

STRAIGHT AHEAD

The Aquariums

Includes 12 aquariums with native fish and turtles of Kansas and information panels, two ecotone dioramas, information panels about the Pratt Fish Hatchery, and artwork of native fish by Joseph R. Tomelleri.

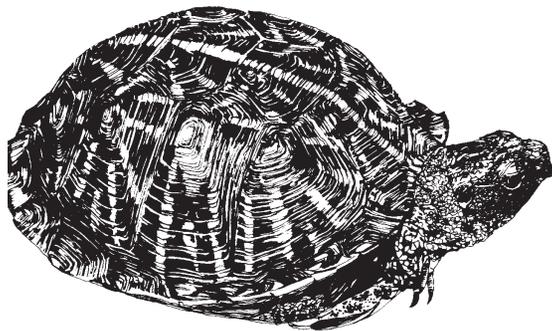
Background Information

The aquariums hold 400-600 gallons of water displaying fish species native or successfully introduced into Kansas and live native turtles including the current state record common snapping turtle. Generally they include crappie, sunfish, catfish, walleye, and members of the bass family.

The two ecotone displays depict the importance of having a diverse habitat. The "winter" display illustrates the importance of wetlands to wildlife. Deer, fox, and other non-aquatic animals use these areas. The milo field and shelter belt demonstrates the importance of different plant communities coming in contact to form what is called an "edge." Edge supports a larger and more varied wildlife population due to the diversification of vegetation and the travel lanes it provides.

Two display panels feature the hatching and rearing of the channel catfish and the early history of the Pratt Hatchery. Also featured is a working model of Seth Way's ingenious hatching trough, which revolutionized artificial hatching of channel catfish.

Throughout the aquatic room are drawings of native fish by Joseph R. Tomelleri. The detailed lines and coloration in each painting almost makes one



LOCATION AND OPERATIONAL TIMES

The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Education Center is located two miles east and one mile south of Pratt on spur 64 across from the Operations Office. The center is open 8:00 to 5:00 Monday - Friday, with other times available upon request. The center is closed on all state holidays. Admission is free! The public is welcome to picnic along the river or at Pratt County Lake, located one-half mile east of the center.

HISTORY

This building was built in 1913 as the fish culture school of Kansas University. It was only briefly used as a "satellite classroom" of KU due to the death of the programs professor, Lewis L. Dyche. Starting in 1915, this building served as the first administration headquarters for the Kansas Fish and Game Commission. The first floor always served as an exhibit center for the general public. In 1966, the building was completely converted to an education center. A renovation of the building was completed in 1990.

REFERENCE CENTER RESOURCES

Orders may either be called in to (620) 672-0751. Only return shipping costs are charged.

E-MAIL

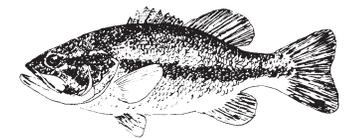
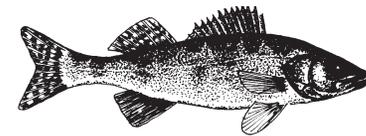
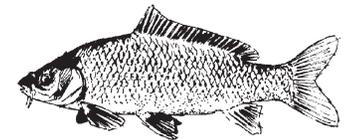
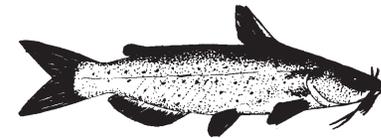
museum@ksoutdoors.com

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, Parks and Tourism, 1020 S Kansas Ave., Topeka, KS 66612-1327. 12/15

Kansas Department of
Wildlife, Parks and Tourism

EDUCATION CENTER & AQUARIUM

SELF-GUIDED TOUR



Kansas Department of Wildlife,
Parks and Tourism
Operations Office
512 SE 25th Ave.
Pratt, KS 67124
(620) 672-0776


Department of Wildlife, Parks
and Tourism

Department Website:
www.ksoutdoors.com

AT THE ENTRANCE

Insect Displays: Straight across from the main entrance are colorful insect displays. Highlighting this area is a working bee hive. Bees are a delight to observe as they go about their daily activities. Numerous exhibits of butterflies, moths, and other intriguing insects are also on display.

FIRST ROOM TO YOUR LEFT

Reptile and Prairie Room

This room features a living display of reptiles of Kansas including snakes, lizards and turtles. The prairie grasslands of Kansas (short, mixed, and tall) are also displayed along with wildlife common to each area.

Background Information

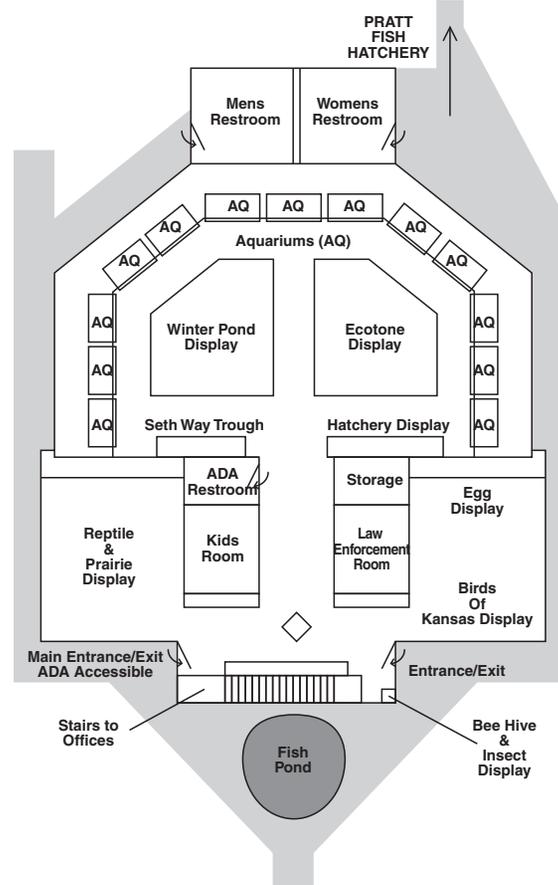
The reptiles and amphibians on display are common to Kansas. None are venomous. The state reptile, the ornate box turtle, is one of two land turtles on display. The barred or tiger salamander is the state amphibian.

Kansas has three major grasslands, based mainly on precipitation. The tallgrass prairie (Flinthills region) is dominated by tall grasses, such as big bluestem and Indian grass, which can reach a height of 6-8 feet. Immense fires periodically swept this region, preventing the invasion of woody plants, such as trees.

The mixed prairie, where Pratt is located, is dominated by bunch grasses such as little bluestem and sod-forming grasses such as buffalo, resulting in a more open and diverse landscape.

The grasses of the shortgrass prairie (the High Plains of Kansas) rarely exceed a height of 5 inches. There is a fierce competition among plant life for water, soil nutrients, and protection from the elements, such as wind and hail. Fire doesn't play as large a role in maintaining these grasses as in the other two regions; there is just too little fuel to burn.

EDUCATION CENTER MAP



FIRST ROOM TO YOUR RIGHT

Birds of Kansas

The most frequently seen wildlife are birds. Their bright colors and melodic calls attract mates and proclaim territories.

Background Information

Kansas is visited by numerous species throughout the year, but the best time to observe birds is in the spring and fall. About 45 species of waterfowl and more than 40 species of shorebirds migrate through Kansas from March through June and August

through December. The Cheyenne Bottoms display illustrates why the "Bottoms" is one of the most important wetlands in North America. Playa Lakes, the "oasis" of the western prairie, are also featured.

An excellent display of the raptors of Kansas, mainly hawks and owls, is also located in this room. Raptors, with their hooked beaks and sharp talons, are important in keeping prey populations, such as mice and rats, in check. A barn owl is capable of eating as many as 8,000 rats and mice in a year. All raptors are protected by federal law.

A rare display containing 128 species of bird eggs is found in the southwest corner of this room. These eggs were collected in the 1890s and early 1900s and donated to the Education Center. (The collection of bird eggs or nests is no longer legal.) Find the largest and smallest egg of a native bird. Watch the video on birds.

HALLWAY

Be sure to look up and discover the magnificent shoulder mounts of the grazing animals that once roamed the prairies of Kansas. The bull bison would weigh about 2,000 lbs. Elk were a prairie animal until a change in the landscape drove them to the mountain regions of the west. Grizzly bears and wolves also once roamed the Kansas prairie. The pronghorn was a common sight on the western plains of Kansas. Mule deer were once more common in Kansas than the white-tailed deer. Now the reverse is true.

HALLWAY LEFT ROOM:

Kids Room

This room has a collection of native Kansas mammal ReplicaTrack stamps and two large dry erase boards for hands-on activities to help learn more about Kansas wildlife.

HALLWAY RIGHT ROOM:

Law Enforcement Display

This display shows the many unique techniques and devices poachers used to steal fish and wildlife from the people of Kansas. The Law Enforcement division is responsible for enforcing the state's wildlife and nature resource laws and regulations.