

A BIRDERS' GUIDE TO MISSOURI PUBLIC LANDS

BIG BUFFALO CREEK CONSERVATION AREA

**1,555 acres Benton and Morgan counties DeLorme 44, A-4
MDC owned; for information call 660-530-5500**

Directions: To enter on the southeast side, from Cole Camp go east on Hwy. 52 to Rt. FF; or from Versailles, go west 10 miles on Hwy. 52 to Rt. FF. Go south 8 miles on Rt. FF to the end of the blacktop and turn west on Big Buffalo Road. Watch for area signs.

To enter from the southwest, from Cole Camp, go south 13 miles on Rt. B, then east on Rt. WW to the end of the blacktop. Turn north on Big Buffalo Road and go 1.25 miles to the area. Or, from Edmonson (southeast of Lincoln on Rt. H), go east on Rt. W, then south on Rt. B to Rt. WW and proceed as directed above.

When to Visit/Species to Expect: Spring and summer visits promise opportunity to see many oscines, as this area continues to deserve its reputation as one of the best places in the state to find nesting warblers. These include, Blue-winged, Prothonotary, Worm-eating, Yellow, Yellow-throated and Black-and-white Warblers, Northern Parula, Louisiana Waterthrush and Common Yellowthroat. Also present are Warbling, White-eyed and Red-eyed Vireos and Summer Tanager, Eastern Wood-Pee-wee, Eastern Phoebe and Eastern Kingbird.

Features of interest to birders: 3 parking areas (1 gravel, 1 small roadside grass area, 1 at campground). The small grass parking area is adjacent to the fen natural area (see below).

Easy viewing of bottomland along Pole Hollow Creek and Heron Pond is possible from the road and from the two larger parking areas and campground.

The 4.5 miles of multi-use trails are the only access to much of the area. Most of it (1,477 acres) is in forest or woodland.

There are two Natural Areas. 40-acre Big Buffalo Fen, on the north side of the road, includes a deep muck fen, a sedge meadow shrub fen and a wet meadow. The 5-acre mesic bottomland Big Buffalo Creek Forest Natural Area is in the Morgan County portion, on the south side of the road, just as it enters the area at the southeast corner.

Big Buffalo Lake (a 5-acre pond) may have waterfowl from fall to early spring, but is a mile from the nearest parking lot.

Toilets: None

Camping: 10 primitive RV sites and an open area for tents near where the road leaves the area at the southwest point of its arc through it.

Hazards/Limitations: Low water crossings along Big Buffalo Creek Rd. leading into the area from both sides may be impassable. Road access is only in a small southeast portion of the 1,555-acre area.

Nearby Birding Sites: Carpenter Mem. CA, Mount Hulda Towersite, Edmonson Access, Brickley Hollow Access