

Des Lacs National Wildlife Refuge Scenic Backway

It's All About The Birds!



3 Days/2 Nights

Gateway City: Minot, North Dakota



"A dark line of trees marked our approach to a running stream, the River of Lakes The conical skin lodges were now plainly in sight, not more than five miles off, and Indians galloped out from the camp to meet us and escort us in. Buffalos, they said, were plenty."

It was crowned Riviere des Lacs – a River of Lakes running through a verdant valley, by French Canadians coming south from Canada to trap beaver, muskrat, mink, and other fur bearing creatures that made the beautiful river valley their home. The Plains Indians, Native Americans already living in the area, heartily welcomed fur trader Henry Bollos when he came upon them while seeking shelter from the harsh winter. The late 1800s brought settlers who worked in farming, ranching, and coal mining, causing waterfowl to decline to record lows, before the National Wildlife Refuges was designated.

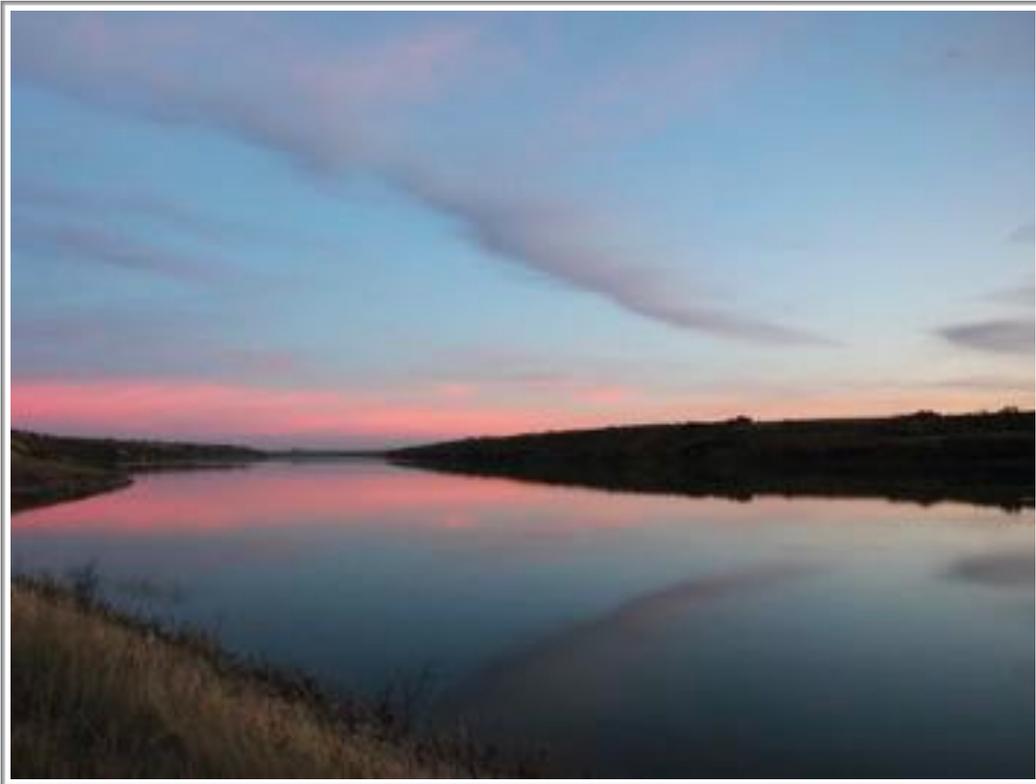
Although remnants of the Native American villages still remain, today's visitors exclaim "birds are everywhere!" Every fall, a blizzard of white descends on that same river of lakes and the Des Lacs Valley looks like it may be part of an early snowstorm. The flurry is actually thousands of snow geese and tundra swans joining the resident ducks and shorebirds. Few other places in the world have this

concentration of birds and one of the very few places that have five different species of grebes: piped-billed, horned, eared, red neck, and western, all nesting in one place.

Now, nearly 20,000 acres are a landing place for thousands of migratory birds, as well as other wildlife. At most times of the year, more than 250 species of birds can be spotted here, along with moose, deer, beavers, and pelicans. Even though known for migrating waterfowl and shorebirds, the Refuge is also known for animals which are not found in other parts of North Dakota. The Northern Pintail, large dabbling ducks, nest April-June. Hungarian Partridges, or Grey Partridges stay on the Refuge year-round. You can delight at the sight of western grebes running over the water during their courtship every spring. Mallards nest everywhere. White and blue Lesser Snow Geese, come and go in spring and fall. Also keep an eye out for deer, moose, raptors, wild turkeys, and other wildlife. Along the entire route, the scenery is gorgeous, and there are excellent opportunities with incomparable access to waterfowl, water, and songbirds.

Drive slowly as you make your way through the Refuge, to make sure you don't miss a single species showing off in the wild. It's a different world up here, savor your time to enjoy it.





Touring the Byway

We recommend starting your “wild” journey in Minot, filled with interesting heritage and culture. The area was settled by Scandinavians who came to build new lives and railroaders who helped build new towns. The Scandinavian Heritage Park tells the story of these hardy souls. The Northwest Arts Center and the Taube illustrate their creative genius. The Dakota Territory Air Museum illustrates the importance of the aviation industry to North Dakota. A good night’s rest at the Dakotah Rose Bed and Breakfast will prepare you for getting on the road the next day.

It’s just a little over 50 miles from Minot to Kenmare, the jumping off point for the Des Lacs National Wildlife Refuge Scenic Byway. You’ll pass Burlington, with lots to see and do, but we know you’re eager to get on the Byway. You can catch Burlington on the way back. Get a quick bite of lunch in Kenmare before taking the road to the Visitor Center from the middle of Kenmare. Make sure to stop to read the interpretive panels on the drive around the lakes.

Des Lac National Wildlife Refuge Scenic Byway consists of a North and South auto tour divided by the town of Kenmare. Sixth Street in the center of Kenmare takes you to the Refuge Visitor Center, with a large sign at the intersection of County Roads 1 and 1A. The 11-mile South Drive follows the shore of Middle Des Lakes Lake. The road is gravel but well-maintained and not well-traveled. On the drive you may see white pelicans, several species of Grebes, several species of ducks, glossy ibis, cormorants, coots, red-tailed hawks, deer, orioles, American avocets, and black crown night herons, among other birds. The 5-mile North Drive is also a two-way well-maintained gravel road that is very narrow in some places. There is a picnic area and bathroom near the end.



The 7 ½-mile Canada Goose Nature Trail adjacent to the southern end of Upper Des Lacs Lake is great for viewing migrating and breeding waterfowl. Tasker's Coulee is a unique wooded area consisting of a Day Use Area with mowed grass nature trails and wildlife observation. A historic Civilian Conservation Corps shelter with tables and a bathroom is located near the parking area. Munch's Coulee is a 1¼-mile designated Nature Trail National Recreation Trail. The first ¼-mile of the trail is level, hard-surfaced, and wheelchair accessible. The next 1-mile trail segment is mowed grass with some steep slopes but delivers breathtaking

views of Lower Des Lacs Lake. The upland portion of the trail offers one of the best places on the Refuge to view native wildflowers and grasses. Because the road runs on the northeast side on South Drive, and the water lays to the west and south, morning is the best time for visiting.

After an overnight in Kenmare, you can spend the day exploring the town. On the hills above town, you'll see the Kenmare High School Rocks, where every spring the seniors, gather with shovels, trucks, and paint brushes and get to work on their class year. The class years remain highly visible as the classes apply a fresh coat of paint during their reunions. A goose sculpture in Centennial Park is near the high school. The restored historic Danish Mill that now stands as the centerpiece in Town Square Park, was built in 1902 to harness the wind for milling wheat, serving farmers for miles around until World War I. Explore Lostwood, a nearby National Wildlife Refuge, plus the Pioneer Village and Museum, the Historic Danish Mill, and the V and R Toy Museum. On another optional day head back toward Minot and explore Burlington for the day. From there, we wish you a safe and pleasant journey home, or on another North Dakota Scenic Byway.



DAY ONE



Minot

Minot is said to have “grown like magic” after the Great Northern Railroad set up a tent camp for construction workers. Magic City grew more when Minot State University was established along with the Minot Air Force Base in the 1950s.

Scandinavian Heritage Park

To discover the heritage of another group of immigrants to North Dakota, the Scandinavians from Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, and Iceland, visit the Scandinavian Heritage Park, established to honor these five cultures.

Remembrances and replicas include an authentic Stabbur Stave Church, from Gol, Norway, and a 25-foot tall Swedish Dala Horse.

1020 South Broadway, Minot, ND 58702, 701-852-9161

Northwest Arts Center

Located on the campus of Minot State University, the Northwest Arts Center began as a hallway gallery. It now encompasses the lower level of the library including the Walter Piehl Gallery and climate-controlled collection storage for Minot State University's Permanent Art Collection and Native American Collections. The Native American Collections features approximately 450 items of traditional clothing, decorative crafts, and other artifacts.

500 University Avenue West, Minot, ND 58707, 701-858-3264, Tues-Fri 10AM-5PM, Sat 1PM-5PM

Taube Museum

Housed in the restored Union National Bank Building, The Tabue maintains a permanent collection of works of art as well as showcasing guest artists.

2 North Main Street, Minot, ND 58703, 701 838-4445 Tue – F 10:30AM-5:30PM, Sat 11AM-4PM, or by appointment. Donations accepted.

Dakota Territory Air Museum

With a presence of the Air Force nearly since it was founded, Minot is the perfect place for the Dakota Territory Air Museum that has proudly evolved into a significant historical depository honoring the men, women and machines that have impacted the rich history of aviation. Inspiring displays feature military and vintage aircraft and also the rich and varied stories of our region's aviation history.

100 34th Avenue NE, Minot ND 58702, 701-852-8500, M-Sat 10AM-5PM, Sun 1PM-5PM May-October

Railroad Museum of Minot

The railroad was particularly important to the settlement, providing a vital link to the outside world. This museum features more than 100 years of trains starting in 1886, plus tools and technology, steam and diesel equipment, trackage, passenger and freight artifacts, communications systems, hardware, maintenance, and control equipment. Memorabilia, maps, photos, logs and records, uniforms and memorials are also on display.

19 First Street NE, Minot, ND 58703, 701-852-7091, Saturdays, May-Sept 10AM-2PM, \$5 adults



Destination Distinctive Accommodations

Dakota Rose Bed and Breakfast, 510 4th Avenue NW, Minot, ND 58703, 701-838-3548

Originally the Andrew Carr home, this premier 1903 Bed and Breakfast, has all the charm of yesterday with all the modern amenities of today.

Destination Distinctive Dining

10 North Main, 10 Main Street North, Minot, ND 58703 701-837-1010

Minot's downtown destination featuring a diverse menu.

Charlie's Main Street Café, 113 Main Street South, Minot, ND 58701 701-839-6500 One of the oldest restaurants in Minot, Charlie's Main is a local, family-owned classic American diner.

Minot's Daily Bread, 1500 South Broadway, Minot, MD 58701 701-837-6904

Local family opened bakery with a simple dedication to quality.

Destination Distinctive Retail

62 Doors Gallery & Studio, 11B Main Street South, Minot, ND 58701

An innovative and hip gallery with eight arts studios.

Margie's Art Glass Studio, 109 Main Street South, Minot, ND 58701, 701-837-8555 For everything art glass.

The Market on 4th, 1900 4th Avenue NW, Minot, ND 58703, 701-839-4123

Repurposed furniture, home decor, handmade crafts, gifts, and vintage goods.

52 West Trading Company, 2815 S Broadway, Minot, ND 58701, 701-838-4550 Unique clothing, footwear, and accessories, locally crafted leather.

DAY TWO



Kenmare

Kenmare attracts 400,000 or so snow geese and tundra swans each year, earning it the name “Goose Capital of North Dakota.” Their descent creates a huge, brilliant spectacle worthy of celebration! The town itself was organized in 1897, six years after coal prospectors had settled in. The McBride family opened a boarding house for surveyors establishing land boundaries for mining and ranching claims. After decades of hardships, when the SOO Line railroad arrived, immigrants came by the train load, and the town prospered. A hardware store, livery, meat market, blacksmith shop, hotel, and general store and drug were erected in between the pioneers’ early simple sod shack homes, with sideways turned kitchen tables serving as the front door.

Des Lacs National Wildlife Refuge

Encompassing nearly 20,000 acres along the Des Lacs River from the Canadian border to eight miles south of Kenmare, the Des Lacs National Wildlife Refuge is a mix of natural lakes and wetlands that provide a haven for migrating and nesting waterfowl. In addition to the Des Lacs National Wildlife Refuge Scenic Byway that travelers through the Refuge, Munch's Coulee Nature Trail, is a designated National Recreation Trail which provides breathtaking views of the Lower Des Lacs Lake. Take a breather on the first bench on the trail to watch the ducks and turtles in the water. Tasker's Coulee Wildlife Observation Area is located in a heavily wooded coulee (similar to those that the Native Americans sheltered their tipis in), offers hiking through the woodlands, and teems with forest birds, vireos, black & white warblers, black-capped chickadees, and downy woodpeckers. The Canada Goose Nature Trail stretches from Middle Des Lacs Lake to Upper Des Lacs Lake. The Visitor Center features wildlife displays, bird mounts, antler sheds, furs, and interactive displays. There is an observation deck with binoculars. 701-385-4046, The Des Lacs National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center is open M-F 7:30AM-4:30PM and an interpretive kiosk next to the headquarters holds brochures 24 hour per day.





Destination Distinctive Accommodations

Quilt Inn, 1232 N Central Ave, Kenmare, ND 58746, 701-385-4100

Choose from standard rooms with two queen beds, single queen rooms with a desk, a two bedroom apartment, or an Executive Suite with a King and pull out sofa. All rooms have a refrigerator, microwave, flat screen cable television, and free WiFi. Complimentary continental breakfast is served each morning. A partnership with Boom Fitness is available to guests at no charge.

Destination Distinctive Dining

South of the Border, 50401 US-52, Kenmare, ND 58746, 701-385-3555

Have dinner right across the parking lot from the Quilt Inn.

Gathering Grounds, 101 1st Ave NW, Kenmare, ND 58746, 701-385-3100

Get breakfast and lunch items and hot coffee, eat in or to go.

DAY THREE

Lostwood National Wildlife Refuge

Explore the nearby Lostwood National Wildlife Refuge, nestled in an ancient glacial moraine with mixed-grass prairie. The scenery ranges from rolling contours to steep hills, both punctuated with wetlands and small lakes, often called "potholes." Lostwood was designated a Globally Important Birding Area by the American Birding Conservancy/Audubon Society, providing habitats for prairie birds including Sprague's pipits, Baird's sparrows, marbled godwits, upland sandpipers, and willets.

Reached from County Route 2 (436th Avenue NW in Kenmare) which turns into 2A, 88th Street NW, that reaches 8315 North Dakota Route 8, Kenmare, ND 58746



Lake County Historical Society's Pioneer Village and Museum

The region's heritage is preserved in 22 buildings full of antiques and other authentically arranged furnishings, including a one-room schoolhouse, pioneer house, dress shop, newspaper office, antique tractor display, buggies, a convent organ, a collection of items dating back before the Civil War and more!

49200 US Route 52, Kenmare, ND 58746, 701-240-4505, W-F, 4PM-7PM, Sat-Sun 2PM-5PM, or by appointment 49200 US Route 52, Kenmare, ND 58746, 701-240-4505, :



V & R Toy Museum

Explore a large selection of farm toys, trucks, farm-built toys, buckles, caps, train set, and a farm scene.

517 3rd Avenue NE, Kenmare, ND, 701 385 4491

Destination Distinctive Retail

Peony Petals Florist & Gifts, 104 North Central Avenue, Kenmare, ND 58746,
701-385-4684

OPTIONAL DAY FOUR



Burlington

The first town in Ward County, Burlington is located where the beautiful Souris River meets the Des Lacs River. Started as a squatter's camp when coal was discovered underground, it became the first center of underground lignite mining in the country ultimately working to develop use of the fuel on a large scale. The Soo Line Railroad built a station here in 1893 to transport coal out of the region. A large mining population continued until the 1920s when the mines worked out.

Ward County Pioneer Village Historical Museum

Pioneer Village and the Ward County Historical Society has restored a group of historic buildings, each with their own theme and collection including a blacksmith shop, car museum, cook car, general store, North Prairie School, Lutheran Church, Imperial Ward County Courthouse, a post office, the Sawyer Railroad Depot, Sundre Cabin, the Samuelson House, and the Harmon House.

8181 Highway 2 and 52 West, Burlington ND 58722, 701-839-0785

Pointe of View Winery

This quaint, charming, family-owned winery, the first established in North Dakota, specializes in native fruit, grape, and honey wines. They offer free tastings and an outdoor deck overlooking the Souris Valley. Birders are welcome to watch the multitude of birds on the property. 8413 19th Avenue NW, Burlington, ND 58703, 701-839-5505



Destination Distinctive Dining

Hacienda Steakhouse, 135 Colton Ave, Burlington, ND 58722, 701-838-7099

Built in 1970, the Burlington Hacienda is a replica of an old plantation. The dining room's centerpiece is a natural stone fireplace and all interior walls display an original mural by nationally known artist Vern Skaug. The owner of the Hacienda started as a cook 1998, and later managed the restaurant before purchasing it in 2005.

Destination Distinctive Retail

Davy Pottery, 2401 100th St NW, Burlington, ND 58722, Ph:701-838-0678