

is occupied in some years and American and Least Bitterns, Great Egret, Green Heron, and Black-crowned Night Heron can also be found. In spring the occasional Snowy Egret and Little Blue Heron overmigrants appear. The forested bottomlands are great for cavity-nesting birds including Wood Duck, Hooded Merganser, Pileated Woodpecker, Barred Owl, Brown Creeper, and Prothonotary Warbler. Lost Mound also harbors possibly one of the only regularly breeding populations of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers in the state. The Red-shouldered Hawk, Whip-poor-will (summer), Carolina Wren, and Cerulean Warbler (summer) are rare, but regular residents. Large numbers of breeding American Redstarts can easily be found throughout summer.

Migration can be excellent with 28 species of ducks, swans, and geese including massive flocks of Common Mergansers, Canvasbacks, and Lesser Scaup in the pool north of Lock & Dam 12. A complete seasonal list of birds found at Lost Mound can be downloaded from the INHS website: <http://www.inhs.uiuc.edu/cwpe/research/fieldstations/lostmound.htm>.

It's more than birds

We all know that birds do not exist in a vacuum. Lost Mound is worthy of conservation for the grassland birds alone, but what makes the site unique, in addition to the size, quality, and variety of habitats, is the large number of rare and interesting species across the board: Fresh water mussels, plants, butterflies, reptiles, fish, and mammals. Overall 47 state-endangered or state-threatened species occur at Lost Mound. Some of these species occur nowhere else in Illinois and/or have the largest population in Illinois at Lost Mound. For lists of these species and other information see the Web site mentioned above. The combination of species diversity, habitat diversity, and scale makes Lost Mound a special place, like no other site in Illinois. But to be perfectly fair, Lost Mound has issues with invasive plants, bureaucratic gauntlets for prescribed burning, and lack of appropriate land planning by neighbors. Like many other sites, management and research deeds lag behind the needs.

History

From the end of the glacial ages, fast forward to 1917 and the beginning of the Great War, later renamed World War I. The Army was looking for a place to test artillery made at the Rock Island Arsenal. They needed a large, secluded, sparsely populated area fairly close to Rock Island. The "sand prairie," as it was known locally at that time, fit the bill. The well-drained sands between the Mississippi River to the west and steep bluffs to the east were not suitable for cultivation and therefore the area was sparsely settled. The Army bought the land and the Savanna Army Depot was born. After WWI, the mission changed to munitions storage, and expanded during WWII to include weapons manufacturing, processing, testing, and disposal. Because such work with explosives requires large safety zones around work and storage areas, much of the original prairie remains despite decades of Army construction and destruction. In many areas that were disturbed by Army activities the surrounding matrix was still native prairie and so the species that colonized the areas were the native plants.

Table 1. The 30 most frequently encountered birds in mid-June at Lost Mound and adjacent areas of the former Savanna Army Depot from 2004-2006 point counts in upland habitats. Number in parentheses is rank abundance in 2000-2001 counts.

Grasshopper Sparrow (1)	Brown Thrasher (27)
Western Meadowlark (2)	Northern Mockingbird (31)
Dickcissel (4)	American Goldfinch (22)
Field Sparrow (3)	Baltimore Oriole (12)
Mourning Dove (6)	Northern Cardinal (29)
Eastern Meadowlark (5)	Gray Catbird (25)
House Wren (7)	Lark Sparrow (17)
Brown-headed Cowbird (9)	Bobolink (28)
Red-winged Blackbird (8)	Cedar Waxwing (34)
American Crow (13)	Orchard Oriole (26)
Song Sparrow (24)	Eastern Kingbird (18)
Blue Jay (10)	Northern Flicker (39)
Great Crested Flycatcher (23)	Barn Swallow (35)
American Robin (16)	Chipping Sparrow (20)
Indigo Bunting (32)	Eastern Bluebird (19)

Table 2. The 30 most frequently encountered birds on the Illinois half of the Springbrook, IA Christmas Bird Count including Lost Mound Unit and surrounding areas from the 2001-2005 counts including only species seen in 3 or more years, and excluding House Sparrow which only occurs outside the boundaries of Lost Mound.

1. Mallard	16. American Goldfinch
2. Dark-eyed Junco	17. Rock Pigeon
3. European Starling	18. Northern Cardinal
4. Red-winged Blackbird	19. White-breasted Nuthatch
5. Ring-billed Gull	20. Eastern Bluebird
6. American Tree Sparrow	21. Red-bellied Woodpecker
7. Canada Goose	22. Red-tailed Hawk
8. Cedar Waxwing	23. Wild Turkey
9. Bald Eagle	24. Downy Woodpecker
10. American Crow	25. Common Merganser
11. Blue Jay	26. Tufted Titmouse
12. Mourning Dove	27. Common Goldeneye
13. Black-capped Chickadee	28. Northern Flicker
14. Horned Lark	29. American Robin
15. Herring Gull	30. Hairy Woodpecker