



The Official Newsletter  
of the  
Kansas Ornithological Society

## The Horned Lark

---

2458 Coolidge, Wichita, KS. 67204

March 1991

Vol. 18, No. 1

### RECYCLED PAPER

This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.

### KANSAS NESTING EAGLE SURVEY

The Prairie Raptor Project has this year contracted with the Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks to provide accurate information on any and all eagle nests (active or abandoned) located within the state. Please call (913) 225-6787 or write to the address below to provide information that is pertinent to this project. All information will be confidential and used only for protection of the birds and their habitat.

The Prairie Raptor Project  
12660 W. Armstrong Road  
Brookville, KS. 67425  
Maure Weigel, Director

### MEETINGS UPDATE

Information for the spring 1991 meeting, along with a registration form are included elsewhere in this newsletter. Please note that there is a change for the fall meeting from the customary October dates. The fall meeting will be held at St. Mary's College in Leavenworth on September 21-22. The change in dates was required because of the schedules for the facilities. Persons wishing to present papers at this meeting should especially make note of these dates.

### PREVIEW OF THE JUNE NEWSLETTER

Information for the June newsletter should be provided to the editor by June 1, 1991. Articles intended to be included in that issue include stories of the respective "big years" experienced in 1990 respectively by Galen Pittman and Steve Crawford. Also intended to be included are the usual seasonal bird reports.

## KBRC RULES

In this issue of the Horned Lark you will find a copy of the Kansas Bird Records Committee (KBRC) "new" Procedural Rules that were voted on and accepted by the KBRC and the KOS Board of Directors at the 1990 Fall Meeting. Also included is a full size report form for submitting unusual bird sightings. Feel free to copy this form and distribute it to any interested parties you encounter.

The KBRC needs the support and especially the participation of all active birders that observe rare or unusual birds in the state of Kansas. The need to "document" the occurrence of unusual bird species is very important to improving the quality of our knowledge of Kansas birds. Since one of the goals of the KBRC is to help establish and maintain a high standard of documentation for bird records, it is essential that the committee operate with a high degree of "professionalism" when records are evaluated for their validity. To be able to properly evaluate sightings, written documentation must be submitted by field observers to establish the facts and circumstances surrounding the record. In addition, a written record can be accurately reproduced and archived for the benefit of any present or future investigators who wish to independently evaluate the data. To rely on "hearsay" or strictly verbal reports of sightings is notoriously inaccurate and nearly impossible to verify and archive. Even if there was irrefutable physical evidence to support the occurrence of a particular species, there would still need to be documentation included that would establish the time and place and other circumstances of the sighting.

Some potential contributors might shy away from submitting detailed written documentation because of the feeling that their "word" should be all that is needed to "accept" a record as valid. The purpose of the KBRC is not to "judge" the observers submitting the records, but to evaluate the evidence that is presented to support the sighting. If the documentation submitted is poor the record is likely to be rejected! The observer is assumed to be presenting the true facts and thus the decision to accept or reject the record should be based on the scientific merits of the evidence provided. An observer might think they have seen a rare species, but perhaps didn't realize that the criteria they were using to identify that species wasn't sufficient to "rule out" a similar one or that they were just mistaken. The committee can't just rely on the good intentions of the observers. We must be as objective as possible and let the submitted facts speak for themselves.

Other potential contributors might shy away from submitting records because its just too much work or they don't have the time. The committee needs your help to expand and improve our "database" of Kansas birds. Ultimately, the committee needs your records to further advance our "working" knowledge of the distribution of Kansas birds and to make the KOS Checklist of the Birds of Kansas as up-to-date as possible. Finally, if your not sure if a sighting should be submitted. Contact any member of the committee and get their opinion.

Galen D. Pittman KBRC acting Secretary

Procedural Rules of the  
Kansas Ornithological Society's  
KANSAS BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

I. Name and Affiliation

- A. Name. The official name of this committee shall be the "Kansas Bird Records Committee" and is hereafter referred to as the "Committee."
- H. Affiliation. This is a committee of the society known as the "Kansas Ornithological Society." The Committee is established under the auspices of the Kansas Ornithological Society (hereafter, "KOS"), as approved by their Board of Directors.

II. Purposes

- A. Evaluate reports of rare or unusual bird sightings from the state of Kansas.
- B. Maintain those original bird records and all Committee votes and comments for the use of any future bird students or enthusiasts.
- C. Publish at least minimal data on all records receiving a decision.
- D. Incorporate all records of the Committee and revise and publish, as appropriate, the official KOS Checklist of Birds of Kansas.
- E. Provide a means by which sight records can gain acceptance as valuable scientific data.
- F. Choose the "ten best Kansas birds of the year" from among those submitted to and accepted by the Committee annually (the year being defined as from 1 June to 31 May), to be announced at the annual fall meeting of the KOS and subsequently published in The Horned Lark.
- G. Establish standards of observation and reporting for improving the quality and quantity of our knowledge of Kansas birds.

III. Membership

- A. Number and Definitions. The Committee shall consist of seven regular voting members, one of whom is the "Chairperson" and another the "Secretary," and two alternate members. The alternate members shall vote in place of regular members on records submitted by those members, and in place of any absent members who have not expressed their votes in writing to the Secretary prior to the meeting.

- B. Qualifications. Committee members should possess expertise in identification of Kansas birds, knowledge of Kansas bird distribution, and familiarity with birds and localities in Kansas. Committee members shall belong to the KOS.

C. Members.

- 1. Appointment and Term of Office. The President of KOS shall appoint the seven members and two alternates to terms of three years each. Members and alternates will be appointed to designated slots on the committee, i.e. position #1, position #2, alternate #1, etc. Appointments shall be staggered, three annually, in order to maintain continuity. The stagger is as follows: 1,2,3 / 4,5,alt.1 / 6,7,alt.2. Members and alternates of the Committee will be allowed to serve for a maximum of two consecutive terms (six years total). After a one-year or longer absence from the Committee each member shall become eligible to serve again, with the same two-term restriction. Alternates, however, can be appointed to serve as a member for a maximum of two consecutive terms directly after having served as an alternate for one or two terms. There shall be no limit on the number of separate six-year periods that any one person may serve on the Committee. New members take office at the close of the annual fall meeting of the KOS.
- 2. Duties. Vote on bird records and in all elections.

D. Chairperson

- 1. Election and Term of Office. Same criteria and provisions as for the Secretary.

2. Duties

- a. Call and preside at Committee meetings.
- b. Vote on bird records and in all elections.
- c. Appoint subcommittees as needed.
- d. Assure that the current Rules are properly applied.
- e. Should the Secretary be unable to serve, the Chairperson shall act as Secretary in all respects.

E. Secretary

- 1. Election and Term of Office. The Secretary must be a regular voting member of the Committee. The Secretary shall be elected for a term of three years by a vote of the members of the Committee. The candidate receiving the largest number of votes shall be elected; a tie shall be decided by an additional ballot listing





valid meeting of the Committee. The final decision must be made at the first valid meeting in which the record is discussed.

A record shall be accepted, if at a valid meeting of the Committee, it receives five or more "yes" votes to the question "Should this record be accepted?" Any record that receives fewer than five "yes" votes is rejected. Proxies shall not be allowed as votes.

11. **First State Records.** Some form of physical documentation shall be required for the acceptance of the first record of a species' occurrence in Kansas. Acceptable evidence could consist of photographs, sound recordings, specimens, verified band numbers, etc. First state record submissions that involve only a sight record (regardless of the number of observers) may be accepted as "hypothetical" and added to the KOS Checklist of Birds of Kansas as such. Species shall remain on the hypothetical list until the Committee receives physical evidence upgrading them to regular status.

F. **Publication.**

1. The decisions of the Committee shall be published annually, in the form of an Annual Report, in The Horned Lark.

2. The published data for accepted records shall include at least the name of the species, date(s) of observation, locality, reporting observer(s), and type of evidence supporting the record, e.g., specimen, photograph, sound recording, or sight only.

3. Rejected records shall also be published, with a minimum of the above data, except that the observer's name shall not be included. Also the reason for rejection shall be listed in accordance with the voting categories mentioned in section VI.F.2.

Kansas Bird Records Committee Official Report Form  
KBRC No. (Committee use only)

1. Species \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
(Common name) (Scientific name)

2. Sex/Age \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Number observed \_\_\_\_\_

4. Date(s) of sighting \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Duration of sighting \_\_\_\_\_

6. Location (including county) \_\_\_\_\_

7. Observer (your name): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Other observers: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Description of habitat/setting: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Distance from bird \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Optical equip. \_\_\_\_\_

12. Time of day \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Lighting conditions/sun angle \_\_\_\_\_

14. Previous experience with this or similar species: \_\_\_\_\_

15. Reference material consulted and how this influenced your identification: \_\_\_\_\_

16. How long after the sighting did you first write this description? \_\_\_\_\_

17. Was this put on the KOS Hotline (913-329-4699) and, if so, what was the result? \_\_\_\_\_

18. Vocalization heard (if any): \_\_\_\_\_  
19. **DESCRIPTION:** (Include only what was observed. Describe, in detail, all relevant field marks, behaviors, etc., especially those that are diagnostic, and would distinguish this from similar species.) Please include any photographs, recordings, and/or sketches that would aid in identification. USE OTHER SIDE.

Mail completed form to: Kansas Bird Records Committee Secretary, Galen L. Pittman, RR4, Box 260, Lawrence, Ks 66044













