

Whitney Mountain

DIRECTIONS:

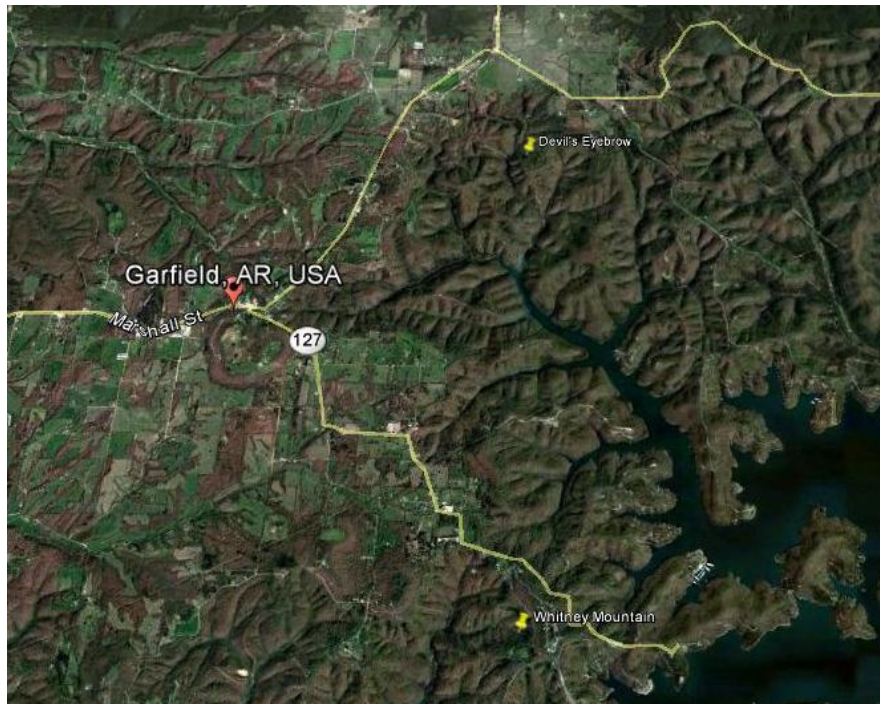
On an Arkansas map, notice highway 62 north of Beaver Lake and the community of Garfield. Gas and food are available at Garfield.

In the center of town head southeast on Arkansas 127. It crosses the railroad tracks and generally runs southeast toward Beaver Lake. The

first 4 miles are mainly small farms and open fields, but thereafter, it winds along a mid-slope bench on the eastern side of Whitney Mountain.

Whitney Mountain is on the north side of Beaver Lake, part of the Lost Bridge community. There is more information about Whitney Mountain Lodge and Lost Bridge Village on the web.

After four miles on 127, you get to interesting mid slope mature hardwood forest. Whitney Mountain Lodge above, and facing north and east are deep forested ravines. The upper elevation at the lodge is about 1800 feet. We look into around 1300 feet elevation from the shoulder along 127.



In the summer, Whitney is a good place to find Cerulean Warblers. In May 2013, for example, there were a minimum of seven heard and/or seen from the 127 shoulder along about 0.8 miles of north and northeast-facing slopes. Not all in the treetops, or I should say, many treetops are easily scanned below the road. This stretch of particularly good habitat starts where Lodge Drive heads up Whitney Mountain and ends just before the turn to Slate Gap Road.

LOTS of caution here. There are only a few a few good places to stop and a few wide shoulders.

Many other forest birds are present during the nesting season. These include Wood Thrush, Hooded and Kentucky Warbler, American Redstart, a Yellow-breasted Chat in a powerline clearing, Acadian Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Vireo. We found a small flock of Black-billed Cuckoos during spring migration, May 1, 2013. At one point, Red-eyed Vireos engaged in chase, with 3 perched in a flowering pawpaw along the roadside.



The relative cool north and northeast slopes here are also good places to view wildflowers characteristic of the Ozarks.

If you drive down Slate Gap Road, it crosses through several extensive cedar glades, rocky areas with a heavy growth of cedars. These cedars have been cleared under powerlines. It is here you can see the flora of natural glades in the area. We always look for interesting plants like Spanish Needles, that bloom here and elsewhere in October.

MORE BIRDING IN THIS AREA:



another 0.5 miles east on 62, to the entrance.

Highway 127 provides attractive landscape views. If you look north, Devil's Eyebrow Natural Area and WMA is in the same kind of rough Ozark hill country, just three forested miles away. You could just fly across there if you were a Cerulean Warbler, but alas, we reach Devil's Eyebrow by returning to Highway 62 in Garfield, driving a few miles east to Gateway, then about

If you stay on 127, notice the turn onto Slate Gap Road. Slate Gap is a good winter waterfowl destination. The road eventually winds down to a good spot to view a big cove on Beaver Lake, including views all the way across the lake to Rocky Branch. This is covered in more detail in the guide entitled "Beaver Lake from Rocky Branch to the dam" also available as a PDF from the Northwest Arkansas Audubon Society website.

Just beyond the turn onto Slate Gap Road, 127 branches off, with one branch entering Lost Bridge Park South, and the other Lost Bridge Park North. These are both campgrounds and parks administered by the Corp of Engineers (daily use fee). We usually scan both of these during our winter waterfowl rounds.

--prepared by Joe Neal in May 2013