

HOBBS STATE PARK-CONSERVATION AREA

(June birding list for Sinking Stream and Historic Van Winkle trails at end)



With over 12,000 acres, Hobbs is the largest state park in Arkansas. The park boundary is 10 miles east of Rogers on state highway 12.

The visitor center is located on highway 12 just east of the intersection of 12 and War Eagle Road. Feeders at the visitor center are always great places to see a variety of birds. You can watch the feeders from outside along the parking lot or inside through big glass windows.

The area adjacent the visitor center is a good place to explore mature upland Shortleaf Pine maintained in an open condition with prescribed burning. While there are numerous places to explore this upland pine habitat, it's convenient to walk the very accessible Ozark Plateau Trail, a paved loop. The trail also includes an additional loop for an even longer walk a little deeper into the hollow. Birds typical of these upland habitats can be found. Pine Warblers and Yellow-throated Warblers nest here, for example, and Red Crossbills are occasional. There are benches along the trail and picnic tables under big pines right where the trail takes off from the visitor center. Hollows between pine-clad ridges mainly have

deciduous trees. A free hand-out at the visitor's center (and online) provides information and directions for trails.



Van Winkle Hollow, particularly on the north side of highway 12, has high species diversity because of numerous habitats including forested slopes, moist thickets, old fields, a spring-fed stream and a highly variable Beaver Reservoir shoreline. Historic Van Winkle Trail in the hollow is 0.5 miles in length and accessible. Besides seeing a variety of birds, hikers in the hollow may also enjoy spring wildflowers in moist ravines and on the steep slopes that rise on either side of the hollow. Red-headed Woodpeckers benefit from the big snags along the Beaver shoreline. Nesting warblers in this and adjacent hollows (including Sinking Stream, below) and slopes include Kentucky, Hooded, Northern Parula, Black-and-white, Yellow-throated, Prothonotary, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Worm-eating, and Louisiana Waterthrush.

Opposite Historic Van Winkle (and using the same parking lot with a bathroom) is Sinking Stream Trail. "Sinking stream" refers to the habitat of streams going underground during periods of low flow. This is short, easy loop up



the hollow formed by Little Clifty Creek. Pools that remain are interesting places to visit, both by birds and people. And it can be a very birdy place – consider Wood Thrushes in summer. Watch for Broad-winged Hawks in the openings. There are great views of Acadian Flycatchers in the hollow. Bald Eagles may fly right over the parking lot in winter. Native wildflowers abound.

The parking area that serves these two trails deserves special attention. The paved sidewalk that connects the trailheads overlooks Little Clifty Creek hollow, with landscape views of part of the hollow plus the canopy trees and shrubs beyond. You can just stand here and see lots of birds. We have found that flocks of migrants fly from tree to tree across the hollow, often including trees around the parking area. You can stand in one spot here with remarkable results.

Shaddox Hollow Nature Trail (1.5 mile loop) offers a wonderful representation of native flora and fauna. This ranges from habitats dominated by mature native Shortleaf Pine on the ridgetop (including parking area) down the slope to bluff lines with mesic vegetation (and birds) in moist ravines. There are lovely fern-covered north-facing slopes. Volunteers and park personnel have been restoring an Ozark glade covered with native prairie vegetation that rises above Beaver Lake.

The trail begins at a parking area (with bathroom) on highway 303. There's a hike along a ridgetop and a descent down a southwest-facing slope into the hollow. After a short hike near Beaver Lake, the trail returns to the ridgetop. Such varied habitats can be quite birdy. Don't be surprised if you see a Barred Owl down in the hollow or hear a Black-and-white Warbler singing on the slope.

If time is short, you can just pull into the parking lot and bird the immediate big pines in this area without walking the trail itself. But it doesn't take long to walk the trail. With the variety of habitats, it is possible to see many birds typical of this part of the Ozarks. Breeding birds include Pine Warblers, Scarlet and Summer Tanagers, Acadian and Great Crested Flycatchers, Black-and-white Warblers, Acadian Flycatchers, Red-headed Woodpeckers, etc.

The trail was funded by the Benton County League of Women Voters in memory of conservationist Virginia Koen Allured.



Pigeon Roost Trail covers the wide habitat range in the area. One loop is about 4-miles, the other about 8.5 miles. The trail winds through narrow hollows and along the pine-clad ridges. Habitats include native Short-leaf Pines, a variety of native hardwoods, and plants typical of the Ozarks. Part of this trail overlooks Van Hollow, with great views of Beaver Lake in winter.

We often visit the nearby the Corps of Engineers Rocky Branch recreation area on Beaver Lake during migration periods and in winter. Here are wide views of the lake. We have often found Common Goldeneyes,

Horned Grebes, Ringed-billed and Bonaparte's Gulls and Common Loons (but the loons are common only in migration). Bald Eagles make regular appearances in winter. Cedar thickets just above the lake

are excellent places to find a variety of winter birds like Hermit Thrush, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and Yellow-rumped Warbler. There is also native shortleaf pine habitat at Rocky Branch, a good place to find wintering Pine Warblers and to hope for Red Crossbills. (January 2018)

Below is a list of birds identified (and posted to eBird) by UA-Fayetteville graduate student Vivek Govind Kumar and two others (Barry Bennett and Peter Shaffer) during a birding trip that included both Sinking Stream and Historic Van Winkle Trails. This list certainly demonstrates robust birding potential of Hobbs State Park-Conservation Area:

Hobbs State Park-Conservation Area, including Sinking Stream and Van Winkle trails – June 9th 2019

- 1) Yellow-billed Cuckoo – 4
- 2) Chimney Swift – 2
- 3) Turkey Vulture - 2
- 4) Red-bellied Woodpecker – 3
- 5) Pileated Woodpecker – 1
- 6) Acadian Flycatcher – 9
- 7) Eastern Phoebe -3
- 8) White-eyed Vireo – 11
- 9) Yellow-throated Vireo – 3
- 10) Red-eyed Vireo – 13
- 11) Blue Jay – 2
- 12) American Crow – 1
- 13) Northern Rough-winged Swallow – 1
- 14) Carolina Chickadee – 6
- 15) Tufted Titmouse – 5
- 16) Carolina Wren – 6
- 17) Blue-gray Gnatcatcher – 3
- 18) Wood Thrush - 4
- 19) Brown Thrasher – 1
- 20) American Goldfinch – 1
- 21) Chipping Sparrow – 7
- 22) Brown-headed Cowbird -1
- 23) Ovenbird – 1
- 24) Worm-eating Warbler - 2
- 25) Black-and-white Warbler – 5
- 26) Kentucky Warbler – 4
- 27) Hooded Warbler – 6
- 28) American Redstart - 1
- 29) Northern Parula – 10
- 30) Yellow-throated Warbler - 1
- 31) Summer Tanager – 1
- 32) Scarlet Tanager - 4
- 33) Northern Cardinal – 5
- 34) Indigo Bunting – 7

Additional species near visitor center

- 1) Mourning Dove - 1
- 2) Ruby-throated Hummingbird - 6
- 3) Red-headed Woodpecker - 3
- 4) Downy Woodpecker - 2
- 5) Eastern Wood-Pewee – 3
- 6) Barn Swallow - 1
- 7) White-breasted Nuthatch – 2
- 8) Eastern Bluebird – 2
- 9) American Robin – 1
- 10) Gray Catbird – 1
- 11) House Finch – 2
- 12) Pine Warbler – 3

Species not seen/heard – Louisiana Waterthrush, Great Crested Flycatcher, House Wren, Eastern Towhee