Hunting is not allowed in the refuge areas (see map). Hunting pressure on the Bottoms can be heavy during waterfowl season, particularly on weekends. Hunters planning trips to the Bottoms should consider weekday hunts.

Prior to hunting any species on Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area, all hunters are required to obtain and complete a Daily Hunt Permit. These permits can be found at all entrances to the wildlife area, at parking lots and most boat ramps. Silver colored, iron dispensers are located at these points. Each permit is a two piece card. Before hunting, complete the top portion of the card and separate it from the lower portion and place it in the permit box. Carry the lower portion of the permit with you while hunting. Upon completion of your hunt, fill out the lower portion and place it in a permit box. Each hunter must complete one for each day hunting at Cheyenne Bottoms.

Be sure you are at a foot crossing before leaving dikes. No shooting is allowed on or from the dikes. No holes or pits may be dug for any purpose. Portable blinds that contain more than one person are prohibited. The use of watercraft is restricted. Watercraft are not permitted on or from the dikes. No propeller-driven boats are allowed on or from the dikes. No shooting is allowed on or from the dikes.

A handicapped accessible hunting/photo blind is available in the north portion of Pool 4. These blinds are required and available at the area office free of charge. Trapping is not permitted at any time in the refuge area nor during waterfowl seasons.

Because Cheyenne Bottoms is such a diverse, large and unique marsh, birdwatching is one of the more popular activities on the area. The spring and fall migration periods offer the best opportunity to view large numbers of different species in this one location. In spring, waterfowl and sandhill cranes can begin arriving as early as February. Wading birds, such as herons and egrets, begin arriving in March and April. Most shorebirds arrive in late April and early May. By late May, the birds that are still present on the area will tend to remain and nest.

The southward migration in fall can be a rewarding and challenging experience for the birdwatcher. Most of the birds moving through the area during this time of year have replaced their breeding plumage with a set of feathers that lack much of the color they had just a few months earlier. This can make identification difficult, especially when looking at shorebirds.

The fall shorebird migration can begin as early as July and extend well into September and October. Because of this, the bird numbers are not as impressive as the spring movement since the birds do not achieve as great a number at any one time. The peak period for duck viewing in the fall occurs early to mid-October. Most wading birds remain on the area until the marsh freezes. This is especially true for the great blue heron. Whooping cranes are most apt to stop at Cheyenne Bottoms in late October into early November. Bald eagles winter on the area or are present from as early as November to as late as March. A checklist of birds found on the area and the seasons they are present is available at the area office and the information signs at the main entrances.

OTHER ACTIVITIES
Fishing at Cheyenne Bottoms is limited mainly to carp and bullheads. Occasionally channel cat, crappie and largemouth bass are found if several years of water is maintained.

The primary management goal of Cheyenne Bottoms is to provide a diverse marsh habitat for waterfowl and shorebirds during the migrational periods. This includes providing food, water and resting places. A secondary goal is to increase the production of waterfowl and shorebirds that nest on the area. Approximately 13,000 acres of the wildlife area are open to hunting. This brochure is not intended to be a complete listing of area regulations. Some restrictions vary from year to year. If you have further questions contact Wildlife and Parks personnel.

Be sure you are at a foot crossing before leaving dikes. Barrow ditches along the dikes are deep. In addition, caution should be used when crossing all open water. Water depths can exceed 4 feet especially around renovated islands. This is particularly true in Pool 4 where extensive level ditches have been dug.

Rattle snakes are common during warm months, so caution should be used.

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Littering is prohibited. Take all trash with you. Boats, decoys, ammunition, binoculars and other supplies are not available at the area office.

The Mitigation Marsh, located in the southeast portion of the Wildlife Area, is closed to youth hunting area. It is open to hunters less than 16 years old hunters accompanied by no more than two adults.

Non-toxic shot is required for all shotgun hunting. The possession of lead shot in the field is prohibited.

No shooting is allowed on or from the dikes.

No holes or pits may be dug for any purpose. Portable blinds and temporary blinds made of native vegetation may be used but must be removed within 10 days after the close of the hunting season or after the last day of use.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS
Be sure you are at a foot crossing before leaving dikes. Barrow ditches along the dikes are deep. In addition, caution should be used when crossing all open water. Water depths can exceed 4 feet especially around renovated islands. This is particularly true in Pool 4 where extensive level ditches have been dug.

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