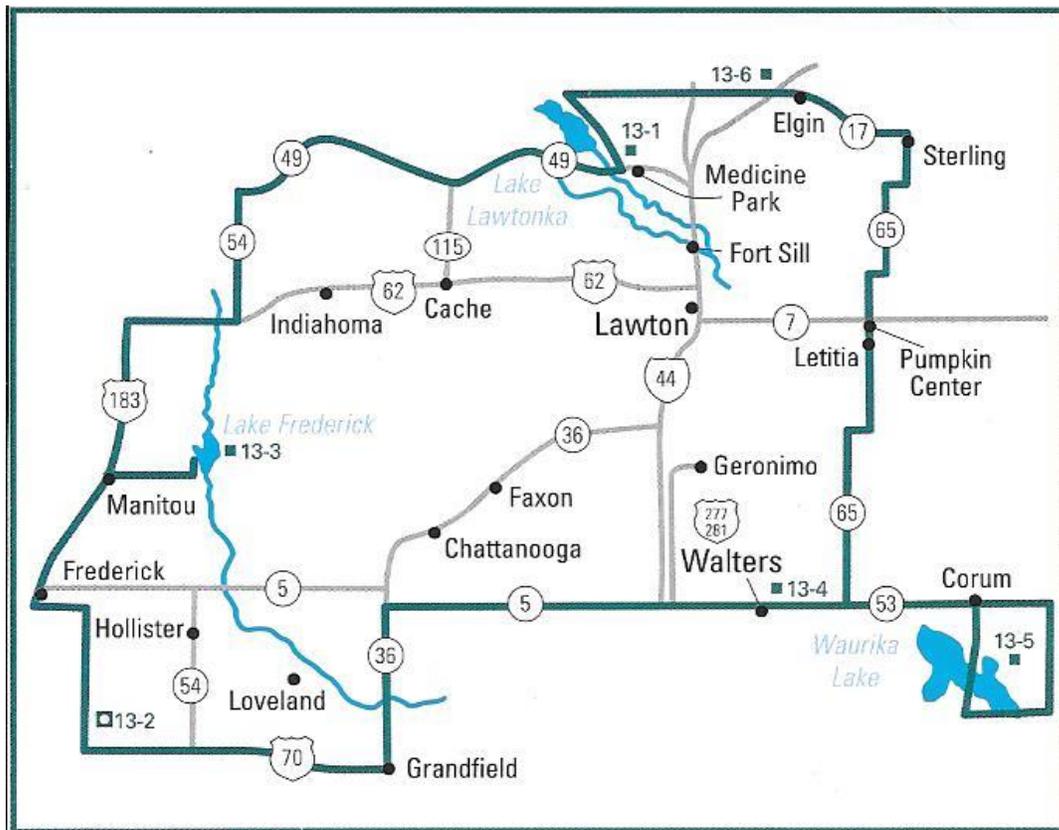


Loop 13– Hackberry Flat Loop



Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge (13-1): 580.429. 3222.
<http://wichitamountains.fws.gov>; *Directions: Take I-44 east of the city Lawton to US 62, then west to SH 115 and follow signs.*

Frederick Chamber of Commerce: 580.335.2126,
www.frederickchamber.org; *Directions: In Frederick, turn east onto Grand Ave. off of Hwy 183 (Main St.) park on south side of road.*

What to Expect: According to the few remaining “old-timers” in the town of Frederick, from sunrise to sunset, hundreds of thousands of ducks, geese, cranes, blackbirds and shorebirds congregated at Hackberry Flat before it was drained in the early 1900s. It was said that the birds’ squabbling, debating, conversing and arguing could be heard for miles. The Great Plains region in Oklahoma is located within the migratory route known as the Central Flyway and this area in southwest Oklahoma is a known haven for migrating waterfowl and shorebirds. Hackberry Flat is one of the critical links in a series of “refueling” habitats within the Central Flyway which includes Salt Plains and many of the playas in western Oklahoma (see the Playa Lakes and Salt Plains Loop descriptions). During late April and early May birders can find large numbers of **waterfowl** still at the Flat as well as over 26 species of **shorebirds**. **American avocets, black-necked stilts, snowy plovers** and several **grassland birds** nest at Hackberry. On a clear day, looking north from Hackberry, silhouettes of the Wichita Mountains can be seen shimmering on

the horizon. The remarkable Wichita Mountains rise abruptly from the surrounding plains and, with a history that began over 500 million years ago; these mountains are a geologic museum where features from several different spectacular epoch events are on display. The prairies enclosed and surrounded by these mountains are as close to pre-settlement conditions as can be seen anywhere in the Great Plains. Free-ranging **bison** and **elk** can be seen as well as **prairie dogs**, **burrowing owls**, **turkey vultures** and **golden eagles**. Between Hackberry Flat and the Wichita Mountains are vast areas of mesquite grassland. Look for **roadrunners**, **Texas horned lizards**, **scissor-tailed flycatchers**, **ladder-backed** and **golden-fronted woodpeckers**.

Lodging: Lawton: (11) hotels, www.lawtonftsillchamber.com. (click on “Member Directory”, scroll down to “Hotel/Motel/Lodging”) 580.355.3541; **Frederick:** (2) motels; (1) RV Park, www.frederickokchamber.org – 580.335.2126; **Medicine Park:** (10) motels, inns, and B&Bs, www.medicinpark.com, 580.529.2825. Camping/ RV: **Lake Frederick** www.frederickokchamber.org, 580.397.3291; **Waurika Lake**, <http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/visitors/projects.cfm?Id=M519570>, 580.963.2111; **Wichita Mountain National Wildlife Refuge** – Doris Campground (contact information above).

One-Day Outings: Fill up your gas tank and pack a picnic lunch or enjoy lunch at any of the local cafes and restaurants in many of the towns on this Loop.

Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge (13-1): Start your visit at this amazing Refuge by driving up Mount Scott. From the top of the mountain, enjoy the 360° view of the prairies much as it looked prior to settlement. Be sure to check out the Visitor’s Center to gain a better understanding of the Great Plains plant and animal community and the geologic history of the mountains. With 15 miles of designated trails, numerous fishing lakes and picnicking areas, a visit to this Refuge will be memorable.

Red River Reservoirs: Southwest Oklahoma is an arid region, however within this Loop, the traveler can enjoy several reservoirs and their associated wetlands all within the Red River drainage. A route to visit each one of these reservoirs is approximately 159 miles. **Lake Ellsworth (13-6)** has over 4200 surface acres with all of the amenities for boating, fishing and water recreation. Lake Lawtonka, located within the Wichita Mountains offers up all the water recreation desired including excellent fishing.

Frederick Lake (13-3), in addition to fishing, boating, and picnicking, provides a mountain bike trail around the lake. **Waurika Lake (13-5)** is a beautiful lake which provides all amenities including several nature trails.

Birding Route: Start with a full tank of gas and be aware that this route is approximately 152 miles long. At sunrise, the birder should start at **Hackberry Flat (13-2)** which is known as a birder’s paradise! By just driving the gravel roads and using your car as a blind you can observe during spring migration over 27 species of shorebirds. Plan on staying most of the morning at Hackberry Flat. Have lunch in Frederick and then drive to **Frederick Lake (13-3)** and look for grassland species. Next, drive through the **Wichita Mountains NWR (13-1)** and stop at the many pull-outs and the prairie dog town to look for birds. From the Wichita Mountains follow the Trail signs to **Sultan**

Park Nature Trail (13-4) in Walters to look for riparian bird species. Toward late afternoon, check out **Waurika Lake (13-5)** and enjoy the late afternoon and evening observations of many bird species. .