

## Loop 10 – Chief Black Kettle Loop

**What to Expect:** To be able to boast of over 30,000 acres of mixed-grass prairie as well as sheltering over 100,000 wintering geese suggests an amazingly diverse loop! The landscape of this loop includes mixed-grass prairies, wooded ravines, rolling red hills, shinnery oak mottes, creeks, wetlands and the Washita River. Within Black Kettle National Grassland there is a mixture of both short and tall grass species but it is dominated by the mid-grass species known as Little Bluestem. These grasses produce seeds that are consumed by rodents such as **kangaroo rats**, **pocket-mice** and **deer mice**. These rodents, in turn, are eaten by **bobcats**, **coyotes**, and numerous **birds of prey**. The grasses provide cover for nesting birds such as **Northern Bobwhite**, **Eastern Meadowlark** and **Grasshopper Sparrow**. The southern region of this loop boasts creeks, wetlands, and reservoirs, all associated with the Washita River. The Washita National Wildlife Refuge provides habitat for impressive numbers of wintering **geese**, **Bald Eagles**, **Sandhill Cranes** and over **250 other bird species**.

**Lodging:** [Cheyenne Lodging](#): [RV Parks](#). **Elk City:** [Elk City Lodging](#). **Sayre:** [Sayre Lodging](#), [RV Hookups at Sayre City Park](#), [Flying W Guest Ranch](#)

**One-Day Outings:** Fill up your gas tank and pack a picnic lunch (grocery stores in Cheyenne, Elk City, and Sayre) or enjoy lunch at any of the local cafes and restaurants in Cheyenne, Elk City, and Sayre.

**Black Kettle National Grasslands:** Breakfast in Cheyenne, then visit the [Washita Battlefield National Historic Site \(10-4\)](#). Visit the beautiful visitor center and walk the 1 ½ mile trail (has paved and unpaved sections) and experience the prairie as it looked over 100 years ago. From the visitor's center, turn right (west) onto State Hwy 47 and travel about 7 ½ miles and turn left at the entrance to the **Croton Creek Wildlife Viewing Area (10-4A)** and walk the 2 trail loops (total of ~ 1.6 miles). A short drive away is [Skipout Lake \(10-5\)](#) is a good place for a restroom break. Turn left (west) onto State Hwy 47 and drive 3 ¼ miles and turn right (north) onto N1750 Rd. and continue ½ mile and turn left into the entrance. Be sure to walk the 1 ¾ mile trail around the Lake. Return to State Hwy 47, turn right (west) and continue past the junction of State Hwy 30. Continue on State Hwy 30 as it turns north. Drive through the town of Reydon and continue 9 miles past the junction of State Hwy 47 and turn right (east) onto E0850 Rd. Continue east 3 miles and turn right (south) onto N1750 Rd. Continue 1 mile, then turn right (east) onto E0860 Rd. ½ mile and turn left (south) and follow signs to [Metcalf Museum \(10-6\)](#) and enjoy a picnic lunch at the visitor's center (Open March 1 – Nov. 30, Tues. – Sat.). Next stop, travel to [Spring Creek Lake \(10-7\)](#) by returning to E0860 Rd. and drive east just over 2 miles and turn left at the entrance. Return to E0860 Rd., turn left (east), and drive just over 1 mile to N1780 Rd. Turn left (north) and drive 1 mile to E0850 Rd. and turn right (east). Drive 6 miles to the intersection of State Hwy 47. Turn

right (south) and travel just over 1 ½ miles to the entrance to [Black Kettle Lake \(10-3\)](#) and enjoy a short trail that meanders through the prairie.

**Washita River:** Spend a day at the Washita River and the reservoir created by the damming of this prairie river. At the [Washita National Wildlife Refuge \(10-1\)](#) be sure to walk the 1/3 mile hard surface nature trail out to a boardwalk and observation deck. Also take advantage of a ½ mile hiking trail and observation tower at Owl Cove. At the Refuge headquarters be sure to check out the observation deck and, of course, the prairie dog town. At [Foss Lake State Park \(10-2\)](#), known for its excellent fishing and boating opportunities, there are numerous walking and hiking trails to view wildlife.

**Off the Beaten Trail:** For travelers with high clearance vehicles, view the extensive mixed-grass prairie, red shale hills and wooded ravines on the approx. 14 miles [Black Kettle Grassland Scenic Route \(10-8\)](#). To begin, travel 1 ¼ miles north of the intersection of State Hwy 47 and State Hwy 283 in Cheyenne and turn left (west) onto E0950Rd. Road will curve and go north and then curve west onto E0940 Rd. Travel ½ mile, turn north onto N1830 Rd and then turn west onto E0930 Rd. Follow E0930 around to N1810 Rd. and turn north. Follow this route as it meanders west and north, where it will eventually become N1790 Rd. Continue on until the road intersects with State Hwy 33.

**Birding Route #1:** The **Black Kettle National Grassland** one-day outing route is highly recommended.

**Birding Route #2:** It is recommended that you take the **Washita River** one-day outing route and then consider taking State Hwy 44 south from Foss Lake about 5 miles and then turn right onto the frontage road of I-40 west to [Clinton Lake \(10-9\)](#). The next stop should be at [Lake Elk City \(10-10\)](#) where you can take a short walk into wooded areas alongside the creek to look for birds. From Clinton Lake take I-40 west to the Exit for State Hwy 6 (about 11 miles). Turn south onto State Hwy 6 and go about 1 mile and turn right (west) onto West Lakeview Rd. Travel about ½ mile then turn left onto N2005 Rd. and in a little over ½ mile the lake entrance is on the right. A final stop should be made at [Sayre City Park \(10-11\)](#) which will afford the birder a refreshing break and a chance to look over the fish ponds for wintering waterfowl or wading birds in summer. To get to the city park take Exit 20 off of I-40 onto North 4<sup>th</sup> Street and the city park is over ½ mile on the left side of the road.