

CROWDER STATE PARK

Edge Wade, 2018

1,912 acres Grundy Co. DeLorme 21, C-8/9

GPS: 40.103469,-93.673511

76 Highway 128 Trenton, MO 64683

DNR owned; for additional information call 660-359-6473

Directions: From Chillicothe at the intersection of US 65 and US 36 (about one half hour (28 miles). Go north on US 65 to Trenton; take the Bus. 65/MO 6 exit, turn left to go through Trenton on 10th Street/MO 6. MO 6 makes a left turn at Main St. Continue on MO 6 west of town, and make a right (north) onto MO 146. MO 146 swings west. Shortly after the sweeping curve west, turn right (north again) onto MO 128 to enter the park at the south end.

To reach the west access to the Thompson River Trail (see below), continue on MO146 west of the turn onto MO 128. At Edinburg turn right (north) onto NW 52nd Ave. and follow it to NW Dove Lane. Make a right onto Dove Ln., which goes into the park and ends at a parking lot.

ADA information: Trails are not paved and terrain is difficult in places. Good birding can be had from the roads, campground, picnic areas and parking lots.

When to Visit/Species to Expect: This is one of the most under-appreciated birding areas in the state, with fewer than 40 visits recorded in eBird since 1992. As an oasis of lake, hills with woods and grasslands surrounded by agricultural land, it provides nesting habitat and/or a welcomed migration stopover for many species.

The 117 species reported is not representative of its potential. Fall and winter months other than one visit in October and late November and a couple in early December are missing in the record. Those few winter trips included Winter Wren, Red Crossbill, Harris's Sparrow, Brown Creeper and Red-breasted Nuthatch sightings.

Spring migration visits are scant, yet 18 species of warblers and five vireos have been found. Waterfowl surely visit the lake during unreported months. Bobwhites, pheasants and turkeys are present. Whip-poor-wills have been reported in May and June.

Features of interest to birders: 18-acre Crowder Lake is the centerpiece of the park and can be scanned from road at several points. The Thompson River runs along the park's north and east sides. The terrain includes rugged ravines, steep-walled valleys, sandstone ledges, as well as bottomland. The stands of mature trees include burr oak, silver maple, sycamore and cottonwood and planted pines. In all but the pine areas (good for crossbills, etc.) the understory is rich in plant diversity, which attracts, shelters and feeds many species.

Any parking area in the park provides a starting point for views or short walks into potentially bird-rich habitat niches. These short ventures can be surprisingly rewarding.

Good views of the lake and the outflow area frequented by waterthrushes and other warblers, wrens, and a variety of woodland birds are given at the dam edge near the dam/trailhead parking lot. A short walk south along the lakeshore from this lot may be rewarded with sparrows, catbirds and warblers in the lakeside scrub vegetation.

Trails from a birding perspective:

Thompson River Trail--8.6-mile trail rated rugged, with north and south loops. The west end access to the north loop (3.75 mile loop) is off NW Dove Ave. as described in directions above. The west end is not rugged, but relatively flat and follows a ridge through a restored prairie, the best grassland area of the park. Good birding for sparrows can be had by walking this portion and backtracking to the parking lot on Dove Ave.

Redbud Trail--1.75-mile loop rated moderate through Ozark highlands-like terrain and habitat. An access point is near the vault toilet in the special-use area (please don't access the trail from this point if it is occupied by a youth camping group). A White Connector loop reduces the length to 1 mile with a return to the special-use area. Another trail access to the full loop is across the road from the tennis court parking area. Species to look for along this trail are what one would expect in woodland settings.

River Forks Trail--2-mile loop with a moderate rating. The trailhead near the east end of the dam (northeast corner of the lake) offers the easiest, nearly flat access to a stretch of the Thompson River. Check it out for Winter Wren and other riparian-loving species in appropriate season. If a shorter than 2 mile jaunt is desired, hike the portion heading north-north-east from the parking lot and retrace your steps from any point before the trail turns south.

Tall Oaks Trail--This 3-mile trail is rated rugged. It passes through nearly all the available habitats in the park, and can be accessed from Shelter #3 (Burr Oak) and from the amphitheater parking lot. There is a .2 mile spur across the dam that connects this trail with the parking lot at the northeast corner of the lake and the trailhead for the River Forks Trail.

Toilets: The campground Showerhouse/restroom is open during camping season. A modern, accessible one is at parking lot is at the northeast corner of the lake (near the dam,). A vault toilet is along a path near the picnic area not shown on the park map at Shelter #3 (Burr Oak) on the west side of the lake, and

another is in the special use area on the ridge top near the park entrance and office.

Camping: The campground is open March through November with basic and electric sites. Reservations can be made for stays during the on-season. For weekend reservations, there is a required two-night minimum stay.

Hazards/Limitations: None other than rugged terrain in some areas.

Nearby Birding Sites: Lake Paho CA, Wayne Helton Mem. W A, Chloe Lowry Marsh NA*, Grand Trace CA*.

*Indicates Birders' Guide available when this guide was written. See <http://www.mobirds.org/Locations/SiteGuides.aspx> for these and additional guides.

CROWDER STATE PARK

LEGEND

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