

Birders' Guide

Duck Creek Conservation Area

Mark Haas, 2023

6,318 acres, Bollinger, Stoddard, and Wayne Counties,
DeLorme 67, A9.

GPS: 37.0466, -90.0744

MDC owned. For information, call 573-222-3337

Directions: From Puxico, take Highway 51 north 8.5 miles to the area headquarters.

This guide is for the main unit of Duck Creek CA, which includes three eBird hotspots—one for each of the three counties within the area. The Wayne County hotspot is west of Pool 1 and includes Unit A and Unit B, the Luken Farm, and the Pine Grove. The Bollinger County hotspot includes the north half of Pool 1, the area headquarters, and the north quarter of Pool 2. As a reference, hunting blind E2 (in Pool 2) sits right on the east-west boundary line between Bollinger County and Stoddard County. The remainder of the area south of this county line is the Stoddard County hotspot. This includes Pool 3, most of Pool 2, and the south half of Pool 1. Over 200 species have been recorded at each of the three hotspots. A detailed map of the area is highly advisable when birding here, and is available on the MDC website.

ADA Information: There is excellent birding by vehicle throughout the area. Roads that encircle Pools 1, 2, and 3 and into the interior of Units A and B should provide views of waterfowl, waders, shorebirds, woodland birds, and raptors. Accessible fishing docks on the west and east sides of Pool 1 provide good views of the water. There are accessible vault toilets at the campground and area HQ.

When to visit/species to expect: Nearly all of our migratory waterfowl have been seen here, especially in spring migration. You could see thousands of Ring-necked Ducks then. Common Loon and Horned Grebe are also possible at this time. Depending on the timing of seasonal flooding, the area can be very good for migrant shorebirds in some years. Expect all of the resident woodpeckers year-round and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers in winter. Also in winter,

look for Hermit Thrush, Winter Wren, Brown Creeper, kinglets, and Yellow-rumped Warbler. Orange-crowned Warbler is also possible. Fox Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, and Field Sparrow are among the winter sparrows you might see. Of the 30 warblers seen here, most have been reported during spring migration.

In summer, expect Mississippi Kite and all of the common waders, including night-herons. Plus Wood Thrush, Summer Tanager, and all of our woodland vireos and flycatchers. Also, you'll have a good chance for Prothonotary Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, and Yellow-throated Warbler. Other summer possibilities are Common Gallinule and Scissor-tailed Flycatcher. Among the year-round residents are Eastern Phoebe, Eastern Towhee, Black Vulture, and Bald Eagle.

Features of interest to birders: Man-made Pool 1, with 1,800 acres of water visible from the perimeter road, is the crown jewel of this conservation area. This is the best spot for diving ducks and other water birds. With its many standing snags, it swarms with Tree Swallows in summer. Bald Eagles have nested here for many years, and last year Ospreys did too.

Pools 2 and 3 contain nearly 1,500 acres of the bottomland hardwoods that once covered the Bootheel. They are flooded during waterfowl season and are a magnet for Mallards and Wood Ducks. And of course, always prime for woodland birds. Both have perimeter roads and Pool 2 has short spur roads into the interior.

Units A and B are seasonally-flooded herbaceous wetlands. They are your best bet for dabbling ducks, waders, and shorebirds. Waders spotted here since 2020 include White-faced Ibis, Glossy Ibis, White Ibis, Roseate Spoonbill, and Hudsonian Godwit. Units A and B also contain the best winter sparrow habitat on the area. Don't overlook Fish Ponds and Kinder Pool, which on a smaller scale are good for dabblers, shorebirds, and sparrows.

The Pine Grove and the pines around the HQ can be good in season for Pine Warbler and Red-breasted Nuthatch. And it seems that on every birding trip, the campground will produce a species or two that you haven't found elsewhere on the area—especially winter woodland birds.

To access the Bollinger County hotspot, enter at the area HQ on

Hwy 51. For Wayne County, you can enter Unit A from the north via Hwy Z and unit B from the west on CR 513. From the east, enter Unit A at a ditch crossing on the west side of Pool 1. A good strategy for the Stoddard County hotspot is to bird Fish Ponds and Kinder Pool and then enter the main part of the area at the southeast corner of Pool 3 along Hwy 51. Again, a good map will be quite useful at Duck Creek CA.

Picnic Areas: Picnic tables at area HQ and campground

Toilets: Accessible vault toilets at HQ and near campground.

Camping: Primitive campground, with several sites, at the south end of Pool 1.

Hazards/Limitations: Most of the area is closed to the public (except for hunters) from October 15 through the end of duck season (Pools 2, 3, and south part of Pool 1) or from October 15 through the end of Canada Goose season (Units A and B, Luken Farm, and north part of Pool 1). The road around the north end of Pool 1 is one-way (clockwise) and is included in these seasonal closures.

Nearby Birding Sites: Mingo NWR, Duck Creek CA—Greenbrier Unit, Duck Creek CA—Dark Cypress Unit.

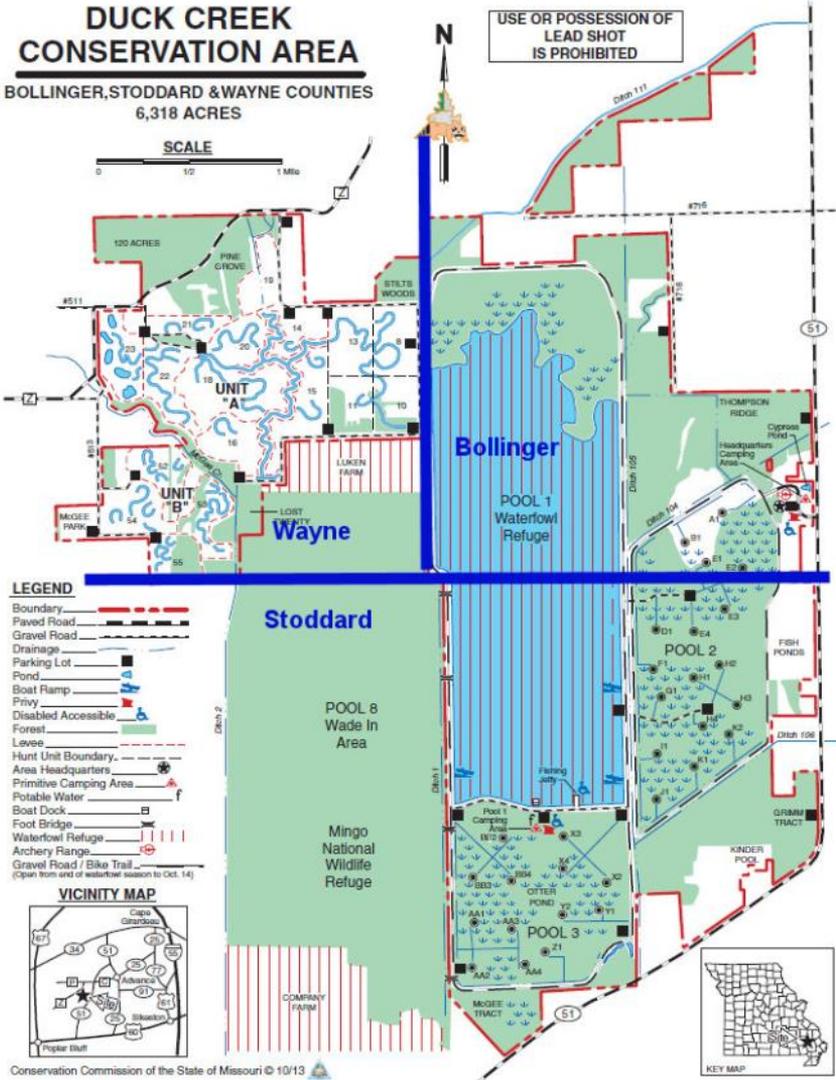
DUCK CREEK CONSERVATION AREA

BOLLINGER, STODDARD & WAYNE COUNTIES
6,318 ACRES

SCALE

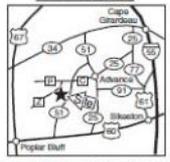


USE OR POSSESSION OF
LEAD SHOT
IS PROHIBITED



- LEGEND**
- Boundary
 - Paved Road
 - Gravel Road
 - Drainage
 - Parking Lot
 - Pond
 - Boat Ramp
 - Privy
 - Disabled Accessible
 - Forest
 - Loose
 - Hunt Unit Boundary
 - Area Headquarters
 - Primitive Camping Area
 - Potable Water
 - Boat Dock
 - Foot Bridge
 - Waterfowl Refuge
 - Archery Range
 - Gravel Road / Bike Trail
- (Open from end of waterfowl season to Oct. 14)

VICINITY MAP



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