

Marais des Cygnes
National Wildlife Refuge
24141 Kansas Hwy 52
Pleasanton, KS 66075
913 / 352-8956
www.fws.gov/refuge/marais_des_cygnes

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
www.fws.gov

For Refuge Information
1 800 / 344-WILD

Marais des Cygnes Wildlife Area
16382 Vail Road
Pleasanton, KS 66075
913 / 352-8941

Kansas Dept. of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism
www.ksoutdoors.com

For State relay service
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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism

Marais des Cygnes

*National Wildlife Refuge
and Wildlife Area*


Kansas
Department of Wildlife, Parks
and Tourism



Pelicans on Unit G, Marais des Cygnes Wildlife Area
© Mike Blair

“Marais des Cygnes” is French for “marsh of swans”; however, the name is actually a translation of an Osage Indian name for the region, “Mixa-ckau-tse”, which means “where white swans are plentiful.” Trumpeter and tundra swans are now rare visitors, but this area is still well known for its abundance and variety of wildlife.



Welcome



This blue goose, designed by J.N. "Ding" Darling, is the symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Marais des Cygnes National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the adjoining Marais des Cygnes Wildlife Area, managed by the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT), encompass a diversity of wildlife habitat. The two areas are nearly equal in size and together protect 15,000 acres of land along the Marais des Cygnes River in east-central Kansas. Marais des Cygnes Wildlife Area was established by the State of Kansas in 1951, primarily for the management of waterfowl. Marais des Cygnes NWR was established in 1992 by Congress for the protection and restoration of bottomland hardwood forests. Together, the two areas complement each other and provide a variety of habitat for wildlife and recreational opportunities for the public.

The Marais des Cygnes River was the heart of the Osage Indian Nation's hunting grounds. The Osage people were very reliable fur trappers, and thus, frequently traded with the French trappers and explorers in the area. A number of trading posts were established along the river, including one that eventually became the nearby town of Trading Post.

The refuge and wildlife area are both named for the Marais des Cygnes River, the primary natural feature of the region. Annual floods profoundly influence the wetlands and bottomland hardwood forest found at both sites. Water pumped from the river also helps maintain the managed wetlands.

Wildlife Management on the Refuge and Wildlife Area

Bottomland hardwood forest protection and restoration is the primary management activity on the refuge and is an important goal of the wildlife area as well. Over 80 percent of bottomland hardwood forests have been destroyed nationally. Remaining tracts are often fragmented and relatively small. In addition, dams, levees, channelization of river systems, and increasing water needs for municipal, industrial, and agricultural use have greatly changed the natural flooding necessary to sustain healthy flood-plain forests.



Bottomland hardwood forest

Annual floods supply nutrients to flood-plain forests, recharge forested wetlands, and support the growth of plants adapted to flood-plain habitat. Forests slow flood waters, trap suspended sediments, and provide habitat for many species of wildlife. Some wildlife species, such as red-shouldered hawks, broadhead skinks, and flat floater mussels, are rarely found in habitat other than flood-plain forest and wetlands. Bottomland forest restoration includes tree or nut planting, restoration of forested wetlands, and modification of forest composition.

Wetland management is the highest priority on the wildlife area and receives high consideration on the refuge as well. Water level manipulation within wetland units is the primary management tool on the wildlife area.



Rock riffles on the Marais des Cygnes River

Selected marshes are dewatered, allowing annual plants to germinate and grow. Some marshes may be burned, disked, or mowed to encourage the growth of desired plants or inhibit undesired species. These units are then flooded in the fall to provide habitat for migratory and wintering wetland wildlife. Marshes that are not dewatered produce marsh plants and harbor fish, amphibians, and invertebrates sought by wetland wildlife.

Native prairie and croplands are managed on both areas. Native prairie protection and restoration activities include prescribed fire, mowing, control of invading non-native plants, and planting of native grasses and forbs. Crop fields are managed to provide food for migrating waterfowl and upland wildlife.

Closed areas on both the refuge and the wildlife area serve as sanctuaries where wildlife can feed and rest with little human disturbance. Spring migrants need to feed undisturbed to prepare for reproduction and their journey to breeding areas. Summer resident waterfowl and wading birds require protected areas to forage and rear their young. Closed areas also provide safe havens for fall migrants during

hunting seasons. Freedom from disturbance is critical to waterfowl and eagles, as well as other wildlife, whenever food is less available and energy requirements are high.

Diverse Wildlife Abounds

The biological diversity of this region is tremendous due to the meeting of the extensive tallgrass prairie, located to the west, and the oak-hickory forests, to the east. High-quality stands of bottomland hardwood forest, upland oak-hickory forest, tallgrass prairie, and seasonal and permanent wetlands are found throughout the refuge and the wildlife area. These unique areas provide habitat for many species that are considered threatened or endangered, such as broadhead skinks, spring peepers, flat floater mussels, and Mead's milkweed.

The large marshes on the wildlife area attract thousands of ducks and geese each fall. Large numbers of other water birds, including white pelicans, egrets, herons, rails, and shorebirds can also be seen.

Historically, trumpeter and tundra swans were notable features of the region, but are now rare visitors. Unfortunately, intensive hunting by fur traders and settlers for skins and meat greatly reduced numbers of both species of swan by the late 1800s.



Purple coneflower

© Bruce Freske



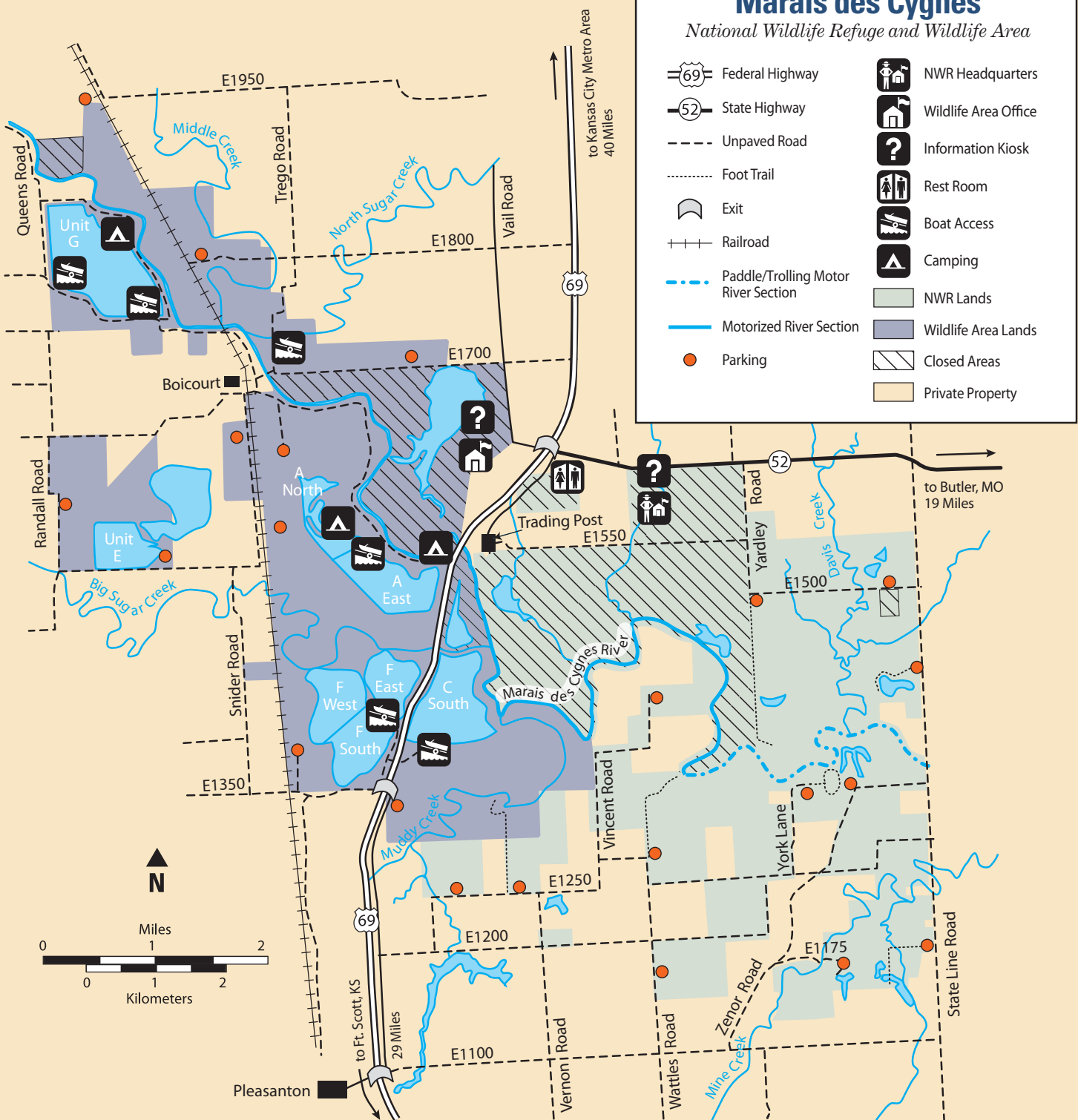
Mallard drake

© Mike Blair

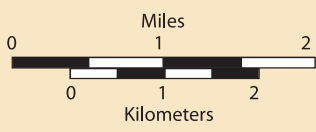
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Marais des Cygnes

National Wildlife Refuge and Wildlife Area



- Federal Highway
- State Highway
- Unpaved Road
- Foot Trail
- Exit
- Railroad
- Paddle/Trolling Motor River Section
- Motorized River Section
- Parking
- NWR Headquarters
- Wildlife Area Office
- Information Kiosk
- Rest Room
- Boat Access
- Camping
- NWR Lands
- Wildlife Area Lands
- Closed Areas
- Private Property



Pleasanton

to Ft. Scott, KS
29 Miles

to Kansas City Metro Area
40 Miles

to Butler, MO
19 Miles

Tundra swan populations have recovered much more quickly from over-hunting than trumpeter swan populations. This is largely because tundra swan nesting habitat is located in the relatively undisturbed Canadian Arctic rather than the upper Midwest, where extensive drainage of wetlands has eliminated much of the nesting habitat for trumpeter swans. Only the Atlantic and Pacific coast populations of tundra swans have recovered. The Gulf Coast population, which once migrated through Missouri and Kansas and wintered on the Gulf Coast of Texas, no longer exists.



© Mike Blair

Flying squirrel in a tree hole

Bottomland hardwood forests and upland oak-hickory forest on both the refuge and wildlife area host an impressive migration of warblers in the spring. Nearly 30 different species of warblers can be found here! Other interesting species found in the area are river otter, bobcat, wood and cotton rat, hooded merganser, cerulean warbler, scissor-tailed flycatcher, loggerhead shrike, red-shouldered hawk, paddlefish, and copperhead snake.

Enjoy Your Visit

Recreational activities such as fishing, hunting, wildlife observation, and photography may be enjoyed on the refuge and wildlife area.

Limited hunting is allowed on the refuge for deer and turkey during specific State seasons. Quail, rabbit, squirrel, and waterfowl hunting opportunities are also available.

Hunting on the wildlife area is primarily for waterfowl. Over 2,500 acres of marsh provides diverse waterfowl habitat for hunting opportunities. Squirrel, deer, and turkey hunting opportunities are also available.

Several ponds on the refuge provide fishing opportunities for sunfish, bass, and crappie. The Marais des Cygnes River, which runs through both the refuge and wildlife area, has channel and blue catfish as well as white crappie, white bass, and walleye.

Both the refuge and wildlife area have service and levee roads that provide easy access for hiking and wildlife observation. These roads vary in length from one-quarter of a mile to 1¼ miles and are not open to public vehicle traffic.

Bird, amphibian, and reptile checklists may be obtained from either the refuge or the wildlife area offices, or they can be found on the refuge website listed on the back of this brochure.

Linn County Park, located six miles north of the refuge and wildlife area, provides cabin and facilities for camping. Food, lodging and fuel are available locally.



National Wildlife Refuge Regulations

<i>Boating</i>	Outboard motor use is restricted to the westernmost 5½ mile section of the Marais des Cygnes River. Non-motorized boats and electric trolling motors may be used on all open portions of the Refuge including the eastern 4 mile section of the Marais des Cygnes River. Refuge property boundaries are located at the center of the river. Where sections of the river border private property, only the half of the river adjacent to public property is open to public use.	<i>Hunting</i>	Deer and spring turkey hunting is open only to those possessing a valid Refuge Access Permit. Contact the refuge office for more information on obtaining an access permit. Hunting for squirrel, rabbit, waterfowl, bobwhite quail, coot, rail, snipe, woodcock, mourning dove, and fall turkey is allowed on the refuge. Limited hunting for deer and spring turkey is also available.
<i>Camping</i>	Overnight camping and building of fires is prohibited.		Trapping, hunting, or running dogs for furbearers and coyotes is prohibited.
<i>Fishing</i>	Fishing is allowed in accordance with State seasons and creel limits.		Decoys, tree stands and portable blinds must be removed each day.
<i>Firearms</i>	Persons possessing, transporting, or carrying firearms on National Wildlife Refuge System lands must comply with all provisions of State and local law. Persons may only use (discharge) firearms in accordance with refuge regulations (50 CFR 27.42 and specific refuge regulations in 50 CFR Part 32).		Firearms using centerfire and rimfire ammunition are prohibited at all times.
<i>Pets</i>	Pets must be leashed except when used for hunting during appropriate hunting seasons.		Hunting with the aid of or distribution of feeds, salt or minerals is prohibited.
<i>Personal Conduct</i>	Closed areas are closed to all public entry unless specifically opened for a special event. Use of the open portion of the refuge for nature observation and other related activities is allowed.	<i>Animals and Plants</i>	Discharge of firearms within 150 yards of any residence or other occupied building is prohibited. Spotlighting on the refuge is prohibited. Molesting, harassing, or injuring any animal or plant, except fish and game taken in season, is prohibited. Harvest of berries, mushrooms, and nuts for personal use is allowed.
		<i>Artifacts and Historic Items</i>	Artifacts and historic items are protected on refuge lands by federal law. It is unlawful to excavate or remove these objects from the refuge.
		<i>Mechanized/Motorized Vehicles</i>	The use of ATV's, bicycles or other forms of transportation other than by foot is prohibited. Blocking gates or access roads is prohibited.



Wildlife Area Regulations

Motorized Vehicles

Hunting and fishing regulations generally follow State regulations established by KDWP. Regulations specific to the Wildlife Area are as follows.

Motor vehicles are restricted to public roads and parking lots. ATVs are prohibited. Do not park in front of gates or access roads. Some roads are closed seasonally.

Boating

Boats may be used for hunting and fishing. Check posted regulations regarding motor use.

Camping

Primitive camping is allowed at designated sites. Fires must be contained in fire rings, grills, or stoves. No amenities are provided.

Fishing

Fishing is allowed year-round in the river and streams, and from April 15 through September 15 in marsh units except in closed areas.

Salvage of fish may be allowed by posted notice during dewatering of marshes.

Firearms

Pistols and center-fire and rim-fire rifles are permitted. Target practice is prohibited.

Hunting

Nontoxic shot is required for all shotgun hunting.

Waterfowl hunters must register at the wildlife area headquarters before and report harvest after hunting each day. Daily permits are free.

Hunting from dikes, levees, or roads is prohibited.

Access permits are required for some deer hunting seasons. Contact the wildlife area office staff for details and permits.

Commercial guides are required to obtain a permit.

Tree stands may not be placed more than 14 days prior to the season and must be removed within 14 days of the end of the season. Portable blinds may not be left unattended overnight. Only two blinds or stands are allowed per hunter. Blinds and stands must be clearly marked with the owners name and address or KDWP number.

Natural blinds, constructed of materials or debris present on the site may be used.

No person shall place, deposit, expose or scatter bait for hunting.

Decoys may not be left unattended overnight.

Personal Conduct

Closed areas are closed to all public entry unless specifically opened for a special event.

Animals and Plants

Harvest of berries, nuts, and mushrooms, and collecting of shed deer antlers, for non-commercial use, is allowed.

Accessibility Information

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs and activities of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and of KDWP is available to all individuals regardless of physical or mental ability. Dial 711 for a free connection to the State relay service for TTY and voice calls to and from the speech and hearing impaired. For more information or to address accessibility needs on the National Wildlife Refuge, contact staff at 913 / 352-8956, or the U.S. Dept. of the Interior, Office of Equal Opportunity, 1849 C Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20240. For more information or accessibility needs on the state wildlife area, please contact the staff at 913 / 352-8941, or KDWP, 1020 S Kansas, Topeka, KS, 66612.