

## A BIRDERS' GUIDE TO MISSOURI PUBLIC LANDS

### **PERSHING STATE PARK**

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**3,565 acres Linn Co. DeLorme 22, H-2**

**DNR owned; call 660-963-2299 for additional information**

Directions: From Chillicothe, go 18 miles east on US 36; from Brookfield, go 7 miles west on US 36. At the intersection with Hwy. 130, go south two miles on Hwy. 130 to the park.

When to Visit/Species to Expect: Anytime but a hot summer afternoon is good. This oasis of natural habitats surrounded by agricultural land is a haven for lowland-loving warblers (30 species are on the park checklist), owls (including Short-eared on the wet prairie), woodpeckers, waders, and for waterfowl in the winter. Spring migration stopovers include Hudsonian Godwit, American Bittern, American Woodcock, seven species of vireos, and Veery, Swainson's, Hermit, Gray-cheeked and Wood Thrush.

This is a good site to visit when waterfowl hunting season closes nearby conservation areas to regular birding.

In the spring of 2008, birder sat Pershing were surprised with the first Fish Crow seen in the vicinity.

Features of interest to birders: The section of Locust Creek meandering through the park is the last unchanneled waterway in north Missouri. This natural area is accessible on the 1.5 mile boardwalk, traversing mature bottomland forest, shrub swamps and wet prairie. The park also has areas of oxbow lakes, sloughs, marsh and upland forest.

The 6.5 mile Riparian Trail includes the boardwalk, then continues along the natural levee of Locust Creek, connecting the park and Fountain Grove CA via a 60-foot cable suspension bridge.

Three shorter trails totaling 3.5 miles invite birders to explore other habitats.

Canfield Savanna Trail runs through a savanna of oaks with native grass understory.

Oak Ridge Trail connects the campground and picnic area through oak-hickory forest, including a ridge overlooking a shrub swamp.

Scout Lake Trail circles the small lake on the east side of Hwy. 130, one of four small lakes in the park.

Toilets: Modern restroom at the campground.

Camping: Basic and electric campsites and special-use area. Sites may be reserved year-round. On-season is April 15 through October 31. A firewood advisory may be in effect. Generators are prohibited unless permission granted for camper health/safety.

Hazards/Limitations: Spring flooding may close the boardwalk.

Nearby Birding Sites: Swan Lake NWR is 14 miles south; Fountain Grove CA is 14 miles southwest; Mussel Fork CA is about 20 miles east.