



The Official Newsletter
of the
Kansas Ornithological Society

The Horned Lark

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From the Keyboard

Just a few short weeks ago I sat with the 80 some KOS members in attendance at the Annual Meeting in Hays. It was quite an event, and as you can tell from other articles in this issue, a great time was had by all. Start making plans now to attend next year's annual meeting in Garden City, and start looking for information in the next issue regarding the spring meeting.

Well, here we are (as I write this) just a few short weeks before that hectic month of December! Once again this year we've got a full slate of Christmas/Mid-Winter Bird Counts. Take advantage of these fun occasions and get in on a little friendly competition! I set a goal to make it to a "new" Count every year. It's a great way to meet other birders and find new birding hot spots (which you can then write up and submit for the *Horned Lark!*).

I want to thank those of you who have written me lately with bits and pieces of information, advice and encouragement. Carolyn Schwab had a good summer of birding news (in spite of the rain) with Cedar

Waxwings and Tree Swallows nesting in her neighborhood! And a big thanks to Ray Schulz of Great Bend who shared with me his efforts to halt the Sandhill Crane hunting season. Letters like these make it all the easier to get another addition of this newsletter together and out to you the members! Your good work and hard work are noticed, appreciated and in the long run bring in dividends in many different ways.

Another year is about to whiz by at ever increasing speeds. I know that a lot of you, like Jaye (my birding spouse) and myself have had a good year with lots of good birds and a lot to be thankful for. I'm thankful for this opportunity to share these newsletters with all of you and all the encouragement you give back to me. So as we wrap up issue 4 and forge on to a new year, let me paraphrase that great author, "Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good Christmas Count!"

Happy Holidays everyone,

Chuck

In this issue...

Fall Meeting News	7	New Members	8	Roundup	10.
Abstracts of Papers		Dues are Due	8	Plus a few miscellaneous items!	
Attendance		Costa Rica Trip	8	(May Santa bring you all binoculars	
Checklist		T-Shirts	8	with many new lifers in them for 1994!	
Top 10 Species		Regular Features...		Merry HoHo--dawn)	
Young Naturalist Award	9	Special Species	7		
Christmas Bird Counts	9, 15	Birding Hotspot(!?)	9		

FALL MEETING A HUGE SUCCESS

The 46th Annual Meeting of the Kansas Ornithological Society was held October 1 - 3, 1993, at Fort Hays State University in Hays, Kansas. Most everyone in attendance felt that it was very successful. Included in this issue of the Horned Lark are numerous articles dealing with that meeting including: attendees, Sunday Field Trips bird list, abstracts of papers given, the listing of the 10 best birds of the past year, etc. etc.

If it looks like we had a good time, we did. If you

weren't in attendance and feel bad about missing the fun, simply mark down that next October we will be going out to Garden City (the Varied Thrush - Phainopepla - Lesser Goldfinch - Inca Dove capital of Kansas) for our 47th Annual Meeting. The Garden City hosts have promised that we will have a great meeting, and I'm already excited about it. Plan to attend and start watching future Horned Larks for details about our Spring Meeting as well!

ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS

Following are the abstracts of the papers presented at the Annual Meeting in Hays, October 2, 1993. There were a total of 15 papers presented and they were all great! If you find a paper that interests you and would like more information, I would encourage you to contact the author(s) of that paper directly and I am sure that they would be more than willing to provide you with more information. If you have problems tracking down a particular author get in touch with the Horned Lark editor and he will assist you in your search. The papers are listed in the order that they were presented and the presenter of the paper is the first author listed.

WEIGHT AND FEATHER GROWTH IN NESTLING EUROPEAN STARLINGS AND HOUSE SPARROWS

Authors: *Douglas White and Dale Kennedy*
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Rate of weight gain and maximum weight are regularly used as indices of nutritional status or quality of nestlings in comparative studies. We examined the potential of an alternative index based on ptilochronology, the study of the widths of daily growth bars on tail feathers. A potential advantage of ptilochronology in field studies is that growth rates could be determined from a single visit to the nest. For two nestlings each from 35 European Starling nests and 37 House Sparrow nests, we recorded nestling mass every other day and collected a single rectrix near the day of maximum nestling mass. We compared the growth rate constant and asymptotic mass with the mean width of daily growth bars. Correlation between results of the two methods was poor, raising doubts about the biological relevance of current indices of nestling quality.

DIET AND BODY CONDITION OF LESSER PRAIRIE-CHICKEN ON TEBUTHIURON-TREATED SHINNERY OAK RANGELANDS

Author: *Craig D. Olawsky, 1125 Union, #13, Emporia, KS 66801, 316/ 342-5063*

Lesser prairie-chicken (*Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*) in west Texas and eastern New Mexico are associated with sand shinnery oak (*Quercus havardii*) rangelands. Shinnery oak is treated with the herbicide tebuthiuron by many landowners to improve grass production for cattle. Comparisons of body condition were made for lesser prairie-chicken collected from untreated and tebuthiuron-treated shinnery oak rangelands in 1984 and 1985. In addition, crop contents were examined and guts measured to compare diet and gut morphology between prairie-chicken from treated and untreated sites. Lesser prairie-chicken collected from untreated sites had higher fat levels than birds from tebuthiuron-treated sites ($P < 0.05$). Summer diets differed between treatments. During 1984, total plant matter was greater ($P < 0.05$) in diets of birds from treated plots than in un-treated plots. In both years, foliage made up the bulk of plant matter consumed by prairie-chicken in treated plots, while shinnery oak acorns were the dominant food item in untreated plots. Consumption of shinnery oak acorns was greater ($P < 0.01$) in untreated pastures during both years. Acorns were a major food item during both years for birds in untreated sites, but were absent from diets of birds in treated sites. Small intestine and caeca lengths were longer in prairie-chicken collected from tebuthiuron-treated sites than from untreated sites ($P < 0.05$). Because lesser prairie-chicken appear to find a higher quality diet in untreated sites, maintaining areas of untreated sand shinnery oak is recommended.

for information on

Christmas Bird Counts

in your area and surrounding areas

See the CBC Calendar

on Pages 9 and 15

