

Weekend Trip for Sandhill Crane Migration Viewing

When: Friday, March 18 to Sunday, March 20 (two nights; one sunrise blind; one sunset blind)

Hotel info:

- Microtel Inn
104 Talmadge
Kearney, NE
877.361.2512
- Price: \$50.96 plus tax per night for the rooms with one queen bed
- Call 877.361.2512 and use confirmation code 57282109
- Rooms will be held until March 4
- These rooms have not been prepaid so you will need to provide a credit card when calling
- Web site for hotel:
http://www.microtelinn.com/MicrotelInn/control/Booking/property_info?propertyId=31812
- I stayed here last year and it is a very lovely hotel for the money, clean, convenient, newer, seem to remember there was a free cookie plus refrigerators and microwaves in each room
- **4 rooms remain as of 2/8/11 (all non-smoking rooms with one queen bed)**

Sunrise blind reservation for Rowe Sanctuary

- 12 reservations were made for the blind at Rowe Sanctuary
- Address is 44450 Elm Island Road, Gibbon, NE
- This was prepaid by me at the rate of \$26.37 per person including tax (I had old information on pricing)
- We will need to arrive by 6 a.m. on Saturday, March 19; more details to follow closer to event
- Web site for Rowe Sanctuary: <http://rowesanctuary.org>

Sunset blind reservation for Nebraska Nature & Visitor Center (formerly Crane Meadows)

- 12 reservations were made for the blind at Nebraska Nature & Visitor Center
- Address is 9325 South Alda Road, Wood River, NE
- This was prepaid by me at the rate of \$25.12 per person including tax (I had old information on pricing)
- We will need to arrive in time for our 6 p.m. tour on Saturday, March 19
- Web site for Nebraska Nature & Visitor Center: www.nebraskanature.org For both of the blind reservations, I will cancel any non-reimbursed reservations the week prior to the trip to have the money refunded. Please send payment via check to my attention at: 2833 Sage Creek Road, Fort Collins, CO 80528 Or bring cash or check to the next FCDCC meeting

Total per person for both blinds: \$51.49

7 spots remain for each blind as of 2/8/11

What to see and do: See lots of sandhill cranes (500,000 estimated visit the area each year); thickest in Grand Island to Kearney stretch; other areas to think about: Overton to Elm Creek section of the Platte River; North Platte to Sutherland section of North Platte River

- Rowe Sanctuary
 - Blinds available: \$25 plus tax per person per visit; reservations required
 - Nice visitor center
 - Best for sunrise or sunset viewing
- Crane Meadows
 - Blinds available: \$25 per person plus tax per visit; reservations required
 - 455 foot pedestrian bridge crosses channel of Platte River; \$5 for tour
 - Blinds best for sunrise or sunset viewing; bridge sounds like it might be good all day but sunset best
- North Platte area/Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park, North Platte
 - Cranes are all over the fields here during the day as they feed
 - Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park has a blind in state recreation area; no fee
- North River Drive
 - Just drive along the river and watch in the fields
- Roadside turnouts
 - Two along Platte River Drive west of Doniphan
 - One west of Rowe Sanctuary office located southwest of I-80 exit 285 near Gibbon on Elm Island Road
- Public viewing decks
 - Alda Crane Viewing Site (two miles south of Crane Meadows Nature Center near Alda interchange on I-80 exit 305)
 - Richard Plautz Crane Viewing Site (1 mile south of I-80 Gibbon interchange at exit 285)
 - Need to arrive at least an hour before sunset for both to get a spot as these get crowded on weekends
- Hike/bike bridge that crosses Platte River at Fort Kearney State Recreation Area
 - Southeast of Kearney
 - State park permit required per car (either \$3 or \$15)
 - I-80, exit 279, 3 mi s on SR 10, 3 mi w on CR 50A.
 - Visitor center open 9-5
- West Platte River Drive
 - Just drive along the river and watch in the fields

Items to note:

- Drive from Fort Collins to Kearney is about 5 hours without stops (I-25 to Cheyenne then east on I-80)
- This is anticipated to be the prime/peak migration weekend
- There is a crane conference in Kearney this same weekend

- At next meeting we will determine driving arrangements

Helpful and informative web sites about crane viewing and photography

- www.nebraskaflyway.com
- www.rowesanctuary.org
- www.nebraskanature.org
- www.michaelforsberg.com
- www.joelsartore.com