

## **LAKE PAHO CONSERVATION AREA**

Edge Wade, 2018

2350 acres Mercer Co. DeLorme 15, H-9

GPS: 40.4103323,-93.6798335

MDC owned; for additional information call 660-646-6122

**Directions:** From US 65 in Princeton, go west on US 136 about 5 miles, then north on MO 145 to access the east side of the area, or continue on US 136 about a quarter-mile to a right turn to access the south end of the lake, or continue a bit further to a right turn into the southwest side of the area.

From I-35 at Bethany, exit onto US 136 and go east about 30 miles to the south end of the area. Make left turns to enter at the points described above.

**ADA Information:** Birding is good from roads and parking areas. Views of the lake are good from several points. There are no paved trails.

**When to Visit/Species to Expect:** As with several birding sites in far north Missouri, this is a potentially great site with too few reported visits (fewer than 15 since 2002) to assess it. There have been only two autumn reports and none for winter, so the use by waterfowl is not shown well in eBird. That said, 18 species of ducks have been seen in March and April. A Common Loon in late October indicates that loons and grebes might be seen in decent numbers with well-timed trips.

Warbler sightings are few—more a reflection of the lack of spring and early autumn reports, rather than lack of presence in the rather limited suitable habitat. An April trip was rewarded with a female Spotted Sandpiper displaying on the fishing jetty. A Red-breasted Nuthatch was seen on a late November visit.

Sparrows are well represented, as are swallows and a good mix of woodland and grassland species should be anticipated.

**Features of interest to birders:** 273-acre Lake Paho is easily viewed from a variety of points with well-placed parking areas. The roughly north-south orientation with a good mix of shallow areas, coves, and deep water toward the dam at the south end promises good waterfowl viewing in season.

The wetland cells at the south end can be seen well from the road to the fishing jetty. When flooded they are a favorite for dabblers and possibly rails.

Allow plenty of time to check out the cove areas by foot or car in campgrounds. Take any short trail available. Campgrounds B and C are definitely worth exploring.

The area near the headquarters at the southwest corner along Fathom Street can be especially birdy. The cove just northwest of the private inholding can be reached by using the nearby parking area on the west side of the road or the "make do" parking lakeside as a quiet approach to birds resting in the cove off the main channel (watch for mud if there have been recent rains).

The two small parking areas along Rt. B provide access to grassland species. Elder Street (the road east of Rt. B at Rt. N) also has a lot with grassland views, and leads to Elk Street (first right turn east of Rt. N). This northeast corner of the area is not often visited and may be birdier than other similar habitat areas.

**Toilets:** 5.; one at each campground area, one near the headquarters at the southwest corner of the lake, one at the fishing jetty at the south end (as of this writing the jetty privy has been leveled).

**Camping:** There are 40 individual sites in 3 campgrounds on the east and north sides of the lake. No amenities beyond pit toilets.

**Hazards/Limitations:** This is a popular fishing lake. Avoid weekends, if possible, especially in warm weather.

**Nearby Birding Sites:** Grand Trace CA\*, Helton Wildlife Area, Crowder SP.\* See <http://www.mobirds.org/Locations/SiteGuides.aspx> for these and additional guides.

