

Woodlands Nature Station Area, Land Between The Lakes

Submitted by Aviva Yasgur

GPS coordinates (for Woodlands Nature Station)

N 36° 54' 5.56" W 88° 2' 10.31"; or 36.901529, - 88.037333

Habitats

- Honker Lake and Bay and Bobcat Point – bay and impounded lake off of Lake Barkley, protected refuge from November through March.
- Hematite Lake – small inland lake surrounded by rich forest, bluffs, and marsh areas
- Empire Point – open fields and old farmstead area with old buildings, tree lined old roads, shrubby areas. Large shoreline expanse.

Birds and birder comments

Over 250 species of birds have been documented in Land Between The Lakes, and the Nature Station area is a good starting point for enjoying this diversity. The area around the Nature Station is designated a “Nature Watch Area,” and includes birding destinations such as Honker Lake/Bay, Bobcat Point, Hematite Lake, and Empire Point. The Nature Station is open March 1-Nov. 30, and you can stop in there for maps and information.

Honker Bay is a large bay off of Lake Barkley, and Honker Lake is an impounded section of it. You can access Honker Bay from Honker Dam and also at Bobcat Point. Or, you can hike the 5-mile Honker Trail. (In summer, take tick-prevention measures if hiking.) In spring and summer, Honker Lake and Bay is a good spot to see nesting osprey and eagles, as well as a variety of herons and egrets. You can also spot a variety of songbirds including prothonotary warblers, orchard orioles, purple martins, kingbirds, warbling vireos, northern parulas, and more. In late fall and winter you can find a large variety of waterfowl here, such

as gadwall, wood ducks, several species of mergansers, buffleheads, ring-necked ducks, shovelers, widgeon, ruddy ducks, and more. You can walk across the dam for a peek further back into the coves. On the shallow Honker Lake side, you will typically see dabblers, and other the deeper Bay side you can spot the divers. This is also one of the best places in Land Between The Lakes to see bald eagles in winter.

Hematite Lake is a great birding destination if you'd like to do some walking. There is a moderate 2-mile trail that circles the lake, and takes you through the woods, along the shoreline, and through some marshy areas. This is a great trail for songbirds including a variety of warblers and vireos, and pretty much all of our woodpeckers. In winter, many waterfowl hang out on the lake.

Empire Point is an old farmstead situated by the shoreline of Lake Barkley. The fields and brushy areas are a great place to spot birds such as red-tailed and red-shouldered hawks, kestrels, and sparrows. There is an old gravel road that you can walk that leads along the field, passes through a row of old pine trees, and along the shoreline. In winter, this is a great spot for kinglets, sparrows, brown creepers, and other winter songbirds. If you look out into the lake, you can often spot hundreds of cormorants, which like sit on the power towers, as well as other waterfowl. The waters here are part of a protected wildlife refuge from late fall through early spring.

More information about wildlife watching in the Nature Watch area:

<http://www.landbetweenthelakes.us/seendo/self-guided-activites/nature-watch/>

Trail map for the Nature Station area: <http://www.landbetweenthelakes.us/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/14NatStatTrailMap.pdf>

General Land Between The Lakes map: <http://www.landbetweenthelakes.us/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/NewLBLGeneralMap.pdf>