

# CHEYENNE BOTTOMS

**C**heyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area is located two miles east of U.S. Highway 281, between Great Bend and Hoisington. Access is also available from K-156, or by turning off K-4 Highway at Redwing. It is owned by the people of Kansas and managed by the Department of Wildlife and Parks.

The 19,998-acre area is part of a 41,000-acre natural land sink just northeast of Great Bend.

During the 1950s, the state of

Kansas acquired the land, and dikes were constructed to impound water in five pools. Canals and dams were built to divert water from the nearby Arkansas River and Wet Walnut Creek to supplement water provided by two intermittent streams, Blood and Deception creeks.

During the 1990s, extensive renovation divided some of the pools. Pump stations were built to allow for increased management flexibility and water level manipulation. This

renovation effort also provided increased water conservation to better meet wildlife needs during dry periods.

Manipulation of water levels in the pools is a major tool in managing the marsh for water birds. Each year, one or more of the pools are drained as deemed necessary. Often these areas are seeded to millet and/or wheat and undesirable vegetation is controlled by burning, mowing and disking while the pools are dry.

## HUNTING INFORMATION

Hunting is not allowed in the refuge areas (see map). Hunting pressure on the Bottoms can be heavy during waterfowl season, particularly on weekends. Hunters planning trips to the Bottoms should consider weekday hunts.

Hunters are required to check-in before each hunt and check-out after each hunt electronically through [ksoutdoors.com/checkin](http://ksoutdoors.com/checkin) or the GoOutdoorsKS mobile app.

Pools 1, 5 and a portion of Pool 2 are refuge areas and closed to all activities. Exceptions occur for some special hunts. Check with wildlife area personnel for more information.

In addition to waterfowl, other game may be legally taken at

Cheyenne Bottoms. Pheasant, quail and deer can be found in the area. Snipe and rail hunters also have success, especially along the shallow marsh margins.

A handicapped accessible hunting/photo blind is available by reservation. Call the (620) 793-3066 for additional information and reservations.

In the event of whooping crane activity, the pools the birds are in is closed to all hunting and the goose hunting zones are closed to crane and light goose hunting.

## BIRD WATCHING

Because Cheyenne Bottoms is such a diverse, large and unique marsh, birdwatching is one of the more popular activities on the area. The spring and fall migration periods offer the best opportunity to view large numbers of different species. In spring, waterfowl and sandhill cranes can begin arriving as early as February. Wading birds, such as herons and egrets, begin arriving in March and April. Most shorebirds arrive in late April and early May. By late May, the birds that are still present on the area will tend to remain and nest.

The southward migration in fall can be a rewarding and challenging time for birdwatchers. Most of the birds moving through the area have replaced their breeding plumage with a set of feathers that lack much of the color they had just a few months earlier. This can make identification difficult, especially

when looking at shorebirds.

The fall shorebird migration can begin as early as July and extend well into September and October. Because of this, the bird numbers are not as impressive as the spring movement since the birds do not achieve as great a number at any one time. The peak period for duck viewing in the fall occurs early to mid-October. Most wading birds remain on the area until the marsh freezes. This is especially true for the great blue heron. Whooping cranes are most apt to stop at Cheyenne Bottoms in late October into early November. Bald eagles winter on the area and are present from as early as November to as late as March. A checklist of birds found on the area and the seasons they are present is available at the area office and the information signs at the main entrances.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

Fishing at Cheyenne Bottoms is limited mainly to carp and bullhead catfish. Occasionally channel catfish, crappie and largemouth bass are found if several years of water is maintained.

Trapping is permitted by obtaining a free special permit at the area office. Only live traps and dog proof traps may be used.

## GENERAL REGULATIONS

Vehicles are permitted only on established roads and parking areas.

Camping is permitted only in the primitive campground located one mile west of the area office.

The use of watercraft is restricted. Watercraft are not permitted in the refuge area. In-the-water propeller-driven boats are permitted only during open waterfowl seasons. Airboats are not allowed at any time. Pool 3A is closed to motorized boats. Pool 4A is closed to motorized boats at starting 1 p.m. All boats must be operated at no wake speeds throughout the wildlife area. From April 15 to August 15, hand-powered boats are not permitted to protect nesting birds.

Littering is prohibited. Take all trash with you.

Boats, licenses, stamps, decoys, ammunition, binoculars and other supplies are not available at the area office.

The Mitigation Marsh, located in the southeastern portion of the wildlife area, is managed as a youth hunting area. It is open to hunters 17 and younger and one mentoring adult. The adult may hunt.

Non-toxic shot is required for all shotgun hunting. The possession of lead in the field is prohibited.

No shooting is allowed on or from the dikes.

No holes or pits may be dug for any purpose. Portable blinds or decoys may not be left unattended overnight. Natural blinds may be used and shall be constructed of natural herbaceous materials present on site.

The refuge area is closed to all activities.

## SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

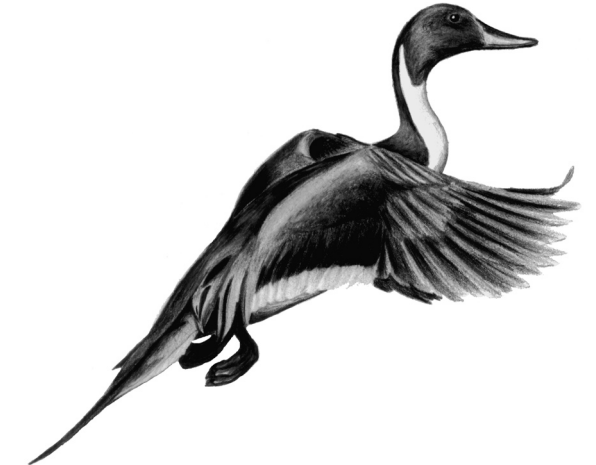
Be sure you are at a foot crossing before leaving dikes. Barrow ditches along the dikes are deep. Caution should be used when crossing all open water; water depths can exceed 4 feet, especially around renovated islands. This is particularly true in Pool 4, where extensive level ditches have been dug.

Rattlesnakes are common during warm months, so caution should be used.

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs described herein is available to all individuals without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, political affiliation, and military or veteran status. Complaints of discrimination should be sent to Office of the Secretary, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, 1020 S Kansas Ave., Topeka, KS 66612. 07/22

# Cheyenne Bottoms

## Wildlife Area



The primary management goal of Cheyenne Bottoms is to provide a diverse marsh habitat for waterfowl and shorebirds during the migrational periods. This includes providing food, water and resting places. A secondary goal is to increase the production of waterfowl and shorebirds that nest on the area.

Approximately 13,000 acres of the wildlife area are open to hunting. This brochure is not intended to be a complete listing of area regulations. Some restrictions vary from year to year. If you have further questions contact Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks personnel.

Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area  
204 NE 60 Rd.  
Great Bend, KS 67530

  
Department of  
Wildlife and Parks


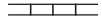
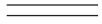














(Area Office)  
(620) 793-3066  
24-hr. Hotline (620) 793-7730

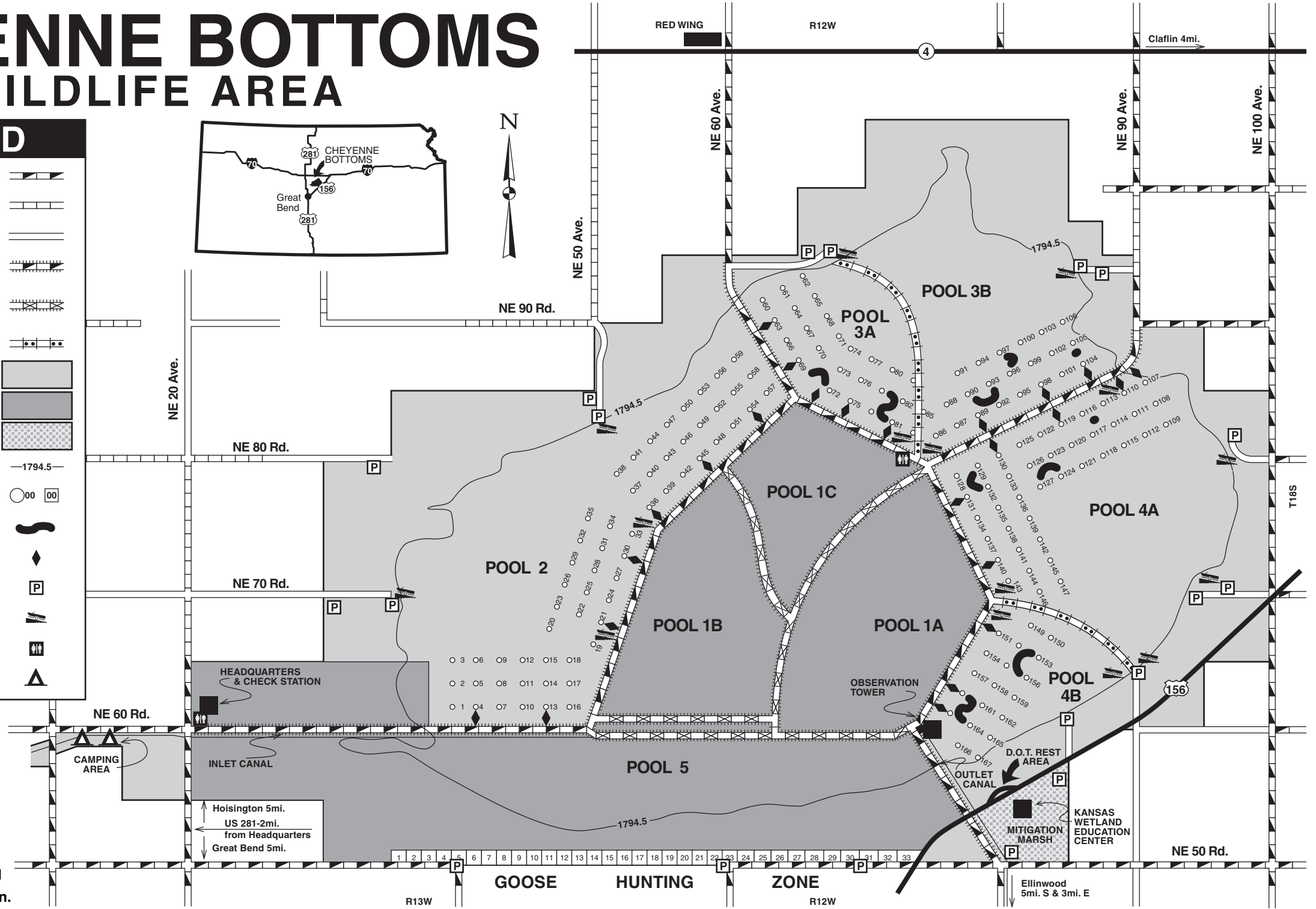
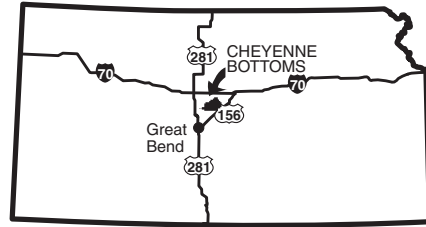
(Regional Office)  
(620) 227-8609

[www.ksoutdoors.com](http://www.ksoutdoors.com)

# CHEYENNE BOTTOMS WILDLIFE AREA

## LEGEND

- Gravel Surface Road 
- Improved Earth Road 
- Unimproved Earth Road 
- Dike with Gravel Surface Road 
- Refuge Area Dike  
(Closed to all Activities) 
- Dike (Available to Foot Travel only) 
- Area Boundary 
- Refuge Area 
- Youth Mentor Area 
- Normal Pool Elevation  -1794.5-
- Duck and Goose Blinds 
- Renovation Island 
- Foot Crossing 
- Parking Area 
- Boat Ramp 
- Vault Toilet 
- Camping Area 



Funded in part by your hunting license dollars and the federal excise tax on sporting arms and ammunition for wildlife restoration.