

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

## **RIPPEE CONSERVATION AREA**

**Edge Wade; June, 2012**

**418 acres Douglas Co. DeLorme 63, D-9**

**MDC owned. For additional information call 417-256-7161.**

Directions: From Ava, go 11 miles east on MO 14 and 1.5 miles south on CR 328.

When to Visit/Species to Expect: This is one of those special places tucked away in a valley off the beaten paths of most birders. All seasons will reward the adventurous birder with a broad mix of species.

This under-birded site has proven to be excellent for migrant and nesting warblers. Among those reported in a limited number of visits are Blue-winged, Cerulean, Kentucky, Pine, Worm-eating, Chestnut-sided and Canada. This diversity shows the potential range supported by the mosaic of habitats here. Vireos are numerous.

It's a woodpecker and flycatcher paradise. Migrant thrushes should be expected in good numbers. Grassland and scrub areas attract Blue Grosbeak and sparrows, in season. A roadrunner has been seen.

Features of interest to birders: The road running most of the length of the area along Rippee and Bryant creeks is easily walked. There are no designated trails, but old two-tracks give easy access to gently sloping forest to the north and bottomland old field habitat to the east of the road.

The oak-hickory, short-leaf pine and bottomland hardwood forest, glade, grasslands and old field areas support a superior variety of plants and bird species.

The dolomite glade above the 50-foot bluff to the north of the road may have attracted the Greater Roadrunner to the area in June of 2012.

Fifteen species of fish and crayfish endemic to the Ozarks are protected in the Bryant Creek Natural Area (36 acres), running downstream from the confluence.

Toilets: 3 privies (one in the picnic area; 2 in the campground).

Camping: A primitive camping area along Bryant Creek has 15 sites. Picnic tables are in a fenced-in area at the confluence of the two creeks.

Hazards/Limitations: None noted, other than potentially many campers and swimmers on warm summer days, especially weekends (but the activity is concentrated in a narrow strip along Bryant Creek, leaving most of the area available for quiet birding). The area shows evidence of popularity by horseback trail riders.

Nearby Birding Sites: Vera Cruz Access, Caney Mountain CA, Shannon Ranch CA.