue another 0.5 miles east to Peary Road (CR755) and turn left (north). After about 0.5 miles turn right (east) on **Finn Road** (CR563) and continue 0.5 miles to **Larry's Feeders**, which can be good for Pine Grosbeaks. After visiting this feeder station, carefully turn around and return to Peary Road (CR755). Turn right (north) on Peary Road and continue for 0.5 miles to Arkola Road (CR52). The *Friends*

of Sax-Zim Bog Yellow-bellied Bog is on the left (west) of Peary Road in this section. Feel free to explore this area on foot (or snowshoe) and check for boreal specialties including Snowshoe Hare.

Section L - this section is approximately 9 miles (18.6 miles with the Cotton option).

13. From this intersection, if you turn right (east) it is a quick 4.7 mile drive east to the town of Cotton where you can find food (**The Wilbert Cafe**) and gas. If you are not ready for a break, you can turn left (west) and proceed 1 mile (or from Cotton, 5.7 miles) back to the intersection of Arkola Road and **Highway 7**. Turn right (north) and proceed north 8 miles to Stone Lake Road (CR319), watching for raptors (Rough-legged Hawks and rarely Snowy Owls) in the open country, Great Gray and Northern Hawk Owls in the spruce bog habitat, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Snow Buntings, Northern Shrikes, and Moose are possibilities. Remember to watch for traffic on this birdy, but busy stretch of road!

Section M - this section is approximately 7.0 miles.

14. Turn right (east) on **Stone Lake Road** (CR319) and watch for owls and other raptors, Northern Shrikes, and waterfowl if there is open water at the inlet to Stone Lake itself. Though this is a dead end road, you can turn around at the Public Landing (where there is a seasonal outhouse). Retrace your route back to Highway 7 and turn right (north) and proceed another 1.5 miles to Zim Road (CR27) where you should turn left (west).

Section N - this section is approximately 3.8 miles.

15. Proceed 1.2 miles along Zim Road to **Admiral Road** (CR788) and turn left (south). After you pass a gravel pit you will enter excellent spruce bog habitat, popular with owls, Canada Jays, Moose (rarely), and other boreal species. At 2.6 miles south of Zim Road you will reach the famous **Admiral Road feeders**. At one time this was perhaps THE best place in the country to see Boreal Chickadees, but they have been less regular in recent years. This feeding station can be popular with finches, woodpeckers, nuthatches, redpolls and Canada Jays). Marten and Fisher and Great Gray Owl are also possible here. Boreal Chickadees are especially fond of peanut butter, and may appear soon after this is smeared on the feeder frame and perches.

Section O - this section is approximately 10.4 miles.

16. From the feeders continue south another 3.4 miles to Kolu Road (CR207) and turn right (west). Proceed 1 mile to **McDavitt Road** (CR213) and turn right (north). After about 2 miles you will enter excellent spruce bog habitat (**the "Magic Mile"**), popular with Great Gray Owls, Black-backed Woodpeckers, Canada Jays and other boreal species. There are logging trails heading west and east from McDavitt road at the south end of this stretch of bog, and another heading west located 2.7 miles north of Kolu Rd. These are worth exploring on foot or snowshoe if you don't find any owls along the road itself. Approximately 4 miles north of Kolu Rd check the **McDavitt Road feeders** at the tiny brown cabin on the right (east) side of the road. Note that McDavitt Road transitions from CR213 to CR83 about 0.7 miles before reaching Zim Road (CR27) on the north end of this section.

Section P - this section is approximately 9.5 miles.

17. Another worthwhile side trip if time allows (especially for Evening Grosbeaks): from the north end of McDavitt Road (CR83), turn left (west) and drive 9 miles to CR444 (1 mile west of Hwy 5). Turn right (north) on CR444 and drive 0.5 miles to **Mary Lou's Feeders**, the first house on the right. Please park in her driveway by the garage with the "Lou's Feeders" sign. Don't park on the road! You are welcome to enter her yard to view the

feeders, but make sure not to point any optics in the direction of the house across the street. Mary Lou has graciously provided birders a porta-potty by the garage, and a photo blind on the north side of her house. Large flocks of Evening Grosbeaks are at the feeders mainly in the morning (until 11am or so), but the feeders are also good for Pine Grosbeaks, Common Redpolls, Pine Siskins (some years), Blue Jays.

Closing Section

18. Many birders and photographers finish their day by slowly driving through the good bog habitat along **Admiral and McDavitt Roads** (or along Highway 7 to the east, or Lake Nichols Road). Great Gray Owls feed most actively at dawn and dusk, and this can be a good time for spotting other wildlife as well.

Thank you for taking the Winter Driving Tour of the Sax-Zim Bog. Please contact the Friends of Sax-Zim Bog with any corrections, suggestions, or comments.

www.saxzim.org

info@saxzim.org

218-341-3350 for Sparky, Executive Director and “Answerer-of-Questions.”

FOSZB Welcome Center address for GPS navigation:

8793 Owl Avenue, Toivola, MN 55765

TOWING & AUTOMOBILE ASSISTANCE

Mrs. Mac's Towing (Meadowlands, MN)

218-393-7377

Not affiliated with Friends of Sax-Zim Bog

FOSZB BIRDER/PHOTOGRAPHER ETIQUETTE SUGGESTIONS

We all want to have a pleasant experience visiting the Bog. The majority of the Sax-Zim Bog is public land (County, State, etc) with many private lands as well. Everyone must take responsibility for their own behavior. Much of this is just common sense and common courtesy.

BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR

- Watch your rear view mirror when driving the roads. Please pull over so others going faster can safely pass.
- When you do stop to observe or photograph wildlife, please pull over to the side of the road (But be careful in winter that you don't pull over too far and get stuck in the ditch!)
- Do not pull over and park across from another parked vehicle. The space between the two cars is usually too narrow for other traffic to get through at normal speeds.
- Avoid pointing binoculars, scopes, and cameras at any dwelling. How would you like it if you looked out your picture window in the morning and saw folks staring at you?
- Private property is private property. Do not step on any land unless you know it is public land.

BE A FRIEND OF WILDLIFE

- Use common sense to not unduly disturb wildlife.
- Winter is a tough time for all critters, so avoid interrupting their survival strategies. All wildlife

needs food (calories) and rest. Don't repeatedly disturb a critter as it tries to hunt and get calories; don't throw things at a critter so it looks at you or flies; do not tease owls with fur on a string or a mouse in a cage (the owl spends energy with no caloric reward); and avoid disturbing roosting nocturnal species while they are sleeping.

- Contribute bird seed, peanut butter, and suet to the public feeder on Admiral Road (this is YOUR feeder...nobody manages this feeding station).
- Speeding after fleeing wildlife in your car is a bad idea. The critter is expending calories by running at top speed.

BE KIND AND COURTEOUS

- Respect other visitors and locals.
- If someone is already watching/photographing an owl or other wildlife, stay back...stay behind them and remain quiet. They were there first. Or ask if you may join them.
- Keep voices low when a group is watching/photographing a critter.
- Don't walk in front of those watching/photographing a bird or mammal.

Let's all use common sense and common courtesy and have a good time out there! The Sax-Zim Bog is a wonderful place full of amazing "bogdiversity" that is ours to discover and enjoy.