

Birding Paradise

Take a close look at Kansas and you'll begin to see a wild and untamed side to the state. Natural Kansas is a place where prairie chickens strut and clouds of geese wheel.

Wetlands

The most popular destinations for birders in Kansas are two large wetlands complexes in the central part of the state - Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area and Quivira National Wildlife Refuge.

About 45 percent of the North American shorebird populations stops at the Cheyenne Bottoms during spring migration. At least 320 species of birds have been recorded here.

Few sights can equal sunsets at Quivira in late October and November, as wave after wave of honking geese and noisy cranes descend into the marsh with the glow of sunset illuminating the scene. Excellent roadside bird watching opportunities are available along the Wetlands and Wildlife Scenic Byway.

Woodlands

Scattered across eastern Kansas are a variety of forested habitats. Nesting species in this area include yellow-throated and cerulean warblers, white-eyed vireo, scarlet tanager, Arcadian fly-catcher, whippoorwill, pileated woodpecker and red-shouldered hawk.

The bottom land of the Missouri River at Fort Leavenworth has stands of timber, which have been untouched for nearly 200 years, and maintains summer populations of such eastern birds as scarlet tanager and cerulean warbler.

Flint Hills

Lying west of eastern forests, the Flint Hills contain most of the remaining, unplowed tallgrass prairie in America. Several species of special interest to birders inhabit these grasslands, including the greater prairie chicken, Sprague's pipit, Henslow's sparrow and Smith's longspur.

Red Hills

Stretching across several southern border counties, Kansas' rugged and beautiful Red Hills (also known as the Gypsum or Gyp Hills) offer impressive scenery and a fascinating diverse mix of eastern and western bird species.

During winter, after the annual cedar berry crop has been bountiful, flocks of hundreds of mountain bluebirds descend from the Rocky Mountains to take advantage of this rich food source. While much of this land is privately owned, the area offers good roadside birding. We recommend the Gypsum Hills Scenic Byway.

Lakes, Reservoirs & Rivers

From October to April, when the crowds of recreational users have lessened, Kansas reservoirs serve as islands of desirable habitat for many species of birds.

Long-eared owls have chosen Cedar Bluff as their winter home. A true oasis on the High Plains is Scott Lake State Park. This lake and thickly wooded canyon attracts a variety of interesting birds during all seasons.

Urban Parks

If you are visiting one of the larger cities in Kansas, nature centers, arboretums and wildlife refuges are an ideal place to get an up close look at birds unique to Kansas.