

at Mermet Lake Conservation Area. *The Illinois Wildlife and Nature Viewing Guide*, available for purchase through IDNR, includes Mermet Lake as one of the state's top sites for watching wildlife.

### Facilities

**Picnicking:** Several picnic tables, each with a grill, are located on the eastern shoreline. A shelter for groups features a large grill. Pit toilets are on the grounds. There is no drinking water or refreshment stand, and camping is prohibited.

**Fishing:** The shallow lake features rip-rap, standing and fallen trees, depressions, lotus pads and stick-ups. The lake has largemouth bass, crappie, bluegill, sunfish, channel catfish, buffalo, carp, and other feeder and rough fish.

**Hiking:** The area has two trails. The nature preserve has a small 1/2-mile interpretive trail with tree identification markers and a small boardwalk extending into the cypress swamp. Another nature area has a 1-mile interpretive trail with tree identification markers along the way.

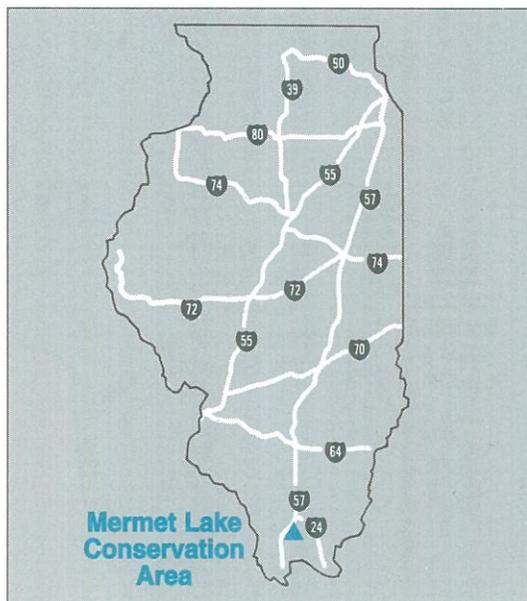
**Boating:** The 452-acre lake, with a maximum depth of 12 feet, is a major attraction at the refuge. Private boats use the four launching ramps and motors up to 10 horsepower are permitted. Rental boats, paddles and life jackets are available from the site staff.

**Hunting:** During waterfowl season, a check station is in operation and a daily drawing is held for the no-charge use of the permanent blinds. There is also a handicapped waterfowl blind available and two flooded walk-in areas. Other hunting such as dove, deer, squirrel, rabbit and quail is permitted in designated areas.

### Mermet Swamp Nature Preserve

At the southeast corner of Mermet Lake Conservation Area, 43 acres have been set aside for non-game, rare and endangered species. An old-growth forest of pin oak, sweet gum and swamp white oak occurs at the west end of the preserve. A second growth community of bald cypress, swamp cottonwood and pumpkin ash occurs in the swamp. Red oak, white oak and tulip poplar are predominate on the uplands. Red iris, arrow arum and American snowbell bush are some of the unusual plants present. An interpretive hiking trail, approximately 1/2 mile in length, winds through this area. A raised observation platform extends from the trail into the swamp.

For more information, contact Site Superintendent, Mermet Lake Conservation Area, 1812 Grinnell Road, Belknap, IL 62908, (618) 524-5577, Fax (618) 524-9807.



### Mermet Lake Conservation Area

1812 Grinnell Road

Belknap, IL 62908, 618-524-5577, Fax 618-524-9807

- While groups of 25 or more are welcome and encouraged to use the park's facilities, they are required to register in advance with the site office to avoid crowding or scheduling conflicts.
- At least one responsible adult must accompany each group of 15 minors.
- Pets must be kept on leashes at all times.
- Actions by nature can result in closed roads and other facilities. Please call ahead to the park office before you make your trip.
- We hope you enjoy your stay. Remember, take only memories, leave only footprints.
- For more information on state parks, write to the Department of Natural Resources, Clearinghouse, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1271, call (217) 782-6302 or visit our website at [www.dnr.state.il.us](http://www.dnr.state.il.us).
- For more information on tourism in Illinois, call the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's Bureau of Tourism at 1-800-2CONNECT.
- Hearing-impaired individuals may call the Department of Natural Resources' TTY number, (217) 782-9175, or use the Ameritech Relay Number, 1-800-526-0844.

Equal opportunity to participate in programs of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and those funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other agencies is available to all individuals regardless of race, sex, national origin, disability, age, religion or other nonmerit factors. If you believe you have been discriminated against, contact the funding source's civil rights office and/or the Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, IDNR, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1271; (217) 785-0067; TTY (217) 782-9175.

This information may be provided in an alternative format if required. Contact the DNR Clearinghouse at (217) 782-7498 for assistance.

# Mermet Lake

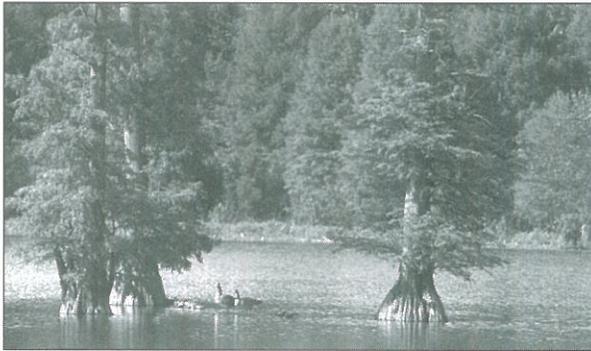
## CONSERVATION AREA



**Illinois**  
Department of  
**Natural Resources**

## The Area

Mermet Lake Conservation Area is an old cypress swamp which has been made into a waterfowl hunting area. Primarily the area was developed for duck hunting, but several thousand Canada, blue and snow geese frequent the area each winter. The shallow lake also is very productive for largemouth bass, channel catfish and most panfish. The lake is closed in October prior to waterfowl hunting season and is re-opened directly after waterfowl season. The original acreage acquired in 1949 in Massac County, 1/2 mile southwest of Mermet on U.S. 45, has been increased to 3,074 acres, of which 690 are permanent water.



## Natural Features

One of the first major developments at Mermet Refuge was the 1962 construction of a system of levees, which created a lake. The lake serves as a reservoir and a supply of water to temporarily flood two walk-in duck hunting areas and a duck hunting area of permanent blinds. These permanent blinds are allocated on a no-charge daily draw system. The water in the lake is dropped 2 feet each fall to accommodate the duck hunters. After waterfowl season, the water is returned to the lake and due to a normal lack of rainfall run-off, a system of wells and pumps is used to return the lake to pool stage.

Approximately 200 acres of millet, buckwheat, milo and corn are planted annually in the open fields in the waterfowl blind area. The food attracts waterfowl to the area and greatly enhances hunting success. Waterfowl hunting in the area closes at 1 p.m., enabling the waterfowl to have undisturbed use of the area in the afternoon.

A good population of deer, squirrel, birds and furbearing forest game exists in the timbered part of the area. Endangered species such as the purple gallinule, least bittern, moorhen and rice rat have been seen. Bald eagles and osprey are regularly sighted on the lake. The state record willow oak also is located

