

Songbird Hiking Trail

TRAIL SUMMARY Location: Western Blue Ridge, Lake Conasauga Recreation Area; **Features:** Songbird management Area, beaver pond; **Distance:** 1.7 miles; **Difficulty Rating:** Easy; **County:** Murray; **Nearest City:** Ellijay (SE), Chatsworth (SW); **Maps:** Crandall Quad (GA); Cohutta Wilderness map; **Blazes:** None, none needed; **Campsites:** Available seasonally in the recreation area campground; overflow camping area at the Songbird Trailhead (open year-round); **Ranger District:** Cohutta

The 120-acre Songbird Management Area provides optimum habitat for songbirds. To the left, where the second-growth forest remains uncut, a branch of Mill Creek [parallels](#) the trail. To the right, a dense young stand cut in the late 1970s is maintained by managed burning to keep its vegetation thick and shrubby, a habitat required by many songbirds.

The trail proceeds straight ahead to a fork in the path at a directional sign-at 0.3 mile the loop starts around the beaver pond. Continuing straight ahead, following the loop in a counterclockwise direction, the treadway parallels a beaver pond, the first of a 0.3 mile-long chain. A boardwalk leads out over the pond to an observation platform, offering a perfect spot to sit and watch for wildlife. The beaver lodge and dam are visible.

At mile 0.6 the Grassy Mountain Tower Trail, having come from Lake Conasauga, enters from the right at a bulletin board and directional sign. Both trails share the same treadway at this point. The trail crosses a low bridge, then leads up the hill to the left at a directional sign. After passing through another shrubby opening, the Grassy Mountain Tower Trail continues straight and Songbird Trail branches left. The Songbird Trail crosses three more footbridges before completing the loop.

Over the years the beaver have enhanced this loop. Their ponds have added beauty and increased the diversity of habitat and wildlife. The area supports many bird species. Cavity nesters, such as the flicker, live in the gray snags; the woodcock probes the mud for earthworms; the kingfisher dives for small fish. Watch for wood ducks living in the boxes around the pond or in the cavities of dead trees. Frogs, in one form or another, snakes, and salamanders can be viewed from the water's edge. Colorful dragonflies helicopter to and fro, hawking insects.

The shoreline mud registers the comings and goings of the local animals. Raccoon, deer, wild hog, and beaver tracks are not difficult to find. If you come upon a large, wide-palmed footprint that isn't human, you have probably found a black bear track.

The best time for birding along this trail is during spring migration. Then the males are both vocal and colorful. Mid-May is usually a good time for bird-watching.

Highlights

Throughout: Good birding area. Many species live in or migrate through the management area.

Mile 0.3: A beaver pond, busy with bird, amphibian, and insect life. Mammal tracks can be seen in the mud.

Directions

(See page 177 of Lake Conasauga Trail for directions to the recreation area.) The Songbird Trail begins at the Overflow Camping Area at Lake Conasauga. To reach the Overflow Camping Area, continue straight ahead on FS 68 approximately 1.2 miles past Camping Loop A (first entrance into the recreation area). The trail starts at the Songbird Management Area bulletin board. Trailhead parking is available across the road from the Overflow Camping Area.