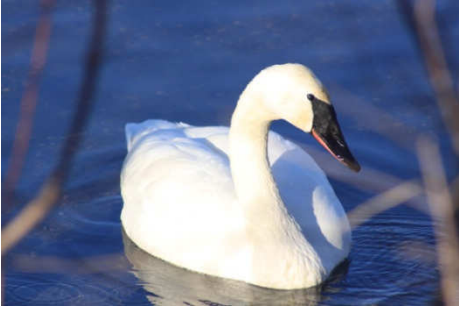


9. Point Douglas County Park



Trumpeter Swan

Photo by Kevin D. Smith

At the confluence of the great Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers, Washington County maintains Point Douglas Park. Access this location off US Hwy 10 before crossing the bridge to Wisconsin. A parking area, restrooms and picnic area make your visit very comfortable.

Winter is probably the season best known by local experts for finding specialties. The waters of the St. Croix River are usually very late to freeze and early to open up. Because of the large open water with plenty of food, many birds are attracted annually. A spotting scope is very helpful in making some of the finer identifications, but if you only have binoculars, that's ok too. In the event a rare species is spending time on the water you can be pretty sure an experienced birder

will be visiting the park. They are almost always willing to share the sighting with other interested folks.

You can see large flocks of Common Merganser and Common Goldeneye. The real treat is when you find Trumpeter Swans, a Barrow's Goldeneye, American Black Duck or Long-tailed Duck. Bald Eagles often sit out on the ice near the open water so you might count quite a few. Much of the water area is in Minnesota but don't be afraid to bird Wisconsin too. The railroad bridge crossing the river is home to Peregrine Falcons. Some years they have been known to stay the winter, but warmer months you are more apt to find them. They nest on the bridge in May or June and hunt the rivers and railroad corridors to feed their young.