

Sedan Bottoms Wildlife Management Area

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The **Sedan Bottoms Wildlife Management Area** is along the Chariton River in southern Appanoose County. Some of this land has been in private wetlands for years but the area received a big boost in 1997 when the Mellon Foundation donated \$1 million to the Conservation Fund, which had worked with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). A total of 2,600 acres was purchased where the historic town of Sedan was located. Sedan was a company town where pickle cucumbers were raised and the railroad was located. Another 1,800 acres has been added to the site since the original purchase. An abandoned railroad right-of-way provides an excellent foot path and a historic Morman trail crossing is found on the southeastern side of the area.

Birds of the Sedan area are found on both public and private lands. You may wish to begin your tour of the area by leaving the town of Exline at the extreme western side of Appanoose County and driving east on 570th Street (County Road J51). Northern Mockingbird has been found in upland pasture land in this area in most years. One of the most reliable places has been at the 570th Street (J51) and 250th Avenue intersection and one-half mile on either road (Figure 1, Area 1). Traveling further east on 570th Street, Henslow's

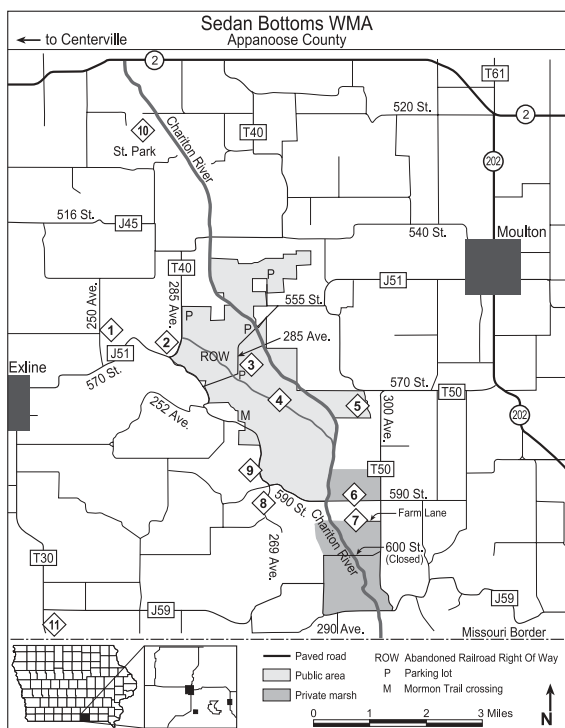


Figure 1. Sedan Bottoms Wildlife Management Area and surrounding birding areas: (1) Northern Mockingbird area, (2) Henslow's Sparrow habitat, (3) cement pad, (4) railroad right-of-way, (5) Buckshot Lake, (6) shallow marsh, (7) Prothonotary Warbler area, (8 and 9) deciduous areas, (10) Sharon Bluffs State Park, (11) Missouri-Iowa line.

Sparrow can be found at the intersection of 570th Street and 265th Avenue (T40) (2). Stop and listen for them.

Continue southeast on 570th Street for a short distance and turn left onto 285th Avenue where you will come to an abandoned railroad right-of-way and cement pad (3). This is a good shorebird area in most years because of the large amount of wetland available. You may scope from the pad or walk southeast 300 yards to get to the best shorebird area (4). Red-necked Phalarope and White-faced Ibis were seen in 2001 and they were the first records for Appanoose County. All regular herons and egrets are found during migration.

Continue north and northeast on 285th Avenue as it becomes 555th Street, then 290th Avenue, and, believe it or not, 570th Avenue again (follow the map)! On the right is Buckshot Lake (5) where Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows were abundant the past two falls. As many as 12 were found in a three-week period in September. Black-crowned Night-Heron was present all summer in 2003. Soras and shorebirds are plentiful. Lark Sparrow, Short-

eared Owl, and Northern Harrier can also be found. Yellow Rail has been found twice in this area.

Continue east until the road intersects with 300th Avenue and turn south. At the intersection with 590th Street, turn west. The bridge over the Chariton River is closed on this road. The shallow marsh north of 590th Street is private but it can be scoped from the road (6). This is usually the best of all the marshes. Cinnamon Teal and Common Moorhen are among the birds sighted here. Continue south on 300th Avenue for one-half mile. Scope from the top of the dike to Area 7. Prothonotary Warblers have nested in this area for the past seven years. Snowy Plover was seen in 2001. This is private land but permission to bird can be arranged.

Follow the map from 300th Avenue to 615th Street (Look south and begin your Missouri list!). Follow the roads numbered 615th Street to 290th Avenue to 605th Street to 269th Avenue. This route takes you north along the west side of the Chariton River until you are at Areas 8 and 9, which are good places for warblers and passerines. Pileated Woodpecker is common in these woods. Wooded habitat contains typical species such as Scarlet and Summer Tanager, Kentucky Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, and Willow Flycatcher.

If you are returning to Rathbun Lake, you may want to stop at **Sharon Bluffs State Park** (10) that bisects the Chariton River just south of Iowa Highway 2. This an oak-hickory forest with a Nature Center that is an excellent area during migration for warblers, vireos, flycatchers, and thrushes. Summer residents include Acadian Flycatcher; Cerulean, Kentucky, and Northern Parula Warblers; and Summer and Scarlet Tanagers.

Lake Rathbun and surrounding areas have great birding habitat, and wetlands are found along the western portions of the lake.

Golden Eagle has been found two of the last three winters south of Exline at the **Missouri-Iowa line** on T30 (11).