

## Beech Mountain

Beech Mountain is famous for its ski slopes and an abundance of rental houses, but it is also a fantastic – though seldom explored – spot for bird watching. Despite the number of houses and the maze of roads covering the mountain, the trail network is extensive, and it feels much more remote than it is. Towering at 5506 feet above sea level, the change in elevation gives birders access to a wide variety of habitats that are great for a wide variety of breeding warblers and other songbirds in the spring and have the potential for fantastic mixed flocks of migrants in the fall. Ravens are common at the top of the mountain.

### Species to keep an eye out for:

While there is no such thing as a good spot to see Black-billed Cuckoos, there is a population of them on Beech Mountain.

In September you can ride the ski lift to the very top of the mountain, and then sit on the deck of the 5506' bar and enjoy a local beer while watching for kettles of migrating hawks! Check the Beech Mountain Ski Resort webpage to see what days the lift is operating:

<https://www.beechmountainresort.com/summer/scenic-lift-rides/>

You can also park at Emerald Outback and walk about half a mile up the road to the deck as well.

There are quite a few great trails for bird watching on Beech Mountain. You can view a map of all the trails and their descriptions here:

<https://beechrecreation.recdesk.com/RecDeskPortal/Portals/268/2020%20Beech%20trail%20map.pdf>

eBird Hotspots:

[Buckeye Recreation Center](#)

[Lake Coffey & Trails](#)

### Habitats:

Mixed Hardwood Forest, Beech Forest, Meadow, Lake, Mountain Stream

**Access:** open year-round, but trails are sometimes closed or inaccessible in the winter due to snow and ice. The road up Beech Mountain is very steep, make sure to downshift on your way down the mountain!

**Parking:** There is parking available at each of the trailheads, but some of the parking areas are small and unpaved.

**Drinking water:** There is a water fountain at the Buckeye Recreation Center, but not at any other trailheads.

**Restrooms:** Only at the Buckeye Recreation Center

**Food:** There are several restaurants on Beech Mountain, so you could easily do a trail in the morning, have lunch, and then hike another trail in the afternoon and have a lovely day!

**Accessibility:** Buckeye Recreation Center is handicap accessible, the trails are not

### **Special Considerations**

**Hunting:** not allowed

**Need for boots/waterproof footwear:** The trails vary in difficulty, but none are particularly strenuous. Good hiking boots are recommended for all of them. If it has recently rained all the trails can become very muddy.

**Other:** Several of the trails at the top of the mountain are open to mountain bikers as well, so be aware of potential bike traffic.

### **Directions:**

Here is the Google Maps directions to Buckeye Recreation Center:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Buckeye+Recreation+Center/@36.2200913,-81.9073878,597m/data=!3m2!1e3!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x88508cf6c6430c95:0x25219b996d922497!8m2!3d36.2200913!4d-81.9048129!16s%2Fg%2F1hjhdqwyh?entry=ttu>