

ARKANSAS IBA SITE REPORT FORM A. Date: 09/26/02
Prepared by: Leif Anderson, Kenny Nichols, Dr. Herschel Raney

SITE NAME Lake Dardanelle Size (acres) 10,000+

C. Nearest Town Clarksville, Dardanelle, Russellville County Johnson, Logan, Pope, Yell

D. Section, Township, Range T7-9N R20-24W

E. Latitude _____ Longitude _____ or UTM 3900427N 15 484461E

F. General description of the site (road mileage from nearest town, habitat, prominent features, ownership, and other helpful information).

Site is located 0.5 miles east of the Lake Dardanelle Lock and Dam at the Hwy 7 bridge and extends upstream just west of the US Army Corps of Engineers Recreation Area at Morrison Bluff. There are extensions off the main lake to the north and south.

G. IBA Criteria (check all that apply): Please read accompanying detailed criteria for site selection before completing this section.

X Criterion AR-1: Regularly supports significant densities of one or more of the bird species considered by Audubon as vulnerable in Arkansas (see attached Arkansas Birds of Conservation Interest list). Explain below.

Black & Yellow-Crowned Night-Herons: A large mixed flock rookery exists at an unknown location past the west end of this area. The area receives heavy feeding use.

Hooded Merganser: During the winter and particularly during migration large populations use the lake.

Bald Eagle: Periodic nesting occurs in the vicinity of Morrison Bluff. Large feeding concentrations of bald eagles occur during the winter.

“Interior” Least Tern: Uses the sand bars during migration. No known nest sites at this time, though the habitat exists, and there have been historical nesting records.

Brown-headed Nuthatch: A resident population at the southern portion of Lake Dardanelle State Park and at US Army Corps of Engineers Old Post Park are at their northern extend of their range, in this portion of the state. These populations appear to support their range expansion to the north onto the Ozark National Forest.

Yellow Warbler: Sporadic nester in the backwater western portion of the area.

Cerulean Warbler: Uncommon nester along less developed, extensive hardwood portions of the lakeshore.

Rusty Blackbird: Uncommon winter resident in flooded woods portions of the backwaters.

X Criterion AR-2: Site regularly supports 10,000 waterfowl (excluding snow geese) or more. Explain below.

2-5,000 Diving ducks of 10+ species are routinely be found on a winter day. Species occurrence shifts regularly and can vary from 5,000 Scaup and 100 Ruddy Ducks to 3,000 Ruddy Ducks and 200 Scaup within a few days. Winter totals of individuals are over 20,000 diving ducks. The lake, rivers, and backwaters also are used by several thousand dabbling ducks.

X Criterion AR-5: Site regularly supports 2,000 gulls or more (wintering site). Explain below.

During winter months 10,000+ gulls can be found in a day. Occurrence dynamics may find 10,000 Ring-billed, and 10 Bonaparte's, one day. Four days later 2,000 Ring-billed and 7,000 Bonaparte's can be found. Franklin's can occur in numbers during migration. During winter Herring and Laughing can be found amongst the more common species. As many as 6 other gull species have occurred on the lake.

X Criterion AR-6: 3,000 raptors or more pass site per seasonal migration, or 100 per day; or 3 raptors on winter territory per square mile. Explain below.

The lake shore and islands, during winter, exceed the 3 birds per sq mile. Red-shoulders and Red-tails are numerous. The area is consistent for finding Merlins in small numbers. Sharp-shinned Hawks appear in greater than average numbers.

X Criterion AR-8: Site supports 100 vultures or more. Explain below.

On the South side of the lock and dam is a tall hill/ bluff line (Owned by AR Natural Heritage Commission). This is an excellent roost site with 100+ being found during migration. Lesser numbers during the winter and breeding season, but still significant.

Significant Bird Habitat Exist - Explain below.

Several of these habitats exist in the area, but they are probably not outstanding examples.

X Criterion AR-12: Site supports long-term avian research efforts. Explain below.

Dr Nupp of AR Tech Univ, at Russellville is conducting Least Tern research in the area. A research study on Zebra Mussels, their heavy metal content, and toxicity in birds is needed, for this local area. Another potential bird researcher present at AR Tech is Dr Chris Kellner.

X Criterion AR-13: Site provides important, bird-specific educational opportunities. Explain below.

Lake Dardanelle State Park naturalists host many interpretive sessions that use birds as one of the topics.

H. Why is this site important for Arkansas birds? Provide additional details.

The large lake, combined with elevated water temperatures (0.5-2 degrees) caused by Nuclear One, provides an active fish population, even during the coldest portions of the winter. The fish population/ density is unknown, but appears to be large. Barge traffic and the dam can break the fish into easily digestible sizes.

Routinely 1-400 White Pelicans can be found on the lake and river. This species is not listed in AR-1, but represents a very large winter population .

The lake provides an excellent night roost for gulls, mainly concentrating in one area. The gulls break up into much smaller flocks to forage throughout the day.

The many fingers of the lake provide escape cover for the diving ducks, from barge and fishing boat traffic.

ORNITHOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE

I. List the species for which this site is important, the season(s) for which the site is important, average or maximum numbers (estimates are accepted), the years on which this count or estimate is based, and sources of information.

Species	Season	Avg Numbers/Season	Which Years (?)	Sources
Ring-Billed Gull	W	20K	Last 7 years	2,3
Franklin's Gull	S&FM	500	Last 7 years	2,3
Bonaparte's Gull	W	8K	Last 7 years	2,3
Laughing Gull	W	2-4	Last 7 years	1-3
Herring Gull	W	50+	Last 7 years	1-3
Parasitic Jaeger, Common Black-Headed Gull, Thayer's Gull, Sabine's Gull, California Gull, Lesser Black-Backed Gull, Black-Legged Kittiwake.				
	W		Occasional	3
Common Loon	W	5	Last 7 years	2,3
Pied-Billed Grebe	W	200	Last 7 years	2,3
Horned Grebe	W	50	Last 7 years	2,3
Western Grebe	W	1	Two occurrences	1
Canvasback	W	300+	Last 7 years	2,3
Redhead	W	100+	Last 7 years	2,3
Ring-Necked Duck	W	1K+	Last 7 years	2,3
Scaup, Greater	W	100+	Last 7 years	2,3

Scaup, Lesser	W	8K+	Last 7 years	1-3
Long-Tailed Duck	W	1-5	Last 7 years	1-3
White-Winged; Surf; Black Scoter	W	2-10	Last 7 years	1-3
Goldeneye, Common	W	400	Last 7 years	2,3
Bufflehead	W	1,500	Last 7 years	2,3
Hooded Merganser	W	100+	Last 7 years	2,3
Red-Breasted Merganser	W	100	Last 7 years	1-3
Common Merganser	W	50	Last 7 years	1-3
Bald Eagle	W	20	Last 7 years	2,3
Bald Eagle	B	2	Last 10 years	1-3
Historical nesters within last 10 years.				
Turkey Vulture	S&FM	100+	Last 7 years	2,3
Turkey Vulture	B, W	50	Last 7 years	2,3
Black Vulture	S&FM	40	Last 7 years	2,3
Black Vulture	B, W	20	Last 7 years	2,3
Tern, Caspian	S&FM	10	Last 7 years	2,3
Tern, Least	S&FM	5	Last 7 years	2,3
Historical nester within last 10 years.				
Tern, Forster's	S&FM	40	Last 7 years	2,3
Nuthatch, Brown-headed	yr	20	Last 4 years	1-3
Yellow Warbler	B	2-5pairs	Last 1 year	3
Cerulean Warbler	B	4-8pairs	Last 3 years	3
Black & Yellow Crowned Night-herons	B	3-10pairs	Last 1 year	2,3
<u>(feeding)</u>				

Season: B=Breeding, W=Winter, SM=Spring Migration, FM=Fall Migration
Sources: 1=published reports, 2=surveys (bird counts, etc.), 3=personal observation

Specify Sources:

Christmas Bird Counts have touched the East end of this site for 12+ years.
International migrant count has touched the Pope county portion for the last 4 years. During fall and winter various birders have done 5+ visits per week.
1-2 visits per week by birding fisherman during breeding season.

HABITAT AND LAND USE

J. Major Habitat Types: Please estimate the percent (%) of the total area that is made up of the following general habitat types. (See attached habitat definitions)

_____ Swamp (cypress, tupelo, or mixed forest)
 2 Lowland Hardwood Forest
 4 Lowland Pine-Hardwood Forest
_____ Upland Hardwood Forest
 2 Upland Pine-Hardwood Forest
 2 Upland Pine Forest
 10 Riverfront Forest (Sycamore, River Birch, etc.)
_____ Prairie
 <1 Glade
 20 Riverine
_____ Natural Lake (oxbow, meander scar lake)
 55 Artificial Impoundment
 3 Shrub-Scrub Habitat
 <1 Canebrakes
 1 Marsh-Emergent Vegetation Habitat
 <1 Sandbars

Explain below.

Most of the site is a 10K+ lake. Interspersed by River channels of the Arkansas & Piney Rivers and the Illinois Bayou. Shoreline and islands vary from pine to bottomland hardwood. Uplands are pine or hardwood.

K. Major Land Uses: Please estimate the percent (%) of time that the proposed site is used for the following purposes:

<u> 8 </u> Nature and Wildlife Conservation	<u> 10 </u> Utility/Right-of-way
<u> 22 </u> Hunting/Fishing	<u> 10 </u> Suburban/Residential
<u> 20 </u> Other Recreation or Tourism	<u> 20 </u> Urban/Commercial
_____ Agriculture/Aquaculture/Livestock	_____ Research
_____ Forestry	<u> 10 </u> Undeveloped
_____ Water Supply	<u> 30 </u> Other (specify) Barge traffic

Explain below.

Lake is used for AR river barge traffic, fishing, dabbling duck hunting, boating. The shoreline has a nuclear power plant and associated utilities; undeveloped; rural, suburban and urban buildups. 2 State Parks and numerous US Army Corps of Engineers recreation areas.

L. Land Ownership/Management: (Check all that apply): State Federal
 Municipal Private

List landowners or primary contacts, addresses, and phone numbers.

US Army Corps of Engineers

AR Nuclear One

Other partnership landowners:

Dardanelle State Park

AR Tech Univ.

Dardanelle

Russellville

Is landowner or land manager aware of the IBA program? Yes or No

Explain below.

The US Army Corps of Engineers has been contacted as the principal landowner. AR Nuclear One is primarily responsible for winter time temps, and indirectly fish populations. They may find listing, attractive for public relations.

Lake Dardanelle State Park may find that listing attracts more visitors.

Dardanelle and Russellville may find listing, attractive for tourism.

CONSERVATION AND OTHER RESOURCES

M. Primary Conservation Issues: Please note threats to the site as Serious (S), Minor (M), or Potential (P).

Invasive or Non-native Plants

Introduced Animals

Cowbird Parasitism

Predators

Habitat Conversion

Development

Disturbance to Birds or Habitat

Hydrologic Changes

Off Road Vehicle Use

Describe primary conservation issues, their seriousness, and any steps being taken to address them.

Barge and boat traffic certainly move bird populations around on the lake. Generally the birds only fly a couple 100' before setting back down. In addition, the birds return year after year. They don't appear to be bothered by boats. Zebra mussels may be attracting higher numbers of diving ducks and may pose a risk of heavy metal poisoning.

Other resource issues—social, economic, historic, etc. (Describe below).

Social: The presence of dabbling ducks attracts local duck hunters.

Economic: Bird watchers from across the state travel to the lake during fall and winter to see the ducks and gulls.

Is habitat restoration or enhancement of this site needed? Yes or No

If the site needs restoration, what actions need to be taken (e.g., fencing, planting, stream bank stabilization, erosion checks, exotic species management, timber thinning, etc.)?

Backwater habitat could be improved by planting aquatic plants, providing structures, and installing dikes to provide a set water level w/ sand bars for Least Terns. Zebra Mussel control, could benefit the bird's health.

N. List local individuals and/or groups with an interest in this site. Provide names, addresses, and phone numbers.

Leif Anderson; PO Box 195 Hector, AR. 72843 (479) 284-3402
AR Audubon Society; at above address.

O. Supporting documentation is required (topographic maps, photos, field notes, checklists, etc.) Attach supporting materials and return to Audubon Arkansas Important Bird Areas Program, c/o Rob Fisher, Director of Conservation; Heritage West, Suite 450; 201 East Markham Street; Little Rock, AR 72201; phone: (501) 244-2229; fax: (501) 244-2231; email: rfisher@audubon.org.

6-25-02