



*Buzzard Cliff overlook*

**Description:** Oak-hickory and hemlock forests dominate this 3,776-acre park. Natural and manmade openings in the forest provide acres of edge-type habitat and numerous wildlife viewing opportunities. Thirteen trails provide nature enthusiasts 26 miles of paths to explore the park. Trails cover varying degrees of difficulties and ranges of interests. A number of yellow poplar coves lend beauty to the fall scenery.

**Wildlife Viewing Information:** Look for white-tailed deer along the forest edge. A variety of songbirds fill the forest, especially in spring and summer when many neotropical migrants come to the park to breed. Various warblers, the brown thrasher, red-eyed vireo, red-winged blackbird, and ovenbird are just some of the species inhabiting the park in summer. Marsh and red-shouldered hawks frequent the park. Three species of owls are year-round residents: Eastern screech, great-horned, and barred. Listen particularly for the latter two species at night. Coyotes add to the nighttime sounds. Although woodcocks and ruffed grouse are tough to see in their forested habitat, in spring you can listen to the mating calls of the woodcock and the male ruffed grouse drumming his wings. Wild turkeys are commonly seen during late summer and fall, and less frequently in the spring and early summer. Elusive black bears and gray foxes are sometimes seen. Summertime hours can be spent chasing butterflies and dragonflies. Impressive thickets of the rhododendron, West Virginia's state flower, bloom around the first of July, while early June visitors can catch the blooming mountain laurel.

Visitors to the nature center can view mounts of assorted animals, including bear, coyote, bobcat, raccoon and fox along with some rather impressive deer racks. Some live snakes including the timber rattlesnake, copperhead and black rat snake are often kept at the center. A few other natural history and cultural displays are available.



*Brown Thrasher*

*Photo by Johnny N. Dell, Bugwood.org*

**Directions:** The park is located 24 miles from I-64/77. Take Exit 42 (Robert C. Byrd Drive) off I-64/77 at Beckley and travel south on state Route 16/Route 97. Follow signs to the park. Travel on state Route 16/Route 97 for 3.7 miles, then bear right onto state Route 54 south for 13.5 miles to Maben. Take state Route 97 west from Maben for 5.5 miles to a T intersection. Turn left at the stop sign onto Bear Hole Road, and proceed for 0.6 mile to the park entrance.

**Ownership:** WV Division of Natural Resources. For more information on park accommodations and recreational facilities, call the park at 304-294-4000, or 1-800-CALL WVA, or visit [www.twinfallsresort.com](http://www.twinfallsresort.com).

*Excerpt from West Virginia Wildlife Viewing guide by Mark Damian Duda. For a free copy (plus shipping and handling), call 304-637-0245.*