

BIRDING WOOLSEY WET PRAIRIE (WWP), Fayetteville

DIRECTIONS: The starting point is the intersection of highway 16W (Wedington Road) and I-540 in Fayetteville. Take Wedington (16W WEST) approximately 1.7 miles and find Broyles Avenue. Turn left (SOUTH) onto Broyles Avenue. Travel on Broyles to Fayetteville's west side wastewater treatment facility (1.0-1.1 mile). Turn right into the drive to the facility, then make the first right turn, which is a short deadend (before you reach the main gate into the facility) – park. This is on the south end of WWP. By the way, Broyles comes out at Farmington, immediately south of the wastewater facility.



WWP is a wetland mitigation site adjacent Fayetteville's new Westside wastewater treatment facility. The site is a former seasonal wetland associated with Tallgrass Prairie habitat. At the present time, the area is quite open and so is attractive to birds otherwise hard to find in a rapidly developing urban environment (examples: Loggerhead Shrike all year, Northern Harrier in migration and winter). Woolsey currently consists of a series of shallow wet cells separated

by earthen berms. The many “islands” are actually prairie mounds that are a natural feature of unplowed or moderately plowed former prairies. Native plant diversity is very high and Osage burrowing crawfish – an endemic species associated with seasonal wetlands here – are common. The earthen berms provide a good walking surface throughout the 30 odd acres.



WWP has become an excellent birding site for numerous wetland and open country bird species. The walking is easy, but it can be damp or wet in places, so wear boots or something you don't mind getting wet. There are no bathrooms or other facilities at WWP. Visitors with walking limitations will find the berms easy to negotiate.

The full bird list for WWP is growing. Dr Andrew Scaboo has birded Woolsey regularly and routinely submits his data to National Audubon Society's "ebird". Check ebird for a full site list. A few examples of birds sighted here: transient & nesting Blue-winged Teal, American Bittern, Least Bittern, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk (nesting nearby), Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Sora. Many shorebird species were found here before the ponds became fully revegetated (with fewer since). These shorebirds have included American-Golden Plover,

Killdeer (nesting), Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Wilson's Snipe. Other species of interest: Short-eared Owl, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Loggerhead Shrike, Sedge and Marsh Wrens, Eastern Bluebird, American Pipit, Common Yellowthroat. Woolsey's sparrow list is long including Vesper, Le Conte's, Nelson's, Song, Lincoln's, Swamp, and others.

Here are a couple of websites with more information:

<http://ecoarkansas.com/WoolseyMain.html>

There is also a blog spot with WWPS info at:

<http://aubreyshepherd.blogspot.com/2008/12/bruce-shackleford-submits-annualreport.html>

Fayetteville's consultant for WWP (and other projects) is:

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Tallgrass Prairie conservation and restoration work on Woolsey includes significant involvement by Joe Woolbright and his company Ozark Ecological Restoration, Inc (OERI). Woolbright & OERI are involved in such projects elsewhere in northwest Arkansas:

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--prepared by Joe Neal September 2010