

SPRING MIGRATION BIRDING: KIBLER BOTTOMS, ALMA WASTEWATER, AND FROG BAYOU WMA

Prepared by Vivek Govind Kumar (April 2021)

This guide is mainly aimed at spring migration birding. It will also help you get around the area and find birds at other seasons, too.

I have attached maps of 3 different areas - Kibler Bottoms; Hamer Rd/Orrick Rd/Alma WTP/Sharp Chapel Rd; Frog Bayou.

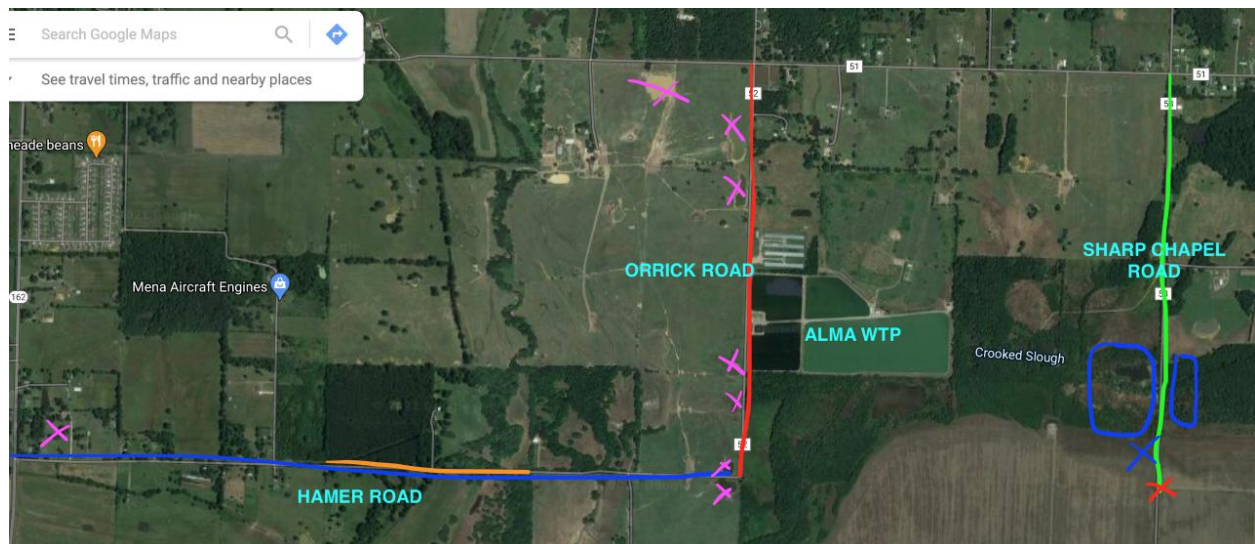


Map 1 - Kibler Bottoms - Start by going south on Westville Rd (RED) from Hwy 162. At **35.386301, -94.259478**, you will see open fields on both sides of the road. Start scanning for shorebirds and other open country species. As you continue south, you will see an area with very short grass on your left. This is the **West Ark Sod Farm** (excellent in migration for Golden-Plovers, Upland Sandpipers etc.) (marked on map as a rectangle with red/blue borders). **Scan this area thoroughly with a scope.**

Turn left on Crawford Rd (BLUE) and continue east/north-east. The sod farm will still be on your left. **When the road curves to the north-east, look for a long, wet depression with a lot of vegetation on**

your left - scan thoroughly for shorebirds and ducks. This wet depression is part of an oxbow that floods the whole area seasonally. As you continue east on Crawford Rd and then turn north (left) onto Thornhill St (ORANGE) past the U of A Vegetable Research Station, scan the fields on both sides of the road for shorebirds.

Then turn right (east) onto Arnold Rd (PINK). **The fields on your left (BLUE Xs) are where wastewater from poultry processing plants is injected. These fields can attract very large numbers of shorebirds due to insect abundance. Again, scan both sides of the road.** Eventually, Arnold Rd crosses the seasonal oxbow (currently has extensive mudflats to the left and flooded area to the right of the road - **MAGENTA X**) - this spot can be very productive. Turn left onto Cross Lanes Rd (CYAN) and continue north out of the bottoms while scanning the fields for shorebirds. **The spots marked with GREEN Xs are locations with Golden-Plovers and other shorebirds during spring migration.** This should be a 7 mile loop.

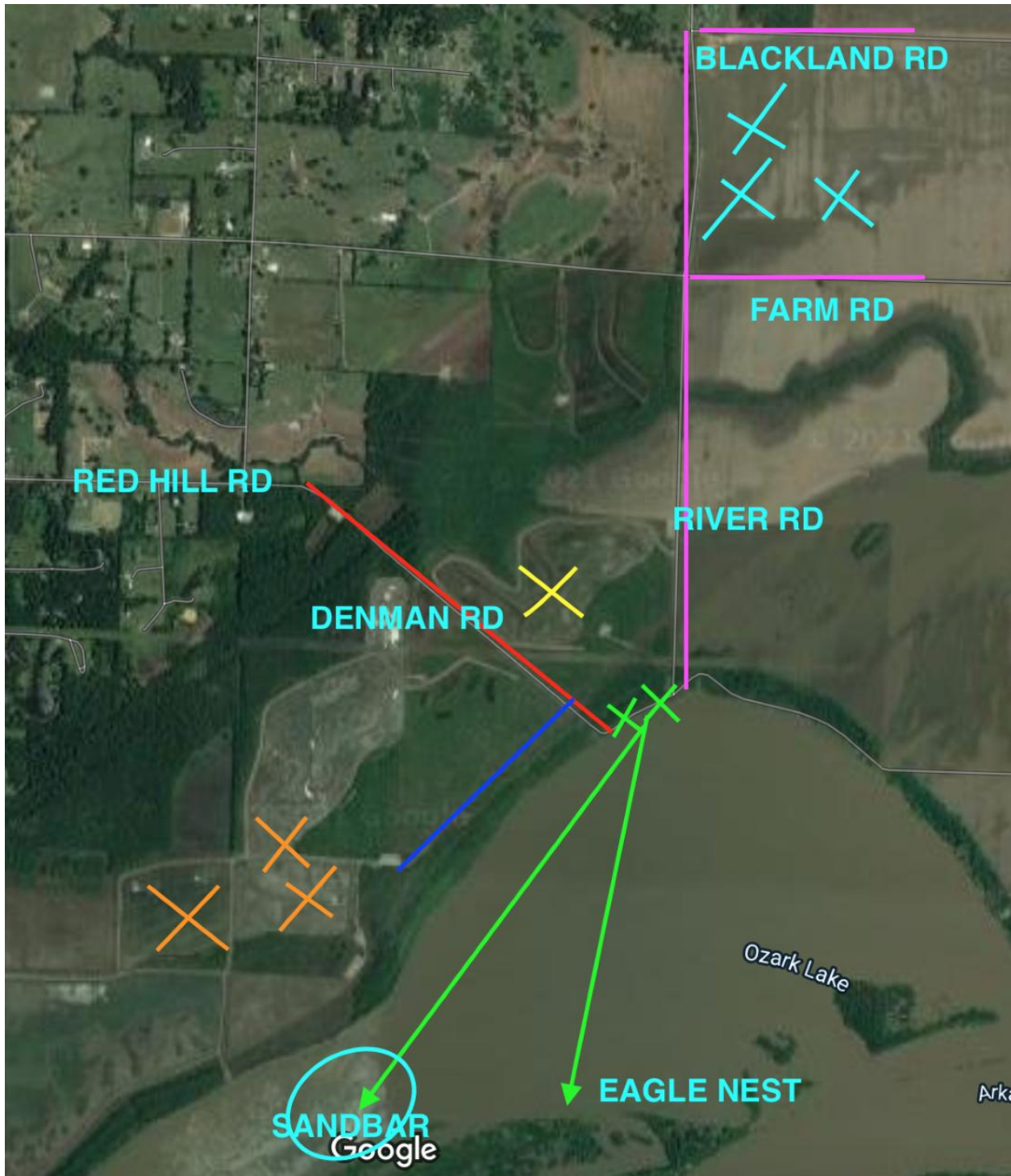


Map 2 - Hamer Rd/Orrick Rd/Alma WTP/Sharp Chapel Rd - From Hwy 162, turn right onto Hamer Rd (BLUE). This road has a mix of agricultural/woodland/riparian habitat that can be very good for migrant songbirds. **The ORANGE line indicates a stretch of road (starts when you see a pine plantation on your left and continues east beyond the low water crossing) that has been quite productive for warblers etc. in migration. All PINK X's indicate potential Black-bellied Whistling-Duck locations (spring-fall).** The PINK X at the west end of Hamer Road (wet drainage ditch + small pond next to a house on the left of the road (may be hard to see from road)) has been a reliable spot in recent years.

When you turn left (north) onto Orrick Rd (RED), check the ponds/fields on your left for shorebirds and ducks. Alma WTP is open to the public on weekdays. With exception of days when the shooting range is in use, you can drive around the ponds as long as you don't disrupt their operations. The large woodlot and marshy area to the south of the ponds (on your right as you drive east at the south end of the property) can be very productive for a variety of migrants.

Continue north on Orrick Rd and turn right onto Red Hill Rd. Eventually, turn right onto Sharp Chapel Rd (GREEN). Continue south and eventually you will see **swampy woods on your right and a dense woodlot on your left (BLUE ovals)** - this area is excellent for ducks, rails and a variety of songbird migrants. **The BLUE X just south of the swamp indicates a marshy area (on your right as you continue south) that**

usually has Virginia Rails/Marsh Wren etc spring-summer. Eventually you will see a gate on your left (RED X) - this is as far as we usually go because the road is typically muddy with a lot of potholes after this point.



Map 3- Frog Bayou - Continue east on Red Hill Rd until it becomes Denman Rd (RED). After a point the road curves south-east through wet woods and moist soil units. At 35.464079, -94.140109, you will see a

large, flooded moist soil unit on your left (YELLOW X) - this has been very productive for ducks in migration and winter. For optimal viewing you will need to briefly cross the marshy area (rubber boots essential) bordering the pond until you get to a levee.

Continue south-east on Denman Rd until you see an extensive, shallow former channel of the Arkansas River (locally called Dyer Lake) in front of you. Just before you get to the lake, you will see a dirt/gravel road (BLUE) going to the right (west) - this leads to a parking area for some large moist soil units (ORANGE Xs) that can be very productive for shorebirds and ducks (**NOTE – water levels vary**).

Once you're at the lake, Denman Rd curves to the left (east) and **runs parallel to the open water. Set up your scopes anywhere along this stretch (GREEN X's) to view a Bald Eagle nest located on one of the river islands roughly SSW of this area (see arrow on map; it is a long ways off – good for eagles).** If you look further to the SW, you may see a sandbar (depending on the water level) that is can be productive for gulls, terns, pelicans etc.

Continue east on Denman Rd and turn left (north) onto River Rd (PINK). **You will see large fields on your right (bordered by Farm Rd to the south and Blackland Rd to the north). The CYAN Xs mark the locations of spring 2021 Golden-Plover sightings.**