

# Connect US

Your only *FREE* Guide to the  
Federal Lands of Southern Illinois



## Southern Illinois: Wildlife Watcher's Paradise



*A Biannual publication dedicated to the recreational opportunities  
and land management activities on the federal lands in Southern Illinois.*

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Crab Orchard



The U.S. Forest Service  
The Shawnee National Forest



The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Rend Lake



# Calendar of Events

## Have some free time during the Spring and Summer?

Plan a day out with your family and friends exploring what federal lands in southern Illinois have to offer.

### MAY

**May 8**

■ **Crab Orchard NWR Families Understanding Nature (F.U.N.) Program – Red Tailed Hawk** (10:30 AM – Noon). The Red-Tailed hawk is one of the most noticeable hawks in Illinois. Join Free Again Wildlife Rehab as they discuss these graceful creatures at 10:30AM. More fun activities will follow in the Crab Orchard Visitor Center from 11:00 AM to Noon. For more information, please call 618-998-5933.

■ **Crab Orchard NWR International Migratory Bird Day Celebration:** International Migratory Bird Day celebrates the journeys of migratory birds between their breeding grounds and their wintering grounds. Events to be announced. For more information, please call 618-998-5933.



#### Saturdays from Memorial Day to Labor Day

■ **Rend Lake Environmental Science Series.** This summer-long series of family oriented presentations, workshops, and field trips begin the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend at the Rend Lake Visitor Center. Most programs will be at 11:00 AM & 2:00 PM. For a complete listing of the programs, inquire at the Rend Lake Visitor Center, Rend Lake Project Office, or look on the Rend Lake web site at [www.mvs.usace.army.mil/rend](http://www.mvs.usace.army.mil/rend).

**May 29**

■ **Rend Lake E.S.S. Program – The Reptile Experience** (11:00 & 2:00). Come out and meet Serengeti Steve and see a variety of lizards, snakes, and more. This hands-on experience will let you get up close and personal as you pet, touch, and even hold different reptiles as part of this educational program. For more information, please call 618-724-2493.

### JUNE

**June 10**

■ **Rend Lake Beach Blast** (12:00 – 4:00 PM). Come to Rend Lake's South Sandusky Beach for some fun in the sun and games aplenty. This family fun day will have activities with a water safety message for kids of all ages. For more information, please call 618-724-2493.



**June 12**

■ **Crab Orchard NWR Kids Fishing Derby** (8:00 AM to Noon): The Kids Fishing Derby at Prairie Creek Recreation Area is a free event hosted by the Refuge as well as local sponsors and is a wonderful opportunity for families to spend a day together on the Refuge fishing. The Derby is for kids 12 and younger. Registration begins at 8 am. Free lunch will be provided for participants and their families. For more information, please call 618-998-5933.

■ **Shawnee National Forest Fishing Derby:** Fishing Derbies at Glen O. Jones and Lake Glendale. These youth events held on Illinois free fishing day are designed to get kids out-of-doors. It is a fun day for all with prizes for participants. Check the Shawnee National Forest website at <http://fs.usda.gov/shawnee> in May 2010 for additional details.

■ **Rend Lake E.S.S. Program – Disc Golf** (11:00 AM & 2:00 PM). Looking for some fun and exercise, no matter your age and skill? Then come out to learn about and try your hand at the fun sport of Disc Golf. For more information, please call 618-724-2493.

**June 19**

■ **Rend Lake E.S.S. Program – Wildlife Rehabilitation** (11:00 AM & 2:00 PM). Pam Sundeen from Second Nature Wildlife Rehabilitation enlightens visitors on why some animals need our help. You will see some of the baby critters that come to the rehab center, learn how they are taken care of, and find out what you can do to help. For more information, please call 618-724-2493.

### JULY

**July 3 & 4**

■ **Rend Lake Best Dam BBQ Contest & Fireworks Festival.** Plan to come for two days of fun, entertainment, games, live music, and good food at the Rend Lake Visitor Center. The Best Dam BBQ Contest will be open July 3rd from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. There will be a special area just for kids. Sunday's gates open at 4:00 PM, with a \$5.00 donation for parking. One of the region's largest fireworks displays will be seen around Rend Lake at 9:30 PM on July 4th. For more information, please call 618-438-2121.

**July 10**

■ **Crab Orchard NWR Families Understanding Nature (F.U.N.) Program – White Tailed Deer** (10:30 AM – Noon). Stop by the Crab Orchard Visitor Center to visit with Free Again Wildlife Rehab and a live deer to learn some interesting facts about this popular creature at 10:30 AM. More fun activities will follow in the Crab Orchard Visitor Center from 10:00 AM to Noon. For more information, please call 618-998-5933.

■ **Rend Lake E.S.S. Program – Introduction to Fishing** (11:00 AM & 2:00 PM). Find out the basics of one of our greatest pastimes. You'll learn how to tie a secure knot, which baits to use for what fish, and how to handle a fish when you get it out of the water. For more information, please call 618-724-2493.

**July 17**

■ **Rend Lake E.S.S. Program – Birds of Prey** (11:00 AM & 2:00 PM). Bev Shofstall of Free Again Wildlife Rehab will have several live birds of prey on hand for you to see up close and learn about in this educational program. For more information, please call 618-724-2493.

### AUGUST

**August 14**

■ **Crab Orchard NWR Families Understanding Nature (F.U.N.) Program – Vulture** (10:30 AM – Noon). Come on out to the Visitor Center for an in depth look at some of our scavenger friends with Free Again Wildlife Rehab and a live Vulture at 10:30 AM. More fun "vulture" activities from 11:00 AM to Noon. For more information, please call 618-998-5933.

**August 21**

■ **Rend Lake E.S.S. Program – Owls** (11:00 AM & 2:00 PM). Whooo makes those noises at night? Bev Shofstall of Free Again Wildlife Rehab will show you when she brings some live owls to the Rend Lake Visitor Center. For more information, please call 618-724-2493.

**August 28**

■ **Rend Lake E.S.S. Program – Astronomy** (Time TBA). Greg Hollman of Rend Lake College will bring introduce you to star gazing and astronomy in the evening skies over Rend Lake. For more information, please call 618-724-2493.

### SEPTEMBER

**September 11**

■ **Crab Orchard NWR Families Understanding Nature (F.U.N.) Program – Reptile and Amphibian** (10:30 AM – Noon). Come out to the Crab Orchard Visitor Center to learn all about these cool creature. Live reptiles and amphibians will be presented and you can hold them too! For more information, please call 618-998-5933.

**September 18**

■ **Crab Orchard NWR Butterfly Roundup** (10:00 AM to Noon): Monarch Butterflies travel through our area each year on their way to spend the cold months of winter in Mexico. Visitors are invited to help catch and tag these butterflies as they feed and rest at Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge. Reservations are recommended. For more information, please call 618-998-5933.

■ **Crab Orchard NWR Clean Up** (8:00 AM – 1:00 PM): The Friends of Crab Orchard Refuge will be hosting the annual Crab Orchard Clean Up at the Prairie Creek Recreation Area. Spend the day outdoors and help keep Crab Orchard beautiful. For more information, please call 618-998-5933.

**September 24-26**

■ **National Hunting & Fishing Days Celebration:** Come join us out at John A. Logan College in Carterville for the annual Hunting and Fishing Days, where people come from all over Southern Illinois go to learn more about, and experience the joys of hunting and fishing. For more information, please call 618-998-5933.



**September 25**

■ **Rend Lake Cleanup & National Public Lands Day** (8:00 AM – 1:00 PM). Get your team together and be part of helping keep our Federal Lands beautiful by cleaning the road sides and shoreline of Rend Lake. After helping clean up, the volunteers will be treated to a free lunch, a free commemorative t-shirt, and a chance at a raffle drawing. For more information, please call 618-724-2493.

*For more information about recreational opportunities, exhibits, or activities, visit one of the offices and visitor centers on your Federal lands.*

**Rend Lake Visitor Center**  
10833 Rend Lake Dam Road  
Benton, IL 62812  
618-439-7430

**Crab Orchard Visitor Center**  
8588 Route 148  
Marion, IL 62959  
618-998-5933

Open: 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM  
March 28-May 23 (Weekends)  
May 20-August 15 (Wednesday- Sunday)  
August 21-October 23 (Weekends)

Open: 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM Daily

**Shawnee National Forest:** Supervisor's office: 618-253-7114

**Hidden Springs Ranger Station**  
602 N. First Street  
Route 45 North  
Vienna, Illinois 62995  
(618) 658-2111

**Mississippi Bluffs Ranger Station**  
521 N. Main  
Jonesboro, IL 62952  
(618) 833-8576

Open: 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM Daily

Open: 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM Daily

# Rend Lake: A Birder's Paradise

If you were told that there is an inexpensive activity that can get you outdoors; help you reconnect with and enjoy nature; help you to relax; can help you enjoy exercising; can include the whole family, no matter age or physical ability; promotes learning; helps the local economy; and is like a treasure hunt each time you do it, would you be interested? Well, 48 million people in the United States, approximately 21% of the population, have said they are interested. The activity is bird watching or birding, which is defined as a person who observes and identifies wild birds in their natural surroundings as a hobby.

Bird watching can be as simple as watching birds from your window on a feeder in the yard. It can be part of a camping trip to Rend Lake as a friendly competition to see who in the family can identify and record the most birds seen around the campsite. Another birding opportunity might include watching the chaotic movement of 15 hummingbirds at the feeders while visiting the Rend Lake Visitor Center. Or,

you are already a die-hard birder, Rend Lake offers you unlimited opportunities to enjoy this hobby. As part of the Mississippi Flyway migration route, Rend Lake not only has the resident birds but also has the potential for many rare visitors appearing at different times of the year. The chance of seeing differ-

ent species is also multiplied by the many different types of habitats that are around Rend Lake, including wetlands, mud flats, prairies, old fields, and forests. In fact, Sheryl Devore, author of the Birding Illinois Guide Book, states: "A total of 272 bird species have been documented here and in the nearby

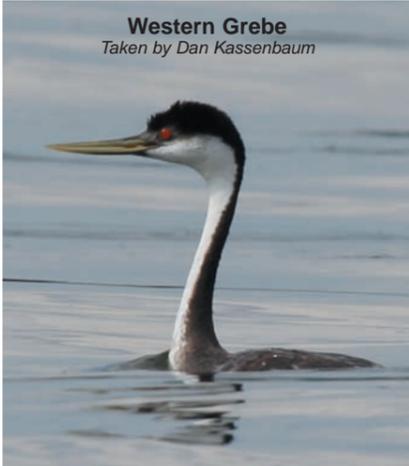
Wayne Fitzgerald State Park, among them, 35 shorebird species."

So, when is the best time to come looking? The short answer is – any time. No matter when you are at Rend Lake, if you keep your eyes open, you are sure to see birds anywhere on the lake. For dedicated viewing, the morning is generally the best time for the "hunt." The birds are more active and apt to be calling early in the morning. As for

seasons, each offers its own special treasures. Spring and fall migrations; March-May and July-November offer the chance to see birds that normally don't live at Rend Lake, like snowy owls, red-throated loons and hudsonian godwits. The summer brings such visitors to the lake as double

Crested Cormorants and Osprey. And, if you are lucky, you might see some of the resident Bald Eagles during the summer! The peak time to see the most species is late April through mid-May when the majority of neotropical migrants, birds that winter in the tropics, are headed

northbound to nesting areas around Rend Lake and places further to the north. In early July, several shorebird species begin their long journey south stopping at mudflats around Rend Lake and other suitable spots for foraging and resting. The fall migration is rather long and drawn out often into late October and early



**Western Grebe**  
Taken by Dan Kassenbaum



**Horned Grebe** Taken by Dan Kassenbaum

for the serious birder, it may include straining your ears in the pre-dawn dark of a brisk December morn to capture that elusive 100th species during the Rend Lake Christmas Bird Count.

If bird watching interests you or if



**White-eyed Vireo**  
Taken by Dan Kassenbaum



**Kentucky Warbler**  
Taken by Dan Kassebaum

November, when large rafts of waterfowl and big groups of American White Pelicans frequent Rend Lake.

Where is the best place to see birds on Rend Lake?

The answer would depend on what kind of birds you are looking. Shore birds, eagles, and warblers all have favorite haunts.

On the north end of Rend Lake, shorebirds abound in many locations, including mud flats just south of the Casey Fork sub-impoundment dam when the lake level is around 407 NGVD in August and September or most times of the year in the Ward Branch area. Ward Branch and the Rend Lake Fish & Wildlife Management areas are both excellent for waterfowl viewing. Check out the viewing tower in the Refuge for a good viewing and photography



**Black-necked Stilt** Taken by Dan Kassenbaum

On the south end of the lake, the Rend Lake Wetland Complex, south of the Rend Lake Dam, is a perfect location to see waterfowl, shorebirds, and woodland birds in one location. Easy access to the Rend City Wetlands levees is available by

a pedestrian trail from River Road or from the Rend Lake Bike Trail. Wading birds can be seen throughout the summer. Blue-winged teal arrive in August and September on their journey southward. Rend City Wetlands is one of the easier places in the area to observe bald eagles.



**Red-necked Phalarope** Taken by Dan Kassenbaum

opportunities. Want to be impressed? Check out one of the large bottomland forests of Rend Lake where scattered colonies of great blue herons may be spotted. The Atchison Creek wetland levee offers easy viewing of 10-15 pairs of nesting great blue herons.

For more specific details on locations, directions, and species you might find in a specific area, stop by the Rend Lake Visitor Center and pick up a Watchable Wildlife Guide, a Rend Lake Bird Checklist and a map of the area.

# Watchable Wildlife is Everywhere at Rend Lake

Rend Lake is managed by the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. It offers an unbelievable number of opportunities for visitors to enjoy wildlife.

Over 40,000 acres of water and land provide diverse habitats for a variety of wildlife species. Constructed levee systems provide wetland habitat for geese, ducks, frogs and turtles, as well as aquatic mammals, such as muskrats and beaver. Not to fret, the forests and fields surrounding Rend Lake support many wildlife viewing opportunities as well. Whether you're an outdoor recreationist, sportsmen, or bird watcher, you're sure to spot white-tailed deer, a species that can be found in abundance in the area. Drivers beware! A casual drive around the area in early evening is sure to provide a sighting of a doe and fawn or a massive buck. The network of roads in Wayne Fitzgerald State Park provides excellent photographic opportunities.

Various habitat management programs enhance wildlife numbers and provide viewing opportunities for everyone. Prairie grass areas are burned to remove thatch and undesired brush. Prescribed burning is regulated by a preapproved burning plan. The plan prescribes wind speed and direction, desired humidity, and a safety line construction around each field to contain the burning grasses. Within a few days after a burn, grasses and forbs begin to appear to change the area to a green oasis.

Green-tree wetlands in the Gun Creek and Rend City Wetland complexes, are oak forests that are flooded with shallow water levels in the fall and winter. The presence of water in these areas allows for greater access to acorns, hickory nuts, and other forest foods that dabbling ducks, such as mallards and other wetland wildlife species feed on. The water is removed in the early spring to allow for tree growth.

Water levels in wetlands are controlled through water control struc-



tures. Water is held in the wetland management areas in the fall and slowly released in the spring and early summer. This promotes the growth of native seed producing plants like smartweed and wild millet. Shorebirds feed in the slowly exposed moist soil areas. Raccoons also find much to eat in these mudflats. Native plants provide low cost, nutritious foods for wetland visitors. Some wetland areas may be planted in Japanese millet or corn to promote use by waterfowl in the fall. With so many kinds of food, wetlands are always a hot spot for wildlife viewing.



Open fields around the lake, including many fields on the west side of the lake by the Franklin/Jefferson county line, may be planted in row crops (corn, soybeans, and milo) or food plots. The agriculture areas are leased to local farmers. A four to five year plan is followed so that the crops are altered in each field every year. Your favorite wildlife watching corn field this year may be planted in soybeans the next year. Winter



wheat may be planted after the soybeans are harvested to provide browse for deer, turkey, and geese during the winter. A portion of the row crops is not harvested, but left for wildlife use. Food plots may contain brown millet, sunflowers, milo, or clover. Each year, some areas are left unplanted to become weedy. This habitat is great for song birds, quail, and rabbits. Flocks of reintroduced wild turkeys can be seen during the winter in

food plot fields. Hens and poult of various sizes can be found throughout the summer along agricultural field roadways. Strutting gobblers are found in the spring in woodlands and food plots. Roadways entering Rend Lake recreation areas are excellent locations to see turkeys almost daily. Plan your next visit to the lake with wildlife in mind.

Nearby at Wayne Fitzgerald State Park, one might get in position to spot a ring-necked pheasant. For more skilled observers, put your skills to the test in fields adjacent to the lake at Ward Branch and Ken Gray where almost yearly there are opportunities to see a buff-breasted sandpiper.

Rend Lake offers these Watchable Wildlife opportunities and more. Designated Watchable Wildlife viewing areas are the Rend Lake Refuge observation stand, the Gun Creek levees, and the Atchison Creek levees. Look for the binocular logo around the lake and pick up a free Watchable Wildlife Guide at the Rend Lake Visitor Center or the Rend Lake Project Office.

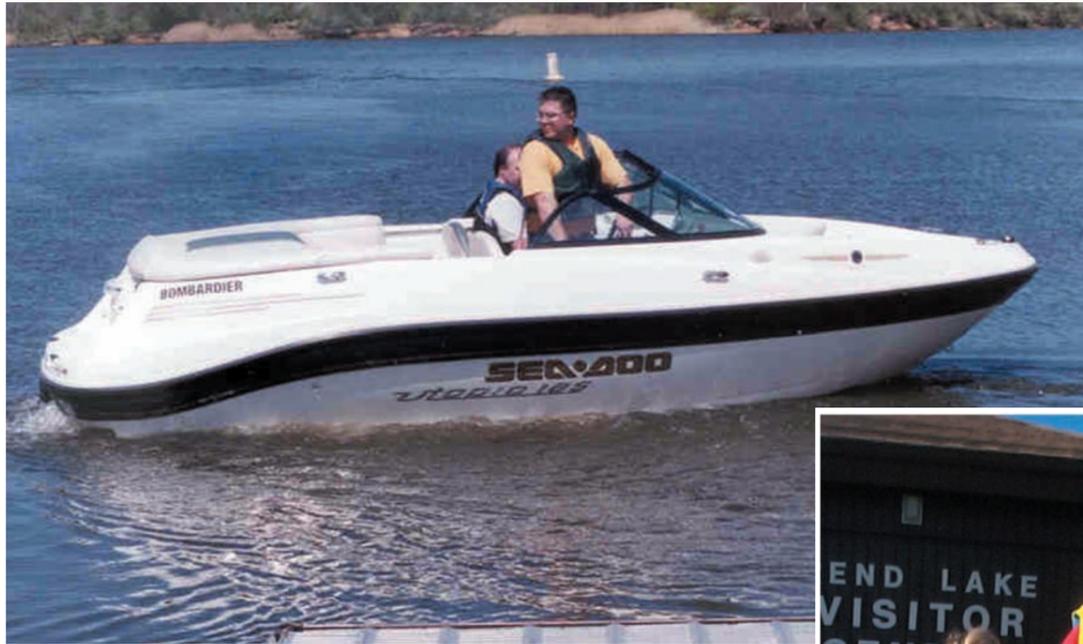


# Rend Lake offers a Splashin' Good Time

Whether you are looking for some relaxing peace and quiet; a chance for wildlife viewing; fishing opportunities; or some wet and splashing fun in the sun for the upcoming spring and summer, Rend Lake provides it all in the line of water based recreation. Visitors will find many different opportunities for affordable family fun at Rend Lake.

The enticing waters of Rend Lake accommodate everything from rubber rafts and paddleboats to personal watercraft and houseboats. Rend Lake provides over 18,900 acres of opportunities to enjoy water based recreational activities.

If it's fishing that the doctor has prescribed, look no further. Rend Lake boasts some of the best fishing in the state. A recent Department of Natural Resource survey shows fishing of



Excellent boating facilities and services are available on and around the lake.

For your boating needs, the Rend Lake Marina is conveniently located off Rend City Road. Boat repair services; slip rentals; winter boat storage; bait; and boat and personal watercraft sales and supplies are available from the Rend Lake Marina. Pontoon boats and fishing boats are available to rent. Contact the Rend Lake Marina at (618)724-7651 for more information.

Rend Lake Resort also offers boating supplies. The Resort is located at the north end of the Wayne Fitzgerald State Park and offers courtesy docks, marine fuel, and boat rentals. The Blue Heron Store offers a full range of items for picnic supplies or a quick ice cream break. The Resort also features overnight lodging facilities, cabins, a restaurant, a banquet facility, tennis courts, and a swimming pool. Contact the Rend Lake Resort at (618)629-2211 for more information.

Rend Lake's South Sandusky Beach offers an area if you want to take a break from boating or simply don't boat or fish. The beach is located off of Rend City Road in the

South Sandusky Day Use area, on the lake's southwest side. South Sandusky Beach offers a large sand area; ample room to moor your boat; a buoyed swim area; shaded picnic sites for grilling; a playground area for the kids; beach volleyball; foot showers; a large shower house; and two picnic shelters that can be reserved. This site is the perfect spot for having a picnic or spending a day of fun in the sun with family and friends.

The North Marcum Recreation area has a "boat-in rest area" where boaters can get off the water and give their sea-legs a rest. The North Marcum Boat-in Rest Areas offers many facilities including a sand area for beaching the boat; restrooms and showers for making those necessary visits; tables for a lakeside picnic; playground equipment for the youngsters to burn some energy and a beach volleyball court to get a friendly or competitive game of volleyball going.

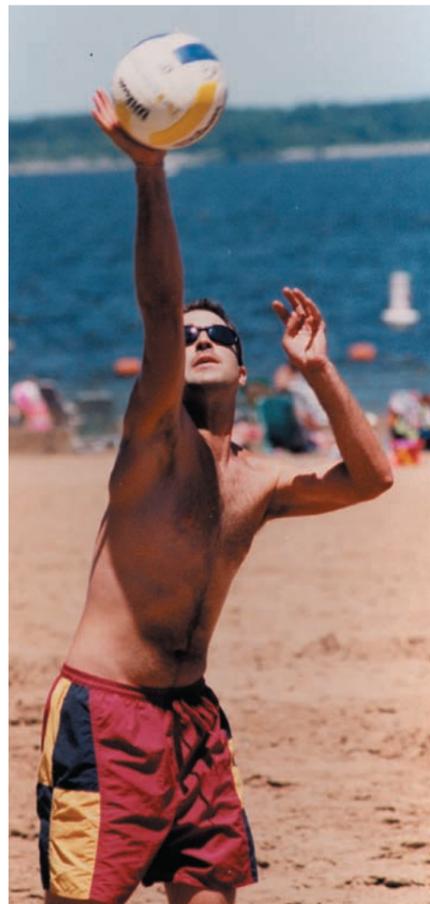
No matter what water based recreation you choose at Rend Lake this spring and summer, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers wants to remind visitors to be safe while having fun! While the best thing to do is to always wear your life jacket when



you are on or around the water, you should also learn to swim. Always keep safety in mind when enjoying the water at Rend Lake. Check out the handbook of Illinois boating laws and responsibilities before you prepare to venture out on the water. This handbook is available at the Rend Lake Visitor Center or online at <http://www.boat-ed.com/il/handbook/pfds.htm>.

Keep your children safe and keep in mind that by law, life jackets are required to be worn by children under the age of 13 on vessels less than 26 feet in length when underway, unless they are below decks in an enclosed cabin. For youth that are in need of a life jacket, the Rend Lake Visitor Center offers a Life Jacket Loaner program. Through this program, you may borrow youth and adult life jackets for a day, free of charge. For more information on this program, stop by the Rend Lake Visitor Center.

*Remember life jackets save lives!*



several species of fish to be favorable on Rend Lake, including: Largemouth Bass, Crappie, White Bass, Hybrid Striped Bass, Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish and Bluegill. Pack up your bait, tackle, and pole and come out to enjoy the fishing opportunities at Rend Lake. Don't worry if you forget something or run out of bait, a variety of bait and tackle shops nearby can meet all your needs. Fishing reports, fish attractor location maps and GPS coordinates are available at the Rend Lake Visitor Center or online on the Rend Lake homepage at <http://www.mvs.usace.army.mil/rend/New/WhatsNew.htm>.

Boating is one of the most popular water activities at Rend Lake. Whether it be cruising across the lake; sitting at a quiet fishing hole; or even a quiet paddle in a protected cove, you're sure to get a good look at the form and function of Rend Lake. Upon arrival, you'll find 27 strategically located boat ramps to assist in getting you on the water with ease. Many of these ramps have courtesy docks to assist you in launching and retrieving your boat.



# U.S. Forest Service

## Shawnee National Forest Grasslands Restoration Project

By: Rod McClanahan

Early explorers traveling through Illinois recorded in their journals seeing vast open grasslands and prairies, where elk and American bison were abundant. While such open prairie habitats were not as extensive throughout southern Illinois, open grassland prairie habitat was widespread and scattered. Today's majestic mature hardwood forests of southern Illinois are beautiful to behold, but they do not resemble the forest conditions that prevailed in southern Illinois in the 1800's. A combination of timber harvesting and the lack of fire have created forestlands much more densely stocked than that which existed in the 1800's. Much of the open grasslands of the 1800's has been converted to agricultural row crops, fescue pastureland, shopping malls, housing subdivisions, industrial sites or red cedar and hardwood thickets.

The tallgrass prairie that once existed east of the Mississippi River is now considered a critically endangered ecosystem because it has declined by 99 percent. The native prairie that historically covered over 100,000 square kilometers in Illinois has now been reduced to 10.4 square kilometers. The reduction of open places has resulted in significant population reductions of those wildlife species that depend upon open grasslands for their survival. Grassland birds are experiencing some of the greatest population declines of any group of North American birds. This decline has been evidenced by population trend data from the annual US Fish and Wildlife Service Breeding Bird Survey, a continent-wide survey that has been conducted since 1966. Nine out of fourteen



grassland bird species that occur east of the Mississippi River declined more than 2 percent per year from the mid to late 1990's. Additionally, 61 percent of grassland breeding species in North America have experienced a significant negative population trend during the period from 1966-2007. Other vertebrate and invertebrate species associated with openlands and grasslands that are showing population declines include Bell's vireo, Bewick's wren, bobolink, loggerhead shrike, yellow-breasted chat, prairie warbler, short-eared owl, Henslow's sparrow, cobweb skipper and Bachman's sparrow. Species, such as the Bachman's sparrow, are believed to no longer exist in Illinois.



### Since 2006, the following acres of openlands treatments have been carried out on Shawnee National Forest lands:

■ Prescribe burning	2500 acres
■ Dozer clearing/brush removal	205 acres
■ Hardland disking	800 acres
■ Farm tractor disking	665 acres
■ Mechanical mowing	360 acres
■ Seeding of annual food plantings	535 acres
■ Seeding of prairie grass/forbs plantings	285 acres

The Henslow's sparrow is one of the most rapidly declining grassland bird species in North America, with an adjusted annual rate of decline of -3.84 percent from 1966-2007. Their population has decreased by an estimated 91 percent since 1966. Henslow's sparrow still exists on the Shawnee National Forest in scattered disconnected patches of grown up grasslands and ungrazed fescue pastures.

One of the most well-known and popular game bird species in Illinois associated with open grassland habitats is the northern bobwhite quail. Northern bobwhite

populations have been declining at an alarming rate during the past three decades. Various organized bird surveys indicate that bobwhite populations have undergone significant population declines in 77 percent of the states within their geographic range. The number of upland game bird hunters pursuing the bobwhite quail in Illinois has steadily declined in the past 10-20 years.

Because of a concern for the rapid disappearance of these valuable open places in southern Illinois, in 2003 the Shawnee National Forest initiated an inventory across the Forest to determine the number of acres that had potential for openland restoration. With the assistance and

tributed approximately \$215,200 toward this cooperative effort to restore and enhance open grassland habitats on the Shawnee National Forest.

In addition to the habitat improvements that have been carried out, the Forest established a cooperative agreement with researchers at the Cooperative Wildlife Research Center at Southern Illinois University to monitor bird populations within several of the openland restoration areas. Each year researchers at SIU conduct bird surveys at established points to monitor population trends of grassland birds within the selected openland areas. Initial survey results suggest marked increases in many grassland birds, including Henslow's sparrow.

The Forest goal is to have the active phase of openland restoration completed by 2015, at which time open grassland habitats would be maintained through a combination of prescribe burning, mowing and seeding of annual food and cover plantings. In 2010, the Illinois Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation will be contributing \$20,000 toward the rental of a contract helicopter for prescribed burning of openlands and other forested areas. Partners have been the key component of the Shawnee National Forest Openlands Restoration Program. Through this cooperative effort, the abundance of openlands and open places will become more abundant, more productive and support a greater diversity of plant and animal species.

input from outside cooperators, the Forest identified 12 areas across the Forest, comprising over 2200 acres to be prioritized for openlands restoration. Intensive grassland restoration began in earnest in 2006 through a cooperative agreement involving the Shawnee National Forest, National Wild Turkey Federation, Illinois Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation, Quail Unlimited, River Oaks Chapter of Quail Unlimited, Pheasants Forever/Quail Forever, Heartland Utilities and Illinois Department of Natural Resources. These partners provided funding, equipment, labor and/or materials with which to increase the abundance of open grasslands on national forest lands. Since 2006, these partners have con-

One of many small ponds in the Shawnee National Forest.





# Shawnee National Forest Recreational Site Index



## Shawnee National Forest Recreation Sites

	Campsites	Picnic Shelter	Picnic Units	Electric	Fishing	Drinking Water	Restrooms	Dumalina	Hiking	Showers	Fees	Open for Use
<b>MISSISSIPPI BLUFFS RANGER DISTRICT</b>												
Buttermilk Hill Day Use Area (Boat-in)			10		•		◆		•			All year (Restroom closed in winter)
Johnson Creek Recreation Area												
<i>Swim Area (Memorial – Labor Day)</i>		2 ◆	10		◆	◆	◆		•			Memorial to Labor Day Dawn to Dusk
<i>Boat Launch</i>		1			•		•		•			All year
<i>Group Camping</i>	20						•	•	•		\$10-\$15	3/16-12/15
Lincoln Memorial		1	3			◆	◆		•			All year 6AM-10:00PM
Little Grand Canyon			2				◆		•			All year 6AM-10:00PM
McGee Hill Picnic Area			1									All year 6AM-10:00PM
Oakwood Bottoms Interpretive Site		1			◆				◆			All year 6AM – 10:00PM
Pine Hills Campground	13				•		◆				\$10	March 16 – Dec 15
Pomona Natural Bridge			1						•			All Year 6AM-10:00PM
Winters Pond Picnic Area			1		•							All year
<b>HIDDEN SPRINGS RANGER DISTRICT</b>												
Bell Smith Springs Recreation Area												
<i>Redbud Campground</i>	21					•	◆		•		*\$10	3/15 – 12/15
<i>Bell Smith Springs Trail System</i>									•			All year
Camp Cadiz Campground	11						•		•		\$10	All Year
Hickory Ridge Boat Launch at Lake of Egypt				•	•							All year
Dutchman Lake Recreation Area				•	•				•			All year
Garden of the Gods Recreation Area												
<i>Observation Trail</i>						◆	◆		◆			All year 6AM-10:00PM
<i>Pharaoh Campground</i>	12					◆	◆		•		\$10	All year
<i>Picnic Area</i>		8					•					All year
High Knob Lookout Picnic Area		2							•			Seasonally 6AM-10:00PM
Illinois Iron Furnace Historic Site		10			•		◆					All year 6AM-10:00PM
Lake Glendale Recreation Area												
<i>Oak Point Campground</i>	57		31		•	•	◆	•	•	◆	*Sgl \$12/Sgl Elec \$18 *Dbl \$24/Dbl Elec \$36	All year
<i>Pine Point Picnic Area</i>		20			◆		◆		•			Memorial Day Labor Day 6AM-10PM
<i>Swim Area</i>					•		◆			◆	*\$3.50 adult *\$2.50 under six years	Memorial Day – Labor Day 10AM-6PM Mon-Sat 12PM-6PM Sun
<i>Cardinal Bay Boat Launch</i>				•	•							All year
<i>Duck Bay Group Camping</i>		9			•	•	•		•		618-949-3807  for group info	4/01-12/15
<i>Goose Bay Picnic Area</i>		23			•	•	◆		•			All year 6AM-10PM
Millstone Bluff Archaeological Area							◆		•			3/15 – 12/15
Pounds Hollow Recreation Area												
<i>Pine Ridge Campground</i>	35					•	•		•		\$10	4/1 – 12/15
<i>Swim Area (No lifeguard on duty)</i>		6 ◆			◆	◆	◆		•			4/1- Oct 6AM -10PM
Rim Rock National Recreation Trail		4					◆		◆			All year 6AM-10PM
Tower Rock Recreation Area				•	•				•			5/01 – 12/15

ALL CAMPSITES AND PICNIC AREAS ON THE SHAWNEE NATIONAL FOREST ARE FIRST-COME, FIRST-SERVE  
-- NO RESERVATIONS ACCEPTED

\*FEES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

◆ Accessible for people with disabilities

Call concessionaire Bill Nolen at (618) 949-3807 for group information

Equestrian camping is permitted at Camp Cadiz and Johnson Creek Group Camping.

# U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

## The Amazement of Spring

The little warblers, just a few months ago, passed through Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge heading for more southerly climate, looking as gray and somber as the leaden winter skies. They will return with the coming blooms of spring, as riotously colored and patterned as any flower. After months of the elusive and muted hues of winter, your eyes will be spellbound.

These amazing changes in plumage, and the migration itself, are all part of the breeding season, and it's the major event for birds as they go about their various endeavors. It is a great time for the bird watchers, too! After the migration passes bird watchers still have the excitement associated with the activities of all the birds that breed locally. From songbirds to warblers to eagles, there is plenty here to keep it interesting.

This is the time nature's musicians really crank it up as they set about wooing a mate or proclaiming a territory. From the flute-like song of the wood thrush to the nonsensical gobbledegook of the yellow-breasted chat, the Refuge resonates with all



manner of chirps and whistles.

Nature's builders also get busy. Nest construction and refurbishing is primary activity during this time of year and birds can be seen collecting bits of materials for that purpose. Examples of their handiwork can be found throughout the Refuge. Nest range in size from those of the ruby-throated hummingbird which are no larger than a thimble, to those of the

bald eagle, which can get as large as a VW beetle. They vary in sophistication from elaborate designs like those of the vireos to simple scratches in the sand which suffice as the nest for some shorebirds.

Perhaps the most interesting seasonal behavior birds exhibit, centers around their parenting activities. In this they are truly nature's role models. Most birds are good providers.

All during the daylight hours they work tirelessly to supply the necessary-seed, worm or insect to satisfy the demands of their offspring. These constantly imploring tufts of down are attached to huge, gaping beaks that open wider than I would seem possible at the slightest hint that daddy's home with the bacon. Even as fledglings, they continue to harass their parents with their incessant "feed me" behaviors. Only by now, because the goofball way the feathers on their heads stick up and puff out, they have gone from looking like they are all mouth to looking like Bozo the Clown of some kind of spike-haired punk rocker. Nevertheless, the dutiful parents pre-serve. Amazing!

There are all kinds of amazing things at Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge: romance, music and architecture.

Sources:  
**Neil Vincent**  
Crab Orchard NWR  
**Kevin Rhodes**  
Shawnee Community College

## Drying out the Refuge's Wetlands?

Currently refuge biologists are removing stop-logs from water control structures at the a-41 moist soil management complex in order to maximize seed production. Say what!!! We're draining ponds to grow more weeds. Oh...Okay. That's why water levels are going down in many of the smaller refuge impoundments, such as Observation pond and area 41 moist soil unit, in spite of excessive rains during the past several weeks. Not to worry, this is only a temporary measure. Later this year, when large numbers of shore birds and water fowl begin arriving at the Refuge, these seasonal wetlands will contain plenty of water to satisfy the needs of these spectacular birds.

Manipulating water levels in shallow ponds on the Refuge is one management strategy commonly used to provide the best possible habitat and food supply for various species of migratory birds. Lowering water levels in the spring accomplishes several things. Mud flats become exposed and are heavily used for feeding of shore birds like lesser yellowlegs and spotted sand piper, which are migrating north for the breeding season. Plants adapted to growing in saturated soils, such as spike rush and wild Millet, sprout and begin growing on these exposed soils. By the end of the summer these "moist soil" plants will have produced lots of seed that will be an important source of wildlife food, particularly to migrating waterfowl in the fall. Providing additional shallow water in the spring makes submerged seed and aquatic insects more available to dabbling ducks, such as mallards and blue wing teal. Manipulating water levels can also be used to prevent the spread of unde-



sirable plants such as cocklebur and willow.

Later this summer the process will be reversed and water levels will be raised in these same wetlands. Mudflats and shallow water will again be available for numerous species of shore birds and waterfowl begins to move south for the winter. Not counting on the three large reservoirs, Crab Orchard, Little Grassy and Devils Kitchen lakes, there are many water impoundments on the Refuge. Approximately 20 of these wetlands are managed on a seasonal basis by possible habitat for migratory birds. The Refuge's shallow water habitat will greatly enhance this summer upon completion of the heron flats Wetland.

Refuge personnel just completed a major construction project at Heron

Flats. Heron Flats is a large, bottomland crop field located on the west side of Hwy. 148 just south of the public observation deck. The construction project included extending an existing levee along the western edge of the field and installing a culvert. With a stop-log water control structure in the main drainage ditch. This will enable Refuge biologist to hold shallow water over eighty acres. Heron Flats will be managed primarily for providing mud flats and shallow water for migrating shore and wading birds. In addition, tremendous benefits should be gained for dabbling ducks, Canada geese, and many other species of wetland loving wildlife. Funding for construction of this project came from a variety of sources including Fish and Wildlife Service nongame bird funds and contributions from the phoenix Audubon Society.

A GROUP OF SIU-C engineering students, led by Mr. Roy Frank, surveyed the site and created a relief map of 0.5 foot contour intervals that was used during the construction phase, and will be used for future management of the area as well. Members of the Phoenix Audubon Society have been conducting bird surveys at Heron Flats since August 1994. A data base is being compiled of bird sighting at the areas in order to measure the changes of avian use resulting from enhancing the wetland site. If Mother Nature cooperates with dry weather the Refuge staff expects to complete the project later this summer.

By providing high quality wetland habitat Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge will continue to be a valuable area for a variety of migratory and resident wildlife populations.

# National Wildlife Refuges of Southernmost Illinois Spring/Summer Recreation Opportunities

The National Wildlife Refuges (NWR) of Southernmost Illinois is far more than a haven for wild plants and animals. Thousands of visitors visit these natural wonders to enjoy a variety of outdoor activities beyond their staple recreational activities of hunting and fishing. Additional recreation opportunities exist there such as wildlife observation, camping, boating, birding, hiking, picnicking, photography and a variety of special events. Though Crab Orchard NWR in Carterville, IL and Cypress Creek NWR in Ullin, IL boast some similarities, but recreational opportunities exist that are unique to each.

## Crab Orchard NWR

If one chooses to spend the day at Crab Orchard NWR, they may find themselves boating or fishing one of the three major bodies of water there, with approximately 9,000 surface acres. With 14 well kept boat ramps and several other areas around the water's edge developed just for bank fishing. Others may choose one of the several ponds located throughout the refuge that can provide excellent bank fishing opportunities where a more secluded experience is made possible. If fishing is not on your list of recreations to-do's this spring and summer there's still something for you at Crab Orchard NWR. Many hiking opportunities exist as well. A variety of trails offer visitors numerous opportunities to experience the year round beauty of the refuge. Trails meander through pine plantations, hardwood forests, wetlands, waterfalls and sandstone cliffs.

Perhaps the family would enjoy a weekend picnic or camping trip. Crab Orchard features several picnic sites that are well developed. One area is available for group use and may be reserved at the refuge visitor center. Campers find outdoor living at Crab Orchard NWR pleasurable for the entire family. A wide variety of camping experience



is available at campgrounds located on the shores of Crab Orchard, Little Grass and Devil's Kitchen Lakes.

## Cypress Creek NWR

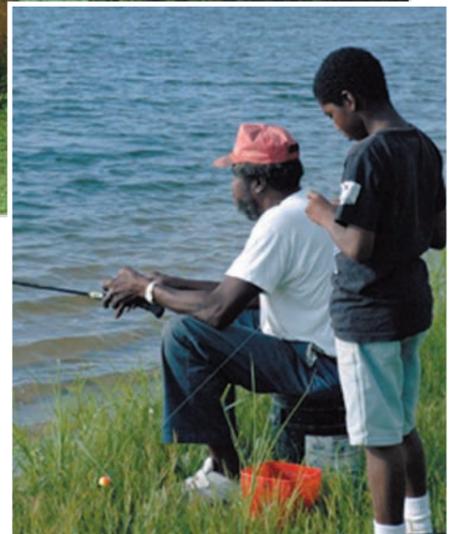
If one enjoys a quiet stroll through nature, perhaps canoeing or kayaking through the swamps, creeks and wetlands would be just what the doctor ordered. Cypress Creek NWR is intertwined with the Cache River State Natural Area, managed by Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The closeness of these two lands and their strong partnership allows for multiple site seeing opportunities.

The wildlife viewer is sure to be pleased about experiencing the rich diversity of the Cache River Wetlands. Over 20 miles of hiking trails offer the best way to experience the rich diversity of the Cache River Wetlands. Over 230 species of

birds, river otters, bobcats, green tree frogs, water snakes and some of the largest swamp trees east of the Mississippi River can be viewed within the area.

The Refuge, Cache River State Natural Area, and The Nature Conservancy lands are accessible year round. Acceptable outdoor uses include hunting, fishing, nature photography, wildlife observation, and boating (10hp limit). Areas within the Cache River Wetlands are also available for educational use.

Hunting and fishing opportunities are abundant within the Refuge. The area includes a diversity of habitats from floodplain and



upland forests, to deepwater swamps and shallow wetlands, to agriculture and early succession fields. These areas support waterfowl, deer, turkey, squirrels, rabbits, and other game species. In addition to the Cache River and associated wetlands and backwater sloughs also offer opportunities to catch crappie, bass, bluegill and other fish throughout the year.



# Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

## Crab Orchard NWR Nature Trails

### 1 Harmony Trail

**Trail Head** Pigeon Creek Road, .25 miles west of State Route 148.

**Description** This trail is marked by an A-frame structure near its entrance and will take you through a variety of habitats from pine plantations to wetlands to hardwood forests. On the trail there is a photo blind overlooking a wetland area. Excellent opportunities for photography of wildlife including birds, reptiles, and amphibians exist.

**Length** An easy 1 mile loop.

### 2 Woodland Trail

**Trail Head** Visitor center on State Route 148, east side of parking lot.

**Description** This is an easy partially paved trail that is used periodically for educational programs. This trail includes two fishing piers on the Visitor's Pond that is open seasonally for fishing from March 15 to September 30. When not being utilized for fishing, these piers provide an excellent opportunity for waterfowl viewing. This walk also offers a pleasant atmosphere for morning bird walks.

**Length** An easy .9 mile loop.

### 3 Wild Turkey Trail

**Trail Head** The north entrance is located on Grassy Road, .6 miles west of South Wolf Creek Road. The south entrance is on Tacoma Lake Road, 1.5 miles south of Grassy Road.

**Description** This young forest trail will take you through a variety of habitats from pine plantations to hardwood forests and is generally mowed during the summer months. The trail is located along several ridgetops which makes it excellent for wildlife viewing.

**Length** A moderate 1.7 mile walk one way.

### 4 Rocky Bluff Trail

**Trail Head** Tacoma Lake Road, .5 miles south of Grassy Road.

**Description** The trail winds through a wide variety of habitats and some of the most spectacular scenery on the refuge. There are intermittent waterfalls, sandstone cliffs, and some steep, rocky sections of trail may make hiking difficult at times, but very worthwhile. This beautiful trail is very popular with hikers and is host to our annual Spring Wildflower Walk held on Saturdays in April. This trail is graced with over 60 varieties of wildflowers such as bluebells, Dutchman's breeches and celandine poppy.

**Length** A moderately difficult 1.8 mile loop.

### 5 River to River Trail

**Trail Head** On Rocky Comfort Road 3.4 miles south of Grassy Road and also at Pleasant Hill Spur Trail on Devils Kitchen Road.

**Description** The beautiful River to River trail spans over 160 miles of Southern Illinois with a five mile section through the refuge. This is the only trail located on the refuge that is open seasonally to horseback riding. Sections of the River to River Trail located on the refuge run through the scenic wilderness area.

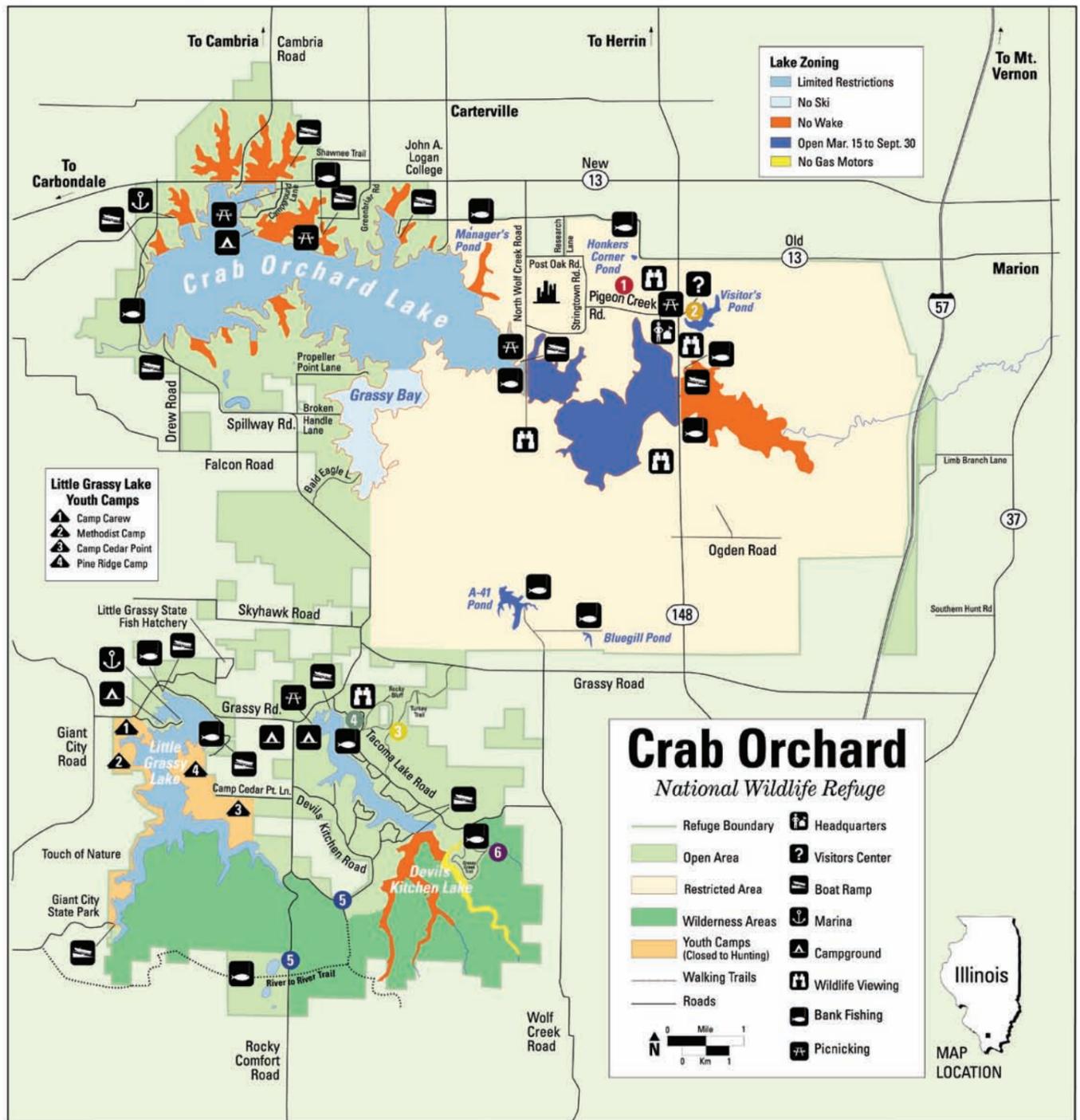
**Length** A moderately difficult walk. Three miles of the trail runs through the refuge.

### 6 Grassy Creek Trail

**Trail Head** .5 miles south of Tacoma Lake Road at the Grassy Creek bridge.

**Description** This trail was once an old road with a wide paved surface that is perfect for the novice hiker wanting to do some wildlife viewing. It is in a hardwood forest and provides scenic views of the beautiful Devils Kitchen Lake. The eastern part of the trail is bordered by Crab Orchard National Wilderness Area.

**Length** A moderately difficult 1.4 mile loop.



We hope you enjoy the nature trails of Crab Orchard NWR. There are six trails that offer visitors numerous opportunities to experience the year round beauty of the refuge. Every season offers something special in the outdoors and you need no special equipment - just a good pair of shoes and the desire to be outside. If you walk quietly and use your senses to observe, you will increase your chances of seeing some of the more secretive wildlife. The following trails are open to foot travel only. Remember to tread lightly and respect other trail users.



## Fee Schedule

### Entrance Fees:

Vehicle (1 day)	\$2. per vehicle, covers all passengers
Vehicle (7 days)	\$5. per vehicle, covers all passengers
Vehicle (Annual Pass, July-June)	\$15. first vehicle, covers all passengers
Interagency Senior Pass	\$10 U.S. Residents 62 or older, lifetime
Interagency Annual Pass	\$80 Valid one year from mo. purchased
Interagency Access Pass	Free for medically proven to be permanently disabled, lifetime

For a family purchasing an annual entrance pass (excluding the Golden Age and Access Passports) additional annual passes for immediate family members at the same address will be \$5.

### Special Recreation Permit Fees:

These fees exist for specialized uses such as group activities, recreational events and rental fees.

Fish-off Permit	\$35 per organization.
(Permit allows the organization to host one fish-off at each of the three lakes per season)	

### Lake Use Fees:

All vessels/boats using the refuge will be assessed a lake fee use charge. This includes vessels that are in dry storage and/or maintained in slips at the marinas.

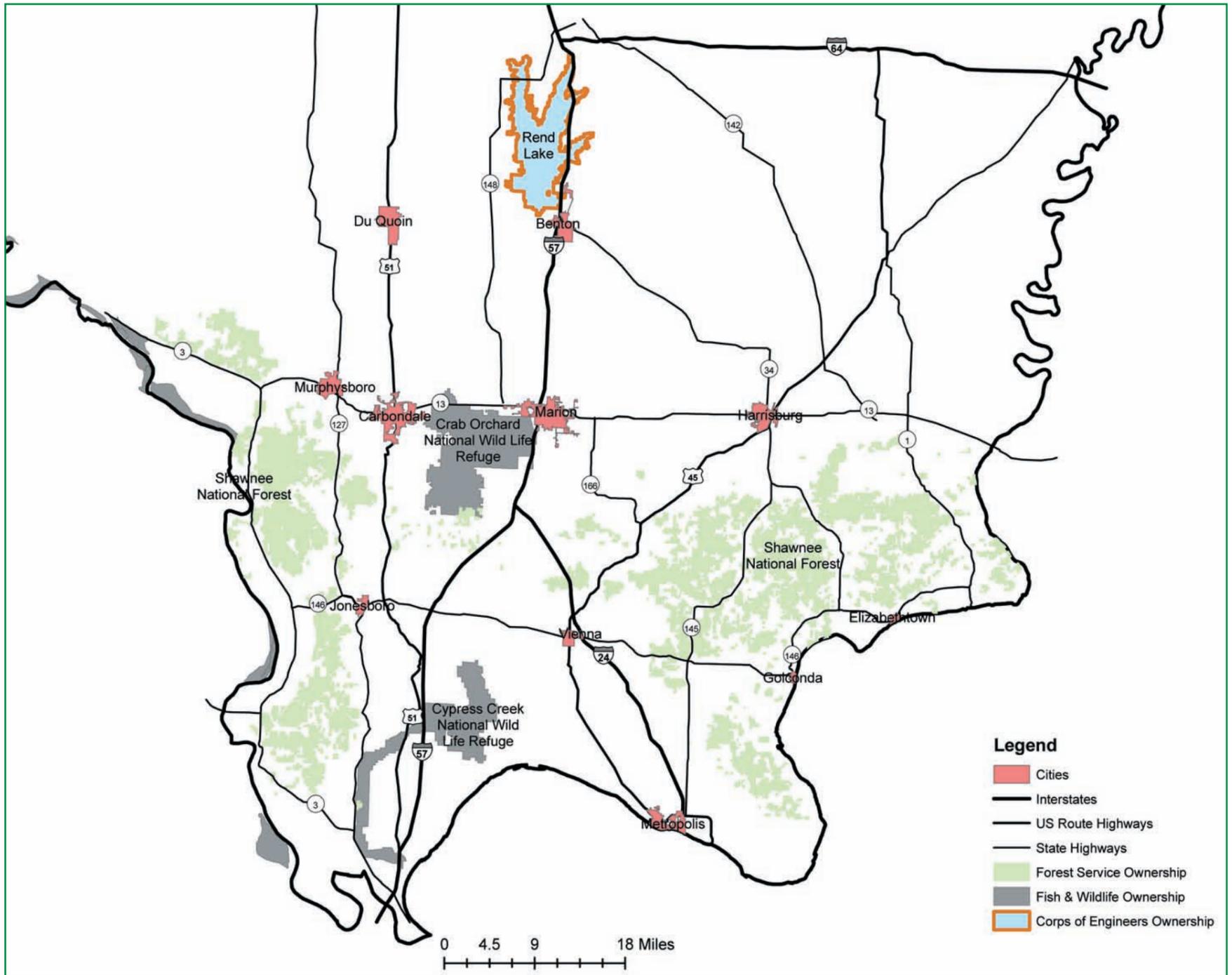
Vessel (1 day)	\$2. per vessel
Vessel (7 days)	\$5. per vessel
Vessel (Annual Pass, July-June)	\$10. first vessel \$5 each additional vessel

Holders of Interagency Senior and Access Passes are authorized to a 50% discount of the full value price for Lake Use Fees. Additional vessels are already discounted, therefore all additional passes are \$5.

In order for the pass to be valid, it must be affixed directly to the vessel on the port (left) bow next to, but not overlapping the state registration.

# A Common Ground

## The Federal Land Ownership Map



## Our Contact Information

### Shawnee National Forest Contacts

Supervisor's Office  
50 Highway 145 South  
Harrisburg, IL 62946  
(618) 253-7114

Hidden Springs Ranger District  
District Ranger's Office  
602 North First Street  
Route 45 North  
Vienna, IL 62995  
(618) 658-2111

Mississippi Bluffs Ranger District  
District Ranger's Office  
521 North Main Street  
Jonesboro, IL 62952  
(618) 833-8576

Mississippi Bluffs Ranger District  
Murphysboro Work Center  
2221 Walnut Street  
Murphysboro, IL 62966  
(Open Tues and Thurs.)

E-mail: [mailroom\\_r9\\_shawnee@fs.fed.us](mailto:mailroom_r9_shawnee@fs.fed.us)

Website: <http://fs.usda.gov/shawnee>

### Rend Lake Contacts

Rend Lake Project Office  
12220 Rend City Road  
Benton, IL 62812  
(618) 724-2493

E-mail:  
[RendInfo@usace.army.mil](mailto:RendInfo@usace.army.mil)  
Fax: (618) 724-4089

### Crab Orchard Contacts

Crab Orchard NWR  
8588 Route 148  
Marion, IL 62959  
(618) 997-3344

### For information on hunting, fishing and wildlife resources, contact the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)

IDNR Region V (local office)  
11731 State Highway 37  
Benton, IL 62812  
(618) 453-8138  
TTY: (217) 782-9175

IDNR Springfield Office  
One Natural Resources Way  
Springfield, IL 62702-1272  
[www.dnr.state.il.us](http://www.dnr.state.il.us)

Special Hunting Permits (217) 782-7305  
License Office (217) 782-2965  
Wildlife Resources (217) 782-6384  
Law Enforcement (217) 782-6431

#### NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status, (not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audio tape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202/720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination write USDA Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call 202/720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.