

right and proceed 1.0 mile to the refuge headquarters road with the large sign proclaiming "Illinois River National Wildlife and Fish Refuges." The gravel road leads to a parking area in front of the refuge office, where the Chautauqua Nature Trail begins.

Stop at the refuge headquarters and visit with the refuge staff. A variety of brochures are available in addition to a bird check list for the Illinois River National Wildlife and Fish Refuges (Chautauqua, Emiquon, and Meredosia Refuges) plus information on the latest wildlife sightings. Armed with this information, you are now ready to hike the short and easy Chautauqua Nature Trail near the headquarters parking area. At the head of the trail, pick up an interpretive brochure. The trail leads through a black oak sand forest along the river valley bluffs. Along the trail there are three observation platforms overlooking the refuge's south pool. The middle platform has a mounted spotting telescope. Typical bottomland forest species as well as other breeders occurring here include Barred Owl, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Wood-Pewee, six species of woodpeckers, Baltimore Oriole, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Wood Thrush, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, and Red-eyed Vireo. Most shorebird species mentioned above as well as terns, gulls, herons, and other waterfowl can be seen from the overlook.

STOP #4. BELLROSE ISLAND (HAVANA PARK DISTRICT)

Directions: From the entrance road to the refuge headquarters, turn right (south). Continue south to the T-intersection at the Manito Road. Turn right (west) and follow this road 6 miles to Havana. Just after the coal docks bridge, which passes across several railroad tracks, turn right (west) on Mound Ave. Continue on this street to the fourth stop sign at Schrader Ave. Turn left on Schrader. Almost immediately, just past the brown house on the right and before the privately owned Tall Timbers Campground entrance, turn right and bear to the right, directly down a steep, sandy slope to the Havana Park District parking area and entrance to Bellrose Island.

Although once an island, today Bellrose Island is actually a peninsula. Follow the trail from the parking area through the mature bottomland forest directly to the Illinois River. In some areas, you may notice an unusually large number of standing dead trees. Many of these resulted from the Great Flood of 1993. The large cottonwood and silver maple trees, alive and dead, attract a variety of cavity-nesting birds. Look especially for Pileated Woodpeckers, common in the mature bottomland forests along the Illinois River, and Prothonotary Warblers (present only during the warmer months), a specialty along river bottomlands. At the river bank, you are directly opposite the mouth of the Spoon River and Emiquon National Wildlife Refuge. Before returning to your vehicle, sit against a log and spend a few minutes simply watching and listening to the active river life around you, both river

traffic and wildlife. Then remember to recall these moments during your final stop on this tour at Dickson Mounds Museum.

As you pass through Havana, look for the non-native Eurasian Tree Sparrows. With their entire western hemispheric population centered on St. Louis, where they were originally released in 1870, this species has widened its distribution by following major river valleys. Non-native Eurasian Collared-Doves have also been sighted in Havana, especially near grain bins along the river.

STOP #5. EMIQUON NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Directions: From the Bellrose Island parking area, turn right (south) on Schrader and continue south through Havana to Dearborn Street (U.S. Route 136/State Route 78/State Route 97). Turn right (west) and follow State Route 78/97 over the Illinois River bridge to Fulton County (note, while crossing the river, the power plant smokestacks, originally located from atop H. A. Gleason Nature Preserve, can be seen on your left). Before long you will have to turn right (north) to continue on State Route 78/97. Six tenths of a mile after turning north on State Route 78/97, just before the Spoon River bridge, turn right into the Spoon River Public Access Area at Emiquon National Wildlife Refuge.

The Frank C. Bellrose Nature Trail begins at the yellow gate and follows along the Spoon River, eventually looping back to the starting point. For a more challenging hike without trails, follow the north bank of the Spoon River to its confluence with the Illinois River, just across the river from Bellrose Island. In this area you will pass near Horseshoe Slough, formerly a part of the tortuously meandering Spoon River.

In direct contrast to H. A. Gleason Nature Preserve, plants of this bottomland forest are highly adapted to periodic flooding from the Illinois River. Soils, deposited by past flood waters, are silty and dark with a high water-holding capacity. Not surprisingly, blackjack and black oaks are entirely absent, replaced by a flood-tolerant, silver maple-dominated forest. A few species that can be found here include Pileated and Red-headed Woodpeckers, Glue-gray Gnatcatcher, and Prothonotary Warbler among other typical bottomland forest species.

Emiquon NWR currently encompasses 1,305 acres. The refuge, when complete, will total 11,122 acres. As you travel to Dickson Mounds Museum, all of the bottomlands you will be passing through on both sides of the road are within the proposed refuge acquisition boundary. These areas were once among the most biologically diverse bottomlands along the entire river valley (for more information, see the book "Waterfowl of Illinois," by Steve Havera, published by the Illinois Natural History Survey in 1999. See Meadowlark 10:46-51. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is continuing to pursue the completion of Emiquon NWR, which has broad public support.