

Beaver Dam State Park

You might be tempted to try and see if you can spot a beaver in Beaver Dam State Park near Carlinville, Illinois. Unfortunately you're not likely to have much luck. Though named for a beaver dam that created the park's lake, the beaver is virtually gone from the area now. However, other wildlife-watching and recreational opportunities make the beaver's absence go mostly unnoticed.

The park's 751 acres provide diverse habitats to suit the needs of a variety of wildlife. Upland and bottomland woods, farmland, open fields, a lake and a marsh are home to deer, foxes, raccoons, grey and white squirrels and turkeys. Hawks, woodpeckers, bluebirds, orioles and cuckoos all reside here and make the area a bird watcher's paradise. Eight miles of hiking trails extend throughout the park and increase access and opportunity for hunters and wildlife watchers.

If you prefer water recreation, throw a line into the 59-acre lake. You can fish along the 1.7 miles of shoreline, or make use of the docks and free boat launch. Stocked with largemouth bass, bluegill, sunfish and channel catfish, the lake is a popular fishing spot.

For a family day trip or a special event, the park offers a few more amenities. One large section of the park is available for picnicking. Families and friends can choose to gather at one of four large pavilions with picnic tables and barbecue grills, and children can play on a nearby playground. Pavilions can be reserved, making them a popular site for family reunions, company parties, and birthday and holiday celebrations. Campers can relax in the first-come, first-serve, tent and trailer camping sites, and youth groups can reserve a separate designated campsite.

If you're looking for outdoor fun in Illinois, check out Beaver Dam and the other beautiful state parks!

Source(s):

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. (2010). Beaver Dam State Park. Retrieved November 20, 2010 from <http://dnr.state.il.us/lands/landmgt/parks/r4/beaver.htm>.

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