

ARKANSAS IBA SITE REPORT FORM

SITE NAME: Millwood Lake

Size (acres): 33,682

Latitude: 33° 69' N **Longitude:** 93° 96' W (center of spillway)

Location: Parts of T 11S, R 27W; T 12S, R 27W; T 11S, R 28W; T 12S, R 28W; T 11S, R 29W; and T 12S, R29W of the Fifth Principal Meridian.

Nearest Town: Ashdown

County: Hempstead, Howard, Little River, & Sevier

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

Millwood Lake is a man-made reservoir interspersed with standing dead timber, live cypress, and marsh-emergent vegetation located approximately 8 miles east of Ashdown in Little River County. Surrounding the reservoir are hardwood, coniferous, and mixed forests. Primarily, Millwood Lake serves as a flood control reservoir but, secondarily, it provides a water supply for local industry, nearby municipalities, and supports many recreational interests that include bird watching, butterfly watching, camping, fishing, hunting, and nature photography.

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

Criterion AR-1: Regularly supports significant densities of one or more of the bird species considered by Audubon as vulnerable in Arkansas. Explain below.

Millwood Lake supports breeding Hooded Mergansers (*Lophodytes cucullatus*), Mississippi Kites (*Ictinia mississippiensis*), Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), Purple Gallinules (*Porphyryla martinica*), Common Moorhens (*Gallinula chloropus*), Red-headed Woodpeckers (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*), Brown-headed Nuthatches (*Sitta pusilla*), Prothonotary Warblers (*Protonotaria citrea*), Painted Buntings (*Passerina ciris*), and Baltimore Orioles (*Icterus galbula*). The specific densities of these breeding populations have not been formally determined.

Millwood Lake provides an important foraging area for Anhingas (*Anhinga anhinga*), Tricolored Herons (*Egretta tricolor*), Black-crowned Night-Herons (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), Yellow-crowned Night-Herons (*Nyctanassa violacea*), White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*), and Wood Storks (*Mycteria americana*).

Millwood Lake is an important stopover point for migrating Ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*) during both spring and fall. Scattered summer records also exist and suggest the possibility of local breeding, but this is unconfirmed.

√ Criterion AR-3: Site regularly supports 10,000 waterfowl (excluding snow geese) or more. Explain below.

16 species of ducks are regular winter residents. Depending upon the severity or mildness of the winter season, both in Arkansas and regions to the north, numbers may fluctuate widely. Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) and Gadwall (*Anas strepera*) are the most numerous surface feeders. Lesser Scaup (*Aythya affinis*), Bufflehead (*Bucephala albeola*), and Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) are the most numerous divers. Greater Scaup (*Aythya marila*), less frequent inland, is a regular winter resident. Flocks of up to 41 birds have been observed.

√ Criterion AR-5: Site regularly supports 25 breeding pairs or more of wading birds (any species).

While there are no confirmed wading bird rookeries located within the proposed Millwood Lake IBA area, large post-breeding roosts do form in the western regions of the lake and at the Okay Dike. Large rookeries do exist nearby to the south within the Hempstead County Hunting Club (Grassy Lake) and to the west-northwest in the Pond Creek National Wildlife Refuge, and many of these birds forage at Millwood Lake.

√ Criterion AR-6: Site regularly supports 2,000 gulls or more (wintering site). Explain below.

Although dependent upon the severity of each winter season, gulls populations are variable but do exceed 2,000 individuals annually. Most common are Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*) but up to 700-800 Bonaparte's Gulls (*Larus philadelphia*) may also be present. Herring Gulls (*Larus argentatus*) are the least frequent. Occasional Glaucous (*Larus hyperboreus*), Black-headed (*Larus ridibundus*), and Little Gulls (*Larus minutus*), and Black-legged Kittiwakes (*Rissa tridactyla*) also appear.

√ Criterion AR-7: 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.

Fall counts of migrating Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*) vary from the hundreds to a peak count of 6300+ individuals on September 21, 1991.

√ Criterion AR-8: Wintering roost site supports 50 eagles or more. Habitat supporting roost is natural, not human-created. Explain below.

There are historical counts of over-wintering Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) at Millwood Lake in excess of 100 birds. Recent counts have been under that threshold but this is believed due to the milder winter seasons of late rather than the loss of suitable habitat or food sources.

√ Criterion AR-12: Site includes one or more outstanding examples of the following special bird habitats.

- **Shrub-Scrub Habitat**
- **Marsh-Emergent Vegetation Habitat**
- **Sandbars**
- **Blackland Prairie**

Explain below.

Shrub-Scrub habitat exists along and near the western end of the Okay Dike which is located on the northeastern shore of Millwood Lake. Marsh-Emergent habitat exists at the Okay Dike and in other shallow water areas, especially within the western portions of the lake. Particularly during years in which the lake's level has been lowered by up to 4 feet, temporary but extensive mudflats and sandbars are created which are utilized by migrating shorebirds, gulls, and terns. A remnant blackland prairie exists north of Saratoga Landing and is jointly managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission.

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

Charles Mills has intensively studied the natural history of this area, particularly its avifauna, since 1974. Each year, 1-4 field trips are led by Charles Mills within the nominated Millwood Lake IBA. Groups which have made multiple trips in the past include the Audubon Society of Central Arkansas, Dallas Audubon Society, Northeast Texas Field Ornithologists, Shreveport Bird Study Group, and Tex-Ark Audubon Society. Additionally, various programs, which focus on birds and other aspects of natural history, are held at Millwood State Park.

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

The Millwood Lake IBA area features excellent habitat diversity that provides abundant cover and food sources to seasonally resident bird species as well as those that migrate through the area during migration periods. Of the 394 species currently on the Arkansas state list, 320¹ have occurred within the area covered by the Millwood Lake IBA.

Millwood Lake is an important stopover point for migrating American White Pelicans (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*), and Franklin's Gulls (*Larus pipixcan*). Yearly numbers for both species vary but range from the hundreds to the thousands. Peak individual counts, respectively, are: 2200+ American White Pelicans on April 17, 1985 and 6000+ Franklin's Gulls on October 27, 2001. Additionally, Millwood Lake is an important

¹ This total does not include Trumpeter Swan, Whooping Crane, Passenger Pigeon, Carolina Parakeet, Ivory-billed Woodpecker, or Bachman's Warbler whose historical ranges did include the area covered by the Millwood IBA.

stopover point for southbound swallows during Fall Migration. In particular, Tree Swallows (*Tachycineta bicolor*) are abundant-their numbers match or exceed the 25,000 threshold set for Purple Martin roost sites.

ORNITHOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE

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/Season	Which Years ?	Sources
Hooded Merganser	B	25	1974-2003	3
Hooded Merganser	W	300	1974-2003	3
Double-crested Cormorant	B	150	1985-2003	3
Anhinga	B	300	1974-2003	3
Least Bittern	B	2	1974-2003	3
Tricolored Heron	B	60	1974-2003	3
Black-cr. Night-Heron	B	20	1974-2003	3
Yellow-cr. Night-Heron	B	60	1974-2003	3
White Ibis	B	1000	1974-2003	3
Wood Stork	FM	30	1974-2003	3
Osprey	SM, FM	50	1974-2003	3
Mississippi Kite	B	100	1974-2003	3
Bald Eagle	B	4	1974-2003	3
Bald Eagle	W	50	1974-2003	3
Northern Harrier	W	25	1974-2003	3
Sharp-shinned Hawk	W	15	1974-2003	3
Cooper's Hawk	W	5	1974-2003	3
Purple Gallinule	B	6	2003	3
Common Moorhen	B	15	2003	3
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	FM	5	1974-2003	3
"Interior" Least Tern	B	25	1974-2003	3
Red-headed Woodpecker	B	10	1974-2003	3
Brown-headed Nuthatch	B	50	1974-2003	3
Sedge Wren	FM	25	1974-2003	3
Marsh Wren	FM	10	1974-2003	3
Yellow Warbler	SM, FM	50	1974-2003	3
Chestnut-sided Warbler	SM, FM	10	1974-2003	3
Black-thr. Green Warbler	SM, FM	75	1974-2003	3
Prairie Warbler	B	15	1974-2003	3
American Redstart	SM, FM	25	1974-2003	3
Prothonotary Warbler	B	100	1974-2003	3
Worm-eating Warbler	SM, FM	2	1974-2003	3
Hooded Warbler	B	15	1974-2003	3

Painted Bunting	B	50	1974-2003	3
Species	Season	Avg/Season	Which Years ?	Sources
Rusty Blackbird	W	50	1974-2003	3
Baltimore Oriole	B	75	1974-2003	3

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: Personal observations of Charles Mills.

HABITAT AND LAND USE

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

- 4% Marsh Emergent Vegetation
- 30% Forest (all types)
- 66% Artificial Impoundment

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

- 30% Nature and Wildlife Observation
- 50% Hunting/Fishing
- 10% Other Recreation or Tourism
- 10% Water Supply

Explain below.

Millwood Lake is primarily maintained for flood control and public recreation. Water is supplied for use at the Domtar Paper Mill in Ashdown and for the cities of Hope, Texarkana Arkansas, and Texarkana Texas.

Land Ownership/Management: (Check all that apply): Federal

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

U S Army Corps of Engineers 870-898-3343

1528 Hwy 32 E

Ashdown AR 71822

Is landowner or land manager aware of the IBA program? Yes

Explain below.

The Millwood Lake Corps Office is aware of the IBA program and has assisted in the preparation of this nomination.

CONSERVATION AND OTHER RESOURCES

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

P Invasive or Non-native Plants
P Cowbird Parasitism
P Habitat Conversion/Development

M Off-Road Vehicle Use
M Predators

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

In the year 2000, the Millwood Corps office established the Wings and Things Nature Festival. Attendance has ranged from 900-1200 individuals each year. Programs at Wings and Things festivals include speakers, audio-visual presentations, and field trips that showcase the birds, other fauna, and flora of the Millwood Lake area.

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

Tex-Ark Audubon Society	Arkansas Audubon Society
PO Box 6985	14300 Chenal Pkwy Apt 7473
Texarkana TX 75505	Little Rock AR 72211

Nomination prepared by:
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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.