

PRAIRIE SURPRISE

WETLANDS & WILDLIFE NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY



DISCOVER A KANSAS TREASURE

The Wetlands & Wildlife National Scenic Byway moves through radiant wetlands exploding with wildlife; prairie vistas with immense blue skies; and rural communities shaped by nature and the entrepreneurial spirit. Although the wetlands are beautiful and rural life will charm the traveler, it is wildlife that captures the spirit of this byway. Clouds of sand hill cranes descend and pelicans, bald and golden eagles, shorebirds, ducks, geese, and whooping cranes gracefully rest here. The marshes that anchor this drive, Cheyenne Bottoms and Quivira National Wildlife Refuge, are international treasures nestled in the heart of America.

Summary. Start your day early with a great breakfast in a local cafe and a delightful hour of bird watching at Cheyenne Bottoms. Then the rural charms of communities along the byway will educate and entertain you. Enjoy a live bird show and then it's time for lunch in small-town America. The afternoon will have its own revelations including antique shops, unique museums, and beautiful scenery. You'll end the day at Quivira National Wildlife Refuge with an easy, wildlife-filled walk as the sun drops low in the sky. Plan on (at least) a full day (about six to eight hours) for this itinerary, bring bottled water and comfortable shoes for easy hiking, and dress in layers and wear sunscreen in all seasons. Weather in the plains is subject to change in a moment. This itinerary is lovely any time of year but birds are more abundant during the spring and fall migrations. Eagles are best seen during January and February.



READY TO EXPLORE?

Drive the Wetlands & Wildlife National Scenic Byway. Discover something amazing in Kansas!

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1. Cheyenne Bottoms Scenic Overlook

Starting at the Cheyenne Bottoms Scenic Overlook near Hoisington is the perfect way to get a "bird's eye view" of the wetlands. The view is amazing so bring a thermos of coffee and a morning snack. Nearby, the Byway community of Hoisington is a great place to take a break --- Main Street boasts unique nature inspired metal art on the light poles.

2. Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area

Early morning at the Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife area is magical. Bring your binoculars and plan to pull to the side of the road often to spot birds. This 19,857-acre wetland is a stopover for hundreds of bird species traveling the Central Flyway including bald eagles, whooping cranes, & pelicans.

3. Kansas Wetlands Education Center at Cheyenne Bottoms

Stop here for a walk into the midst of the marsh. The Center provides exhibits to help you understand the wetlands. You'll get help with bird identification, enjoy the Center's great gift shop, and have the chance to take an easy hike on the Cheyenne Bottoms Bird Trail.

4. Raptor Center in Great Bend

The Raptor Center is located adjacent to the Great Bend Zoo. The Center rescues, rehabilitates, cares for, and releases injured raptors. Naturalists explain the process and the need for rescuing birds of prey and present live bird shows. The Zoo features animals of all types in natural exhibits. Take a break for lunch and get ready to wing your way to the southern end of the byway in the afternoon.

5. Corridor Community Sites

You'll find charming small towns all along the Byway. You can explore Ellinwood's Underground Tunnels, visit historical museums & shop in quaint antique stores. Beautiful stone bridges constructed by the WPA surround Claflin. Tiny Hudson is the home of Hudson Cream Flour & one of the last small flour mills in the US. St. John has a perfect little town square and Stafford is the gateway to Quivira and welcomes visitors with a jigsaw-puzzle-filled cafe with amazing pie.

6. Quivira National Wildlife Refuge

End your day at Quivira National Wildlife Refuge. Sand dunes, century-old cottonwood trees, natural grasses and multiple grains harbor over 500,000 birds during spring and fall migrations. This salt and fresh water marsh attracts birds of all types including the rare whooping crane. Quivira has two short, easy walking trails, but birds and wildlife are easily seen from your vehicle.

KANSAS WETLANDS & WILDLIFE NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY





EMPORIA KANSAS

Front Porch to the Flint Hills

Text Emporia to 71297
(standard text messaging rates apply)

Relax

and enjoy Emporia's front porch hospitality

Plan a trip soon to Emporia, Kansas. Stroll downtown for shopping and eateries. Visit our free Zoo for a botanical treat in Spring and Summer, and terrific animals on display year round. Picnic in one of our many parks and kick back while the kids play. Enjoy the lazy river at Jones Aquatic Center, reflect at the All Veterans Memorial Park, and see the William Allen White House State Historic Site. Travel is just a short distance between each site, and the traffic, what traffic?

As official founding city of Veterans Day, Emporia celebrates the holiday annually with a series of events that honor our veterans. Our free USO Show has become a tradition, and the Veterans Day parade is not to be missed. Our U.S. flags flying downtown also pay tribute to our veterans. If shopping is your "bag," we've got everything from antiques, chocolate, farm and ranch supply, books and gifts, shoes, and some very interesting thrift stores. Did we say chocolate? Don't even think of skipping that; it's a must for the trip home.

After a great day of playing around our city, check into one of our 12 hotels and get some R&R. For your second day, venture out into the Flint Hills of Kansas. The scenery is second to none, and the feeling while there is very peaceful. There are many small towns around Emporia just waiting for you. We're a friendly town, and it shows. Enjoy a serving of our Front Porch Hospitality, and thanks for spending some time on our Front Porch!



Call 800-279-3730 or visit www.emporiakschamber.org