

Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area

Newsletter

Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism

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Cheyenne Bottoms Web Page

Spring migration is underway as of this writing in mid-March. Ducks are starting to show indications that their migration is on the downhill side. Early species are declining in their numbers, especially green-winged teal. Blue-winged teal numbers are still quite high. Spring is the most enjoyable time of year for those that en-

joy watching what is going on outdoors. It is fun to make weekly trips through the Bottoms and pay attention to the changes in waterfowl species composition and even the dates of first observation for the ducks. They're all in their finest plumage and showing their best color as well. You can do the same thing a little later

for shorebirds. Their arrival dates vary by species and you can see changes in composition as April gives way to May. Identification can be a bit of a challenge for sandpipers, but in itself is still fun.

We have kept a record at Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area of

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Cattail mowed during winter 2015-16 in Pool 3B.



Cheyenne Bottoms is a Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Project funded by your purchase of hunting equipment. Some of the best wildlife hunting and viewing opportunities in the United States can be had on land purchased and maintained by these hunter generated dollars.

Killdeer

The following is taken from New Hampshire Public TV, NatureWorks at: www.nhptv.org/natureworks.

The killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*) has brown upper feathers and white undersides. It has a brown head with a black band between its eyes, white 'eyebrows' and black bands around its upper chest. It has a sharp, black bill, long legs and a long tail. Males and females look the same.

The killdeer is found from Alaska to Newfoundland south throughout the United States and into Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, and South America.

Killdeer can be found in open grasslands, croplands and pastures, and shortgrass prairies. They are often found on sandbars, mudflats and pastures.

Insects make up the majority of the killdeer's diet, but they will also eat berries and crustaceans.

Male killdeers claim nesting territory before selecting a mate. To attract a mate, the male will stand in his territory and make a two-note call for hours at a time. The male may



also scrape at the ground and fly over his territory. Once killdeers have mated, the pair will scrape out a nesting site. The female killdeer lays an average of four eggs. Both the male and the female incubate the eggs. It takes about 24 to 28 days for the eggs to hatch.

The chicks are precocial. Once the chicks' down dries, the parents will lead them to a feeding area. The chicks stay with the parents until they fledge a month after hatching. The killdeer may have two broods per year.

The killdeer sometimes distracts predators from its nest by pretending to be injured. It

drags itself along the ground, sometimes on one foot, dragging its wings like they are broken. When the predator turns its attention to the feigning adult and away from the nest, the adult killdeer flies away. Killdeer do not gather in flocks. They are solitary or in male and female pairs.

In the spring, killdeer are one of the earliest non-waterfowl birds at Cheyenne Bottoms. The recorded first of season dates on the wildlife area range from 10 February through 16 March with a median date of 28 February (based on a sample of 26 years).

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the 'first of season' observation for over 150 species of birds. In many cases this involves more than 30 years of data. While this is by no means a scientific research effort, it does provide us a good representation of when many species can be expected to be seen during migration, especially in the spring. Much of this information is available on the Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area web page on the ksoutdoors.com web site. Look under Interesting Facts once you get to the wildlife area page.

You're encouraged to explore the Cheyenne Bottoms web page. If you're a hunter go to the Hunting page and click on Cheyenne Bottoms WA Waterfowl Migration Chronology. This provides infor-

mation on when most ducks and geese are at the Bottoms in the fall along with specific species like mallard and white-fronted geese.

If you're a bird watcher go to Bird Watching and click on the Shorebird Viewing Guide. There are 23 pages of graphs indicating when peak shorebird numbers occur during spring and fall migration, a list of the most common species of shorebirds present in spring and a number of graphs showing when the best time to see a variety of different species occurs.

In addition, the area map, bird list, mammal list, reptile and amphibian list are all there to be read and/or printed off.

There is also a page on Historical Information. This provides an idea of some of the history associated with the Wildlife

Area and the basin in general. Names of the parking lots, in many cases, are based on the history of the basin.

You can also sign up to receive this newsletter in electronic form. If you do that, which we strongly encourage you to do, you will be saving us time and money now being spent on printing, folding, taping, labeling and posting hard copies. If you opt for the electronic form, please let the Area office know so we can delete you from our snail mail list.

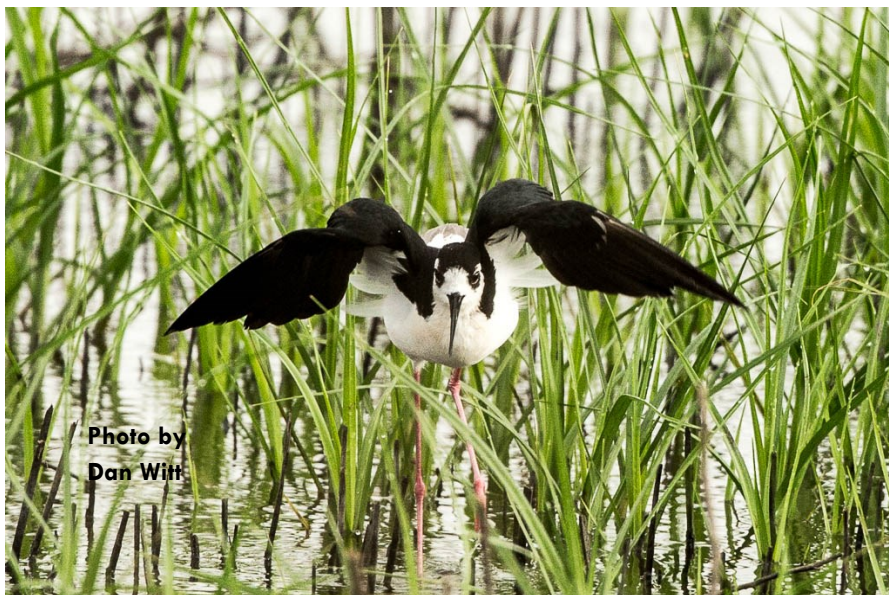
The point of this article is to show what resources are available on the Cheyenne Bottoms Web page if you haven't already checked it out. We have tried to make it a useful tool in planning your trips to the Wildlife Area.

HUNTERS ENCOURAGED TO USE ISPORTSMAN

The Department is in its second year of implementing an electronic daily hunting permit system on Benedictine Bottoms, Buffalo Ranch, Bolton, Buck Creek, Cheyenne Bottoms, Clinton, Elwood, Hillsdale, Isabel, Jamestown, Kansas River, LaCygne, Lovewell, Lyon, Marais des Cygnes, McPherson, Melvern, Milford, Neosho, Noe, Perry, Slate Creek and Texas Lake.

To utilize the electronic daily hunt permit system, the first step, which can be done at any time, is to log on to: <https://kdwpt.isportsman.net> then click on Register to set up an account and obtain a General Access Permit. Once you have the General Access Permit and are ready to hunt, you can log in on a computer or smart phone or call in on a cell phone or landline (1-844-500-0825) and "check-in". After you've finished hunting for the day, you can "check-out" the same way.

If you're still using the cards, start playing around with iSportsman and get used to it. If you need help or have questions, call any of the properties listed above or call the Public Lands Section at 620-672-5911.



WILDLIFE, PARKS AND TOURISM WEB SITE

The Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism web site provides a host of valuable services. Examples include: weekly waterfowl reports; WIHA and FISH Atlas; Hunter Ed Class schedule; license and permit sales; hunting and fishing regulations; legislative updates; and the Outdoor Store with books and DVD's related to all outdoor interests. Don't forget that each Department property has it's own page. Check it out at:

www.ksoutdoors.com



Cheyenne Bottoms was designated as a 'Wetland of International Importance' by the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in 1988. Only 38 sites in the U.S. are recog-



nized as such. In addition, it is recognized as an 'Important Bird Area' by the American Bird Conservancy and is listed as a 'Hemispheric Reserve' by the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network.

Kansas Wildlife, Parks and Tourism
Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area
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Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs described herein is available to all individuals without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, sexual preference, religion, age or handicap. Complaints of discrimination should be sent to Office of the Secretary, Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, 1020 So. Kansas Ave., Suite 200, Topeka, KS 66612.