



Ring-necked pheasant

Jacob Dingel
PCC Photo

Joshua Allison/WV DNR Photo

Description: Hillcrest is West Virginia's northernmost wildlife management area. Its topography and habitats make it unique among the state's 72 WMAs. Hillcrest consists of 2,212 acres of flat bottomlands and rolling uplands. The elevation ranges from 1,000 to 1,300 feet above sea level. The open fields, hedgerows, meadows and orchards are excellent for viewing wildlife.

Viewing Information: Look for white-tailed deer in the fields in the early morning and evening in summer and in the apple orchards in winter. Cottontail rabbits and mourning doves are common inhabitants. In spring, come early in the morning to hear a ring-necked pheasant cock crowing a loud double "kork-kok," or search the hedgerows for these beautiful, introduced game birds. The male is easily identified by its large size, long tail, white ring around its neck, and multi-colored face. The female is smaller and mottled brown, with a long, pointed tail.

In spring and summer, the hay fields support bobolinks and Henslow's sparrows, uncommon birds in West Virginia. Bluebirds also make use of these open fields. In the apple orchards, look for Baltimore orioles, meadowlarks and bluebirds. The fields here in summer are filled with dragonflies and butterflies. In winter, birds of prey migrating down the Ohio River stop at Hillcrest to rest and feed in these same open fields.

Small forested woodlots scattered throughout Hillcrest provide necessary food and cover for squirrels and wild turkeys. Several beaver ponds and three developed shallow wetlands provide habitat for wood ducks and mallards, as well as several species of amphibians. From February through April, the "peep" of the northern spring peeper can be heard throughout the area as it announces the approaching spring.

THIS IS A NATURAL AREA WITH NO FACILITIES AND IS A PUBLIC HUNTING AREA. PLEASE CHECK WITH THE MANAGER FOR SEASONS AND AFFECTED AREAS.

Directions: From the junction of U.S. Highway 30 and state Route 8 south of Chester, travel south on state Route 8 for 2.2 miles to Middle Run Road. Turn left onto Middle Run Road and proceed for 0.9 mile. The area runs along the right and left sides of the road. You also can access Hillcrest by Smith Road and Gas Valley Road.

Closest town: Chester

Ownership: West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (304-387-1753)