

Lambert Lake Nature Preserve, Glen Ellyn

Lambert Lake Nature Preserve is located on the west side of Lambert Road just south of Roosevelt Road. It abuts the Village Green Park and is adjacent to the Village Green Links in Glen Ellyn.



Habitat type/site overview

The three-acre Lambert Lake is surrounded by shrubby woodland, which volunteers have been clearing out. Cattails emerge in shallow areas, and water lilies cover a large area of the lake in warmer months. A grassy area and a sumac thicket occupy an area south of the lake. Finally, there is a smaller pond just north of the sports fields. Despite a heavily disturbed habitat, a surprising number of species frequent this small overlooked preserve.

Topography

A wood chip trail encircles the lake; occasionally small sections are flooded and muddy, but this is usually not an issue. There are several dirt trails in the south section; some people may find a section of one of these moderately steep. Proper footwear alleviates any issues.

Birds

Over 130 species of birds have been reported from Lambert Lake, including a variety of ducks and diving birds. During migration, over 20 species of warblers have been seen, as well as thrushes and similar birds. Summer birds include Wood Ducks, Red-winged Blackbirds, Baltimore Orioles, five species of vireo (the Warbling Vireo breeds on the north side of the lake), and assorted sparrows. Great Egrets, Green Herons, and Great Blue Herons are seen regularly.



While the north and west woods have traffic noise, warblers still frequent the woods, and the area near the drainpipe on the northwest side often reveals herons or egrets that may be hidden from the eastern shore. Rounding the lake, the southeast corner often shelters herons and ducks. Black-crowned Night Herons often join them stalking small fish and frogs.



Heading into the fields, there is a lone stump encumbered with several kinds of vines which can be a bird magnet.

DBC Hotspot



Northern Cardinals, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, flycatchers, American Robins, finches—there is no end to the variety of birds seen perched in this one snag, often at the same time. A hill rises out of this field, its ridge cloaked with a variety of trees and shrubs. This area is well worth scanning; since there are a number of berry-producing plants in the mix, large numbers of American Robins and other thrushes, as well as Cedar Waxwings and warblers, can be seen (if not always identified).

The trail forks just to the south of this tree. Taking the left arm leads through a thicket of sumac that soon transforms into a shrubby woodlot; the right fork (actually, this one goes forward rather than to the right) climbs the hill, then quickly descends into the woodlot. Birding by ear here is necessary: American Robins, Northern Cardinals, Black-capped Chickadees, several kinds of woodpeckers—all can be much more easily heard than seen.

If one cares to bushwhack through the trees, one enters the north edge of the baseball fields, with a concealed cattail pond that houses ducks, blackbirds, sparrows, and other surprises. The row of trees hiding an apartment complex from the park can contain amazing numbers of Cedar Waxwings and House Finches, as well as Starlings and House Sparrows (both of which are often absent from the rest of the area). Sometimes large flocks of Killdeer are on the empty ball fields. This is a good area to scan the sky for soaring Red-tailed Hawks or Turkey Vultures.

Best time to go

Early in the day during migrations will produce the greatest number of species, but just before sunset during the summer has produced some good sightings, too, especially of the resident Great Horned Owls. The preserve is a good place to visit if you are short on time. A leisurely stroll around the lake and the field to the south will take less than an hour.

Amenities

The main parking area (a gravel lot) is on the south side of the lake; the entrance is on Lambert Road. There is a smaller area along Taft Avenue on the north side of the lake. Picnic tables are located near the south side parking lot.

Access

Go south on Lambert from Roosevelt Road for about a block; there is a large sign at the entrance. Or go south from Roosevelt Road and turn right (west) onto Taft Avenue to access the north side parking area.

Site contributor

Content and photography by John Cebula.