

Hunting Guide to Kansas



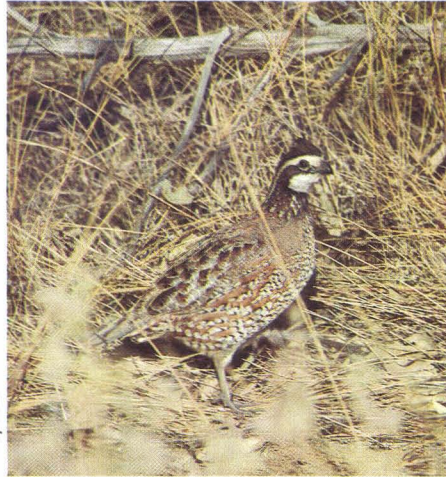
Kansas is a state for a hunter. A deer specialist can choose between whitetails and muleys, and, either way he goes, his chances of taking a trophy head are better than in most other states. Even though Kansans have only hunted deer since 1964 and then only under limited permit, fifteen Kansas deer appear in the Boone and Crockett record list. Big game enthusiasts can also

take advantage of an expanding western Kansas antelope population and exploding populations of eastern and Rio Grande turkeys.

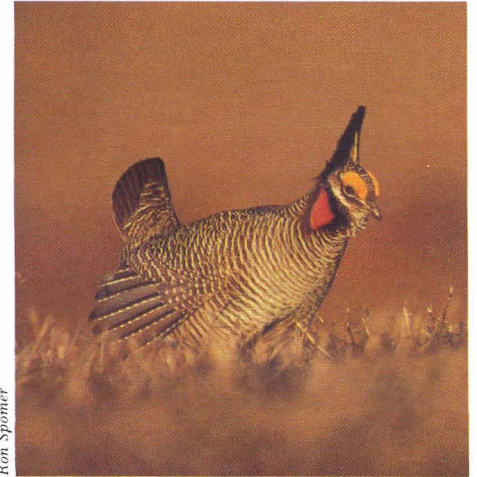
But, as bright as the big game possibilities are, they pale when compared to the state's small game productivity. Pheasants are Kansas' staple game bird. Annual harvest always approaches and sometimes exceeds a million birds, putting Kansas



Gene Brehm



Ron Spomer



Ron Spomer

The pheasant

Introduced to Kansas in 1904, the ringneck pheasant has thrived on intensive agriculture that has handicapped most native game birds. Pheasant habitat consists of almost anything but bare ground. A hunter may find ringnecks in grain field stubble, shelterbelts, weedy corners, grassy waterways, cattail sloughs, pond banks and tailwater edges, or mixtures of native grass and brush. Even the skimpiest fencerow may hold a complement of birds, especially in the first few weeks of the season when weather is mild. Kansas' historic pheasant stronghold was in the western third of the state, a region that still offers superb pheasant hunting, but the ringneck is abundant almost anywhere in the western two-thirds of Kansas and is expanding its numbers in the northeast as well. The mysterious southern boundary of Midwestern pheasant range cuts through the southeastern corner of the state, leaving it without ringnecks in spite of repeated stocking efforts by sportsmen's groups.

Quail

Bobwhite quail have expanded their range and population in Kansas as native prairie has given way to farming and shelterbelts. Today, the bobwhite is found throughout the state, although populations are sparse in the western third of the state. In the west, brushy cover is the limiting cover ingredient; where there is a weedy shelterbelt, a strip of bottomland woods, or an abandoned farmstead, there is probably a covey. The state's best quail cover is found in the southeast where a varied patchwork of woods, brush, grass, and cropland combine with mild winters to produce some of the best bobwhite shooting in the U.S. The northeastern corner of the state, Flint Hills region, and southcentral part of the state also support good quail populations. Kansas also has a second quail, the desert-loving scaled quail, an elusive bird that would rather run ahead of a dog and hunter than flush. Scaled quail are fairly common in the extreme southwestern corner of the state.

Prairie chicken

Kansas is the plains' prairie chicken stronghold, thanks in large part to the extensive rangeland of the Flint Hills, a north-south strip of rolling country in the eastern part of the state. Most of this region has kept its native grass and, as a result, its chickens. Most hunters pass shoot the birds as they fly into corn and milo fields to feed early and late in the day. Upland hunters may also get an occasional shot at a chicken flushing out of grassy roosting cover. The greater prairie chicken common to the Flint Hills is also becoming more common in northcentral Kansas. A second species, the lesser prairie chicken, is found in the southwest, mainly in the sandsage prairie associated with the Arkansas River. Extensive irrigation development has drastically reduced lesser prairie chicken populations, but areas that still have tracts of native grass provide some hunting. Both the greater and lesser prairie chickens congregate in flocks of from ten to fifty birds for spectacular mating displays during the spring.

consistently in the top three pheasant harvest states in the nation. Our bobwhite harvest usually tops two million, also one of the best in the country, and we have more prairie chickens than any other place on the continent. The best part of these harvest figures has to do with the number of hunters doing the harvesting. Kansas hunting is a surprisingly well kept secret. Fewer than 200,000 people hold Kansas

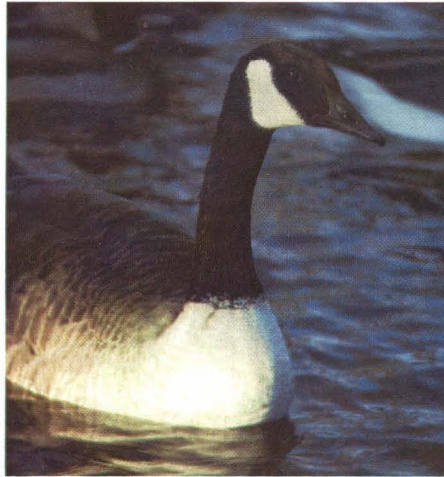
hunting licenses. Of these, almost 43,000 are nonresidents, the twelfth largest number of nonresident hunters in the U.S. They have just discovered what Kansans have known for years—when it comes to chasing a bird with a shotgun, it's hard to beat the Sunflower State.



Ron Spomer

Game mammals

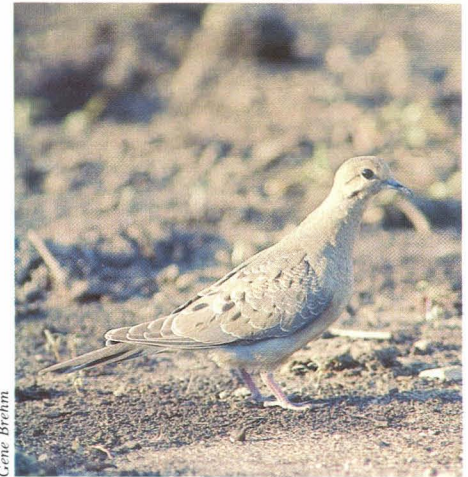
Like the bobwhite, gray and fox squirrels have moved west since settlement of the plains. Fox squirrels are now found all the way to the Colorado border in bottomland timber and shelterbelts. In these western habitats, the squirrels feed on a variety of grains, elm and locust seeds, and osage orange fruits. Because of their restricted habitat and a lack of hunting pressure, they are easy marks for the occasional rifleman who stalks them. East of the Flint Hills, fox squirrels are abundant, and the gray squirrel, an even more tree-loving species, has also established itself. Both squirrels divide their time between crop fields and timber in the eastern part of the state, feeding on waste grains, buds, wild fruit, and a variety of nuts. The cottontail rabbit, America's favorite game mammal has also done well in brushy cover across Kansas. Compared to his eastern kin, the Kansas cottontail is an easy mark for a hunter simply because he is less heavily hunted.



Chris Madson

Waterfowl

Central Flyway waterfowl move across Kansas in three corridors, one east of the Flint Hills, one through the middle of the state, and another in the western quarter. In wet years when the shallow playas of the High Plains fill with water, the western corridor offers excellent hunting, but waterfowling is generally more dependable in the eastern two-thirds of the state. Early migrants like pintails and bluewinged teal stop over in large marshes like Cheyenne Bottoms, Quivira, Marais des Cygnes, and Jamestown as well as in privately owned potholes and ponds across the state. Reservoirs like Glen Elder, Webster, Lovewell, Elk City, John Redmond, and Milford also attract early migrants and hold large flocks of mallards later on in the season when smaller water freezes. Canada geese migrate down all three corridors; whitefronted geese are common in the western half of the state, and snow geese use areas as far west as John Redmond and Perry reservoirs.



Gene Brehm

Mourning dove

The mourning dove is easily the most common game bird in the U.S. and probably the most popular. The dove isn't hampered by the lack of cover that threatens most other plains wildlife. It nests successfully in town and around farmsteads, gleans grain from wheat, sunflower, and milo fields, and loafs happily on the margins of trampled waterholes in fields so overgrazed the grasshoppers carry lunchbuckets. Doves may hatch three or more clutches a summer. Although the states north of Kansas have dove seasons, their September opening dates are usually too late to catch the majority of home-grown birds. As a result, Kansas hunters have the luxury of shooting these northern doves as well as Kansas-reared birds. The Fish and Game Commission has begun an effort to concentrate doves on selected wildlife areas by establishing specially managed food patches of wheat, millet, and sunflower. Shooting pressure on these areas is controlled to increase hunter success.

SOUTHEAST

1 *BIG HILL WILDLIFE AREA* (8 W and 4 S of Parsons) 1,320 acres. Deer, squirrels, quail, rabbits, doves, and waterfowl.

2 *BOURBON WILDLIFE AREA* (4½ E of Elsmore) 350 acres. Quail, squirrel, deer, and some duck hunting.

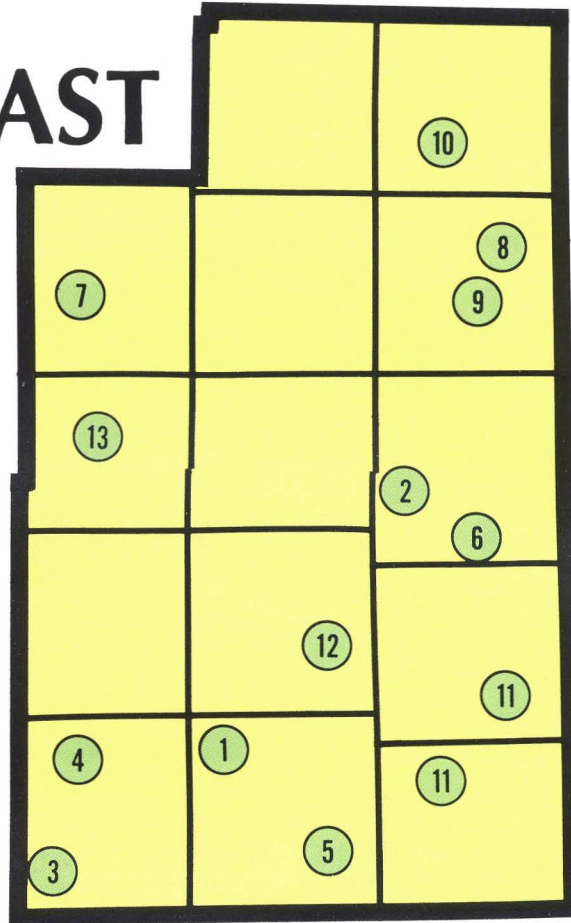
3 *COPAN WILDLIFE AREA* (½ W of Caney) 2,360 acres. Quail, deer, rabbits, doves, and wild turkeys.

4 *ELK CITY WILDLIFE AREA* (3 W of Independence) 10,966 acres. Ducks, geese, deer, quail, rabbits, doves, prairie chickens, and squirrels.

5 *HARMON WILDLIFE AREA* (1 N and 1 E of Chetopa) 102 acres. Deer, squirrels, and rabbits, with limited quail hunting.

6 *HOLLISTER WILDLIFE AREA* (6 W and 2 S of Fort Scott) 2,432 acres. Quail, rabbits, squirrels, deer, with some prairie chicken and furbearer hunting.

7 *JOHN REDMOND WILDLIFE AREA* (NW of Burlington) 1,700 acres (Otter Creek Arm) managed by Fish & Game, plus 4,000 acres managed by the Corps of Engineers, plus 9,000 acres (Flint Hills National Wildlife Refuge)






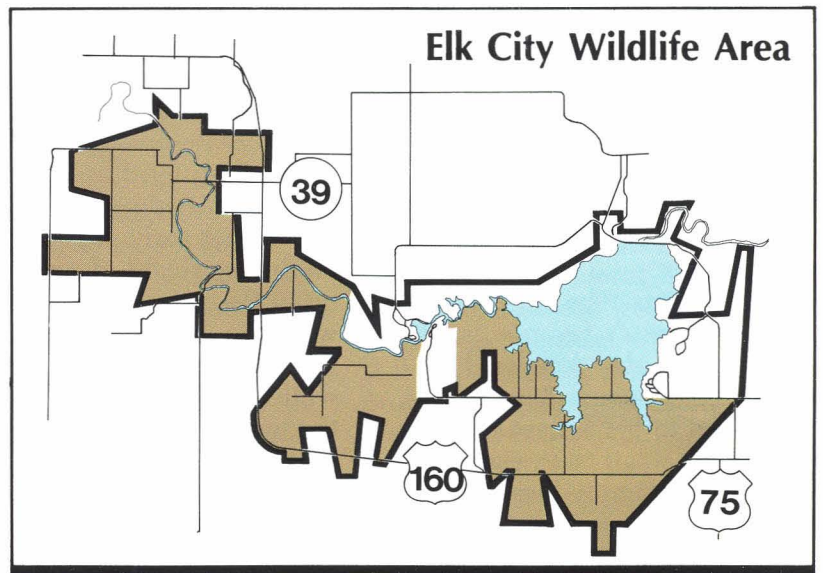
managed by U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Ducks, geese, quail, deer, squirrels, rabbits, furbearers, coyotes, and greater prairie chickens.

8 *LA CYGNE WILDLIFE AREA* (5 E of La Cygne) 4,080 acres. Firearms restricted to shotguns and .22 caliber rifles; no high-powered rifles allowed.

Ducks, geese, deer, squirrels, quail, rabbits, and furbearers.

9 *MARAIS DES CYGNES WILDLIFE AREA* (5 N of Pleasanton) 6,376 acres. Managed primarily for ducks and geese, but also offers good hunting for squirrels, and deer, with some rabbit and quail hunting.

-  Land owned or managed by the Fish and Game Commission; open to hunting except where otherwise posted
-  Water areas; check local regulations for zones open to hunting
-  Land managed by other agencies; check local regulations for zones open to hunting





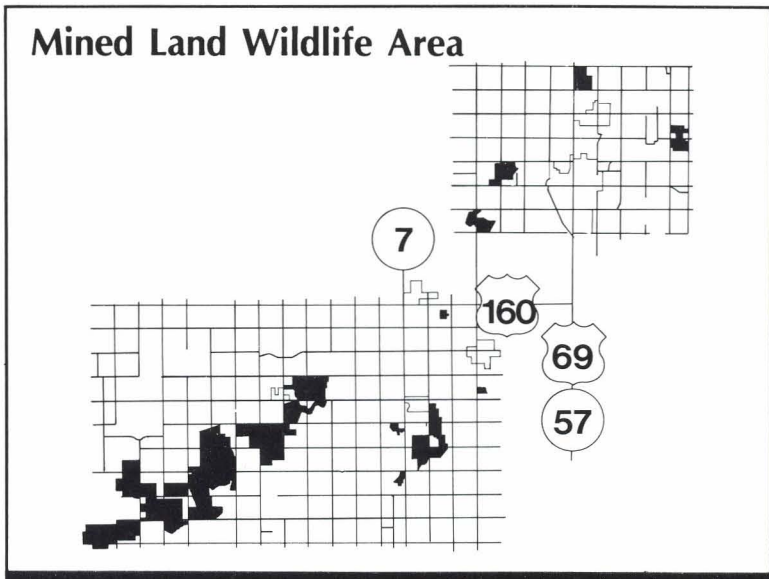
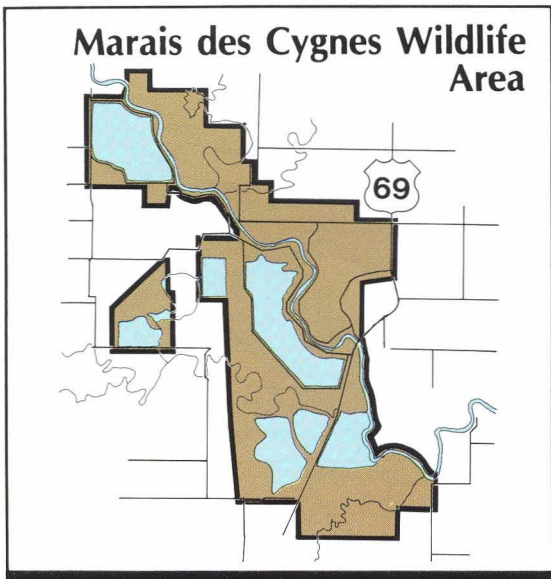
10 *MIAMI WILDLIFE AREA* (8 E and 5 S of Osawatomie) 267 acres. Primarily squirrel and deer hunting, with limited waterfowl hunting.

11 *MINED LAND WILDLIFE AREA* (Scattered tracts in Cherokee and Crawford counties) 14,015 acres. Deer,

quail, and rabbits, with some waterfowl hunting.

12 *NEOSHO WILDLIFE AREA* (1 E of St. Paul) 2,016 acres. Primarily managed for waterfowl hunting, but also offers hunting for deer, quail, rabbits, squirrels, and doves.

13 *WOODSON WILDLIFE AREA* (5 E of Toronto) 2,400 acres. Prairie chicken, quail, rabbit, squirrel, deer, with some hunting for furbearers, doves, coyotes, and waterfowl.



SOUTHCENTRAL

1 **BUTLER WILDLIFE AREA** (3 W and 1 N of Latham) 351 acres. Open from October 1 through March 1 each year. Rabbits, ducks, quail, and prairie chickens.

2 **CHASE WILDLIFE AREA** (1½ W of Cottonwood Falls) 452 acres. North shoreline is refuge. Rabbits and quail, with a little duck hunting.

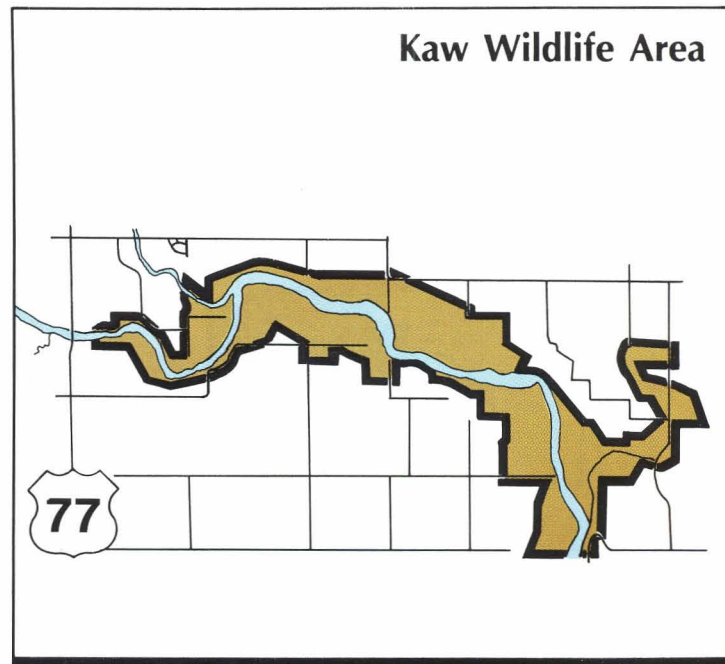
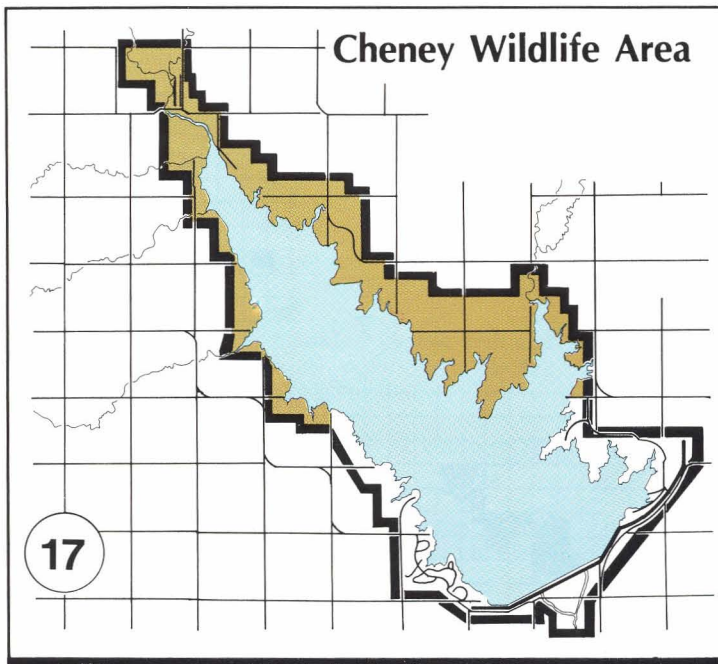
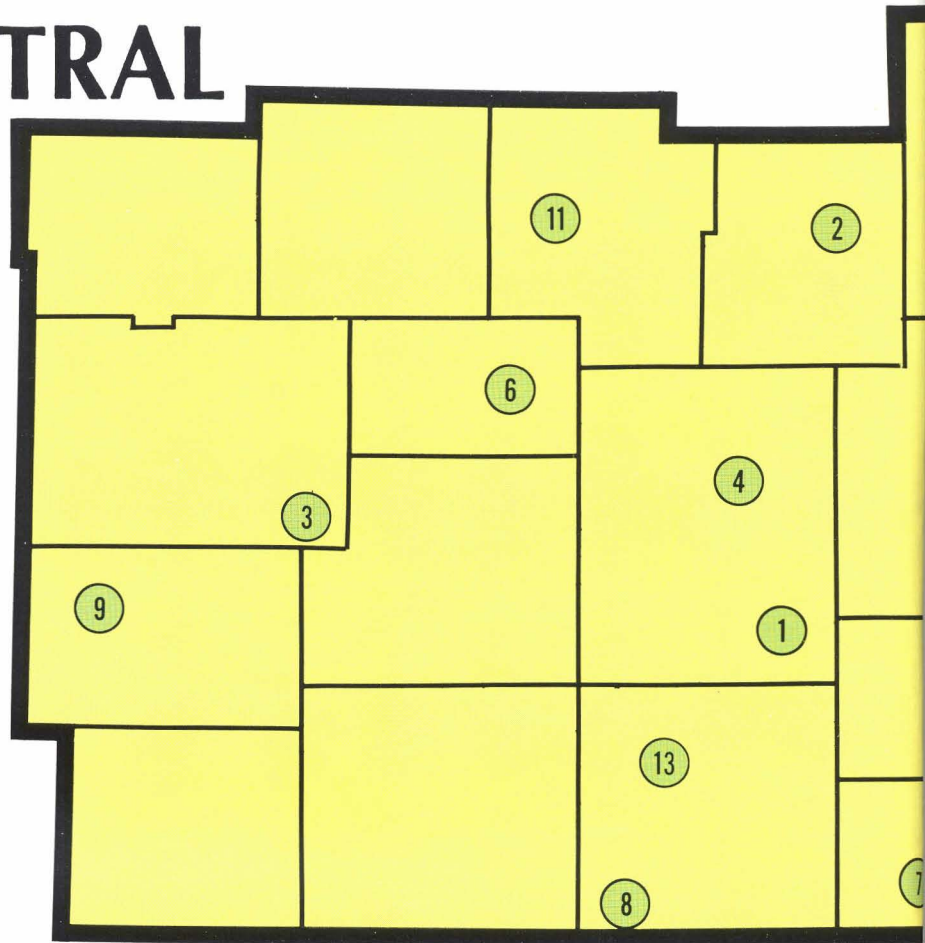
3 **CHENEY WILDLIFE AREA** (7 E of Pretty Prairie) 5,249 acres of land, including a 1,200-acre refuge which is closed to all activities from Labor Day through February 28. Waterfowl, pheasants, deer, rabbits, doves, and squirrels are main species hunted at Cheney, with a few quail, turkeys, and furbearers also taken. A special feature is Eagle Day, the first Saturday in February each year.

4 **EL DORADO WILDLIFE AREA** (6 NE of El Dorado) 2,300 acres managed by the Corps of Engineers. Quail, prairie chickens, deer, doves, rabbits, squirrels, waterfowl, and furbearers.

5 **FALL RIVER WILDLIFE AREA** (7 SE of Eureka) 10,342 acres, including 700 acres in two refuges for a restoration giant Canada goose project. Quail, squirrels, prairie chickens, deer, turkeys, rabbits, doves, waterfowl, and furbearers.

6 **HARVEY COUNTY EAST LAKE** (6 E and 1 N of Newton) 375 acres. Dove, quail, pheasant, rabbit, and squirrel hunting. Fees are charged.

7 **HULAH WILDLIFE AREA** (Several tracts east and west of Elgin) 844 acres. Dove, quail, rabbit, squirrel, deer, and turkey hunting.



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8 **KAW WILDLIFE AREA** (SE of Arkansas City) 4,341 acres, plus five miles of Grouse Creek float stream. Quail, deer, dove, squirrel, and rabbit hunting, with some waterfowl, turkey, and furbearer hunting, also.

9 **KINGMAN WILDLIFE AREA** (7 W of Kingman) 4,043 acres, plus a lake and land refuge of another 280 acres. Pheasants, quail, rabbits, squirrels, deer, doves, turkeys, and waterfowl are main species sought. A display herd of buffalo also is maintained here.

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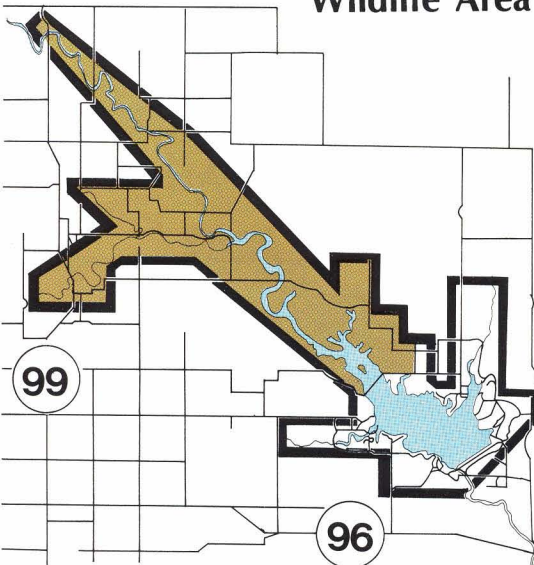
10 **LYON WILDLIFE AREA** (5 W and 1 N of Reading) 562 acres. Quail, rabbits, doves, and waterfowl.

11 **MARION WILDLIFE AREA** (5 NE of Hillsboro) 3,522 acres of land managed by Fish & Game, and an additional 1,100 acres managed by the Corps of Engineers. Doves, pheasants, rabbits, and waterfowl, as well as deer, quail, and furbearers.

12 **TORONTO WILDLIFE AREA** (1 w or 1 S of Toronto) 4,366 acres. Toronto floods regularly. When flooded, it is good to excellent for waterfowl hunting only. When water levels are low, there can be good to excellent dove, deer, quail, and squirrel hunting.

13 **WINFIELD CITY LAKE** (10 NE of Winfield) 1,200 acres of water open to waterfowl hunting only, by permit. Fees are charged.

Fall River Wildlife Area



SOUTHWEST

1 **BARBER WILDLIFE AREA** (¼ N of Medicine Lodge) 80 acres. Quail, rabbits, doves, and pheasants, with limited waterfowl hunting.

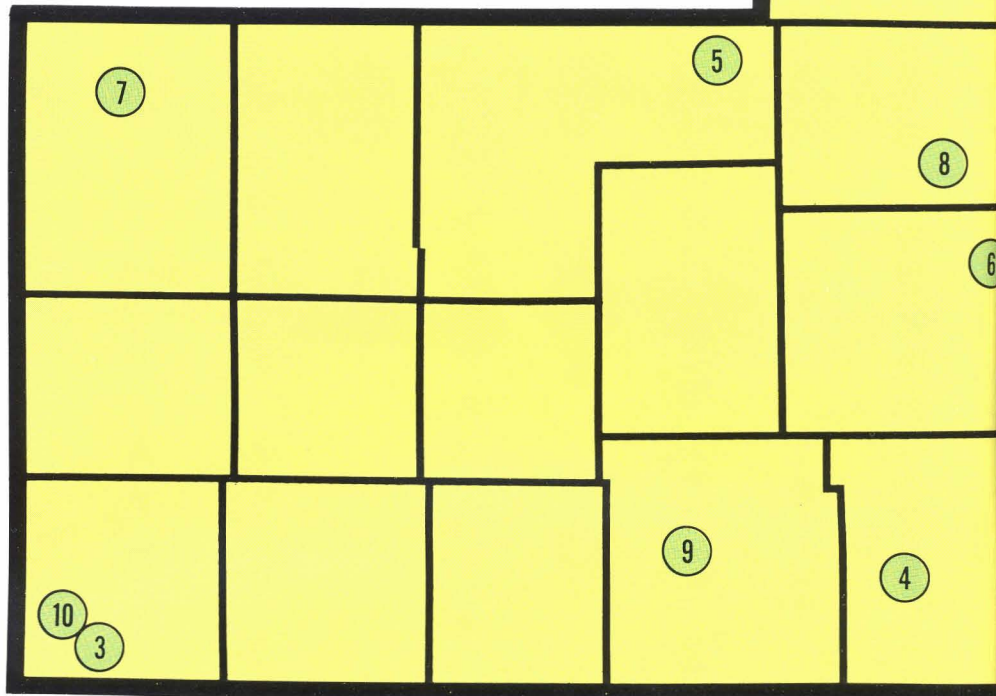
2 **CHEYENNE BOTTOMS WILDLIFE AREA** (5 N and 5 E of Great Bend) 13,416 acres. Primarily managed for waterfowl, annually attracting great concentrations of migrating birds. Also offers some pheasant, snipe, and rail hunting. Widely recognized for bird-viewing potential.

3 **CIMARRON NATIONAL GRASSLANDS** (N of Elkhart) 106,000 acres managed by the U. S. Forest Service. Bobwhite and scaled quail, turkey, lesser prairie chicken, mule and whitetail deer, pheasant, dove, rabbit, and coyote hunting.

4 **CLARK WILDLIFE AREA** (9 S and 1 W of Kingsdown) 1,040 acres. No migratory waterfowl hunting allowed. Deer, turkey, pheasant, quail, and rabbit hunting.

5 **FINNEY WILDLIFE AREA** (8 N and 3 W of Kalvesta) 863 acres. Pheasant, quail, and dove hunting, with some deer hunting.

6 **HAIN WILDLIFE AREA** (5 W of Spearville) Migratory bird hunting only.



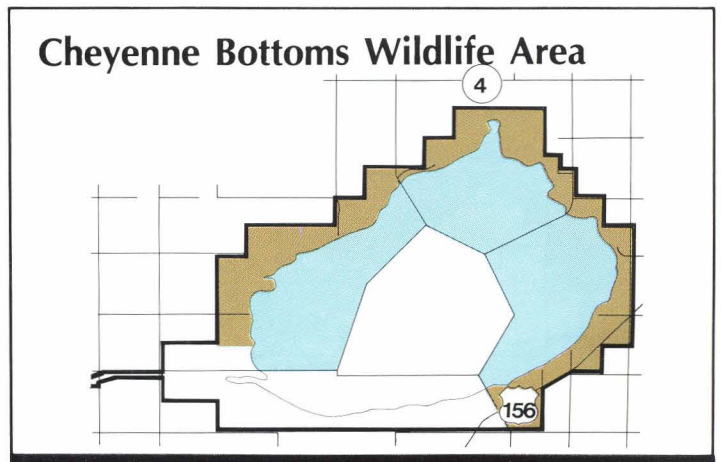
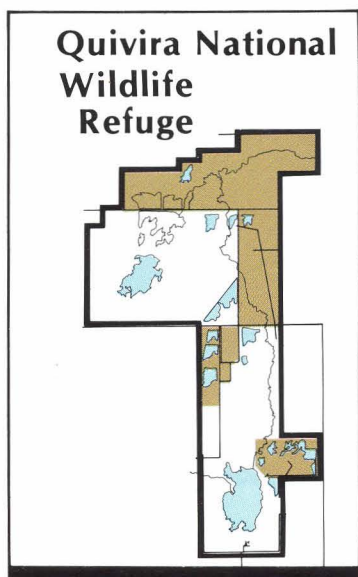
7 **HAMILTON WILDLIFE AREA** (3 W and 2 N of Syracuse) 432 acres. Pheasants, quail, rabbits, and doves.

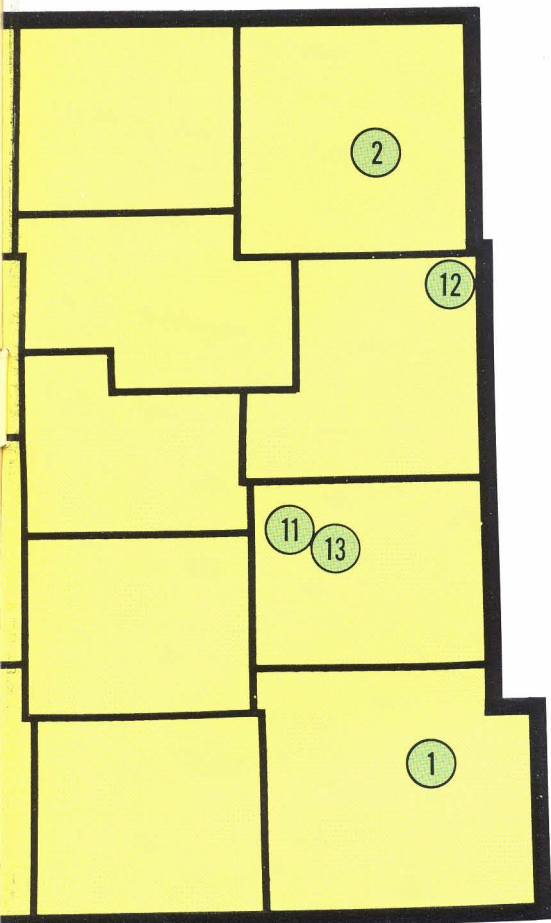
8 **HODGEMAN WILDLIFE AREA** (4 E and 2 S of Jetmore) 254 acres. Pheasant and quail hunting.

9 **MEADE WILDLIFE AREA** (8 S and 5 W of Meade) 400 acres. Pheasants, quail, doves, deer, turkeys, and rabbits, with some waterfowl hunting.

10 **MORTON WILDLIFE AREA** (7 N of Elkhart; located within the Cimarron National Grasslands) 533 acres. Bobwhite and scaled quail, wild turkey, lesser prairie chicken, mule and whitetail deer, pheasant, dove, rabbit, and coyote hunting.

11 **PRATT SANDHILLS WILDLIFE AREA** (5 W and 7 N of Cullison) 4,757 acres. Lesser prairie chickens,





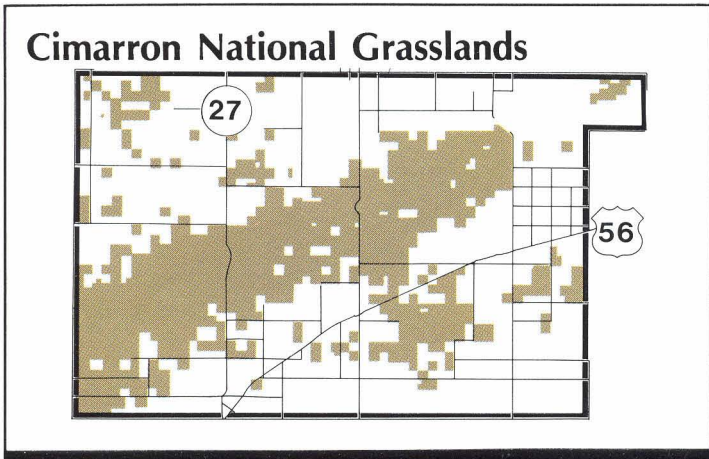
pheasants, quail, doves, deer, coyotes, and rabbits.

12 *QUIVIRA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE* (13 NE of Stafford) 6,350 acres. Waterfowl, pheasants, quail, deer, squirrels, rabbits, and doves.

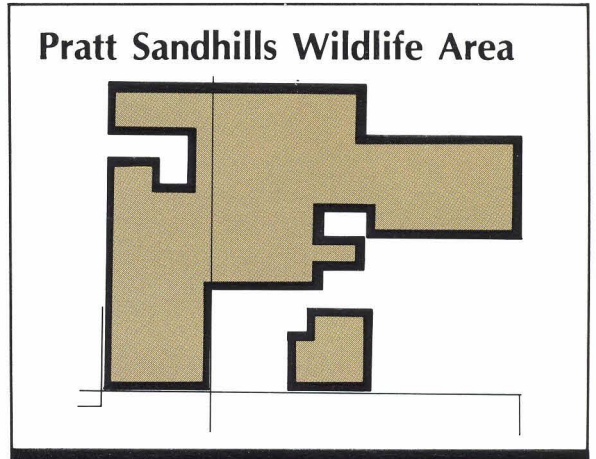
13 *TEXAS LAKE WILDLIFE AREA* (4 W and 1 N of Cullison) 560 acres. Waterfowl, pheasants, quail, rabbits, and doves.

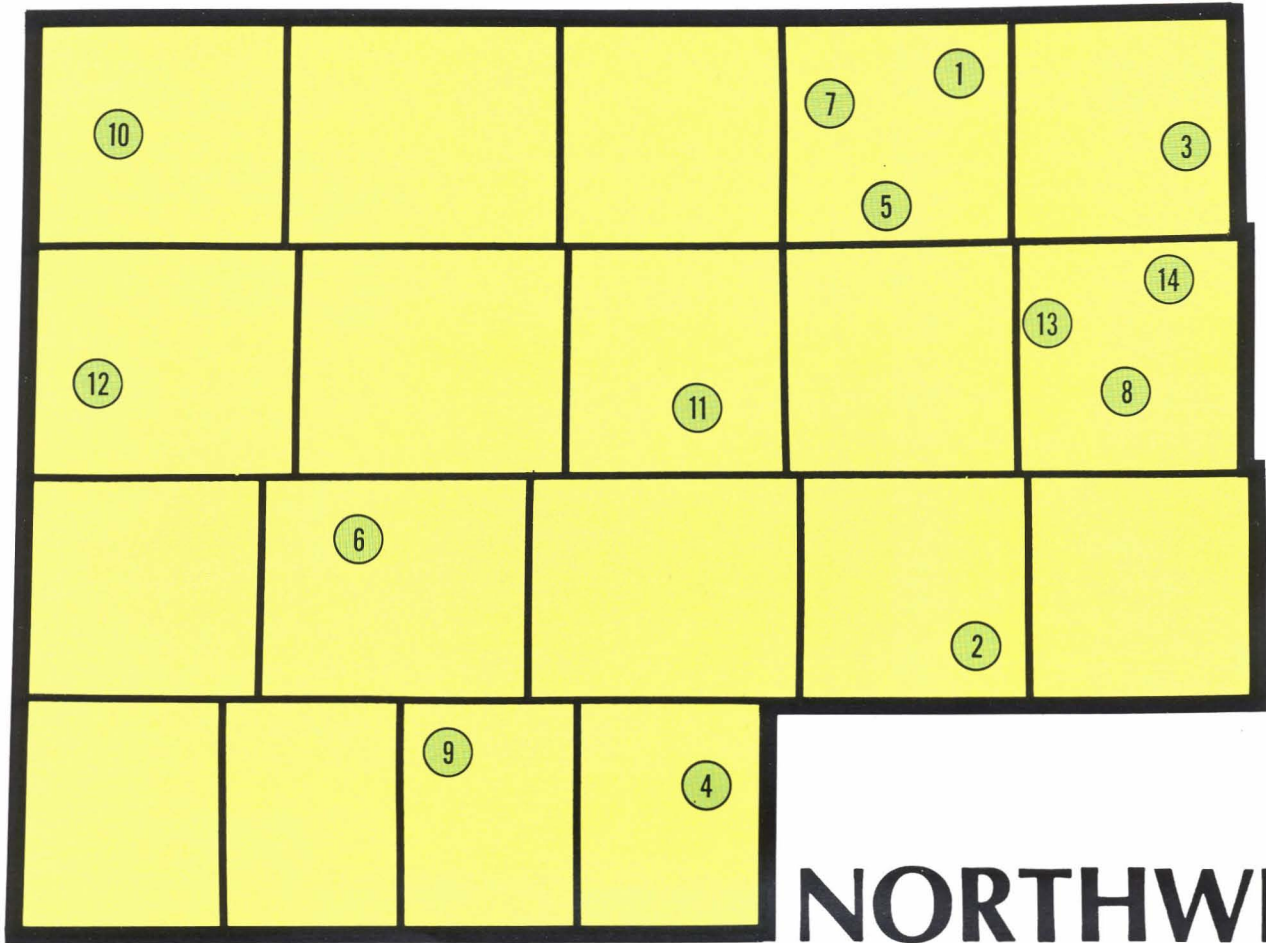


Gene Brehm



Kansas Wildlife





NORTHWEST



1 *ALMENA DIVERSION WILDLIFE AREA* (2 S and 1½ W of Alma) 111 acres. Primarily deer, quail, and pheasant hunting, but some waterfowl, dove, turkey, squirrel, and rabbit hunting.

2 *CEDAR BLUFF WILDLIFE AREA* (13 S of I-70 on K-147) 11,834 total acres, with about 2,000 water acres. Primarily hunted for pheasants and deer (whitetail and mule); also hunted for coyotes, waterfowl, quail, turkeys, doves and rabbits.

3 *KIRWIN NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE* (15 SE of Phillipsburg) 3,700 acres. Most of area is refuge but parts are open to public hunting. Geese and archery deer, primarily; also good for quail, pheasants, doves, and rabbits. No rifles or handguns.

4 *LANE WILDLIFE AREA* (3 E and 6½ N of Dighton) 42 acres. Area is an abandoned lake bed with good weed growth and some trees. Good hunting for pheasant and dove.

5 *LENORA WILDLIFE AREA* (2 E of Lenora) 150 acres. Quail, deer, and pheasants, with some rabbits, doves, and squirrels.

6 *LOGAN WILDLIFE AREA* (9 S of Winona) 271 acres. Good for dove and pheasant hunting, with some mule deer. When lake has water, duck hunting is good.

7 *NORTON WILDLIFE AREA* (6 W and 2 S of Norton at Keith Sebelius Reservoir) 5,656 total acres, with about 750 water acres. Primarily hunted for pheasants but also good for quail, mule and whitetail deer, ducks, geese, turkeys, coyotes, rabbits, and doves.

8 *ROOKS WILDLIFE AREA* (1½ S, 2 W and 1 S of Stockton) 243 acres. Quail and pheasants, with some deer, squirrels, rabbits, and doves. With good water, waterfowling can be excellent.

9 *SCOTT WILDLIFE AREA* (12 N of Scott City) 160 acres. Located on Timber Canyon arm of Scott Lake, a heavily wooded area with good hunting for deer, squirrel, and some quail. This is adjacent to Scott State Park, where no hunting is allowed.

10 *ST. FRANCIS WILDLIFE AREA* (2½ W and 2 S of St. Francis) 480

acres. Dove, whitetail deer, pheasant, and quail. Timber offers some squirrel hunting and the river, with associated pits, attracts ducks for limited duck hunting.

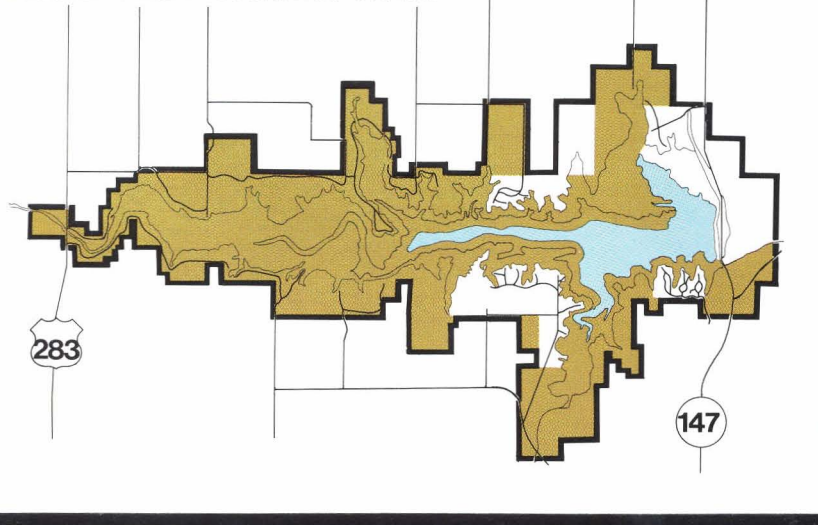
11 *SHERIDAN WILDLIFE AREA* (11 E of Hoxie) 335 acres. Pheasant, dove, and quail hunting. A 75-acre lake offers duck hunting, and associated timber provides deer and squirrel hunting.

12 *SHERMAN WILDLIFE AREA* (10 S and 2 W of Goodland) 1,547 acres. When lake has water, there is good duck hunting. Best hunting is for pheasant. Mule deer, antelope, and dove hunting is also available.

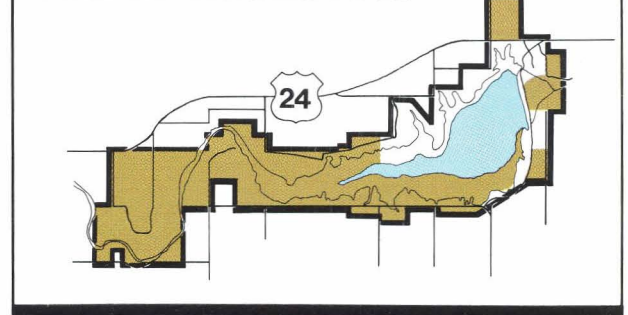
13 *WEBSTER WILDLIFE AREA* (8 W of Stockton) 7,539 total acres, with about 1,500 acres of water. Deer, pheasant, and quail, with some turkey, waterfowl, rabbit, coyote, and dove hunting.

14 *WOODSTON DIVERSION WILDLIFE AREA* (8 E of Stockton) 210 acres. Pheasants, quail, and deer, with some squirrels, rabbits, coyotes, turkeys, and doves.

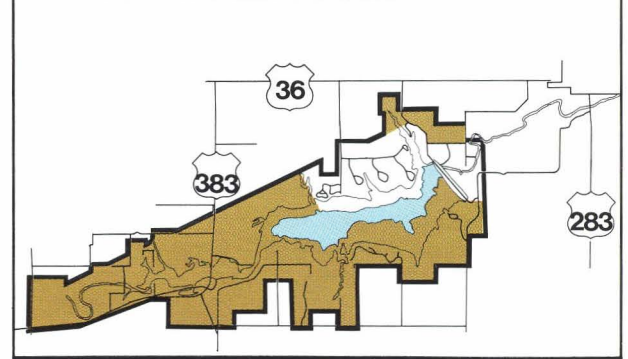
Cedar Bluff Wildlife Area

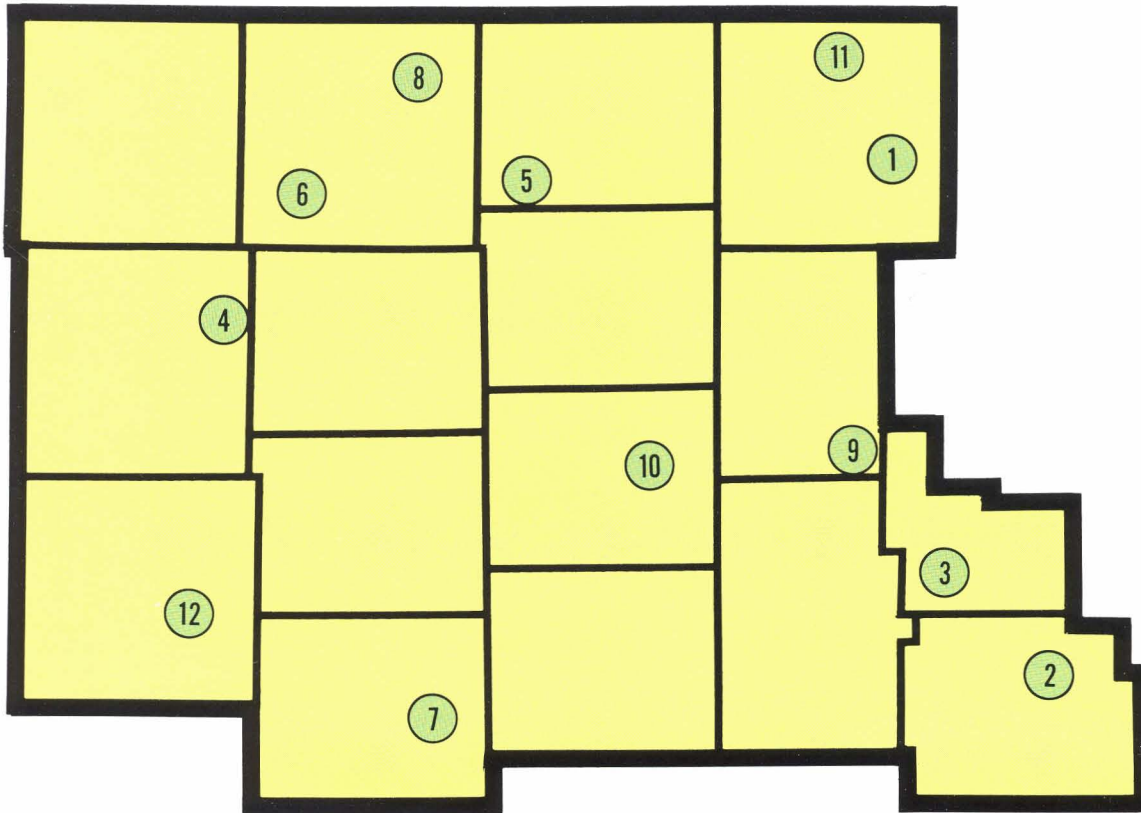


Webster Wildlife Area



Norton Wildlife Area





NORTH CENTRAL

1 *BLUE RIVER WILDLIFE AREA* (2 S and 7 E of Washington) 35 acres. Limited squirrel, rabbit, and deer hunting.

2 *COUNCIL GROVE WILDLIFE AREA* (5 NW of Council Grove) 2,638 acres. Quail, deer, doves, rabbits, and furbearers, with some pheasant and waterfowl hunting.

3 *GEARY WILDLIFE AREA* (8 S and 1 W of Junction City) 195 acres. Quail, prairie chickens, and deer, with some pheasant hunting.

4 *GLEN ELDER WILDLIFE AREA* (Tracts surrounding Cawker City) 12,500 acres (plus 12,500 water acres). Ducks, geese, pheasant, doves, quail, deer, squirrels, rabbits, and furbearers.

5 *JAMESTOWN WILDLIFE AREA* (3½ N and 2 W of Jamestown) 2,728 acres. Primarily managed for waterfowl, with some pheasant, quail, and rabbit hunting.

6 *JEWELL WILDLIFE AREA* (6 S and 3 W of Mankato) 165 acres. Pheasants, quail, and rabbits.

7 *KANOPOLIS WILDLIFE AREA* (12 SE of Ellsworth) 13,040 acres

managed by the Corps of Engineers. Waterfowl, pheasants, quail, deer, rabbits, doves, squirrels, prairie chickens, and furbearers.

8 *LOVEWELL WILDLIFE AREA* (12 NE of Mankato) 2,209 acres (plus 3,000 water acres). Waterfowl, pheasants, quail, deer, rabbits, squirrels, and doves.

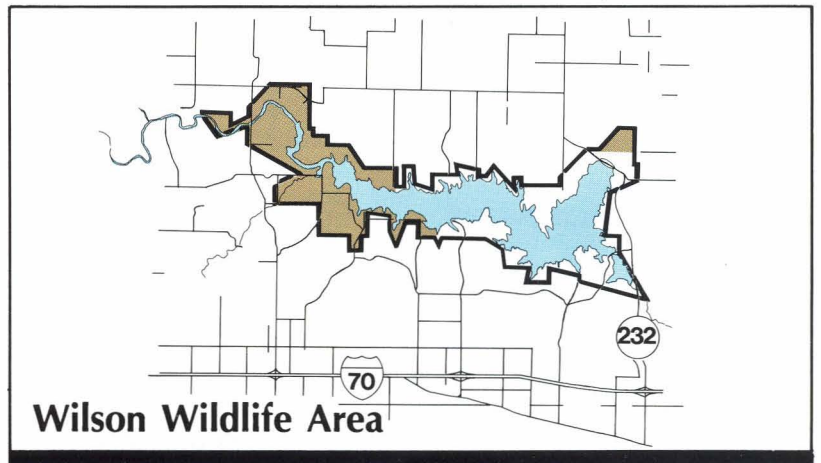
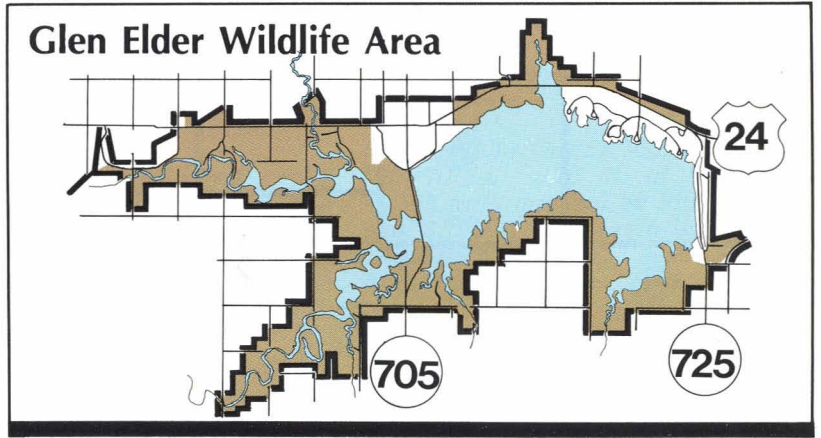
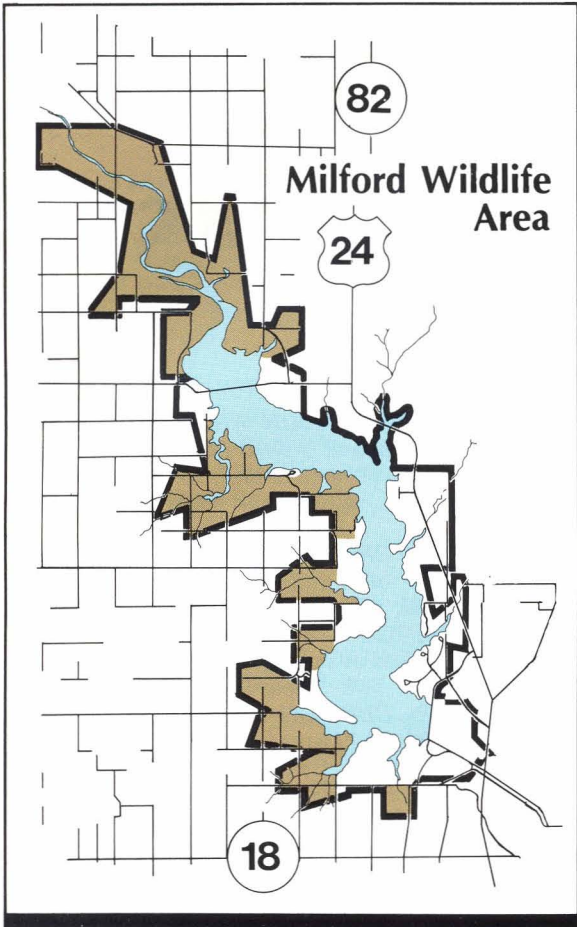
9 *MILFORD WILDLIFE AREA* (Tracts from southwest side of Milford dam extending up the lake to 8 miles north of Wakefield) 15,714 acres. Ducks, pheasants, quail, rabbits, squirrels, doves, deer, furbearers, and some geese.

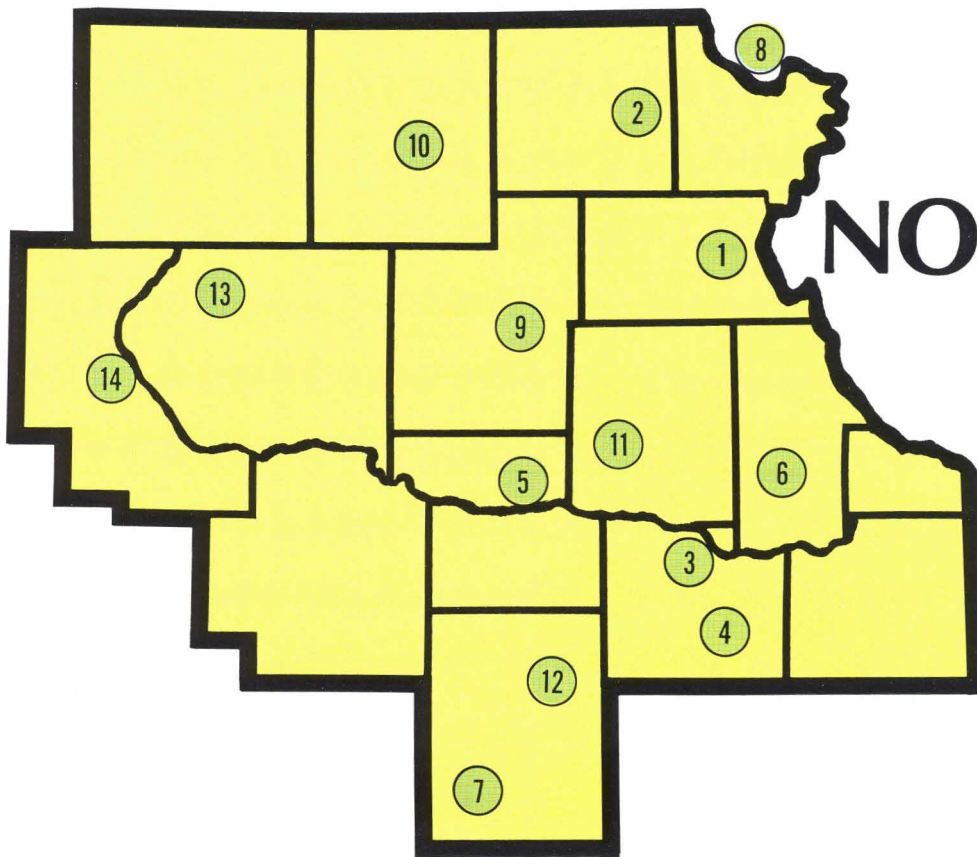
10 *OTTAWA WILDLIFE AREA* (5 N and 1 E of Bennington) 611 acres. Pheasant, quail, rabbits, squirrels, and deer.

11 *WASHINGTON WILDLIFE AREA* (7 N and 3 W of Washington) 457 acres. Deer, quail, pheasants, rabbits, squirrels, doves, furbearers, and some waterfowl.

12 *WILSON WILDLIFE AREA* (7 NW of Bunker Hill) 8,039 acres. Pheasants, quail, deer, doves, waterfowl, rabbits, and furbearers.







NORTHEAST

- 1** *ATCHISON WILDLIFE AREA* (5 N and 2 W of Atchison) 179 acres. Quail, pheasant, dove, whitetail deer, furbearers, squirrel, and waterfowl.
- 2** *BROWN WILDLIFE AREA* (8 E of Hiawatha) 129 acres. Pheasant, quail, whitetail deer, rabbit, waterfowl, and furbearers. Occasional large concentrations of snow geese.
- 3** *CLINTON WILDLIFE AREA* (SW of Lawrence) 9,923 acres managed by Fish & Game, plus 1,933 acres managed by Corps of Engineers. Cottontail rabbit, fox and gray squirrel, whitetail deer, quail, raccoon, and waterfowl.



Gene Brehm

4 **DOUGLAS WILDLIFE AREA** (1 N and 1 E of Baldwin City) 500 acres. Fox and gray squirrels, rabbits, whitetail deer, quail, raccoon, and waterfowl.

5 **KANSAS RIVER** (110 miles of river open to hunting, with access points at Manhattan, Wamego, Topeka, Lawrence, Eudora, and Edwardsville.) Primarily waterfowl and furbearers. Good late season hunting, especially below Perry Reservoir.

6 **LEAVENWORTH WILDLIFE AREA** (3 W and 1 N of Tonganoxie) 332 acres. Good for squirrels, as well as quail, rabbit, whitetail deer, and furbearers.

7 **MELVERN WILDLIFE AREA** (40 S of Topeka) Includes 10,016 acres managed by Fish & Game, plus 4,000 acres managed by Corps of Engineers. Major species include quail, greater prairie chicken, rabbit, fox and gray squirrels, whitetail deer, raccoon, dove, and waterfowl.

8 **MISSOURI RIVER** (120 miles of river, with access points at Wathena, St. Joseph, Atchison, and Leaven-

worth; also, limited access at White Cloud.) Major species are waterfowl and furbearers. Excellent late season duck and snow goose hunting south of Atchison near Itan Power Plant.

9 **NEBO WILDLIFE AREA** (7 E and 1 S of Holton) 6 acres. Waterfowl and furbearers.

10 **NEMAHA WILDLIFE AREA** (1 E and 4 S of Seneca) 462 acres. Whitetail deer, pheasant, quail, rabbit, squirrel, raccoon, ducks, and occasional snow geese.

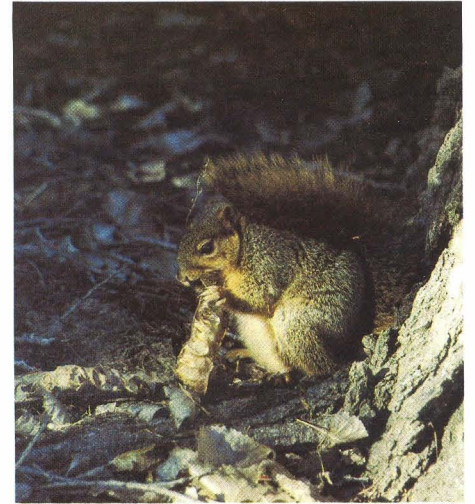
11 **PERRY WILDLIFE AREA** (20 NE of Topeka) 10,984 acres managed by Fish & Game, plus 3,000 acres managed by Corps of Engineers. Quail, pheasant, deer, squirrel, rabbit, waterfowl, and furbearers. Excellent teal and early migrant duck hunting on 1,000 acres of man-made marshes.

12 **POMONA WILDLIFE AREA** (25 S of Topeka) 3,600 acres managed by Corps of Engineers. Rabbit, squirrel, whitetail deer, quail, dove, and some waterfowl.

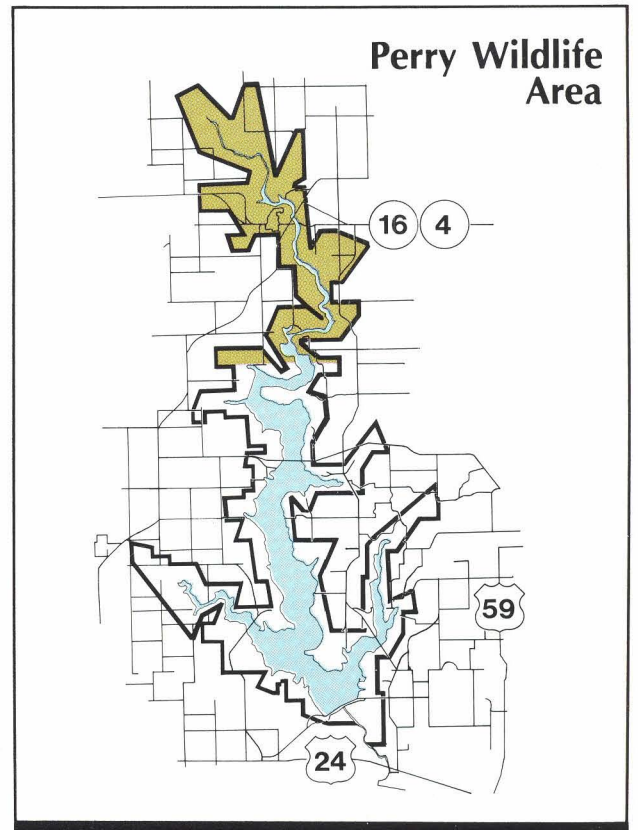
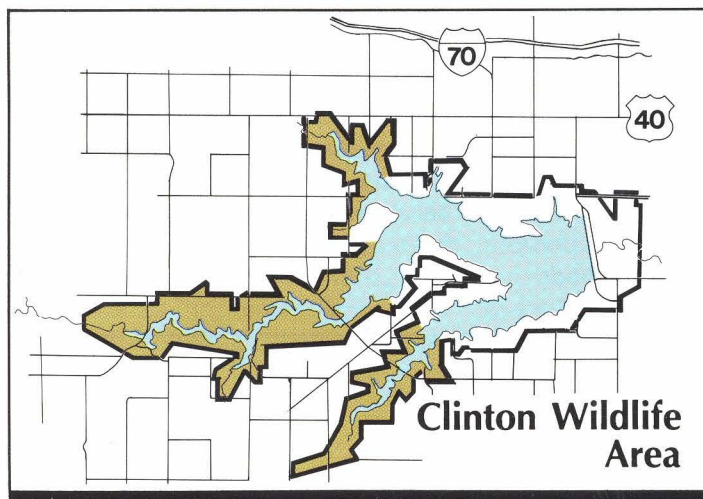
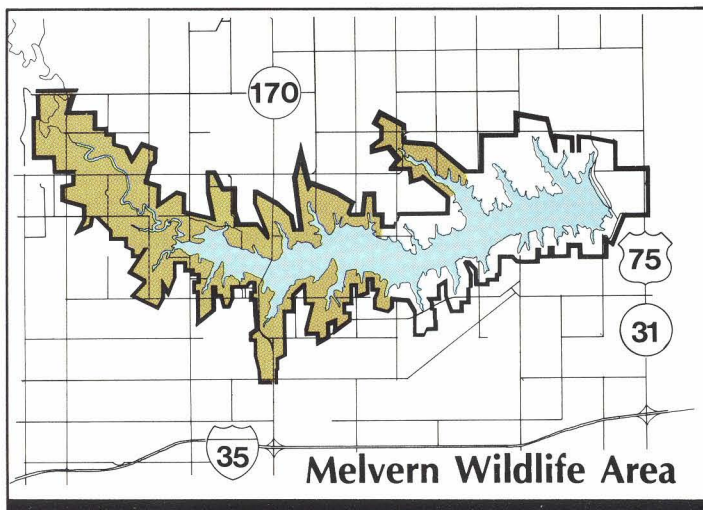
13 **POTTAWATOMIE NO. 1 WILD-**

LIFE AREA (5 N of Westmoreland) 166 acres. Rabbit, quail, whitetail deer, squirrel, raccoon, and an occasional prairie chicken.

14 **TUTTLE CREEK WILDLIFE AREA** (20 N of Manhattan) 10,469 acres managed by Fish & Game, plus 3,703 acres managed by Corps of Engineers. Pheasant, quail, whitetail deer, rabbit, squirrel, prairie chicken, ducks, geese, and raccoons.



Ron Spomer



The public areas outlined in these pages amount to almost 240,000 acres of land, a substantial piece of real estate until it's compared to the size of the entire state—almost 53 million acres. In fact, more than ninety-eight percent of Kansas is controlled by private landowners. Much of the state's best hunting is on this private ground, waiting for the hunter who is enterprising enough to find it.

The finding isn't often easy. Most of us have lost the ties we once had with the land. We don't own farms and, in most cases, don't know anyone who does. And there is an even more basic problem—lack of cover. The pressures of more intensive agriculture have eliminated thousands of acres of wildlife habitat, making the search for good cover more difficult than it has ever been. As a result, the urban hunter is faced with a two-fold challenge—he has to get to know the land well enough to find the cover that remains, and he has to get to know the landowner who controls it.

There are a few ways to take some of the pain out of locating good cover. Maps are an invaluable aid. Topographic maps show major wetlands and woods as well as the drainages, bluffs, and ravines that often protect good coverts. County platt maps, usually available from the abstract office at the county seat, are another critical reference. The platt map is an up-to-date guide to who owns which piece of land in the

county. Armed with these two maps, a hunter can make a day-long reconnaissance with a pair of binoculars and turn up more good cover than he could hunt in a year. Such scouting trips are probably best made a month or so before the season opener. The cover will look about the same as it will for opening, and there will still be plenty of time for the second, more critical step in finding a place to hunt—meeting the landowner.

In these days of large farms and absentee landowners, finding the man who works a given piece of ground can be a chore. Combined with a platt map, a rural telephone directory can save a lot of time and effort in the search. The rural directory contains a map of every township in the county which shows each occupied house and gives the name and telephone number of the occupant. Without it, you may spend hours knocking on doors or working your way through the urban phone book's listings of people who have the same last name as the man you want to reach.

Once you've found out how to get in touch with the man who controls hunting access to the habitat you're after, there are a number of ways to contact him. A few hunters write to landowners before showing up at the doorstep. Some hunters simply call. Most sportsmen, however, prefer to ask personally. No matter what technique appeals to you, there are a few things to remember.

First, try to avoid making your first contact on opening day. You are far more likely to get permission if you ask before the shooting starts or after the opening day crowds have retired to their living rooms for the year. Second, you are beginning an acquaintance, possibly even a friendship, if you're lucky. Have the courtesy to introduce yourself. Most important, remember that you are asking a favor, not demanding a right.

There are a few hunters who don't want to be bothered with asking permission. They are the reason Kansas trespass laws have stiffened over the last few years. They are also a public relations disaster for other hunters. A recent study in New England indicates that most people aren't bothered by the idea of hunting itself; they are upset by the legal and ethical abuses attributed to hunters. A slob hunter does more than convince landowners to close their property; he also lends strength to the urban anti-hunting movement.

Learning to hunt is a process of honing skills that even the best hunters never fully master. Hunters take pride in this skillfulness as they should since it sets them apart from the mainstream of outdoor users. Trespassing after game is a blight on that pride. No hunter can develop a respect for his own skill when he steals into another man's coverts, looking constantly over his shoulder for the owner's pick-up coming down the road behind him.
