

# America's State Parks

## Kentucky's Audubon State Park

John James Audubon State Park is located on U. S. Route 41 in Henderson, Kentucky, just south of the Ohio River. Its inspiration is John James Audubon, the ornithologist, naturalist and painter who resided in Henderson from 1810 to 1819 when Henderson was a frontier village.

John James Audubon operated small businesses in Henderson, Kentucky with mixed success, but his passion was exploring the forests of the region and sketching and painting wildlife, particularly birds. In 1934, the Wolf Hills area in Henderson was selected for a new state park (meeting the minimum 300 acres needed for park development). Susan Towles, a Henderson librarian, supplied the necessary research and documentation to establish a historic connection to the land.

In September 1934, a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) base Camp Cromwell was established off US 41 near John James Audubon State Park. After the 300-acres was procured for park development, approximately 200 CCC, Company 1540 employees were dispatched from their West Virginia base to Henderson where they were joined by others including several Henderson natives. Over the next four years the CCC drained swamps, build two lakes and developed trails and roads. With the help of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the park shelters, the Tea House (presently the park office), and the Audubon Museum were constructed from local stone and mill work. The entire project cost approximately \$500,000.

Beginning in 1948 and lasting until 1955, a program of restoration and construction was carried out. Some of the projects completed were new museum lighting installation; picnic area, bathhouse and beach, landscaping, parking, lake dam and shelter construction. From 1960 to 1969 another \$500,000 was invested in the park with construction of a camping area and nine-hole golf course. Additional land was acquired bringing the park to nearly 700 acres. New picnic shelters and employee housing were also constructed.

The park was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1988.

In 1990, the state General Assembly allocated \$2.5 million for a thorough renovation of the museum and the additional 9,500-square-foot (880 m2) nature center to promote the study of nature. In the spring of 1992, the largest renovation in the museum's 54-year history began and in December 1993 the refurbished and expanded museum reopened. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>

