

Birding at Hays Kennedy Park and Garvin Brown Preserve, Louisville/Prospect area

Directions

From Louisville, take River Road to Prospect, and turn left on Bass Road (there will be a sign for Hays Kennedy on River Road). Once you reach the park, there are large parking areas on either side of Bass Road; turn right to park in front of the pond, and between soccer fields. At the far end of the parking lot, you can follow a worn foot path along the length of the pond and beyond, until you come to a small gate that is the entrance to Garvin Brown Preserve.

Google Map coordinates

38.3519141,-85.631282

Habitats

Hays Kennedys Park is interesting mainly for the long, shallow pond that attracts waterfowl, shorebirds, and herons in summer.

The 46 acres in Garvin Brown Preserve include

- Ohio River
- Wetlands
- Large open fields planted in native grasses and wildflowers, with agricultural rotations
- Fencerow with large trees and smaller shrubs
- Small amount of woodland

Birds and birder comments:

Hays Kennedy Park contains transient ponds with water levels that can fluctuate seasonally. They host dabbling ducks during migration and throughout the winter when temperatures are above freezing (the ponds are shallow and freeze easily). Green-winged Teal, Blue-winged Teal, and Northern Shovelers can be abundant there, with regular showings of Northern Pintail, Gadwall, and American Wigeon. When water

levels are higher it's not unusual to have a selection of diving ducks stop by. When the water levels are low, there are mud banks that attract shorebirds, and the ponds host herons in summer. There is a wetland area behind the ball fields that is good for wetland passerines such as wrens and sparrows, and Sora have been seen there during migration.

Garvin Brown Preserve has a variety of habitats, including wetland, forest, Ohio riverfront, and large open fields. A variety of raptors hunt the forest and fields; Tree Swallows nest in boxes in the open fields, and passerines are abundant year-round. Common Yellowthroat and Yellow Warbler nest in the preserve, and Indigo Buntings are a regular treat during summer. Rusty Blackbirds also frequent the wooded swampy areas.

Cautionary note: Both the park and preserve are popular with dog-walkers, and many dogs are off leash. If you prefer to avoid encounters with off-leash dogs, you may want to avoid this area. In addition, water-loving dogs occasionally romp through the ponds and chase off the waterfowl.

Link to information on Hays Kennedy Park:

<http://louisvilleky.gov/government/parks/park-list/hays-kennedy-park>

Garvin Brown Preserve:

http://www.riverfields.org/wordpress/?page_id=105

eBird Hotspot links:

Hays Kennedy: <http://ebird.org/ebird/hotspot/L673935>

Garvin Brown: <http://ebird.org/ebird/hotspot/L607668>