

shrub prairie



RECREATION

hiking, wildlife observation, photography

WHERE IS IT FOUND?

Shrub prairie is very scarce in Illinois, and the prime example is Wilmington Shrub Prairie Nature Preserve near Braidwood in Will County. There is also some shrub prairie at Braidwood Dunes and Savanna Nature Preserve, near Wilmington in Will County. There are approximately 180 acres (good and poor quality) of shrub prairie remaining in Illinois. Please call in advance to make arrangements before visiting either of these sites.

CHARACTERISTICS

The different prairie types were the result of variations in soil moisture, soil composition, geological substrate, glacial history and topography. Shrub prairie, as its name implies is dominated by shrubs and also by prairie grasses. The only examples remaining in Illinois occur on moist, acidic, sandy soil, especially in the Kankakee area.

WHAT LIVES HERE?

Because the prairie ecosystem is recently evolved, few prairie species are restricted to the prairie habitat and may be found in other habitats as well. Plants tend to be more characteristic of specific prairie habitats than animals. Typical plants of the shrub prairie include hardhack, bristly blackberry, wild lupine, American feverfew, big bluestem, running pine, box huckleberry, lowbush blueberry, black chokecherry, purple chokecherry, Indian grass, tubercled orchid, lance-leaved violet and primrose violet. Animals that may live in the shrub prairie include the western harvest mouse, dickcissel (bird), smooth greensnake and North American racer (snake).