

Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area

Newsletter

Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism

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THINGS FINALLY DRIED OUT

In August, pools we were trying to dry out since late winter finally dried sufficiently to allow us to do some work in the marsh. It was still limited to the perimeter areas, but we did get some hunting holes and hunter access trails mowed in pools 3A, and 4. We even had the chance to plant some millet in Pool 4, but it was late in the planting season.

We were never able to burn the mowed cattail in Pool 3B. Wind and wet weather prevented that during the winter and into spring. We're now in late October and we have our fall wheat planting done and the fireguards in Pool 3B are re-established, so we hope to get it burned soon and begin disking cattail in the northern portion of the pool and begin mowing the southern part. As always, weather has the final say as to what we can and can not do.

Teal season was a bit of a disappointment given the population forecast. Having water in reservoirs, ponds and creeks that have been dry for years

contributed to keeping the ducks spread out over the western part of the state. Weather systems coming from the west, not the north, didn't push many birds south. Also having temperatures in the 90's in October meant ducks had no reason to move south. All of this is speculated to have contributed to a less than average teal season. This extremely mild fall has continued into October and greatly influenced the duck numbers using the Bottoms

in at least the early part of the regular duck season.

The table below shows hunter distribution by pool during the early teal season and also the hunter success by pool. For comparison, teal hunter numbers were estimated to be 2,377 in 2015; 3,001 in 2014 and 1,499 in 2013 and averaged about 1,295 over the past 10 years.

Pool	Number of hunters	Hunter success
2	178	2.36
3A	221	2.71
4A	404	2.75
4B	204	2.91
5	116	3.38
No pool given or other areas	142	3.22
Total	1265	2.83

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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.

OPOSSUM

What Kansas mammal has a pouch to carry its' young, prehensile tail, five clawed toes, hind feet with opposable thumbs that have flat nails instead of claws, a long white, hairless face and is related to the kangaroo? The opossum.

The opossum is found statewide, but is more common in eastern Kansas. These animals prefer woodlands bordered by pasture and near water. Although they are an adaptable critter and are often seen both in the country and in town. They den in tree holes, rotten logs or cliff cavities. Opossums eat nearly anything and everything. They'll eat any kind of carrion, invertebrates, small mammals and birds. They hunt frogs, tadpoles, crayfish, clams and bird eggs. Because of their slow pace, predators can easily prey on them. Coyotes, bobcats, foxes and great-horned owls readily make a meal of opossums. Opossums respond to danger by 'playing opossum'. They go into shock, remaining motionless until they no longer feel threatened. If they are lucky, enemies may leave thinking they are dead.

Considering the opossum is a



relic from the dinosaur era (remaining unchanged from a million years ago) it is well adapted to the 21st century. The opossum's prehensile tail is used when climbing. It acts like a fifth limb, and if curled can carry nesting material. Opossum tracks are easy to spot due to their opposable thumb and wide spacing between their toes. The opposable thumb is like that of humans, allowing greater movement and flexibility.

While it may look like a rat, it is not even remotely related to the common rodent that everyone loves to hate. The Virginia opossum— the one we see in Kansas— is from an ancient group of animals more than 75 million years old and is actually related to the kangaroo. It has

50 teeth, more than any other North American land mammal.

Like the kangaroo, opossums are among the group of mammals called marsupials, which carry their premature young in a pouch. The first litter is born in late February, each weighing and eight of an ounce and about 1/2 inch long. They do not have external ears or eyes at birth. The three to 17 young crawl into their mother's pouch and attach themselves to one of the 12 to 13 nipples. If there are more young than nipples, some young die. After two months their eyes open and they let go of the nipple, but continue to nurse from the pouch. One hundred days after birth, they are on their own and leave the female. A second litter may be born in May or June.

CHEYENNE BOTTOMS WILDLIFE AREA

PARKING LOT NAMES

HUNTERS ENCOURAGED TO USE iSPORTSMAN

Several years ago names were given to the various parking lots located around the wildlife area. The effort was being done to get away from the institutionalized numbering system that was in place and to recognize some of the history associated with the Bottoms. Presented here are the names of the lots and the background behind them.

Coursing Club: During the late 1800's and early 1900's a coursing club was located a bit north and west of the Area office about 1.5 miles. Greyhounds were used to run jackrabbits.

4 Corners: Located northwest of the office 2 miles, this lot is close to the site of the 4 Corners duck hunting club lodge.

Brinkman: Located 1 mile west and about 3 miles south of Redwing, this lot is named for an early ranch family that lived nearby in the late 1800's.

Redwing: Named after the small community located 1.5 miles north of the parking lot.

Kinzel: This lot on the east side of Pool 3B is named for a family that has resided nearby for many years.

Pike: On the east side of Pool 3B, this lot is named for the explorer who passed through the basin in 1806.

Schrepel: Located behind Pool 4A, this lot is named for the family that resided there in the early 1900's.

Deadman: Located behind Pool 4A, this lot is named for an incident when a person was discovered having apparently committed suicide in the lot in the 1990's.

White Rock: This lot is located on the south end of the Pool 4A/4B dividing dike. Following the renovation of the 1990's, this parking lot was surfaced with crushed limestone rock giving it a white color.

Ridge Road: A military road from Fort Harker to Fort Larned crossed the basin in the mid to late 1800's. During wet periods the traffic shifted south along a 'ridge' avoiding the water.

Green Lake: Prior to development as a wildlife area, several small depressions held water longer than the rest of the basin when going dry. Located about 1.25 miles north of this lot, on the east end of the Goose Hunting Zones, was Green Lake. It was one of these depressions.

Silo: This parking lot on the Goose Hunting Zones is named for the long standing landmark north of the lot.

Gunnery: During World War Two, the Army Air Corp used the Bottoms as a target/training area for planes flying out of the Great Bend Airfield. Located less than a mile to the west of this lot on the west end of the Goose Hunting Zones there were gun emplacement structures used for small arms/machine gun practice.

There is a lot of history associated with the Bottoms. Much of it can be found at the Barton County Historical Society south of Great Bend.

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 Division 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.

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