

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Kirwin

*National Wildlife
Refuge*



Kirwin National Wildlife Refuge is located in the rolling hills and narrow valley of the North Fork of the Solomon River in north-central Kansas. The Refuge lies in an area where the tall-grass prairies of the east meet the short-grass plains of the west. As a result of this merging of prairies and plains, grasses and wildlife common to both habitats are found on the Refuge.

Introduction

Historically, great herds of bison roamed these vast grasslands, often followed by wolves that fed on weak and sick animals. Native Americans, who depended on the bison for their subsistence, also resided in this area. Ducks and geese, now attracted to the Refuge in great numbers, were uncommon in this area until large reservoirs were built in the early 1950's for irrigation and flood control.



Canada geese in a wet meadow.

John & Karen Hollingsworth

Kirwin National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), the first National Wildlife Refuge in Kansas, was established in 1954 as an overlay project on a Bureau of Reclamation irrigation and flood control reservoir. The Bureau owns the land and controls reservoir water levels, while the Refuge staff manages all other activities on the land and water. The reservoir is fed by the North Fork of the Solomon River and Bow Creek. Both are intermittent streams, which means they may dry up in periods of low precipitation. The reservoir water levels fluctuate tremendously from year to year, depending upon rain and snow runoff.

Kirwin NWR, consisting of 10,778 acres, supports diverse wildlife habitat including grasslands, wooded riparian areas (found along the banks of the river and reservoir), open water, wetlands, and croplands. It is one of a system of over 500 refuges administered nationwide by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Managing for Wildlife

The primary purpose of Kirwin NWR is to provide nesting cover, food, and shelter for songbirds, waterfowl, upland game birds, and mammals. Refuge staff use a variety of wildlife habitat management practices to provide optimum habitat for wildlife. Crops such as corn, wheat, and milo are grown through a cooperative farming program. A portion of the crop is harvested for use by the farmer and the rest is left in the field to provide food for the thousands of ducks and geese that use the area during spring and fall migrations. Other habitat management tools used to promote native grassland include grazing, haying, mowing, and controlled burning.

Diverse Wildlife Abounds

Kirwin NWR is home to a rich variety of wildlife species including 34 species of mammals, 31 species of reptiles and amphibians, and 197 species of birds. Beavers find food and cover in aquatic habitat, while raccoons and skunks search for a meal along the reservoir shore, and coyotes hunt the uplands.

When the reservoir is low, white-tailed deer find shelter in the windbreaks and in the brush in the dry bottom of the reservoir. Resident species of birds include upland game birds such as pheasant, bobwhite quail, greater prairie chicken, and Rio Grande turkey. Fields of native grass hide mice and rabbits, the prey of many species of hawks and owls.



White-tailed deer are commonly found on the Refuge.

Bill Bussen



A great blue heron stands in a nest high in a tree.

Bill Bussen

Visitors to the Refuge are often awed by the impressive numbers of waterfowl, water birds, and shorebirds that pass through the Refuge during their spring and fall migration.

Spring migration is marked by the arrival of northern pintails, northern shovelers, gadwalls, and both green-winged and blue-winged teal. Shorebirds, such as sandpipers, American avocets, and marbled godwits, also can be seen in large numbers flying and feeding in synchronized motion.

Heralding the beginning of fall migration, water birds, such as American white pelicans, double-crested cormorants, and many species of gulls, begin arriving in late September. Later arrivals include Canada geese, white-fronted geese, mallards, gadwalls, northern pintails, and other dabbling and diving ducks. Some ducks and geese find the Refuge conditions to be so attractive, even in winter, that they fly no farther south. In fact, approximately 20,000 Canada geese and 10,000 mallards winter at the Refuge.

In the late fall and early winter, both golden and bald eagles soar over the landscape. Small numbers of peregrine falcons are also present through this period. Northern harriers, red-tailed hawks, and American kestrels are common to the area as well. Many migratory songbirds can also be found in the diverse Refuge habitats.

Waterfowl species that nest on the Refuge include Canada geese, mallards, and wood ducks. Great blue herons and double-crested cormorants nest in a rookery, a large group of nests high in the trees, along the reservoir shoreline. A variety of small perching songbirds also nest in the Refuge grasslands and riparian areas.

Enjoy Your Visit At Kirwin National Wildlife Refuge

Recreational activities such as fishing, hunting, wildlife observation, photography, hiking, bicycling, and camping can be enjoyed at Kirwin NWR. Fishing for walleye, largemouth bass, black crappie, channel catfish, and other species is permitted in the reservoir; the North Fork of the Solomon River; and Bow Creek.

An auto tour route takes you through a variety of Refuge habitats and provides the best opportunities for viewing and photographing wildlife. Hiking is permitted throughout the Refuge and on designated trails, providing a closer look at the Refuge. Bicyclists may ride on any roads open to vehicle travel. Camping is permitted only in designated campgrounds. Staff at the Refuge Visitor Center are available to answer questions or provide further information.

Visitors are encouraged to enjoy the Refuge activities discussed in this leaflet. Any activities not discussed in this leaflet are prohibited due to their incompatibility with the Refuge purpose.

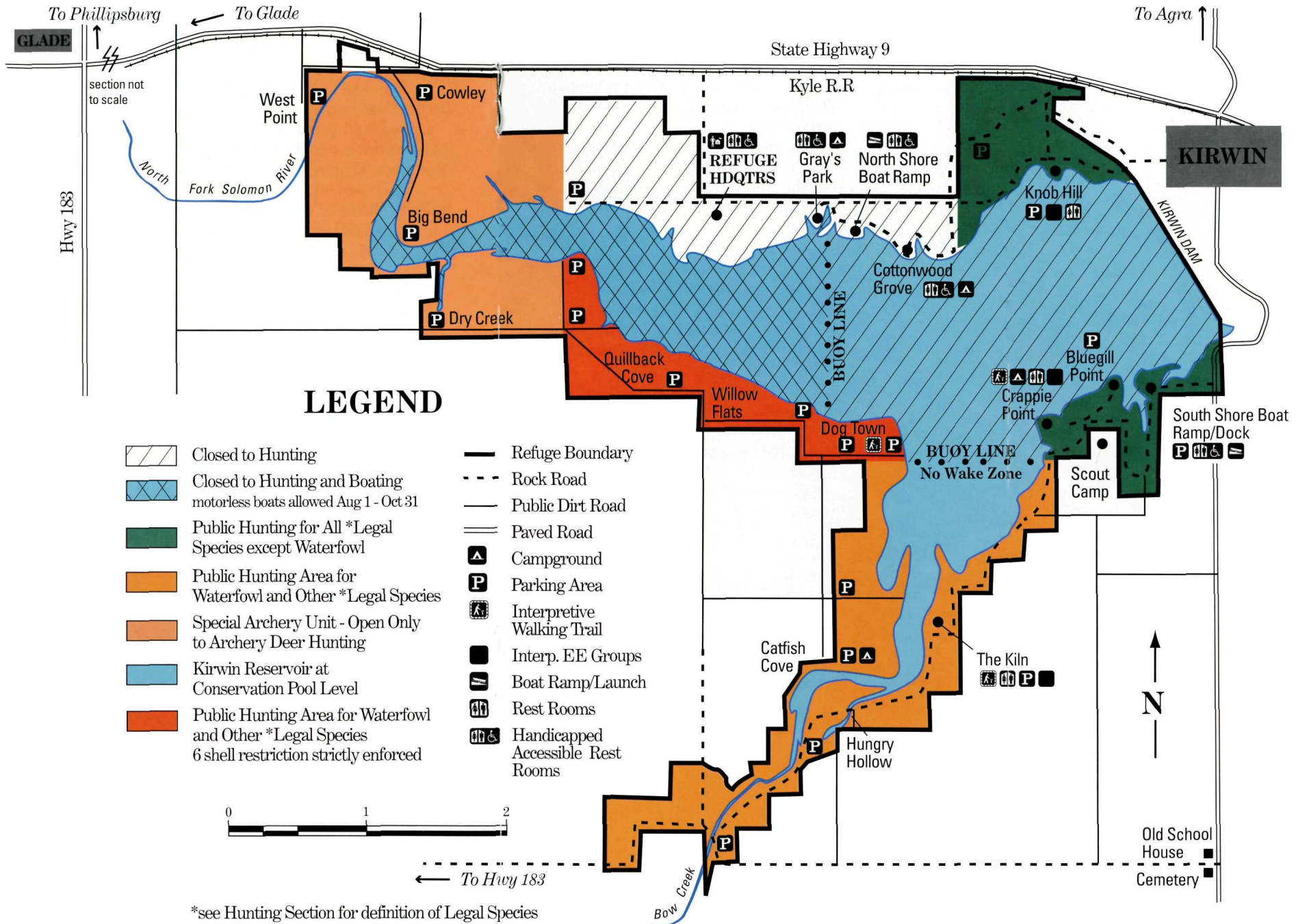
*A marsh wren
builds a dome-shaped
nest fastened to
cattail stems.*



**How To Find
Kirwin National
Wildlife Refuge**

The entrance to Kirwin NWR is located on State Highway 9, 6 miles east of Glade, Kansas. Visitors approaching from the south must turn north onto Highway 183 at Hays, Kansas and travel 60 miles to Glade. Those approaching from the north can reach Glade by driving 5 miles south of Phillipsburg on Highway 183.

After reaching Glade from north or south, turn east onto Highway 9 and travel 6 miles to the Refuge entrance. Upon reaching the Refuge entrance, visitors must turn south and drive 1 mile via county road to the Headquarters. Office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.



*see Hunting Section for definition of Legal Species

Kirwin National Wildlife Refuge Regulations

Refuge visitors must abide by the following regulations to insure their own safety, the safety of others, and the protection of Refuge natural resources.

Motorized vehicles Motor vehicles are permitted only on designated Refuge roads or in maintained camping areas. Roads are subject to seasonal or weather-related closures. Off-road travel is prohibited. Parking is permitted only in designated parking areas or along the shoulder of public roads. The use of snowmobiles or all-terrain vehicles is not permitted on the Refuge. No motorized vehicles are allowed on the reservoir when the water is frozen.

Fishing Sport fishing in accordance with Kansas State Fishing Regulations is permitted on Kirwin Reservoir and the tributaries that feed into it, unless signs indicate a particular closed area.

Boating Boating is permitted on all waters lying east of a buoy line from Gray's Park to Dog Town, unless otherwise designed by appropriate signs. A "no wake zone" is in effect within 300 feet of all shoreline and islands, as well as on the Bow Creek arm.



Controlled Area
• Slow no wake
• Motorless boats only

Hazard Warning
• Danger-hazards such as shallow water, trees, rocks

Restricted Area
• No boats
• Closed area

Information
• Fish attractor

The Solomon River arm is closed to boating to prevent disturbance to wildlife and other refuge visitors. Non-motorized boating is allowed on the Solomon River arm from August 1 through October 31.

Float tubes are allowed in areas open to boating. Boats must be equipped and operated in accordance with Kansas Boat and Water Safety Laws and appropriate Federal regulations. Visitors must recognize and follow standard inland waterway symbols and messages. At Kirwin NWR, the term "boats" includes float tubes, inflatable rafts, inner tubes, and all other manner of floating devices.

Water skiing

Water skiing is permitted in the portion of the lake that is open to motorized boating. Skiing must be done in conformance with applicable Federal and State laws.

Camping and Picnicking

Camping and picnicking is permitted in designated and maintained areas only. Tents and campers are limited to seven (7) consecutive days in the same campground. To assist with maintenance and reduce pressure on popular locations, a camp must be removed from any specific campground for a minimum of 72 hours before it can be moved back to the same campground.

Campers can build small fires only in established fire pits provided by Refuge staff and must extinguish any fires before leaving. Downed wood may be gathered for fires.

Campers must honor quiet hours from 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. Generators, radios, and other devices must be turned off during this time period.

Personal Conduct

Disorderly conduct or disturbance of the peace is forbidden at all times. No person who is obviously intoxicated will enter or be allowed to remain on the Refuge. Possession of controlled substances is illegal.

Refuge users, such as these scouts from Dane G. Hansen Scout Camp, can enjoy canoeing and boating at Kirwin NWR
Rex Lowe

Littering

Visitors must take their trash with them when they leave the Refuge. Leaving any refuse on the land or in the water is considered littering.

Pets

Dogs and other pets must be on a leash or under the owner's immediate control. Free roaming pets are prohibited on any portion of the Refuge.

Fireworks

The discharge of fireworks or other explosives on the Refuge is prohibited.

Hunting

All hunters must possess a valid Kansas hunting license and all the necessary stamps and/or permits required by Federal and State laws. Archery deer hunters must carry a free Refuge-issued permit while hunting on the Refuge. This permit may be obtained at Refuge Headquarters during regular business hours or through a mail request. Information gained through issuance of this permit will assist Refuge staff with tracking the use of archery deer hunting areas on Kirwin NWR as well as helping with management of the deer herds to improve hunting opportunities.

Season dates, methods of taking game, and bag and possession limits on the Refuge are the same as outlined in Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks and Federal regulations, *except for the following:*

- Only federally approved non-toxic shot may be used for all hunting with a shotgun, except when hunting turkey.
- Species that can legally be hunted on the Refuge include *only* waterfowl, doves, pheasants, quail, turkey, prairie chickens, snipe, coots, cottontail rabbits, fox squirrels, and deer (archery only). Hunting of other wildlife is not permitted.
- Cottontail rabbits and fox squirrels may be hunted only during pheasant and/or quail seasons.
- Bow and arrow and shotguns no larger than 10 gauge are the only legal firearms permitted on the Refuge. No rifles or handguns are permitted. Discharge of a firearm for any reason other than the legal taking of game animals is prohibited.

Craig Bihole



Waiting for the first morning flight of Canada geese

- Areas open for hunting are outlined on the map located in this brochure. Not all hunting areas are open for all species, so hunters must ensure that they are hunting in the proper area. Refuge staff at the Headquarters can assist any hunter unsure of the hunting area designations. While in the field during dark goose season, EACH hunter in the area from the Quillback Cove parking area to the parking area east of Dog Town may possess a daily maximum of six (6) shells.

- Portable tree stands and hunting blinds are permitted. They may be installed no more than seven (7) days prior to the season and must be removed no later than two (2) days after the season. The use of nails, wire, screws, or bolts to attach a stand to a tree, or hunting from a tree into which a metal object has been driven to support a hunter, is prohibited on the Refuge. Construction or use of any permanent stand or blind is not permitted. Digging or use of holes or pits is not permitted.

- Use or possession of alcoholic beverages while hunting is prohibited.

- Game may not be retrieved from a No Hunting Zone or from an area that is not open to the hunting of that species. Hunters are responsible for ensuring that game does not fall into an area where it cannot be retrieved.

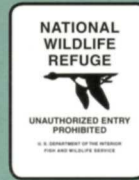
Animal or Plant Life

Molesting, disturbing, injuring, destroying, or attempting to do so to any animal or plant, except properly taken fish and/or game animals in season, is prohibited.

Artifacts, Fossils, and Historic Items

Artifacts, fossils, and historic items are protected on the Refuge by Federal law. It is unlawful to search for or remove these objects from Refuge lands.

These signs regulate activities on Kirwin NWR. It is your responsibility to learn and follow their meanings.



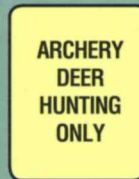
National Wildlife Refuge Boundary



Public Hunting Allowed — Consult Regulations



No Hunting Of Any Kind Is Allowed



Archery Deer Hunting Is The Only Hunting Allowed In This Area



Driving Any Motorized Vehicle On This Trail Is Prohibited



Only Non-Toxic Shot Can Be In Possession When Hunting Migratory Birds, Small Game, and Upland Game Species

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service seeks to afford persons with disabilities full accessibility or reasonable accommodation. Contact Refuge staff for information or to address accessibility needs. For the hearing impaired, use your State Relay System for the Deaf.

Kirwin National Wildlife Refuge
R.R. 1, Box 103
Kirwin, Kansas 67644
785/543 6673
r6rw_krw@fws.gov

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
<http://www.fws.gov>

For Refuge Information
1 800/344 WILD

March 1998



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Kirwin

*National Wildlife
Refuge*