

## **ROBERTSVILLE STATE PARK**

Edge Wade, Spring 2016

1,224.65 acres Franklin Co. DeLorme 40, I-3

GPS: 38.4282114,-90.8257978

DNR owned; for more information call 636-257-3788

**Directions:** From Union, go east on US 50, turn left onto Historic US 66 East (a.k.a. Rt. AT) for .7 mile, then right onto MO Rt. O for 4.9 miles to a left onto Montgomery Rd. into the park. From St. Louis, follow I-44, take exit 253 and go south on Robertsville Rd., then left onto Rt. O, and left onto Montgomery Rd. into the park.

**ADA Information:** A sampling of the habitats can be birded from a car and/or from one of the day use areas. Restroom and vault toilet are ADA compliant.

**When to Visit/Species to Expect:** Good birding begins at the park entrance on Montgomery Road. A slow drive along the road as it parallels the brushy railroad embankment makes good use of the car as a blind. Sparrows are common here, with species varying according to season. Of the 11 sparrow species reported from the park, all but Vesper and Henslow's are likely to be seen along this section of road.

As of 2016, a good spectrum of species made up the 110 birds on the list of sightings. Summer nesters include Wood Thrush, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Blue Grosbeak, Summer and Scarlet Tanager, and Orchard Oriole, as well as the year-round residents of Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch and Carolina Wren.

**Features of interest to birders:** The Meramec River bounding the park on the north and west, and Calvey Creek on the east create a riparian bordered cul-de-sac mosaic of rich bottomland and upland forest habitats favored by many bird species.

Exploring the park by car and foot will bring the birder to glades, grasslands, old fields and riparian areas, each with a rewarding mix of birds to enjoy. An aggressive habitat improvement effort is underway at the park. Controlled burns are opening up woodland understory. Cedars have encroached into glades and old fields. Removal will be a major effort.

The Spice Bush Trail is a .8-mile loop. Access is to the left (west) a little north of the road into the day use area with the playground equipment. Migrant passerines, and in summer, typical Ozark breeders should be expected along the trail. In migration, watch along the trail for any one of the 19 species of warblers and 5 species of vireo reported from the park. In summer, watch and listen

especially for Bell's Vireo, Louisiana Waterthrush, Common Yellowthroat, Northern Parula, Kentucky, Blue-winged and Prairie Warbler.

Additional strolls through bottomland forest and old fields may be had "far from the madding crowd" in more remote parts of the park. Two old roads to cemeteries traverse habitats likely to produce the same broad variety of species as on the Spice Bush Trail, but with fewer park visitors frolicking along the way. Along Red Tail Hawk Loop, before it reaches the campground, a .4 mile-long old road leads south to Shiloh Cemetery. The Roberts family cemetery lies at the end of a .3 mile long old road to the right of the main road as it approaches boat ramp day use area.

A wide power line right-of-way paralleling the Meramec River intersects the road just south of the boat ramp day use area. A check of the utility poles and of the sky above may produce a raptor or two, and the open glade-like and grassy areas below are likely to harbor sparrows and meadowlarks.

**Toilets:** Flush toilets are in the playground day-use area and at the campground. A Vault toilet is near the boat ramp.

**Camping:** There are 12 basic and 13 electric campsites, and a family site. All are reservable. Some sites have wood platforms to provide a level tent area.

**Hazards/Limitations:** The park is close to St. Louis, so may have heavy visitation on warm weekends and in summer. Ticks, chiggers, and bright sun should be considered when planning a trip here if you'll be hiking. The Meramec is a flood-prone river. Portions of the park may be closed in high water times.

**Nearby Birding Sites:** Catawissa CA, Union Access, Chouteau Claim Access, Shaw Nature Reserve, Pacific Palisades CA, Young CA.

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