

A BIRDERS' GUIDE TO MISSOURI PUBLIC LANDS

THREE CREEKS CONSERVATION AREA--UPDATED: 5/21/09

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1,501 acres Boone Co. DeLorme 37, C-10

Directions: The main entrance (two parking lots near the northeast corner of the area) is about 5 miles south of Columbia on US 63, then 1.75 miles west on Deer Park Rd.

A north parking lot is off Bennett Ln., off Hwy. 163, 1.8 miles west of US 63, then about a mile south on Bennett. This lot has no designated trails leading to the interior, but a path near primitive campsites has some potential for good birding.

A west lot is off Tomlin Hill Rd. It can be reached by going south from 163 for 1.6 miles on Fox Ln., or from 163 at Pierpont by going south on Tomlin Hill Rd. 1.8 miles to a sharp right turn onto gravel, then left at the group of mailboxes (a small MDC) sign notes the turn. This looks like a private road, but ends .5 miles ahead at the parking lot. This lot has no designated trails leading to the interior, but a good trail leads from it along the ridgetop, then drops into the valley, providing excellent access to a variety of habitat.

The south lot is reached from US 63 by going west on Minor Hill Rd. to the intersection with Rt. DD to the south and Meyers Rd. to the south. Turn onto Meyers, go .7 to the area property line and an additional .2 to the parking area.

Good birding can also be found along the gravel road that borders the south side of the area. It continues west for .6 miles.

When to Visit/Species to Expect: There is excellent passerine birding potential in spring migration, especially for the physically fit.

Features of interest to birders: Three permanent streams, Turkey, Bass and Bonne Femme Creeks, flow through the area. There are wet woods, large forb fields and some stands of pine (one easily reached from the parking lot off Deer Creek Rd.). The area has about 1,200 acres of forest and woodland; 250 acres of grassland and old fields are being converted to native warm season grasses and wildflowers. Four of the five parking lots offer access to trails.

Toilets: None

Camping: Walk in primitive camping away from roads and parking lots, except during modern firearms deer seasons, when area is closed to all but hunters.

Hazards/Limitations: Rugged Karst topography confronts a birder wishing to access much of the interior except along the multiple use trail, where horses and mountain bikes may be encountered. Portions of this trail can be muddy and difficult to trek during wet periods.

The entire area is closed to other uses during modern firearms deer hunting seasons (dates change each year) and the no hunting zone is open to deer hunting at these times.

Nearby Birding Sites: Rock Bridge Memorial SP, Eagle Bluffs CA, Thomas S. Baskett Wildlife Research Area (University-owned).