



The Official Newsletter
of the
Kansas Ornithological Society

The Horned Lark

Box 36, Nekoma, Kansas 67559

March 1989

Vol. 16, No. 1

EDITOR'S NOTE

No, you haven't opened your neighbor's mail by mistake. The KOS Newsletter has a new name: The Horned Lark. It was decided at the Winter Board Meeting that our newsletter might be more appealing if it had a better title and since the Horned Lark is already our club's official emblem it was voted that the change be made immediately. The new heading was designed by David Seibel and incorporates the familiar drawing of a Horned Lark which was donated to KOS by the late Orville Rice a few years back.

Horned Larks were named after their least conspicuous fieldmark, a long standing tradition among ornithologists. The 'horns' are visible on certain individuals but certainly not under the circumstances that most Horned Larks are viewed by Kansas birders . . . from the front seat of a car at 60 MPH. Like many of our most abundant birds they are largely taken for granted despite the fact that they are hardy and interesting little creatures. Many times I have been feeding cattle in a blizzard thinking all living things were doomed only to hear a flock of larks giving their tinkling call notes overhead. It's as if they are saying: "Hey, isn't this weather great! Twenty below tonight? No problem!" My opinion of them rose dramatically one spring day when I found adults feeding young birds about two weeks after a heavy March snowfall. Can you imagine what it would be like to be incubating eggs under a blanket of snow for a few days? So while they are often an object of scorn from birders searching for longspurs on a Christmas Count and are given casual disregard by virtually everyone the rest of the year, Horned Larks deserve better and will henceforth receive it in these pages.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear K.O.S. members,

I want to take this opportunity to introduce myself to those of you who don't know me already, and to explain some of my ideas and goals as the new president of our society. I received my Ph.D. in ornithology last May from the University of Kansas and am now working for Allen Press, a printer of scientific journals, in Lawrence. My doctoral research focused on the systematic relationships of cuckoos (about 129 species worldwide), based on analyses of skeletal characters, but my greatest interest is and always has been studying

living birds in the wild--that is, birdwatching. To me, there's something incredibly restorative about seeing wild birds surviving by their own devices in an often harsh, sometimes breathtakingly beautiful, always fascinating world. The countless mysteries of why birds do what they do, of the details of their lives and ways, of the subtleties of their plumages and calls, together with their beauty and the constant potential for surprises and discoveries, keep birdwatching downright exciting for me, and I suspect for the membership of K.O.S. in general. My goal as president is to make our society a vehicle for sharing this excitement with as many people as possible--much to our mutual benefit.

I have written in the past (K.O.S. Newsletter, Vol. 14, No. 4, Sept. 1987) about my ideas for increasing the publicity and activity of K.O.S. At a stimulating and productive board meeting last January we began to activate some of those ideas and others which will, I believe, improve the society in several ways. I encourage you all to read the board meeting minutes elsewhere in this issue for a review of some of these new (or revived) plans. As always, the success of each will depend on the availability of enthusiastic volunteers. This presents the potentially cyclic dilemma that we need more activity and publicity to generate more members (the source of more volunteers), but we first need the increased membership to support the new activities. I'm afraid K.O.S. has been doing what most organizations do to postpone the effects of this problem: rather than increase the pool of volunteers, we simply call on the same good people over and over and over again. This works for a while but can eventually exhaust (in more than one sense) our most valuable resource--the enthusiasm of our most active members.

So how do we break the cycle and get more volunteers and more activity at the same time? For a long time I tried to think of incentives we could offer to entice new members, something we could afford on our limited budget but which would make joining us really worthwhile. I've finally realized that we, the members, are the best benefit we could ever offer to someone interested in learning more about birds. Already among us are experts in all sorts of things ornithological, such as field identification by sight and sound, trapping and banding techniques, advanced systematic and ecological research, conservation, management, education at all levels, photography, even wildlife art--and this barely scratches the surface. Our members have literally traversed the globe in pursuit of birds (some have even discovered new species!), and our collective knowledge--freely available in interesting, personable exchanges between members--is staggering. (And by "experts" I don't just mean professionals; every member of the society knows more about something than someone else does.) All we have to do is to let people know these tremendous resources (we) exist, that we are friendly, accessible, and affordable, that we want them to join us, and I believe our membership could easily double or triple within a single year. (That's just one or two new members invited by each current member. Simply consider the popularity of Peterson's and other field guides to recognize the potential.)

Now for some specific suggestions: (1) Tell friends and relatives who watch or feed birds (or would like to) about K.O.S. and that it's a great way to meet other birders and see more birds. Be sure to explain that it's not just for professionals or advanced birders, but for anyone interested in birds (our future meetings and field trips will be increasingly "novice-friendly"). (2) Once our new membership brochure is printed, get several and hand them out accompanied by a personal verbal invitation to join at other nature-oriented club meetings--Audubon, Sierra Club, etc.--which you attend. In the meantime, simply use the new rate cards available from Joyce Wolf in Lawrence. (3) If you lead bird-related programs or field trips, invite the participants to join K.O.S. Let yourself and your program be examples of the society's benefits. (If you'd like to formally associate your activities with K.O.S., I strongly encourage it; we might even be able to provide some resources--slides, printed matter, reference material, etc.--to help you. Let me know if you're interested.) (4) Give gift memberships to friends or relatives (especially

children) living in Kansas, perhaps in conjunction with a field guide, bird feeder, or even binoculars. (5) Recommend and use the K.O.S. as a resource for educational and research materials, guest speakers, field trip leaders, general advice and expertise (at least about birds), and birding tips, including the rare bird hotline. (6) Finally, contact me or other board members if you have ideas or suggestions for improving our society, or if you're interested in starting or helping with a special project or committee. We can always use new ideas, enthusiasm, and talent.

David E. Seibel, President
2907 W. 6th, #108
Lawrence, KS 66044
(913) 843-6611

KOS RARE-BIRD-ALERT HOTLINE

Can't decide where to bird next weekend? Call the KOS RBA for information about rarities and miscellaneous birding reports. Phone (316) 343-7061.

KOS WINTER BOARD MEETING January 28, 1989 Jane Hershberger home, Newton

Members present: David Seibel, Mick McHugh, Pete Jantzen, Rose Fritz, Mike Rader, Jane Hershberger, Dwight Platt.

Non-voting: John Zimmerman, Scott Seltman, Diane Seltman.

A delicious lunch was served by Jane Hershberger at her home overlooking Harvey Co. East Lake, after which David Seibel called the board meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

MINUTES: The minutes of the Fall 1988 Board Meeting were approved as published in the Newsletter.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Rose Fritz reported that from September 30 to date KOS had receipts of \$1,888.73 and disbursements of \$1,372.97. Current balance in all accounts is \$21,142.39. Dwight Platt moved that the Treasurer's report be accepted. Mike Rader seconded the motion. The motion passed.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT: Jane Hershberger reported that very few membership renewals had come in. The dues notices only were sent out in the last few weeks and some Board members had not yet received one. Some dues payments have been coming in at \$6. It was decided to accept \$6 renewals for the time being rather than ask for the remaining \$4.

BUSINESS MANAGER'S REPORT: David Seibel reported that Joyce Wolf could not attend. She said she had received complaints from some new members who had joined KOS in the Fall but had not received anything from the club. She had been under the impression that she should hold those memberships until January. The Bylaws state that a person joining in the last four months of the year received membership for those months and the succeeding year. John Zimmerman reported that he receives requests for missing issues and inquiries about new subscriptions and he forwards these to the business manager. David Seibel will clarify the division of responsibilities between the librarian and business manager in these matters.

BULLETIN EDITOR'S REPORT: John Zimmerman reported that the March issue was about ready with reports of a record high number of 36 Christmas Bird Counts. He has no manuscripts in hand for succeeding issues. John also reported that he will probably be resigning sometime in the next five years and the board should be thinking of a replacement.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S REPORT: Scott Seltman reported that there would be a March Newsletter which would have updates on county records. He was looking into the possibility of printing state maps with county records for a few species in each Newsletter.

SPRING 1989 MEETING: Diane Seltman reported that we could reserve Camp Aldrich near Cheyenne Bottoms for the Spring meeting. However renting the dining hall with prepared meals would be quite expensive so the board agreed that the following arrangements be made: reserve the two sleeping lodges at the camp; bring in materials for a continental breakfast both mornings; let everyone handle Saturday lunch on their own; arrange a dinner at a restaurant in Great Bend for Saturday evening; and have box lunches brought in for Sunday lunch and compilation at the camp. Diane will make the necessary arrangements.

SPRING 1990 MEETING: After some discussion of the location for the Spring 1990 meeting, Pete Janzen moved that it be held in Morton County. Mick McHugh seconded the motion. The motion passed.

FALL 1989 MEETING: The Fall 1989 meeting will be at Baker University in Baldwin. Mick McHugh reported that Roger Boyd has made preliminary plans for the meeting. Roger has considering Steve Hilty for banquet speaker but would like suggestions from the board. The board suggested Stan Senner as first choice, with Steve Hilty or Tom Cade as alternative choices.

FALL 1990 MEETING: Dwight Platt invited KOS to Newton for the Fall 1990 meeting. Mick McHugh made a motion to accept the invitation and Rose Fritz seconded the motion. The motion passed. A local chairman will be appointed at the next board meeting.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT: Nothing has been done since the last meeting. David Seibel suggested that there are lots of educational materials around the state available from various organizations like Kansas Wildlife and Parks. KOS might serve as a clearinghouse where people inquiring about materials on birds could find out what is available.

KANSAS WILDLIFE HERITAGE MONTH: David Seibel reported that the theme this year is Urban Wildlife. Wildlife Appreciation Day will be March 22 in the State Capitol. Mick McHugh moved that KOS allot up to \$15 for a display. Mike Rader seconded the motion. The motion passed. David Seibel will see what arrangements could be made, possibly in connection with Kansas Wildlife and Parks.

RECORDS COMMITTEE REPORT: Marvin Schilling could not attend the meeting but reported that the committee was processing some 150 new records received since last September. Lloyd Moore is a new member of the committee, filling the place of Mel Cooksey who moved to Texas.

BIRD FEEDER SURVEYS: David Seibel reported that the forms were sent out late but they were received before the dates of the survey, and as of Jan. 24, 120 had already been returned. This was ahead of last year at this time. Names and addresses of persons interested in KOS will be sent to Jane Hershberger.

TRUST FUND FOR STUDENT RESEARCH: David Seibel reported that the committee to manage this fund was in the process of being appointed.

NEW MEMBERSHIP BROCHURE: David Seibel reported that he would be sending copy for the new brochure to each board member within the next month and would like suggestions. A graphic designer in Wichita has volunteered her services. He hoped to have it printed by the end of April. David pointed out that the purposes of KOS as stated in the KOS Constitution include the encouragement of the conservation and appreciation of birds. He hoped KOS could put more emphasis on those objectives and suggested that there might be concurrent instructional and scientific sections at the Fall meeting. He said the text for the new brochure would emphasize those purposes.

PUBLICITY AND MEMBERSHIP: David Seibel reported that he would soon appoint a Publicity Committee which would make use of many avenues including newspaper notices of our meetings. If we can get a bigger membership we can get more active members. The new membership

brochure, when printed, would encourage members to contact others. Until then, Jane Hershberger agreed to draft a membership invitation letter with current dues rates to be sent to prospective members.

FIELD TRIPS: It was suggested that more field trips might bring in more members. This has been attempted before and was not very successful due to distance and time factors. But it was agreed that a field trip program be tried again. John Zimmerman suggested KOS be involved in his two-week trip around the state proposed for May 1990. A concern was raised that we are not friendly enough with visitors and new members at field trips and meetings so it was suggested that these events be more organized. Perhaps these could be more instructional for novices.

STUDENT PAPER AWARDS: David Seibel reported that we will use a modification of the form that Elmer Finck had distributed at the last meeting to judge student papers at the Fall meeting.

BIRDS OF KANSAS: David Seibel reported that he had been asked as President of KOS to review and plug the book Birds of Kansas when it comes out.

AFFILIATION WITH ICBP: KOS has been invited to become an associate member of the International Council on Bird Preservation U.S. Section by chairman Stan Senner. ICBP is asking for more support from bird organizations throughout the country in order to have an office in Washington D.C., to monitor bird conservation issues. Mick McHugh moved that the issue of affiliation with ICBP be brought to the membership at the Fall meeting and that a synopsis of information on ICBP be supplied to members in the Newsletter prior to the meeting. Pete Janzen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

LIBRARY EXCHANGES: David Seibel reported that Ruth Fauhl questions whether it is useful to continue library exchanges. She will bring information to a later meeting.

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS: Dwight Platt provided board members with copies of the KOS Constitution and revised Bylaws. He pointed out that procedures were not being followed in the appointment of editors, librarians and committee chairmen. It was decided that these procedures were reasonable and should be followed. David Seibel will be appointing chairs for the standing committees very soon. Mike Rader moved that the current editors of the Bulletin and Newsletter as well as Librarian be reappointed for one year terms following the Spring meeting. Rose Fritz seconded the motion. The motion passed. Dwight Platt pointed out that the board had never adopted lists of duties for the standing committees as required in the bylaws. David Seibel will write a draft for consideration at the next board meeting. Rose Fritz expressed concern about the bylaws requirement that checks be signed by two persons since neither the bank nor the auditors are checking the second signature. Rose was asked to bring a draft of procedures that would help the auditing committee do a better job to the next board meeting. For the present she will continue to have two signatures on each check.

T-SHIRTS: Rose Fritz said she had custody of the KOS T-shirts but would like someone else to be in charge of them. Pete Janzen volunteered to get them printed and sell them.

NAME OF THE NEWSLETTER: After some discussion, Rose Fritz moved that the KOS Newsletter be renamed The Horned Lark. Mick McHugh seconded the motion. The motion passed.

GUIDELINES FOR MEETINGS AND FIELD TRIPS: Dwight Platt said that the old KOS guidelines for organizers of meetings and field trips needed updating. He will bring updated drafts to the Spring meeting for consideration.

CHEYENNE BOTTOMS: Mick McHugh asked if KOS should contribute to the Cheyenne Bottoms development. A suggestion was made that we have a birdathon at the Spring meeting to raise money for Cheyenne Bottoms. Pete Janzen said he could probably get donations of lumber for the nature trail construction. This will be discussed further later.

