

## A BIRDERS' GUIDE TO MISSOURI PUBLIC LANDS

### **SUGAR CREEK CONSERVATION AREA-UPDATED 12/16/08**

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**2,604 acres Adair Co. DeLorme 23, C/D-7/8**

Directions: From Kirksville go 4 miles west on MO 11, then 1/4 mile south on Rt. N to reach interior parking areas. To reach the northwest lot (J) , continue 1 more mile west on MO 11 and turn left/south onto Yarrow Trail. The parking lot is immediately on the left.

From US 63 in La Plata, go west on Hwy. 156 about 5 miles, then north on MO 3 about 4 miles to Crest Trail, just south of Sugar Creek Community Church. There is no sign to indicate that Sugar Creek CA's parking lot G is only 1/4 mile west on Crest Trail, then west at Foghorn, where Crest Trail goes south.

Continuing south on Crest Trail and staying on it at the junction with Teal leads into the area, connecting with lots on Rt. N.

When to Visit/Species to Expect: Anytime. This is a surprisingly good area for spring warblers, especially the first or second week of May. Forest interior and edge-dwelling passerines can be found in migration and during nesting season.

Ruffed Grouse were restocked here with apparent success early in the program. None have been reported seen or heard in recent years (as of 2008).

Features of interest to birders: Ten parking lots give ample opportunity to sample the area without walking, and provide easy access to the many miles of trails through this unusually large stand of similar-age regenerating forest.

The area was logged in the late 19th and early 20th century, then grazed heavily by goats. Forest regeneration began only after the goats were removed.

When not in use by shooters, the rifle range, shotgun range and immediate vicinity offer an opportunity to look for old field, creek bottom and shrub dwelling species. A concrete walkway connects the two ranges.

In 2008, a small pond was constructed at parking lot G (intersection of Crest Trail and Foghorn Trail.)

A major electrical transmission line runs north-south through the eastern portion of the area. Raptors and forest edge birds may be seen along it. Crest Trail and Foghorn cross it, as does Ironwood trail.

Sugar Creek may be checked for riparian species. It can be viewed from near parking lot F along Crest Trail and from below parking lot I at the end of Foghorn.

Trails: Ironwood trail is a 2-mile hiking trail, off limits to the horse traffic of the other trails. The trailhead is at parking lot H on Foghorn.

Multi-use trails for hiking, biking and horseback are Orange trail (2.2 miles), Blue trail (3.0 miles), and Yellow trail (5.1 miles). These wind through the area and can be accessed from some parking areas and at road crossings.

Toilets: 1 privy at the shooting range.

Camping: Parking lots. Walk-in and backpack camping except during firearms deer and turnkey hunting seasons.

Hazards/Limitations: Shooting and shotgun range. Hiking and bicycling not allowed on the trails during firearms deer and turkey hunting seasons.

Nearby Birding Sites: Big Creek CA, Thousand Hills SP, Hidden Hollow CA, La Plata City Lake