

## A BIRDERS' GUIDE TO MISSOURI PUBLIC LANDS

### **POMME DE TERRE STATE PARK**

**Edge Wade, April 2014**

**734.44 acres Hickory Co. DeLorme, 44, G/H, 2**

**GPS: 37.869783,-93.317600**

**DNR owned. For park office, 417-852-4291; for Hermitage area, 417-745-6909**

**<http://mostateparks.com/park/pomme-de-terre-state-park>**

**Edge Wade, 2014**

This park awaits discovery by birders who will find many reasons to celebrate their choice of birding destination and will want to return to enjoy the full round of seasons at Pomme de Terre. Autumn, winter and early spring are particularly good times to visit, as the number of campers/boaters is low and birding can be enjoyed in a quiet, undisturbed setting.

There are two units: Hermitage on the north side and Pittsburg on the south.

Directions to Hermitage Unit: From US 54 in Hermitage, go south on Jackson Street (MO 254) to the junction with MO 64 east. Go 1.4 miles on MO 64, turn right on CR 200, go 325 feet, continue on CR 246 for .7 mile, then turn right onto Park Road.

Directions to Pittsburg Unit: To reach the Pittsburg Unit from the Hermitage Unit, go back to MO 64 and take it to MO 64B Spur as described below.

From Jefferson City (about 1 hour, 45 minutes), from US 54 go south on Rt. D in Hickory County, just west of the intersection with US 65. At 5.4 miles from the US 54/Rt. D intersection, continue straight onto MO 64 East. At 2.5 miles, turn right onto 64B Spur west.

From Springfield (about 1 hour, 15 minutes), go north on MO 13 about 26 miles. Take MO 83 exit (Business 13 toward Bolivar). Turn right onto MO 83 N/S Springfield Ave., then right onto Broadway for .9 mile, then left onto Pomme De Terre Ave. (Rt. D). Follow Rt. D for 13.7 miles, then stay straight onto MO 64 West for 7 miles. Turn left onto MO 64B Spur west for 2.1 miles.

When to Visit/Species to Expect: Excellent birding opportunities await in spring and fall migration for passerines that may accumulate on one of the park's peninsulas. Summer residents include a typical mix of Ozark nesters, including a good population of Prothonotary Warblers along the Pittsburg Unit shoreline.

In fall, winter and early spring the potential to see good numbers of a variety of water birds is excellent. The lake attracts loons, grebes, gulls and pelicans. Ducks are surely present in season, but are severely under-represented on the checklist because of few reported visits in the appropriate period.

In fall and winter, gulls roost on the marina roof. Bald Eagles and Osprey may join Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawks. The full suite of Missouri woodpeckers may be found as resident chickadees, titmice and nuthatches work the trees, joined by kinglets and creepers in the winter.

Birders at Pomme de Terre SP will likely add significant occurrence data with every trip report.

Red-headed Woodpeckers are present in the Pittsburg Unit between July and February, but are apparently gone in early spring.

Features of interest to birders: The Pittsburg unit has been in a prescribed fire rotation since 1985. It is open old growth post oak woodlands with chinquapin oaks on the limestone ridge tops with a grassy understory dominated by little bluestem and Indian grass.

Each unit has a 3.5-mile trail through a natural area. Both offer good views of bird-friendly habitat—both on land and the lake. The grasses and wildflowers are well worth the walk; the potential to find birds is very good.

Cedar Bluffs Trail loops down the long, narrow peninsula of the Hermitage Unit through a heavily wooded area and along rocky bluffs (look for Prairie Warbler in summer). Indian Point Trail is a loop out to the Indian Point lookout in the Pittsburg Unit through savanna woodland to a wooden viewing platform. Connector loops provide opportunities for shorter hikes.

Birders should check all possible habitats and access to birds. On the Pittsburg side, there is a swim beach, fishing pier and marina, picnic areas and campgrounds. The Hermitage side has a swim beach, picnic areas and campgrounds.

Toilets: Flush toilets are available in season; vault toilets are present year-round.

Camping: 258 sites (total includes both units). As of 2013, there are two yurts for rent on the Pittsburg side.

Hazards/Limitations: The park can be very busy with boaters and campers in the summer. Boats can be brought to shoreline campsites in the Hermitage unit.

Nearby Birding Sites: Sentinel CA, Hermitage Access, Murphy (John F.) Mem. SF & WA.