

INDIAN TRAIL CONSERVATION AREA

Edge Wade, 2017

13,503 acres Dent Co. DeLorme 55, 8-A and 47, I-9

GPS: 37.7266254,-91.3587579

MDC owned; for more information call 573-729-3182

Indian Trail Conservation Area is within the Audubon Upper/Middle Meramec River Watershed Important Bird Area, and is on the Great Missouri Birding Trail.

Directions: From Salem, go 12 miles north on MO 19. An impressive stone entrance and the road system were built by CCC workers based here from 1933-1946. The conservation area begins at the end of the paved road, approximately .25 mile east of the turn off MO 19.

This area has an interesting history of deforestation for ironworks, game preservation, and more. The name is derived from one route of the Trail of Tears that traversed the area in 1838 (this route is marked by white markers).

ADA Information: Birding for people with difficulty walking is limited primarily to roadsides. There are no easy trails. Open space camping areas, the lake vicinity, shooting range, and small central area near the lookout tower offer opportunities to scan, listen, and walk a bit on relatively flat land.

Special Note: *All roads in this 55-mile system are not equal. Take a good-size (readable) area map with you, and use it. If your vehicle has a built-in compass, pay attention to it at intersections.*

Although all area gravel roads are shown on the map with the same black and white dashed line, they range from the very good quality of 10-14 (the entrance road), 10-30 (to the lake), and 10-20 (to the shooting range), to narrower roads with low-water crossings (10-17 to the lake is an example), to little more than two-tracks, to much-deteriorated high-clearance-only two-tracks, to closed due to maintenance problems. *If in doubt about the condition of the road ahead, turn around.*

The roads depicted as looping from the north section of the Indian Trail Natural Area to connect back to 10-19 are not passable as of summer 2017.

Signage is not a priority here. Road numbers are on brown posts. Not all intersections have posts. The best indicators of your location in many instances are the Food Plot signs. These are on gates. They are brown on white, showing a deer, turkey and squirrel and the food plot number. Check the sign number on the gate with the numbers on the map to determine your location.

Some roads may be closed during hunting seasons.

When to Visit/Species to Expect: Expect warblers from early April for migrants, through June for singing resident warblers (at least 13 summer resident and late migrant species in June). Twenty-nine warbler species, including Cape May, have been reported.

Woodpeckers, flycatchers (including Olive-sided in April and May), vireos, tanagers and orioles are plentiful.

Only four species of ducks have been reported on 35-acre Blackwell Lake, but this is likely unrepresentative of the potential.

Significant gaps are present in eBird data for August and September and December, January and February. October and November records show good sparrow numbers, but are deficient in fall passerine migrants, most of which likely pass through in the months with no visits reported.

Features of interest to birders: Lake Blackwell can be viewed from two sides. Roads 10-30 and 10-17 lead to the west side, where there is a short one-way loop near the privy. The road across the spillway is closed (but you may walk down there and look for Louisiana Waterthrush, Spotted Sandpiper, Eastern Kingbird, and swallows). The area north of the dam/spillway depicted as lake on the map is now a small wetland area.

Birders can walk across the spillway/dam and down toward the wetland, or reach the east side (see map) on 10-17 coming from the east via 10-21. At Food Plot 37, go south, then east and north (out of the area) to connect with 10-21 by either the first left (along a narrow road to camping area #5) or the second left (10-17). There is a picnic table overlooking the lake at the dam.

Extensive stands of mature pine within the 12,000 acres of forest and woodland provide excellent habitat for a variety of species. Pine Warblers, Yellow-throated Warblers and Chipping Sparrows are among nesters. Red-breasted Nuthatch, Pine Siskins and other pine-loving species should be looked for in season and invasion years.

The rugged oak-hickory covered slopes and small creeks throughout the area provide excellent habitat for thrushes, Ovenbirds, Worm-eating Warblers, waterthrushes, woodpeckers and flycatchers.

Indian Trail Natural Area is in two sections. These are dolomite glade (about 300 acres) and chert savanna (about 900 acres) communities. Prairie and Blue-winged warblers are among summer residents. The south section can be viewed

from a trail from at Food Plot 28 off 10-14 to the shooting range that runs along the natural area's north boundary. The north section is best reached from the road going northwest from the shooting range.

Toilets: 1 privy at Blackwell Lake parking area; 1 privy at shooting range (both ADA compliant).

Camping: 5 designated camping areas with no amenities. Water is available at the Indian tail shop on Road 10-14.

Hazards/Limitations: See the Special Note above about road conditions and signage. There is a shooting range, closed Mondays.

Nearby Birding Sites: Shawnee Mac CA, Montauk SP, Onondaga Cave SP*, Huzzah CA*, Meramec SP*, Meramec CA*.

*Indicates Birders' Guide available when this guide was written. See <http://www.mobirds.org/Locations/SiteGuides.aspx> for these and additional guides.

INDIAN TRAIL CONSERVATION AREA

DENT COUNTY
13,503 ACRES

LEGEND

- Boundary
- Paved Road
- Gravel Road
- Drainage
- Area Access Trail
- Trail of Tears
- Parking Lot
- Privy
- Wildlife Water Hole
- Food Plot
- Designated Camping Area
- Gate
- Shooting Range Safety Zone
- Lookout Tower
- Forest
- Topography
- No Hunting Zone
- Disabled Accessible
- Boat Ramp
- Fishing Dock

VICINITY MAP

