

A BIRDERS' GUIDE TO MISSOURI PUBLIC LANDS

WAH-KON-TAH PRAIRIE CONSERVATION AREA

Edge Wade, April, 2012

3,031 acres Cedar, St. Clair counties DeLorme 43, H-6

Part MDC owned; part leased from TNC; call 417-876-5226

Directions: Access is from perimeter parking lots and other gates. All directions below are from El Dorado Springs. Watch for signs at the parking areas.

1. About 2 miles northeast on MO 82 (parking area on north side).
2. East on Lake Hill Rd. (a.k.a. CR 150) about 1 mile. Lake Hill Rd. does not cut through to Main St. Reach it by going east from Main on Broadway, then right (south) one block at the T with Vernon; or from US 54, take S. Park north to a right onto Thompson, left (north) on Vernon to Lake Hill Rd.
3. About 1 mile north on MO 82 to a left onto CR. 02.
4. Northeast on MO 82 to a left onto CR 1051 to a lot at the northeast corner of the area, near the largest portion of the 50 acres of forest and woodland.
5. From Rt. H north off MO 82, there are gates (do not block) where you can park and walk in.

When to Visit/Species to Expect: When to Visit/Species to Expect: This has been an under-reported site. Visits here will be rewarding to birders seeking grassland species.

Anytime can produce a good suite of species; but, as on all Missouri prairies, expect heat on a mid-summer day; dress for sun and carry water.

Look for Bell's Vireo, Henslow's and Grasshopper sparrows, Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, Upland Sandpiper and Loggerhead Shrike in the spring and summer. Sprague's Pipit., Savannah Sparrow and Lapland and Smith's Longspur may be present in autumn and early winter.

Greater Prairie-Chickens were once found in good numbers here. In 2008, reintroductions using Kansas birds began at Wah-Kon-Tah prairie. The 2011 nesting season was reported as very successful.

Features of interest to birders: There are 4 parking areas and some gates on the perimeter. Below are brief descriptions of the access they provide.

The land is gently rolling. The 2,700 acre native prairie has been augmented with 280 acres of non-prairie grasslands planted in prairie grasses and forbs.

Two-tracks/fire breaks extend into the heart of the prairie. Number 1 in the directions above is roughly the center of the prairie--north/south.

One good access point with a two-track for easy walking is from the south side (2 in the directions above) There is no hunting in this portion of the prairie.

Woodland and small riparian corridors, about 50 acres, are on the northeast and southwest corners near parking areas listed as 3 and 4 in the directions.

Another access point with a good two-track is from a gate along Rt. H. The road leads to the abandoned missile site and a two-track runs deep into the prairie from there.

There are several very small ponds. One of 1 acre is south of MO 82, off the road that is the county line (CR 02 in Cedar Co., SW 900 in St. Clair), at the site of TNC buildings. Another is accessible by a short walk from near the intersection with Rt. H, Hwy. 82 and SW 900.

Toilets: None

Camping: None

Hazards/Limitations: There are no designated trails, but the two-track paths/old roads/fire breaks offer walking routes that reduce disturbance of tall prairie grasses and exposure to ticks.

Prairie restoration projects may be in progress. Patch burn grazing management is being conducted and studied on this area.

Hunting is allowed on the part of the area north of MO 82.

Nearby Birding Sites: Schell-Osage CA, Monegaw Prairie CA, Taberville Prairie CA, Linscomb WA, Blackjack Access, Birdsong CA.