

and its stream connecting to the river attract waterfowl and herons. A nearby branch of the lake circuit path leads south through immature deciduous woods and meadows following the river. This south branch passes a bridge, built in 1919, along the former South Entrance Road (with busy US 29 well within view and hearing). The old bridge offers views up and down the river. Other branches from the circuit path are also worth investigating.

Amenities: A few benches. There are several restaurants as well as a hotel along the west side waterfront.

Handicapped Access: Access to the Lakefront promenade at the north end of the Clyde's Restaurant building avoids the main steps from the parking area. As of this writing, handicapped parking spots can be found near this access to the promenade on the lower level of a parking deck. Beyond the Lakefront, the lake circuit path is completely paved and generally level except for a slope at the north end of the Lakefront. (Please note: Ramps near the main steps from the parking lot are not intended for handicapped access. The ramp along one side of the main steps is designated for bicycles and is too steep for wheelchairs and motorized scooters. A separate zigzagging ramp with handrails leads up from the Lakefront to provide access to portable toilets and the top level of the plaza fountain (it ends at the bottom of the main steps and does not connect to the parking lot level). In short, ramps around the stairs cannot be used for handicapped access to the lake, and one must go to the north end of the Clyde's building for access to the Lakefront and the path.) The paved path on the west side offers ample opportunity to view the lake, although reaching the path may be challenging as no parking is adjacent to the path; generally it is necessary to navigate a ramp.

Special Attractions: A linear Fitness Circuit Trail is adjacent to the path along the stream from Wilde Lake on the northwest side. A private company operates a paddleboat concession from the Lakefront dock seasonally. Fishing is allowed with a valid license. A dock and pier on the west side Lakefront provide viewing areas for the main part of the lake. The green-roofed Lakefront Pavilion is a useful viewing spot during inclement weather.

Compiler: Clayton Koonce and Joanne Solem.

This material is a digest taken from the revised version of *Birding Howard County, Maryland* by Joanne K. Solem. More than 40 sites are available at the above website.

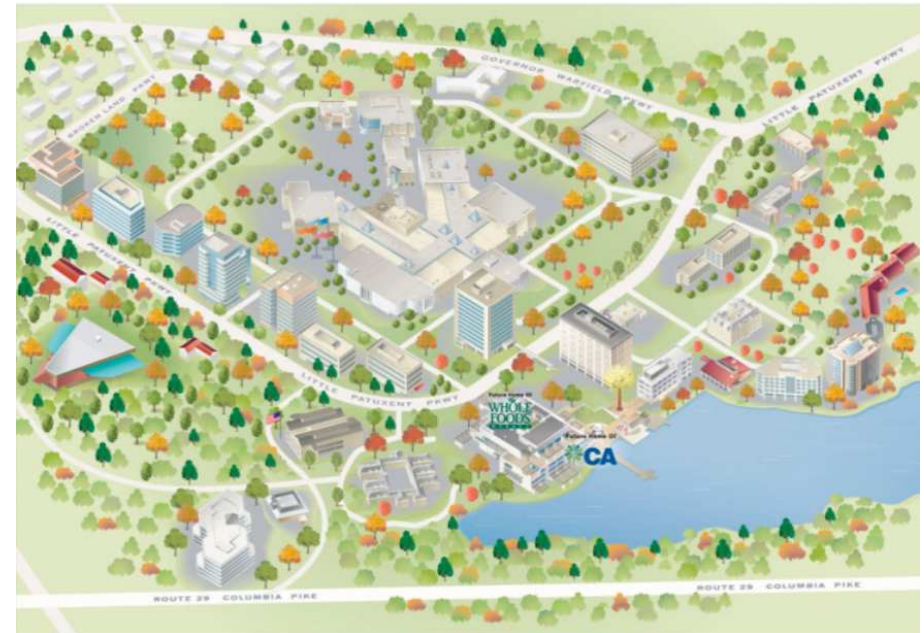
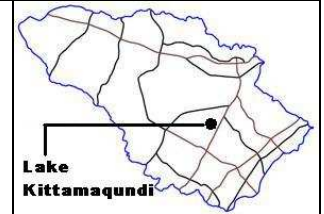
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Howard County Bird Club

A Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS)

Lake Kittamaquundi Site Guide

Columbia, MD 21044



Despite the amount of pedestrian traffic around this lake in downtown Columbia, birders have learned that oddities do drop in here.

GPS: 39.2154° N 76.8541° E Lake Kittamaquundi – Wincopin Circle

Size: 27-acre lake; maximum depth ~7 feet.

Layout and Parking: Parking and access is from the west side of the lake in various lots along Little Patuxent Parkway. With planned development in the near future, parking may change dramatically and with little warning. During peak periods, traffic is slow and parking almost nonexistent. After reaching the paved path adjacent to the lake, it is usually most productive to bear left toward the wildlife end. To view waterfowl, herons, gulls, and terns most of the lake can be scanned from the west side.

Trails and Paths: A 1.4 mile paved path encircles the lake; footbridges cross streams and drainage channels; a long, elevated boardwalk crosses a wet area at the north end of the lake.

Coverage Time: 30 minutes to an hour.

Operation and Hours: Columbia Association open space; closed from 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.

Notable Birds: Long-tailed Duck, Red-necked Grebe, American Bittern, Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Red Phalarope, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Marsh Wren, Golden-crowned Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Rusty Blackbird..

Habitat: Two-thirds of the west side contains commercial buildings; despite the accompanying activity, the pilings and dock regularly attract gulls, a few ducks, and sometimes several cormorants. The northern end of the lake is designated as the wildlife end and brushy, maturing, wooded habitat predominates there. The east side is floodplain along the Little Patuxent River. The understory is not dense except in some areas adjacent to the lake. Noise from traffic along parallel US 29 on the east side of the lake can be distracting, especially during rush hours and in winter when leaves no longer provide a buffer.

Best Time to Visit: Fortunately, the best birding times do not always coincide with the heaviest waterfront usage. Early morning always improves one's chances of finding birds here. Much of the year, there is heavy pedestrian traffic. This doesn't always bother the birds, but it can make birding more challenging. Long summer evenings attract crowds to the planned activities along the Lakefront. Although the circuit path might be busy with walkers, joggers, and cyclists, it is still possible to find birds here. Note that the east side of the lake's main section is where fireworks are launched on July 4th and other occasions. (The fireworks can impact bird behavior afterwards and even compel some birds to move to another location.) Also, during business hours on weekdays, path users may have to be aware of grounds/maintenance crews and their vehicles, path sweepers, and lawn mowers. Drivers of these vehicles, in turn, are mindful of people on the path.

Birding: Birders have learned it is not safe to ignore any good-sized body of water, especially after stormy weather. Of the central lakes, Kittamaqundi has produced the fewest rarities so birders tend to check it in conjunction with either Wilde Lake or Centennial. Frequently, birds that have been seen on one of the other lakes move here before flying to another lake or moving on. Species to be looked for are migratory waterfowl, gulls, terns, or any species associated with water or edges. Late March through mid-May

produces an occasional tern or interesting gull; night-herons can turn up in the spring or, occasionally, during the summer. Shorebirds, by and large, have not been notable with the exception of the county's first Red Phalarope which was present October 1-12, 1982. Migrant passerines are sometimes seen in the vegetation along the shoreline at the north end or in the trees in the floodplain on the east side. Bald Eagles can be spotted over the lake at almost any time of the year, but they seem to be most active here in late winter and spring. During the summer, Ospreys are regular visitors. Some of the more charismatic birds known to breed at the lake or in its vicinity include Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Red-shouldered Hawk, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Pileated Woodpecker, Baltimore Oriole, and Orchard Oriole.

Highlights: The main part of the lake visible from the Lakefront attracts a variety of waterfowl, especially during migration and winter. The end of the long wooden pier is a great place to scan the lake, but note that the carillon at this location can be alarming if it chimes while one is standing there. Birders may occasionally see measures being taken in this area to deter birds deemed to be pest species. Heading north or clockwise around the lake from the Lakefront leads to the wildlife section on the other side of the peninsulas. These divide the main section of the lake from the wildlife end. Wood Ducks, American Black Ducks, and Gadwalls tend to show up here when they visit the lake. This section also offers a stream habitat crossed by a footbridge near the Sheraton Hotel. (This stream flows from nearby Wilde Lake.) A sandbar running from the mouth of the stream and visible below the surface of the water provides a resting and feeding area for various waterbirds. (Sandbars, which may be attractive to birds and birders, tend to be relatively ephemeral as they are dredged with some regularity.) Nearby is an unpaved trail through a patch of woods along the lakeshore, an alternative to the paved path which comes out close to an inlet at the extreme northern tip of the lake. Another sandbar or mudbank at the mouth of the inlet and some snags and artificial floating platforms with plants (for filtering the water in the inlet) provide more resting areas for waterbirds. A long curving footbridge/boardwalk crosses a wet area at the tip of the inlet and connects to the east side of the lake. Along the east side, the Little Patuxent River with its wooded banks flows parallel to the lake. The Kennedy Gardens, featuring plantings of native flowers and grasses, are situated along the central and southern portion of the east side. (These gardens are prime territory for butterfly watchers. Adjacent woods provide habitat for a few species unlikely to be seen nectaring on showy flowers.) At the south tip of the lake, the spillway