

## **A BIRDERS' GUIDE TO MISSOURI PUBLIC LANDS**

### **REFORM CONSERVATION AREA**

**Edge Wade, March 2012**

**6,759 acres Callaway Co. DeLorme 38, D/E-5**

**Leased by MDC from Ameren Missouri; for information call 573-254-3330**

Directions: From Fulton, go east on Rt. O about 9 miles. A right turn onto Rt. CC provides access to the west, central and south parts of the area. Staying on Rt. O presents two options: entering the area on CR 448 to bird the northeast portion, or stopping at a parking area further along Rt. O.

From Jefferson City, go north on US 63/54 across the Missouri River, then east on MO 94 to CR 458 to enter the area from the south end.

When to Visit/Species to Expect: This is an area that is still being explored for niches that may support many species. It has proven to be good birding for sparrows, woodpeckers, and raptors. The checklist will grow as adventurous birders make discoveries here.

Features of interest to birders: The central section surrounding the Callaway Nuclear Power Plant is fenced and strictly off limits. The off limits area includes a large area outside the fence. [see Hazards/Limitations section].

Fifteen parking lots provide easy stopping points. Several have paths or old two tracks leading from them that, with a short walk, will take birders through grassland, into woods or to ponds.

Four lots are on the west side of Rt. CC or a short distance west off of it. Explore the areas with brush rows created in 2011 and 2012 for sparrows.

CR 428 going east is open to the public, but the land it traverses is not. Stay on the road. It skirts the fenced area (east off Rt. CC) and connects with CR 448. A large sign indicates "Entrance D" at the intersection of CR 428 and Rt. CC, and a similar sign, "Entrance E" is where CR 428 meets CR 448. Along CR 428 is a large pine plantation to check for Pine Warblers, Red-breasted Nuthatches, and other pine-loving in proper season, and a pond to the north that can be viewed from the road.

CR 448, running south from Rt. O, then east leads past 5 parking areas. This is mostly old fields, grassland habitat, but woods can be reached with short to moderate-length walks. One good-sized pond can be checked from a lot, and a short walk leads along trees and into old fields.

CR 459 going east from Rt. CC, about a half-mile south of 428, is signed "Main Entrance". This road goes past a 7-acre lake on the south, then the plant entrance on the north, and the road becomes gravel shortly after.

Seven parking areas, a microwave tower, and Riverview Cemetery are along this road as it runs southerly, mostly along a ridge line for the length of the area to the junction with MO 94 and toward the Missouri River floodplain.

CR 468 runs east along Logan Creek, beginning near the south end of CR 459. A walk along this 3/4 mile stretch of riparian/floodplain habitat can be especially birdy in spring migration.

An old railroad bed, now a well-maintained “closed to vehicles” gravel road cuts up from CR 468 roughly parallel with CR 459 through glade and woods toward the center of the area. Carolina Chickadees may be found near its south end.

The Katy Trail transects the southernmost portion and provides easy access to the limited bottomland area, roughly paralleling MO 94.

In 2011 and 2012, feathering work by MDC to provide habitat for quail and small mammals, and extensive power transmission line and road woody growth trimming have provided material for brush and slash piles many species of birds have found attractive.

There are several ponds, most visible from a road or parking area, but a couple hidden from view within the off limits area. Do not enter off limits areas to bird them.

Toilets: None

Camping: None

Hazards/Limitations: Approximately 1,000 acres are off limits, including and surrounding the fenced core area of the nuclear power facility and a mining area in the northeast corner. Additional portions of the area, including CR 428 may be closed during elevated threat alerts issued by the Division of Homeland Security.

Warning sirens are tested about noon, the first Tuesday of each month.

Several fenced one-hectare ecology study plots with additional 100 yard perimeter buffers are scattered throughout the area. These were established by the power company, are strictly off limits to the public, and no habitat management is conducted on them by MDC.

Hunting activity can be heavy. In deer, turkey, rabbit, quail and dove seasons, birders may wish to stay near the roads or in open areas.

Nearby Birding Sites: Whetstone Creek CA, Daniel Boone CA, Danville CA, Ham’s Prairie Access, Mokane Access, Little Dixie Lake CA.