

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT: Diane Seltman reported that she had 75 old members to whom she will have to send reminders because they have not renewed for this year.

HOT LINE: Scott Seltman reported that there were no problems.

DINGUS NATURAL AREA: Jim Mayhew reported that he had visited the Dingus Natural Area and it was a very beautiful and unique area. He asked Bob Weese to repaint the signs and authorized payment for this expense. He found evidence of trespassing to mark a trail for a horse ride and he lodged a complaint with the sheriff. He reported that we need to proceed with a boundary survey and fencing. Jim will talk with The Nature Conservancy to see if they will help with the expenses for this.

FALL MEETING: The Fall Meeting will be in Hays on October 2-3. Mike Rader will work with Chuck Ely on this meeting.

SPRING MEETING: The Spring Meeting next year will be at the Marais des Cygnes Wildlife Refuge and the Dingus Natural Area. It was decided to hold it on May 7 - 8.

KANSAS BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE: David Seibel reported that the Kansas Bird Records Committee had approved changes in the Procedural Rules of the committee at their meeting on April 10. These rule changes would:

- 1) provide that members of the committee be elected by the Kansas Bird Records Committee from nominations made by the KOS membership and with approval of the KOS Board. This procedure would replace appointment by the KOS President;
- 2) provide that new members and new officers would take office at the annual KOS Spring Field Trip; and
- 3) provide that the annual meeting of the Kansas Bird Records Committee would be held after the KOS Winter Board Meeting and before the annual KOS Spring Field Trip. The procedure would work as follows: A call for nominations to be sent to the Secretary of the Kansas Bird Records Committee would be published in the June Newsletter. Members would need to determine a nominee's qualifications and willingness to serve before submitting a nomination. At the Fall Meeting, Kansas Bird Records committee members would hold an election to select new members from the nominees. The Board would vote on approving newly elected members at the Winter board Meeting and the KBRC could elect officers at the annual meeting of the committee.

David Seibel moved that the changes in the Procedural Rules of the Kansas Bird Records Committee be approved by the Board. Scott Seltman seconded the motion. Some members of the Board felt that the procedure was too cumbersome. It was also suggested that nomination by KOS members would probably not work very well. It was suggested that the Committee could better select qualified nominees and then the Board or the membership could elect new members from these nominees. Mike Rader moved that the motion be tabled and the procedure be referred back to the committee for reconsideration. Diane Seltman seconded the motion. The motion passed.

STUDENT RESEARCH FUND COMMITTEE: Elmer Finck has asked to resign from the Student Research Fund Committee. Jim Mayhew asked for suggestions of names of persons who would be able to raise money for this fund.

KANSAS NONGAME ADVISORY COMMITTEE: We need to appoint a representative and an alternate to the Kansas Nongame Wildlife Advisory Committee. Jim Mayhew will contact Elmer Finck to find out when the next meeting is and will appoint representatives.

SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE: Southwestern College has asked to apply the payment they made for a life membership (which was denied by the KOS Board) to annual dues. The Board approved this by consensus.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP FUND: Dwight Platt suggested that since interest from the life membership fund was not supporting memberships and since we were planning to try to raise money for the Student Research Fund, it might be wise to retain funds paid by life members who die in the life membership fund rather than transferring them to the Student Research Fund. This will be considered at a future meeting.

David Seibel moved that the meeting adjourn. Mike Rader seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted, Dwight R. Platt, Corresponding Secretary

Birding Ethics *by Chuck Otte*

We birders frequently feel that we are pretty alert and aware environmentalists. But are we really? Over the past year some disconcerting events have occurred nationwide (all outside of Kansas to my knowledge) drawing attention to the saddening lack of ethical behavior among a few of our following.

- In Guadalupe Canyon, one of the prime birding areas in southeast Arizona/southwest New Mexico, the owners have had to ask for the help of several birding associations to reduce the impact of large groups of birders on fragile vegetation and ecosystems. Tour groups are no longer welcome at this location.
- A Dusky Thrush was present on private property in British Columbia for several months this winter. The non-birding homeowners were, at first, gracious hosts to the hundreds of birders that came to find the bird. But all too quickly things got out of hand with birders assuming that access to the bird was guaranteed and that permission need not be obtained. The owners finally had to post their property as off limits. The sad point is that the bird was clearly visible from public property with just a little patience. (We may have narrowly avoided a similar incident last fall with the Groove-billed Ani of Miami County.)
- In the Davis Mountains of west Texas property owners had a very reliable group of Montezuma Quail that visited them quite regularly. Once again, they were initially friendly and helpful to birders coming to see the quail. But as birding pressure grew with the increasing number of birders, these fine folk finally had to put their property off limits to birders. Imagine coming home to your yard and finding that people you didn't know had pitched their tent and set up camp in your front yard!

I don't bring up these events to point out what a malicious and thoughtless group birders are. On the contrary, 99.99% of all birders I've ever met or have been associated with are fine, thoughtful, conscientious people. BUT, problems can rapidly get out of hand, meaning each and every one of us must make sure things don't get out of hand in the first place!

Okay, so we don't camp out in the yard of someone that we don't know without asking permission. But how many times have we jumped a fence for just a few minutes to kick that warbler up out of that plum thicket? Surely none of us have ever played a tape perhaps just a little too long trying to get that blankety-blank bird to respond. And do we think about the potential impact of pursuing those life-list birds through fragile ecosystems right in the middle of breeding season?

If the ethic we should hold were to come down to one word then, that word would be RESPECT. If we all have some good old fashioned respect, then we won't have problems. Respect for private property, respect for public property, respect for the birds and respect for the environment.

We've all heard the phrase, "treat it like your own." My father, who knows me all too well, always used to tell me, "treat it better than your own." Perhaps that's not such a bad idea. Most of us probably take pretty good care of what we have, so if we treat other's property, privacy and wishes even better than our own, we will promote the positive image of bird watching that I know we all strive for.

The American Birding Association has an excellent code of ethics for birdwatchers which they have graciously allowed us to reproduce. Take the time to read it and then try to follow it. Consider it the "10 Commandments for Birders." Follow those ethics when you're birding. Follow them when you lead a group of birders. Follow them when you're with a group of birders. And if you are with birders who aren't following them, then leave and bird on your own. Don't be guilty merely by association.

We are all active and dedicated birders and share the love of birds. Let's never let a bad image of Kansas birders develop because of inappropriate actions or activities!

Know a Good Kid?

I'm sure we all too often have complained about "those darn kids today," or have at least heard someone say something like that. But when you stop and think about it, we all probably know three "good kids" for every "bad kid." KOS President Jim Mayhew and I are toying around with some sort of Youth Nature Award or Spotlight on Youth article or something similar that will help focus on youth that are doing good things for birds, birding and nature or the environment in general.

But before we can make any awards or spotlight a young enthusiast, we need to know what youth are doing good things. So, anytime you find out about or are involved with a youth that's doing something good for birds or nature, write me a note and give me the details. Thanks for your support of birding and the youth of Kansas!

