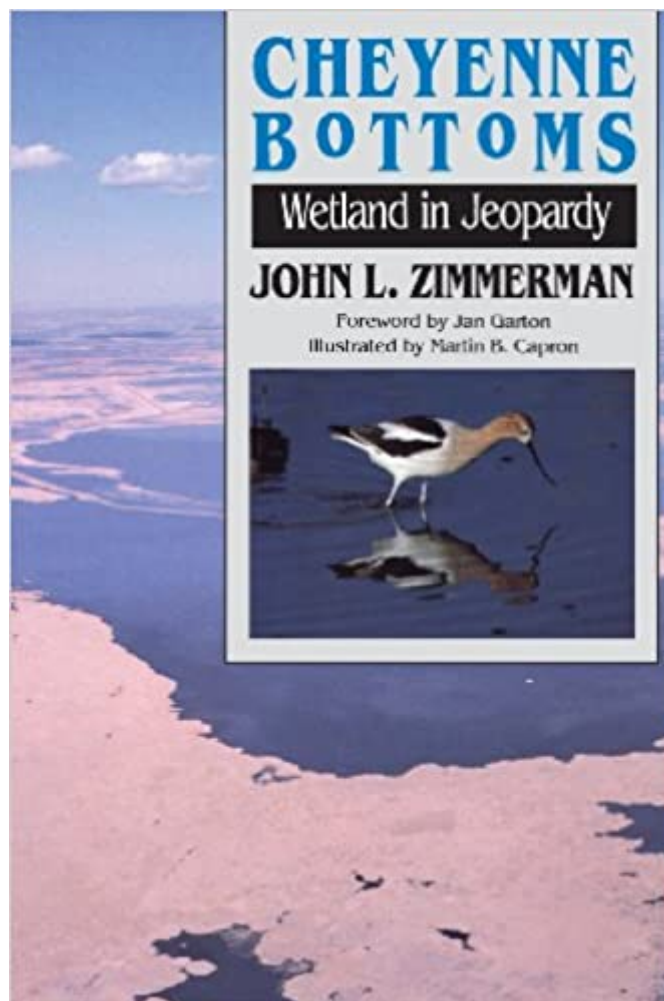


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Cheyenne Bottoms: Wetland In Jeopardy



Synopsis

Swamps are for draining--for converting into housing projects and farmland. Or at least that's been the theory ever since European settlers rolled across the continent a century ago. We've drained a lot of swamps since then. Nationwide, we've "reclaimed" _____% of our wetlands. In Kansas, where we've been particularly diligent, only 4% of our original wetlands remain. Now we realize we needed them. Wetlands, it turns out, are vital pieces of the unfathomable, intricate system that sustains life on earth. Among the wetlands that remain, a few are outstanding for their size, location, and role in feeding and sheltering vast numbers of birds and other wildlife. Cheyenne Bottoms, waystation for hundreds of thousands of migrating shorebirds, songbirds, and waterfowl, is one of the most important wetlands in North America. Located in central Kansas, on the main migration highway between wintering grounds in South America and breeding territory in Canada, the 41,000 acre marsh called Cheyenne Bottoms is a critical refueling stop for migrating birds. It hosts 90% of the populations of five species of shorebirds as well as most of the remaining population of the endangered Whooping Crane and several other threatened and endangered species. Because of its critical role, it has been designated by treaty as a wetland of international importance. In this book, ecologist/ornithologist John Zimmerman provides an introduction to the Bottoms that is at once personal, impassioned, and technically accurate. He describes the Bottoms from many vantage points. He talks of its history, from its formation 100,000 years ago to the fight to preserve it today. He describes the life there—•the rich variety of birds, mammals, and reptiles to whom Cheyenne Bottoms is home. He tells of the jeopardy in which the Bottoms finds itself—•buffeted by vagaries of weather, climate changes, irrigation and water rights, and politics. He also traces the grass roots effort to save the Bottoms that brought together conservation groups, garden clubs, grade school and high school students, and the state government. Finally, he talks about solutions, both long- and short-term.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Conservationists estimate that more than half of our country's original 120 million acres of wetlands have now been lost to development and agriculture. Zimmerman, a Kansas State professor of biology and ornithology, in bringing to life the Cheyenne Bottoms Natural Area in central Kansas describes for us what is lost to us when wetlands are destroyed. Millions of migratory shore birds use this high plains marshland every spring and fall; Zimmerman expands the ecological frame to include the insects, fish and mammals that make wetlands "the quiet furnace of life." This larger view encompasses past and potential threats to the ecosystem from water-use policies, pollution and the greenhouse effect. There are only a few moments when the author's wonder breaks through the solid science--"Close up, the marsh is a joy"--but the sheer ecological significance of these 20,000 acres of marsh gives his description weight and importance to naturalists and especially birders. Illustrations. Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"A good reference source for citizens wanting to help implement management plans for wetland preservation." [Audubon Naturalist News](#) "Cheyenne Bottoms is an engrossing ecological portrait of an endangered wetland that is the pearl in the prairie crown of Kansas." [Paul Johnsgard](#), author of *Birds of the Great Plains* and *Birds of the Rocky Mountains*, among many others "A welcome and enjoyable book that provides insight into the context, complexity, and significance of Cheyenne Bottoms as an internationally important wetland. Hopefully, it will inspire others to join in the crusade to save wetlands and ultimately the Earth." [Ed Pembleton](#), National Audubon Society

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