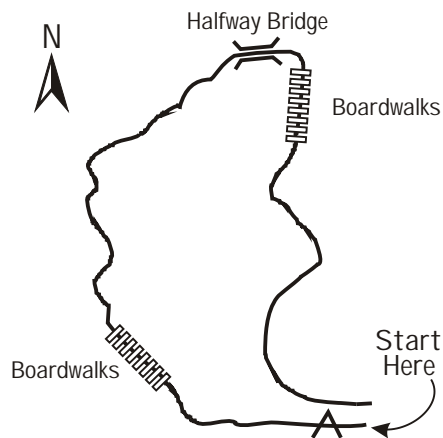


The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers welcomes you to Rend Lake and the Blackberry Nature Trail. This brochure guides you along a winding trail through wildlife habitat (homes). Match the numbered markers along the trail to the numbered text in this brochure. Use this trail as your gateway to explore and enjoy the wildlife at Rend Lake.

Trail Map

Distance	¾ mile
Terrain	Easy
Walking Time	30 minutes



Please remember

- * Avoid poison ivy by staying on the bark chipped trail.
- * Take only memories and leave only footprints.
- * Help keep the area clean by putting litter in its place.
- * Keep all pets on a leash.

Blackberry Nature Trail



Rend Lake

May 1999
DP1130-2-45

Station 1

Diversity of wildlife. Illinois is home to many types of wildlife. Illinois provides habitat (homes) for 17,000 species of insects, 67 species of mammals, 297 species of birds, and 98 species of reptiles and amphibians. Each animal needs a special combination of food, water, shelter, and space for survival. As you follow the trail, look carefully for areas where wildlife may hide, drink, and feed.



Station 2

Upland forest. This forest is composed largely of oak and hickory trees that prefer the dry soils on hillsides. Quail, deer, turkey, and squirrels eat the nuts and acorns produced in the upland forest. Tree branches and hollow trunks provide shelter for nesting animals. As mature trees die from disease and insect damage, young trees grow from the forest floor to replace them.

This natural process helps insure forests for the future.

Upland Forest

Old trees and rotting logs are key components in a forest ecosystem.



The old trees are hollow in the middle and become homes for many animals. Rotting logs attract insects serving as food for other animals.

Station 3

Water in the landscape. Water is necessary for wildlife habitat. Water collects in puddles, tree stumps, and streams. Streams are excellent places to view wildlife. Use your skills as a nature detective to find signs left by visiting wildlife. Those signs may be animal tracks or the remains of meals such as feather, fur, or bone.



Station 4

Bottomland forest. As the trail drops from the drier hillsides of the oak-hickory forest to the moister soils of the bottomland, maples and sycamores are the trees best suited to these conditions. Great-horned owls and raccoons find a home in the lofty heights of the trees and other animals browse among the ground cover plants. A concrete watering trough and trees scarred by wire fencing are the only remaining traces of the farm which occupied this area. The spring-fed trough was placed here to provide water for livestock. Now wildlife come here to drink.

Eastern Screech Owl *Otus asio*

— Nocturnal
10" long, nests in cavities - utilizes nest boxes.

Call varies - can sound like a horse winnie and/or soft purrs & trills.

Owl pellet

contains fur, feather, and bone



Station 5

Thickets. This mass of blackberry vines, honeysuckle, and autumn olive provide shelter for birds, reptiles, and mammals. Animals are attracted to brushy areas. Wildlife use these thickets to rest and hide from predators. The berries and leaves produced by the plants provide a high energy food source for many species of wildlife. When non-native plants and animals are introduced into Illinois fields and forests they are often more successful than native species in competing for available space.

Blackberry

Ripe fruit, is an aggregate of small, purplish-black drupes attached to a cone-shaped receptacle, which readily separates from the plant when berries are picked.



Poison Ivy



Station 6

Conclusions. Nature provides a wonderful and efficient system for supporting a wide diversity of wildlife. However, over 150 species of animals have disappeared in the 20th century from the fields and forests of Illinois. The primary reason for this disappearance is loss of suitable habitat. Wise management of our natural resources is important for the future success of the animals which remain. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers invites you to get involved in volunteer projects designed to improve wildlife habitat on public lands. Contact the Rend Lake Project Office and discover the volunteer opportunities available to you.

