

CUIVRE RIVER STATE PARK

Bruce Schulte. June 2020

6,426.94 acres Lincoln Co. DeLorme 40, A-2

GPS: 39.0356425,-90.9318584

DNR owned; for more information call

<https://mostateparks.com/park/cuivre-river-state-park>

The park is on The Great Missouri Birding Trail, and is an eBird "hotspot."

Directions: From St. Louis, go west on I-70 or I-64 to Wentzville, turn north onto US 61, then east on MO 47 to the park entrance via MO 147.

From Warrenton on I-70, it is 23.5 miles via MO 47 north to Hawk Point, continuing on MO 47 east to the park via MO 147.

From Wentzville on I-70, go north on US 61, then east on MO 47 to MO 147.

ADA Information: The visitor center, several shelters and other activity areas are accessible (see park information on the state park website for details). Good birding can be done from the 13.6 miles of roads and/or parking and picnic areas.

General Information:

At more than 6400 acres, including the 1872-acre Lincoln Hills Natural Area, Big Sugar Creek NA (56 acres) and George A. Hamilton Forest NA (40 acres), Cuivre River is one of Missouri's larger State Parks. The park is well known for its extensive woodlands. Within this woodland matrix are pockets of denser forest, limestone glades, savanna, native grasslands and old fields still recovering from clearing before establishment of the park in the 1930s. Cuivre River State Park is an IBA (Important Bird Area) that also includes three Missouri Natural Areas, two State Park Wild Areas (Big Sugar Creek and Northwoods) and thousands of acres of Special Ecological Stewardship Areas where prescribed burns and other management activities are restoring the natural communities.

When to Visit/Species to Expect:

The extensive woodlands and scattered grasslands of the park can produce interesting characteristic birds throughout the year, though spring and summer are the highlights with good numbers of transient and summer resident migrants, primarily passerines. Forest interior, woodland, savanna, shrubland and riparian species are well represented.

Among the priority species of conservation importance are the Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Eastern Whip-poor-will, Red-headed Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Blue-winged Warbler, Brown Thrasher, Field Sparrow, Eastern Towhee, Yellow-breasted Chat, Wood Thrush, Worm-eating Warbler, Kentucky Warbler and Cerulean Warbler.

Features of Interest to Birders:

Thirty-nine miles of trails provide access to the full mix of park habitats. The best suited for birding are:

Blazing Star Trail: The two-mile loop of the Blazing Star Trail traverses a mosaic of open woodland, prairie and savanna. Species like Kentucky Warbler, Eastern Towhee, Yellow-breasted Chat, White-eyed Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue-winged Warbler, Indigo Bunting and Common Yellowthroat have been recorded frequently.

Lone Spring Trail: This six-mile trail loops through the northern portion of the park. It is good for forest interior and woodland species like the Ovenbird, Red-eyed Vireo, Scarlet Tanager, Wood Thrush, Eastern Wood-Pewee and Acadian Flycatcher.

Cuivre River Trail – North Loop (northern segment) to Connector 5: This one-mile portion of the trail is an old gravel road that goes from the trailhead to Big Sugar Creek. It can be very good with open woodland on the south, closed woodland to the north and the riparian border along the creek. Along the trail and by the creek warblers including the Cerulean, Yellow-throated, Northern Parula, Kentucky, Ovenbird and Louisiana Waterthrush are commonly found.

Lake Lincoln is a 55-acre lake that is primarily used for fishing and boating and as result gets very little use by waterfowl and other water birds. The 3.5 mile long Lakeside Trail can be good though for woodland birds adjacent to the lake.

For birders who cannot enjoy the trail system, driving the park roads will offer good birding opportunities. Some locations that can make good stops with easy walking include old stone picnic shelter area, the Big Sugar Creek Picnic Area and along the creek, Turkey Hollow trailhead area and the area around the Camp Sherwood Forest entrance. The campground can be pretty good, too.

Toilets: Flush toilets are in the Visitor Center (on Rt. 147). Seasonally open flush toilets are in one picnic area and the campground. Five vault toilets are located around the park.

Camping: 112 reservable sites including basic, electric, and sewer/electric/water and family and platform tent sites; an equestrian campground, three organized group camps, and a special use camping area.

Hazards/Limitations: Park visitation on weekends and holidays can be very heavy. Avoid those days if you can; otherwise, go early.

Nearby Birding Sites:

A number of other good birding sites on public land are located nearby. The White Memorial and William Logan Conservation Areas offer primarily upland habitats. Bordering the Mississippi River, the B.K. Leach, Prairie Slough and Sandy Slough Conservation Areas, Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Refuge and Winfield Lock & Dam #25 provide river border and extensive wetland habitats.

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