

## Stone Mountain State Park

**Location:** 3042 Frank Pkwy, Roaring Gap, NC 28668. (36.381946, -81.024159.)

**Species of Interest:** The park attracts a wide variety of woodland breeders and, during migration, the vast tracts of wooded land can attract almost any bird including shorebirds along the creeks and ponds.

### Summer

|                     |                              |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Great Blue Heron    | Red-bellied Woodpecker       |
| Wood Duck           | Acadian Flycatcher           |
| Red-shouldered Hawk | Blue-headed Vireo            |
| Red-tailed Hawk     | White-breasted Nuthatch      |
| Wild Turkey         | Blue-gray gnatcatcher        |
| Barred Owl          | Black-and White Warbler      |
| Eastern Screech-owl | Black-throated Green Warbler |
| Great Horned Owl    | Kentucky Warbler             |
| Northern Flicker    | Worm-eating Warbler          |
| Downy Woodpecker    | Louisiana Waterthrush        |
| Hairy Woodpecker    | Scarlet Tanager              |
| Pileated Woodpecker |                              |

### Winter

|                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Eastern Phoebe          | Golden-crowned Kinglet |
| Brown Creeper           | Ruby-crowned Kinglet   |
| White-breasted Nuthatch | Hermit Thrush          |
| Winter Wren             | Cedar Waxwing          |

**eBird bar chart:** <https://ebird.org/barchart?r=L358717&yr=all&m=>

**Habitats:** River Floodplain, Wetland, Pond, Wooded Stream, Deciduous Forest, Mixed Forest

**Access and Parking:** See the main park map at <https://files.nc.gov/ncparks/maps-and-brochures/stone-mountain-park-map.pdf> for an excellent overview of the park facilities.

**Parking:** Hundreds of spaces in regular parking lots and along the main road, most paved but some gravel

**Drinking water:** available at visitor center and campgrounds, and picnic areas

**Restrooms:** Open at 7AM usually until dusk, every day, all year

**Accessibility:** The park has many handicapped facilities including limited vehicle access to the Hutchinson homestead, handicapped parking in most paved lots, and ramps to the visitor center. Most of the trails are not paved and would be difficult to access in a wheelchair.

## **Site Description:**

**Property ownership:** North Carolina State park

**Trails:** dozens of miles of trails accessible from the park, many of them inside the park itself, connect to the Mountains to Sea Trail and the Blue Ridge Parkway system of trails to make for almost unlimited hiking opportunities

**Trail surface and elevation gain:** dirt/gravel trails along the river floodplain can be quite level, easy walking, but there are also trails that ascend up to the Blue Ridge with thousands of feet of elevation gain; the Stone Mountain trail Loop which goes across the top of the Bare Rock outcrops and through the Hutchinson homestead has probably a thousand feet of elevation gain

**Likely spots for species of interest:** the riverside/floodplain habitats along the main road attract most of the species seen in the park; weedy fields and pools in the floodplain near the back entrance are particularly good for wintering sparrows; Louisiana Waterthrushes can be found on the Widows Creek Trail which is also excellent for migrating landbirds; boulder fields along the base of the stone cliff at the Hutchinson homestead are particularly good for wintering Winter Wrens.

## **Special Considerations**

**Hunting:** not allowed

**Need for boots/waterproof footwear:** trails may be muddy or wet during wet weather, requiring boots at those times; hiking boots advisable on the steep, rocky trails

**Other:** moderate crowding on weekends to almost empty during the week; summer and fall weekends can be more crowded with hikers and school groups

**Directions** From Boone take US 421 South into Wilkes County, 27.6 miles to NC-16, turn left and go 4.3 miles, to Pleasant Home Church Road, turn right and go 1.3 miles to Mountain Valley Church Road, turn left and go 3.2 miles to NC-18, turn right and go 1.3 miles to Yellow Banks Road, turn left and go 4.6 miles to Traphill Road, turn left and go 9.1 miles to John P. Frank Parkway 1.3 miles to the park entrance. GPS coordinates 36.381946, -81.024159. This drive takes slightly longer than an hour.