



# The Horned Lark

Kansas Ornithological Society

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## President's message

I have to start off with a big thank you to Curtis Wolf, Greg Farley, and all the folks at the Kansas Wetlands Education Center who hosted us for the fall KOS meeting. Vice President Henry Armknecht worked closely with these folks and we had a great time.

I always enjoy the fall meeting and the presented paper sessions. The reports on research conducted by the students at many of our colleges and universities are always exciting. Before we leave the topic of fall meetings, mark Sept. 28-30, 2012, on your calendar. We will convene at Southwestern College in Winfield. Max always has a good meeting for us.

Another year is almost behind us. People mark time in many ways. Birders probably tend to mark the years by the great birds that were seen, the

lifers that were finally obtained or the rarities that were just missed. Many of us are getting ready to put 2011 to bed by closing out this year's list and getting ready to start the 2012 list. Before you close the book on 2011, we've got some Christmas Bird Counts to take care of. If you've never participated in a Christmas count, make it a point to start this year. Point your web browser to <http://ksbirds.org/kos/2011CBC.htm>, find a count close to you, and go have some fun. If you're an old hand at Christmas counts, go to a new one in a different part of the state. No matter where you go, they're always fun.

Organizations of all kinds, all across the country, are fighting the trend of declining membership. KOS has been facing this for several years, too.

*(continued next page)*

## From the field



A Sabine's Gull paid a visit to Manhattan on September 16. This species is the only member of its genus (*Xema*) and several of its behaviors are tern-like. It breeds on the tundra of North America and winters in the tropics, usually far at sea. © EJ Raynor, 2011.

## President's message, *cont.*

One reason is that people can find all the information on the Internet they used to have to go to meetings for. While this is correct, in many ways, there's one thing that the Internet still can't replace: people.

Birding is something you go outside and do. You can't be an effective birder just sitting at the computer. Birding is something best done with others. Sure, I do a lot of solo birding, but it's a lot more fun when there are others around to teach, to learn from and to interact with. Call up someone you know who has an interest in birds and invite them to go birding with you. Invite that young person down the street who has shown an interest in birds out for a Saturday

morning of birding. Then buy them year memberships in KOS. Offer to give them a ride to the spring meeting. Once they see how much fun birding is and how much fun being with other KOS members can be, they'll be birders and KOS members for life.

The holidays are a special time of year for all of us. Enjoy time with your friends and family. Create some special birding memories, and wherever you go, whatever you do, be safe so we can bird together in 2012.

*Chuck Otte*

President

## For you, Les

I lost a good friend, colleague and mentor in November.

Les Anderson, a journalism professor at Wichita State University, taught me to write, edit and design. Under his tutelage, I learned to cut

meaningless words such as very and really. I came to understand the distinction between over and more than, and why exclamation points should be used like a rare spice: sparingly. He was thrilled when the book Max Thompson and I co-edited, *The Birds of Sedgwick County and Cheney*



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Reservoir, placed in state and national communication contests. Les' influence is at work in every issue of the Horned Lark.

I took Les, his wife Nancy, and two other couples to Quivira last November to see

Whooping Cranes. I treasure that memory for many reasons, but mostly because it was one small way I could repay Les for all he did for me.

Thanks, Les, for everything. This issue of the Horned Lark is for you. —CKM

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# KOS fall meeting species compilation

KOS fall meeting attendees found the following 146 species in Barton and Stafford counties Sept. 30-Oct. 2, 2011.

Greater White-fronted Goose  
Canada Goose  
Wood Duck  
Gadwall  
American Wigeon  
Mallard  
Blue-winged Teal  
Northern Shoveler  
Northern Pintail  
Green-winged Teal  
Redhead  
Ruddy Duck  
Ring-necked Pheasant  
Greater Prairie-Chicken  
Wild Turkey  
Pied-billed Grebe  
Eared Grebe  
Double-crested  
Cormorant  
American White Pelican  
American Bittern  
Great Blue Heron  
Great Egret  
Cattle Egret  
Green Heron  
Black-crowned Night-Heron  
White-faced Ibis  
Turkey Vulture  
Osprey  
Northern Harrier  
Sharp-shinned Hawk  
Cooper's Hawk  
Swainson's Hawk  
Red-tailed Hawk  
Ferruginous Hawk  
American Kestrel  
Merlin  
Peregrine Falcon  
Prairie Falcon  
Virginia Rail  
Sora  
American Coot

Sandhill Crane  
Black-bellied Plover  
American Golden-Plover  
Snowy Plover  
Semipalmated Plover  
Killdeer  
American Avocet  
Spotted Sandpiper  
Solitary Sandpiper  
Greater Yellowlegs  
Willet  
Lesser Yellowlegs  
Marbled Godwit  
Sanderling  
Semipalmated Sandpiper  
Western Sandpiper  
Least Sandpiper  
Baird's Sandpiper  
Pectoral Sandpiper  
Dunlin  
Stilt Sandpiper  
Short-billed Dowitcher  
Long-billed Dowitcher  
Wilson's Snipe  
Wilson's Phalarope  
Red-necked Phalarope  
Laughing Gull  
Franklin's Gull  
Ring-billed Gull  
Herring Gull  
Rock Pigeon  
Eurasian Collared-Dove  
White-winged Dove  
Mourning Dove  
Barn Owl  
Eastern Screech-Owl  
Great Horned Owl  
Common Nighthawk  
Chimney Swift  
Belted Kingfisher  
Red-headed Woodpecker  
Red-bellied Woodpecker  
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker  
Downy Woodpecker  
Northern Flicker  
Eastern Phoebe  
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher  
Blue-headed Vireo  
Blue Jay

Black-billed Magpie  
American Crow  
Horned Lark  
Tree Swallow  
Northern Rough-winged Swallow  
Bank Swallow  
Cliff Swallow  
Barn Swallow  
Black-capped Chickadee  
Red-breasted Nuthatch  
White-breasted Nuthatch  
House Wren  
Sedge Wren  
Marsh Wren  
Ruby-crowned Kinglet  
Eastern Bluebird  
American Robin  
Gray Catbird  
Northern Mockingbird  
Brown Thrasher  
European Starling  
American Pipit  
Sprague's Pipit  
Orange-crowned Warbler  
Nashville Warbler  
Common Yellowthroat  
Yellow-rumped Warbler  
Wilson's Warbler  
Spotted Towhee  
Chipping Sparrow  
Clay-colored Sparrow  
Field Sparrow  
Vesper Sparrow  
Savannah Sparrow  
Grasshopper Sparrow  
Baird's Sparrow  
Henslow's Sparrow  
Song Sparrow  
Lincoln's Sparrow  
Swamp Sparrow  
White-throated Sparrow  
Harris's Sparrow  
White-crowned Sparrow  
Dark-eyed Junco  
Northern Cardinal  
Red-winged Blackbird  
Eastern Meadowlark  
Western Meadowlark

Yellow-headed Blackbird  
Brewer's Blackbird  
Common Grackle  
Great-tailed Grackle  
Brown-headed Cowbird  
House Finch  
American Goldfinch  
House Sparrow



# Kansas summer season roundup

June 1 – July 31

Mark Corder, compiler

The much-anticipated first state appearance of a Green Violetear occurred during the 2011 summer reporting period at a residence near Keats. If the report is accepted by the Kansas Bird Records Committee, this hummingbird will be added to the official Kansas checklist, thus raising the number of hummingbirds species to 11. In respect of the wishes of the homeowners, only a few birders were able to see this bird. It was present for several days beginning June 11. Many thanks to those who reported and documented this sighting so others could join vicariously in the event.

Another extremely rare hummingbird, a Broad-billed, was reported from Gray County in June. This sighting has been documented and submitted to the KBRC by Sara Shane.

Much of the central and western parts of the state were exceptionally hot and dry in June and July. Air temperatures in many locales exceeded 110 degrees on multiple, and at times, several consecutive days. As a possible consequence of these conditions, the “hot spot” for birds in Kansas during July was Horsethief Reservoir in Hodgeman County. An often-seen and photographed White Ibis was first reported at Horsethief on July 1. This large, white wader topped a list of eight new species for the county. They were seen primarily as a result of birders coming for the ibis. This is the

so-called “Patagonia Effect.”

An eastern shift in the breeding range of Cassin’s Sparrows was presumably caused by the extreme weather conditions. Unexpected displaying birds were

observed in six counties including Marion and Chautauqua. Tristan Weinbrenner located one of the Cassin’s Sparrows, as well as a Lark Bunting and a Baird’s Sparrow, in Marion County.

Other significant finds include Neotropic Cormorant in Neosho County, Tricolored Heron in Clay County, Red Knot at Cheyenne Bottoms, Green-tailed Towhee and Black-headed Grosbeak in Morton County, and a family of Curve-billed Thrashers in Stevens County.

Note that I have attempted to designate, by asterisk, records which are reported as new for the county in which the species was seen. I am relying strictly on the listserv reports for these designations. I would appreciate feedback in this regard. It is a little more work, but I am motivated to do this by the number of reports which include this information.

Good winter birding to all.



## Key:

•Underlined dates, locations or comments indicates unusual, late or early sightings.

•Underlined species indicates unusual species.

•**Underlined species in bold** indicates species with no records or fewer than 10 records for Kansas.

•<D> indicates documentation was submitted to the Kansas Bird Records Committee.

<b>Species</b>	<b>Number and location</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Observer(s)</b>
Snow Goose	1, “blue form,” rural area	Douglas	<u>6/14</u>	JW
Ross’s Goose	1, Baker Wetlands	Douglas	<u>6/1</u>	DL, RB, JB
Gadwall	2, Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	<u>6/3</u>	MR
	1 f., with <u>several chicks</u> , Quivira NWR	Stafford	<u>7/2</u>	PJ
Mottled Duck	2, Pool 2, Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	<u>6/5</u>	SSc

<u>Species</u>	<u>Number and location</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Observer(s)</u>
Cinnamon Teal	1 m., Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	6/3	MR
Northern Pintail	1 f., with <u>3 chicks</u> , Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	<u>7/2</u>	PJ
Canvasback	1 f., Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	6/3	MR
Redhead	1 m., Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	6/3	MR
	2, Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	<u>6/28</u>	MR
	1, Antelope Lake	Graham	<u>7/1</u>	MG
Ruddy Duck	1 f., on lagoon, Baxter Springs	Cherokee	<u>6/5</u>	PJ,GF
	1, Elkhart sewage lagoons	<u>Morton</u>	<u>6/12</u>	WC
	1 f., Sabetha Lake	Nemaha	<u>6/15</u>	RR
	3, Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	<u>6/28</u>	MR
<u>Neotropic Cormorant</u>	1, Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	6/3	MR
	2, Neosho Wildlife Area	Neosho*	6/5	PJ
Snowy Egret	2, riparian area	<u>Cheyenne*</u>	7/4	MG
Little Blue Heron	<u>16</u> , Baker Wetlands	Douglas	6/16	DL
<u>Tricolored Heron</u>	1, Milford Lake area	Clay*	7/21	ER
Black-crowned Night-Heron	2, Antelope Lake	<u>Graham*</u>	7/1	MG
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	1, Horsethief Reservoir	<u>Hodgeman*</u>	7/18	IS,DK,SS
<u>White Ibis</u> <D>	1 ad., Horsethief Reservoir	<u>Hodgeman*</u>	7/1-16	CV
Black Vulture	1, Cheyenne Bottoms	<u>Barton*</u>	7/27	MR(rep.)
Mississippi Kite	1, southwest of Tonganoxie	Leavenworth*	6/27	MG
Broad-winged Hawk	1 ad., Bronco Road	Chautauqua	6/5	PJ,GF
Peregrine Falcon	1, Altamota/Kalvesta Road	Finney	7/16	GF,EF
	1 behind Calhoun residence, Derby	Sedgwick	7/18	JC
	1, Horsethief Reservoir	<u>Hodgeman*</u>	7/18	IS
Black Rail	1, Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	6/13	MR
	1, Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	7/2	PJ
King Rail	1, Milford Lake area	<u>Clay*</u>	7/21	ER,DB
Upland Sandpiper	Several, Horsethief Reservoir	<u>Hodgeman*</u>	7/24	PJ,KG,JC
Semipalmated Plover	1, Horsethief Reservoir	<u>Hodgeman*</u>	7/18	SS,DK,SS
Piping Plover	<u>5</u> , DeWeese Park, Cheney Lake	Reno	7/30	KG
Black-necked Stilt	3, Hain State Fishing Lake	<u>Ford*</u>	7/25	MG,WTC,NA

<b>Species</b>	<b>Number and location</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Observer(s)</b>
Willet 	1, Cheyenne Bottoms 3, Quivira NWR 2, Dighton sewage lagoons 1, Horsethief Reservoir	Barton Stafford <u>Lane</u> * <u>Hodgeman</u> *	7/2 7/4 7/24 7/25	PJ ER PJ MG,WCT,NA
Long-billed Curlew	1, Quivira NWR 1, Horsethief Reservoir 1, Dighton sewage lagoons	Stafford Hodgeman Lane	7/10 7/24 7/24	DK,KK,SS PJ PJ
Marbled Godwit	1, Cheyenne Bottoms 6, Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton Barton	7/2 7/10	PJ ML,EL
<u>Red Knot</u>	1, Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	7/28	MR
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	9, north of Colwich 17, generally north of Colwich 1, Antioch sod farms 1, Unit G, Marais des Cygnes WA	Sedgwick Sedgwick Johnson Linn	7/30 7/30 7/31 7/31	PJ GF ML,EL MG,NA,CF
Short-billed Dowitcher	1, Horsethief Reservoir	<u>Hodgeman</u> *	7/24	PJ,KG,JC
American Woodcock	1, <u>Sand Hills State Park</u>	Reno	<u>6/4</u>	CM,m:obs.
<u>Laughing Gull</u>	1, Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	7/2	PJ
Herring Gull	1, Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	<u>7/16</u>	SS
Least Tern	2, Heritage Park 1, Pratt Fish Hatchery	<u>Johnson</u> <u>Pratt</u>	7/17 7/27	RW MR
Caspian Tern	1 ad., <u>breeding plumage</u> , Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	7/2	PJ
White-winged Dove	1, northwest Hays 1 "singing," Finck residence 1, Magette residence 1, Park City	Ellis Ellis Pottowatomie Sedgwick	6/10 6/11 6/14 7/14	TM,SG EF BM JN
Greater Roadrunner	1, rural area	<u>Hodgeman</u> *	6/25	SS(rep.)
Common Poorwill	1, rural area	Potowatomie	6/16	BM
<u>Green Violetear</u> <D>	1, residence, near Keats	Riley	6/11	LH(rep.)
<u>Broad-billed Hummingbird</u> <D>	1, residence	Gray*	6/8-12	SSh
<u>Black-chinned Hummingbird</u>	2, m. and f., Hill residence 1, ad. f., Seltman feeders	Rawlins Pawnee	<u>6/1</u> <u>6/3</u>	PJ(rep.) SS
Rufous Hummingbird	1 imm. m., Seltman residence	Pawnee	7/29	SS
White-eyed Vireo	1, Prairie Center, Olathe 1, Shawnee Mission Park	Johnson Johnson	<u>7/6</u> <u>7/13</u>	JW ML

<u>Species</u>	<u>Number and location</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Observer(s)</u>
Yellow-throated Vireo	1 singing, Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	6/13	MR
	1, Royer residence	Brown	7/26	RR
<u>Curve-billed Thrasher</u>	“Family,” Hugoton cemetery	Stevens	6/12	WCT
Cedar Waxwing	1, rural area	Republic	<u>7/4</u>	PW
	2, Baker Wetlands	Douglas	<u>7/15</u>	DL,RB
Ovenbird	1, Seltman shelterbelt	<u>Pawnee</u>	<u>6/2</u>	SS
Black-and-White Warbler	1 f., Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	6/13	MR
Prothonotary Warbler	2 ad., 3 juv., residential area	<u>Johnson</u>	6/26	MC
Hooded Warbler	1 ad., Oak Park	Sedgwick	<u>6/1</u>	PG
Northern Parula	1, Calhoun residence, Derby	Sedgwick	<u>7/10</u>	JC
Chestnut-sided Warbler	1, Naismith Park	Douglas	<u>6/2</u>	BA
Yellow-throated Warbler	2, northeast of Galena	Cherokee	6/5	PJ,GF
<u>Green-tailed Towhee</u>	1, Middle Spring	Morton	<u>6/12</u>	WCT
Cassin’s Sparrow	3 singing males, Quivira NWR	<u>Stafford</u>	6/1	BJ
	1, near Hays	Ellis	6/10	EF
	1 displaying male	Sedgwick	6/11	PJ
	1, singing on Bronco Road	<u>Chautauqua*</u>	6/11	MG,NA,CF
	2-4, Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	6/13	MR,RP
	1, 71st Street S. and Grove, Derby	Sedgwick	6/15	KG(rep.)
	1, Lincolnville area	Marion	6/23	BB
	1, Lehigh area	Marion	6/25	TW
Chipping Sparrow	Unusually high numbers	Cowley/Sumner	6/4	MT,CO
	5, south Lane County	<u>Lane</u>	<u>7/24</u>	PJ,KG,JC
	1, Friesen workplace, Newton	<u>Harvey</u>	<u>7/27</u>	GF
	6, Parks’ residence	<u>Riley</u>	<u>7/28</u>	EP
	1 ad., 2 juv., Atchison	Atchison	<u>7/29</u>	GY
	Family, High Park	Sedgwick	<u>7/29</u>	JC
				
Lark Bunting	1, rural area	<u>Marion</u>	7/8	TW
Baird’s Sparrow <D>	1, rural area	<u>Marion*</u>	7/3	TW
Henslow’s Sparrow	1, Lehigh area	Marion	6/25	TW
	7, rural areas	Marion	7/3	TW
<u>Black-headed Grosbeak</u>	1, Point of Rocks	Morton	6/12	WCT
Lazuli Bunting	1, near Pratt	Pratt	<u>6/15</u>	MR
Painted Bunting	2 singing males, Quivira NWR	Stafford	6/1	BJ

<u>Species</u>	<u>Number and location</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Observer(s)</u>
Painted Bunting	1 m., Wilson State Park Office	Russell	6/28	MR
Dickcissel	500+, multiple areas	Linn/Miami	6/5	MG,ML
<u>Lesser Goldfinch</u>	1, Comeau residence	Sedgwick	6/14	JC(rep.)



**Abbreviations:** adult (ad.), potential first county record (\*), female (f.), juvenile (juv.), immature (imm.), male (m.), multiple observers (m:obs.), Quivira National Wildlife Refuge (Quivira NWR), reporting (rep.), Wildlife Area (WA).

**Observers:** Nic Allen, Bob Antonio, Doris Burnett, Jan Boyd, Roger Boyd, Ken Brunson, Bill Busby, Jeff Calhoun, Will Chatfield-Taylor, Mike Cooper, Chris Fagyal, Elmer Finck, Eric Friesen, Gregg Friesen, Matt Gearheart, Paul Griffin, Kevin

Groeneweg, Sam Guy, Leon Hicks, Pete Janzen, Barry Jones, Don Kazmaier, Kathy Kazmaier, Eileen Land, Mark Land, Dan Larson, Brandon Magette, Terry Mannell, Cheryl Miller, John Northrup, Chuck Otte, Eve Parks, Robert Penner, Mike Rader, Edward J. Raynor, Rosella Royer, Ira Sanders, Scott Schmidt (Ssc), Scott Seltman, Sara Shane (SSh), Max Thompson, Carl Vierthaler, Phil Wedge, Tristan Weinbrenner, Jeff Witters, Rodney Wright, Gene Young.

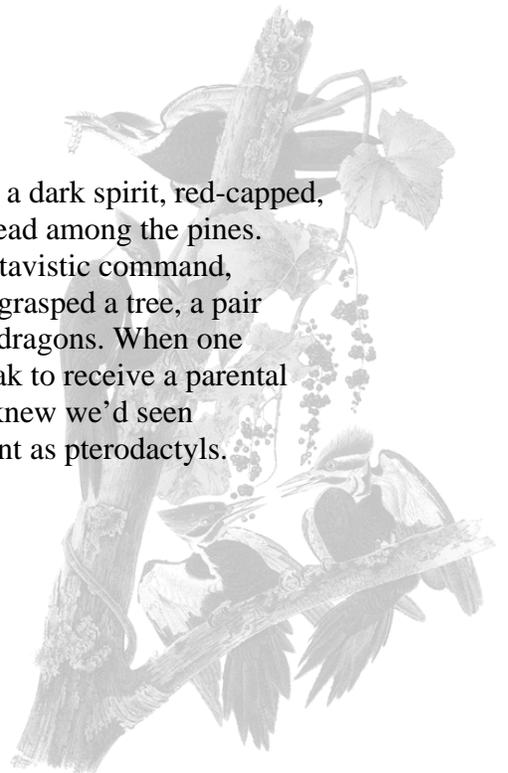
# Pileated Woodpeckers

By Elizabeth Schultz

The bird surprised us every summer.  
Walking the back woods, we'd learned  
to listen for the secluded oven bird,  
to differentiate phoebe from pee-wee.  
Our ears, tuned to tremolo and chirrup,  
we followed the path further in.  
And then we heard the drumming.

It welcomed us back to wildness.  
While ivory-billed ghosts haunt southern  
swamps and ornithologists' dreams,  
their pileated cousins go on proclaiming  
ownership of northern forests.  
Once more, we stepped cautiously  
through draperies of leaves into shadows.

A single bird, a dark spirit, red-capped,  
floated overhead among the pines.  
It barked an atavistic command,  
and now two grasped a tree, a pair  
of three-toed dragons. When one  
opened its beak to receive a parental  
offering, we knew we'd seen  
a ritual, ancient as pterodactyls.



# Fall KOS meeting paper abstracts

**The Kansas County Checklist Project: 10 years after.** *Chuck Otte\**, Junction City, Kansas. The Kansas County Checklist Project started in the fall of 2001 in an effort to better quantify species checklists for every county in Kansas. Historically, some counties had been heavily birded, resulting in large checklists, while other counties were rarely birded, resulting in minimal checklists. Often, the difference between neighboring counties' checklists was astounding. When the project started there was a total of 23,519 "county species." At the June 2011 update, the county species total was 27,068. The range of species per county at the project's start was from a low of 114 to a high of 364. The range now is 180 to 382. Trends, totals, anecdotes and future direction of the project will be discussed.

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**Population biology of a terrestrial shorebird: the Upland Sandpiper.** *Brett K. Sandercock*, Division of Biology, Kansas State University. Research and conservation efforts for migratory shorebirds primarily address species which use coastal estuaries and freshwater wetlands. Here, I report on a long-term study of the behavioral ecology and population biology of the Upland Sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*), an unusual species of shorebird which uses grassland habitats throughout its migratory

range. Our research effort has included a 9-year breeding study near Manhattan, Kan., and a 3-year non-breeding study near Tacuarembó, Uruguay. Upland Sandpipers are non-territorial and have large overlapping home ranges at breeding and non-breeding sites in the grasslands of North and South America. During breeding, sandpipers require heterogeneous habitats, foraging in open areas, but nesting in unburned or ungrazed sites with vegetative cover. Seasonal components of demography are necessary for understanding population dynamics and planning effective conservation measures.



Productivity of sandpipers is relatively low in native grasslands because clutch size is four eggs, nesting success is low, and re-nesting after failure is infrequent. Using captures and re-sightings of color-marked birds, we calculated annual survival to be 0.7-0.8 per year. Unexpectedly, seasonal survival rates of radio-marked birds were close to one during both the breeding period in Kansas and the non-breeding period in Uruguay. Our study provides some of the first evidence for a migratory bird that most population losses occur during their annual movements. Our integrated approach to studying the movements, behavior

and demography has provided new insights into the ecology of Upland Sandpipers, which will aid conservation of this species and other migratory birds.

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**Understanding the birds and the trees: Where does quality habitat come from?** *Scott W. Schmidt\** and *Elmer J. Finck*, Department of Biological Sciences, Fort Hays State University. Control of woody invasive species, primarily Eastern Redcedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), is a priority land use issue among landowners and managers. While maintaining open habitat benefits obligate grassland bird species, there is a need to understand how brush management affects declining grassland birds that require woody vegetation. To assess bird-habitat associations, I used distance sampling across three habitat strata to measure bird abundance and distribution patterns in response to canopy cover. Data were collected in mixed prairie and sand prairie habitats of Barton County, Kan., in 2011. Preliminary results show that 11 of 13 grassland bird species of management concern occurred more frequently in grasslands with red cedar cover than in open grasslands. Also, some grassland species preferred red cedar infested grasslands, where canopy cover exceeds 5 percent. Thus, the habitat benefits for grassland birds accrued through brush removal

might not outweigh the cost of losing grassland birds associated with tree and shrub cover. Considering the diverse habitat requirements of grassland birds, landowners and managers should assess how conservation practices for one species might affect others.

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**Regional climate conditions and variation in migration timing in northern California.**

*Gina G. Barton\* and Brett K. Sandercock, Division of Biology, Kansas State University.*

Fluctuations in regional climate conditions have impacted the timing of breeding, productivity and abundances of plants and animals. Regional effects of the El Niño Southern Oscillation (MEI) and North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO) have been associated with changes in the timing of migration in Europe and eastern North America, but rarely have been examined on the Pacific coast. We assessed variation in the timing of arrival associated with three climate indices (MEI, NAO, and the Pacific/North American (PNA)) during spring and fall migration for five species of migratory songbirds in northern California over a 22-year period. Timing of spring and fall migration was most often associated with the MEI and PNA. Pacific-slope Flycatcher and Orange-crowned Warbler were most affected by the PNA in spring and fall, respectively. The PNA and MEI may be important drivers for phenological events such as migration for western songbirds. Future analyses will assess

whether long-term variation in stopover duration is also associated with variation in climate indices.

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**Apparent population decline of Black-capped Chickadee in Kansas beginning in the 1980s.**

*Jeffrey J. Carter\* and Greg H. Farley, Department of Biological Sciences, Fort Hays State University.* Black-capped Chickadees (*Poecile atricapilla*) are non-migratory passerines, a group where often less research is conducted on population dynamics in contrast to Nearctic-Neotropical migrants. Population trends of Black-capped Chickadee were analyzed using several data sets including the Breeding Bird Survey, the Christmas Bird Count, and Fort Hays State University mist-netting records. These data indicate Black-capped Chickadee have declined substantially in Kansas beginning in the late 1980s. This was in comparison to trends from national and various biogeographic scales where Black-capped Chickadee populations have been consistently increasing. Possible reasons for the decline observed in Kansas were assessed from similar studies of different species. Hypotheses for the decline include weather, sympatric competition for both food and nesting sites, and possibly disease.



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**Ecosystem management at Quivira National Wildlife Refuge.** *Barry Jones, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.* Quivira

National Wildlife Refuge is part of a sand prairie ecosystem that has been highly modified by surrounding land uses. As such, intensive management is required to sustain unique natural resource values, including sand prairie and salt marsh communities that are state imperiled/vulnerable and globally imperiled, respectively. Management is based on an ecosystem approach that considers functions and processes as well as native wildlife communities. We will discuss trade-offs associated with this ecosystem approach to management with respect to imperiled systems and wildlife.

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**Patterns of territory distribution and pairing success in Henslow's Sparrows (*Ammodramus henslowii*) breeding in restored grasslands.**

*Levi Jaster\* and William E. Jensen, Department of Biological Sciences, Emporia State University; Andrew Forbes, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.*

Restorations of grasslands in Missouri are being done using both native warm season grass and forbs and cool season grasses, mainly brome (*Bromus inermis*) and legumes. Henslow's Sparrows and other grassland species use these restorations but to an unknown extent. In 2010 and 2011, we color-banded and monitored 42 and 59 Henslow's Sparrows, in both warm- and cool- season grass fields. In 2010, 16 males maintained territories while 37 males maintained territories in 2011. Of those 53 territories over two years, 15 were in warm-season grass and 38 were

in cool-season grass fields. Based on the distributions of male territories, Henslow's Sparrows showed no significant preference toward use of warm or cool season grassland habitats during either 2010 or 2011. Pairing success was not significantly different between the habitat types. Territory sizes also were not significantly different between habitats, where territories in cool-season grass fields occupied a mean  $\pm$  SE of 0.343 ha  $\pm$  0.045 and in warm-season grass fields mean territory sizes were 0.388 ha  $\pm$  0.071. Cool-season and warm-season grass fields may similarly satisfy Henslow's Sparrow habitat requirements, but patterns in nesting success must also be considered.

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**Greater Prairie-Chicken nest survival in relation to habitat characteristics and anthropogenic disturbance in northcentral Kansas.** *L. M. Hunt\**, *L. B. McNew*, *A. J. Gregory*, *S. M. Wisely* and *B. K. Sandercock*, *Division of Biology, Kansas State University.* Greater Prairie-Chickens have suffered significant range contractions due to extensive loss and fragmentation of prairie habitats in North America. Much of the remaining habitat for the species occurs in areas with high concentrations of agriculture and other human development. Alteration of breeding habitat may have significant effects on key demographic rates of prairie-chicken populations such as nest survival. We conducted a study to evaluate the impacts of vegetation structure, habitat fragmentation

and environmental variables on nest survival of prairie-chickens. During 2007-2011, we monitored 260 nests of 171 female Greater Prairie-Chickens within a 1,500 km<sup>2</sup> study area in the Smoky Hills ecoregion of northcentral Kansas. Grassland habitats at the study area were fragmented by a dense road network (1.4 km of road per km<sup>2</sup>) and variable land-use regimes (38 percent agriculture). We measured local nest-site vegetation structure, spatial attributes of the larger nesting area (patch size, shape, and landcover composition), and distance from nests to anthropogenic features. We then used an information theoretic approach to evaluate and compare competing models of nest survival as related to habitat components at multiple temporal and spatial scales. We present our findings on nest survival of Greater Prairie-Chickens in relation to habitat characteristics and anthropogenic disturbance in a heavily fragmented grassland ecosystem.



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**Responses of grassland songbirds to a patch-burn grazing management in the Flint Hills.** *Amy N. Erickson\**, *Brett K. Sandercock* and *Lance B. McNew*, *Division of Biology, Kansas State University.* The tallgrass prairie ecosystem of the central Great Plains is one of the most threatened ecological communities in North America, and today covers less than three percent of its historical extent. The loss of native grasslands and the intensification

of agricultural practices on remaining grasslands are thought to be leading factors in the decline of many grassland vertebrates. Grassland songbirds evolved under a shifting mosaic of habitat types caused by the interaction of fire and bison grazing, but much of the Flint Hills is now managed to create a homogenized landscape that is evenly grazed by cattle. A patch-burn grazing management aims to restore heterogeneity on rangelands without impacting cattle productivity and landowner revenue. The purpose of this study was to determine if grassland songbird abundances, species richness, nest success, and nesting densities differed between patch-burned sites and traditionally managed sites. Birds were surveyed along 104 300-meter transects. Total number of birds observed was higher at patch-burn sites, and the number of species observed at patch-burn sites was 1.6–2.4 times higher than on traditionally managed sites. A similar number of nests were found on each management type, with apparent success for nests on patch-burn sites (36.8 percent) higher than traditionally managed sites (21.7 percent). Thus, a patch-burn management may be an effective conservation strategy for grassland songbirds by creating structural heterogeneity. Information on cattle productivity will be obtained from landowners to assess differences between the two management types. If cattle productivity is similar between traditional management and patch-burning, landowners may be more likely to switch to a patch-burn management system.

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**Song dialects in alpine-breeding songbirds of the Rocky Mountains.** *Anthony C. Dalisio\** and *William E. Jensen*, *Department of Biological Sciences, Emporia State University*; *Timothy H. Parker*, *Department of Biology, Whitman College*. We investigated patterns of song dialects among fragmented songbird populations breeding in alpine habitat of the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. In 2010 and 2011 we recorded songs of American Pipits (*Anthus rubescens*), Wilson's Warblers (*Cardellina pusilla*), and White-crowned Sparrows (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) across 19 sites among 6 mountain ranges. We used spectrographic cross-correlation to calculate song similarity coefficients within and among populations. Within-site song similarity was greater than mean, across-site similarity for the majority of American Pipit and White-crowned Sparrow populations, but such a pattern was not found in the Wilson's Warbler. Cluster analyses showed that White-crowned Sparrow songs were generally similar among sites within an isolated, contiguous alpine habitat within mountain ranges, but there was no such clustering of American Pipit and Wilson's Warbler populations. Song similarity within each species was not related to distance between mountain ranges in either year, but there was a decline in White-crowned Sparrow song similarity with distance within contiguous alpine landscapes in 2011. Our results provide evidence for the existence of

dialects among American Pipit and White-crowned Sparrow populations in Colorado, though dialects in the latter species could be explained by clinal variation rather than by divergence among isolated alpine fragments.

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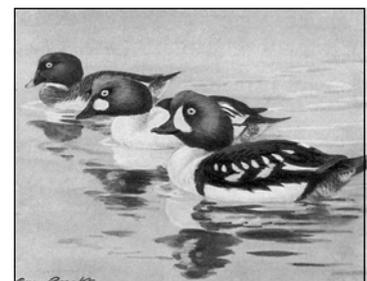
**Changes in breeding phenology of arctic-breeding shorebirds: comparative study over two decades.** *Eunbi Kwon\** and *Brett K. Sandercock*, *Division of Biology, Kansas State University*. Change in breeding phenology is often the first indicator of biological response to modern climate change. Birds migrating long distances to the breeding ground are especially vulnerable to environmental changes such as global warming, and are showing advances in their timing of breeding. However, long-term monitoring, required for phenological study, so far has focused on temperate breeding songbirds. In this study, we examined shift in the breeding phenology of two arctic breeding shorebirds, Western Sandpiper (*Calidris mauri*; N=469 nests) and Semipalmated Sandpiper (*Calidris pusilla*; N=345 nests), by comparing the breeding performance of two temporally segregated breeding populations, monitored during 1993-1999 and in 2011 near Nome, Alaska. During 1993-1999, the mean date of clutch initiation (DCI) ranged between 21-31 May for Western Sandpipers and 25 May-16 June for Semipalmated Sandpipers. In 2011, the mean DCI was 24 and 27 May for Western and Semipalmated Sandpiper respectively, showing that

Western Sandpipers are significantly more advanced than Semipalmated Sandpiper in terms of the timing of breeding. In both species, the clutch initiation and hatching were shifted significantly earlier in 2011 than in 1999. Thus, Semipalmated Sandpipers laid their first egg approximately 10 days earlier, and Western Sandpipers laid 7 days earlier in 2011. However, the breeding phenology of both species shows inter-annual fluctuation and we did not detect a linear trend over the 18-year period. Arctic breeding shorebirds, including Semipalmated Sandpipers, are declining in great numbers around the globe. Long-term monitoring on their breeding performance will aid our understanding on the underlying mechanism for the population decline.

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**Editor's note:** When more than one person is listed, an asterisk indicates the presenter's name. Except for minor editing, abstracts appear as they were submitted. Please contact the authors for more information.

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# 2011 Kansas Ornithological Society meeting minutes

**KOS winter board meeting,**  
February 9, Junction City.

**Present:** Chuck Otte, Patty Marlett, Terry Mannell, Lisa Weeks, John Bollin, Bill Jensen, Gregg Friesen and Cheryl Miller.

**Absent:** Max Thompson, Gene Young, Nancy Leo, Henry Armknecht.

Meeting called to order at 10:14 a.m. by Chuck Otte, president.

**Correspondence:** No issues noted.

**Minutes:** No issues noted. Terry Mannell moved to accept. Motion seconded, no discussion. Minutes approved.

## **Officer and committee reports**

**Treasurer:** Terry Mannell reported on the income and expense summary. Investments are up enough to where our general fund is now sustaining. Note that last spring's meeting helped by making money. Dues of \$3,500 do not match the \$4,600 cost of memberships. Life membership interest covers the difference. John Bollin moved to accept the treasurer's report; it was seconded and approved by voice vote. A comment came up about getting the signature card updated for writing checks. Terry will pursue this.

**Finance committee:** Max Thompson was not present, but Chuck Otte noted and circulated the report form RCB Bank Trust.

**Corresponding secretary:** Records are in order and maintained by the secretary.

**Membership coordinator:** Patty Marlett attached her report again noting the ongoing issue with a decline in membership. Currently we are at the level we were last year. Patty noted that

the Oklahoma Ornithological Society allows members to use PayPal to pay their dues and this might help with getting payments in. Do note that past memberships stay current until the spring meeting.

**Business manager:** Lisa Weeks reported and will give more information later.

**Bulletin:** Gene Young sent an e-mail. The March issue is behind schedule and will be late and will affect timing of the mailing. Cheryl Miller noted that the spring meeting rooms are only held till the first of April and suggested separate mailings. Meeting material is in the March issue. Gene has one article for the June Bulletin which will likely include the KBRC report.

**Horned Lark:** Cheryl reported that the final proof for the March issue is at the printer. There was some discussion on material to submit for the Horned Lark in order to keep up interest in a wide range of readers. We could also have ads in the HOLA if someone wanted them there. Part of the issue



involves the goal of the HOLA. Discussion noted that the roundup appeals to a group of members but likely not to others. Adding material would broaden the appeal.

**Kansas Bird Records Committee:** Max Thompson sent a report. The committee voted on one past record and did not change the decision (declining to see adequate evidence to support the record). This group elects its own members and officers which are approved by the board. They have worked to bring in new members and new members include Terry Mannell and Nic Allen. Aaron Mitchell was re-appointed as an alternate to the board. The KOS board needs to approve the selections. Mark Robbins was selected as the new chair. There is a move to have a balance of academic members and field ornithologists and a range of individuals around the state. Gregg Friesen moved to accept the selection of members; it was seconded, and approved by voice vote.

**Web page:** The group working on this project is still focused. Chuck noted bandwidth use with a spike on the day of the posting of the Snow Bunting photos. If broken links are found, let Chuck know and he will fix them. Note that the birdinginkansas.com pages are still alive.

**Old business:** Terry noted the project of a birding

PowerPoint being worked on by Gregg and Chuck. This would allow birding programs for members who are asked to do presentations around the state.

### **New business**

#### **Membership brochure:**

Lisa has the new membership brochure, which is at the printer now. These need to be distributed. Lisa will bring these to the spring meeting and they can be sent out. John has a list of nature centers and outdoor stores along with societies. We printed 1,000 brochures on the first printing. Terry suggested a post to the KSBIRDS listerv to get information into pages of the local papers. The brochures can also go to colleges and universities and could be uploaded to the web page. Bill suggested putting them in public libraries. Lisa also noted that merchandise is being sold online though a site called Zazzle. Some of the items are not perfect and we will need to work with the organization doing the printing. Also, Lisa noted that shipping was a bit high. A plus is that they do allow us to do our own design work. Matt Gearheart is working on a special shirt design for the spring meeting. Note there is an excessive number of extra large T-shirts in our current stock.

**KOS corporate registered agent:** Terry Mannell got us back on track for 503c status. We need to have a “registered agent” who can be notified if there is any legal action. Terry will go online to change it from Eugene Lewis who has, unknown to us and

likely Gene, served in this role for the past 20 years. The regulations imply that the treasurer is the registered agent. Terry also noted that the KOS has a DUNS number (needed if we were to get a grant).

#### **Spring 2011 meeting:**

Details are on the web site and on the newsletter. Lisa confirms that it is on the normal dates in May (starting Friday night the 7th this year). Note a question on meals with a finger food Friday night and a banquet on Saturday. Motel rooms are only held till the first of April.

#### **Fall 2011 meeting:**

The fall meeting is set for September 27 at the Kansas Wetlands Education Center. Saturday activities are planned for the Kansas Wetlands Education Center and there is some concern about space (should work). Lisa noted that there will be some individuals who might want to be out birding and not go to paper sessions.

Chuck and others will take up this issue. Chuck and others have been in touch with Ted Floyd about coming to the meeting to give a presentation at the banquet and lead field trips. Cost issues need to be addressed and Chuck will send out information of his when he has more. Ted has our dates on our calendar.

**Future meetings:** We need to think about locations for future meetings. The web site has a list of past meeting locations. Again, the goal of selecting locations is to meet at

diverse spots in the state.

**Membership development and membership services:** Terry discussed idea of a “birding card” to leave at restaurants. Chuck stated that in the bylaws there is an opportunity for local chapters. A number of things like bird walks are also an option. The group also noted the need to post options for birders on the listserv. Cheryl reports there was no registration deadline in the Horned Lark for the spring meeting (will work on this as the restaurant likely needs a set number of people). Lisa has many old checklists and will bring them to meetings or give them to nature centers.

The meeting was adjourned 12:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Gregg Friesen, Corresponding Secretary.

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**General membership meeting,** October 1, Kansas Wetlands Education Center, Great Bend.

Chuck Otte called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m.

### **Presentation of slate of officers**

Mike Rader of the nominating committee presented the slate for officers for the coming year. This included President: Chuck Otte; Vice President: Henry Armknecht; Corresponding Secretary: Gregg Friesen; Treasurer: Terry Mannell; Membership Development Coordinator: Patty Marlett; Business Manager: Lisa Weeks; Horned Lark Editor:

Cheryl Miller; Bulletin Editor: Eugene Young; At-Large Members: Don Kazmaier and Greg Farley (Unexpired terms of Rick Tucker and John Bollin continue till 2012); Past President: Nancy Leo.

### **Committee reports**

**Business manager:** Lisa Weeks reported on the new shirts available along with a new checklist now for sale.

**Bulletin:** Eugene Young gave a call for papers noting a need for such.

**Membership:** Patty Marlett noted membership at 290 members with 136 of those being life members. Membership has been staying steady.

**Student research fund:** John Schukman noted no request for money from students last year. Applicants can receive up to \$750 per application.

**Webmaster:** Chuck Otte noted a need for Christmas Bird Count dates.

The meeting adjourned at 9:41 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Gregg Friesen, Corresponding Secretary.

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**Fall board meeting.** October 1, Kansas Wetlands Education Center, Great Bend.

**Present:** Chuck Otte, Patty Marlett, Terry Mannell, Lisa Weeks, John Bollin, Bill Jensen, Gregg Friesen, Cheryl Miller, Bill Busby, Eugene Young, Max Thompson, Henry Armknecht, Nancy Leo, Mike Andersen and Don Kazmaier.

**Absent:** Rick Tucker.  
Chuck Otte called the meeting to order at 12:01 p.m.

**Minutes:** Gregg Friesen had submitted minutes of the last meeting to board members via e-mail. Minutes were accepted on a voice vote.

### **Committee and officer reports**

**Corresponding secretary:** Gregg Friesen noted that minutes are in order with no issues noted.

**Treasurer:** Terry Mannell reported that the last three months showed, as expected, a drop in investment value due to the drop in the market. Our funds went from \$130,000 to \$123,000. See the report submitted with the minutes for details.

**Finance:** Max Thompson reported. Max also noted the drop in funds at 12 percent but noted this is essentially an unrealized loss. We still get some income from funds and earned \$941 this year. Our fixed municipal bonds actually moved up 6 percent this year. The advisors are suggesting we hold with the current mix. Note that Chuck Otte plans to reappoint Max Thompson to the finance committee for the coming year.

**Membership:** Patty Marlett noted a slight increase in life memberships. She also notes getting renewals is helped by sending up to two reminders (U.S. mail or e-mail). We currently have only founding member still living (no charter members).

**Business manager:** Lisa Weeks reported the purchase of note recently was for T-shirts with 140 ordered and a need to sell only 70 to break even.

Material remains on Zazzle.com with a variety of items to which the KOS logo can be applied.

**Bulletin:** Gene Young noted a need for manuscripts. He has one in the review process at this time. Gene noted that some new ways of communicating information, including the World Wide Web, have cut into what used to be in the Bulletin. The KBRC (Kansas Bird Record Committee) has also led to fewer submissions.

**Horned Lark:** Cheryl Miller reported that late issues of the Horned Lark are a result of some continued issues with the printer driver at Northwestern Printers and issues around how bulk mail is handled (it can be held for some time at each location where it is processed).

### **Old business**

**Birding cards:** Terry Mannell had some birding cards printed by Northwestern Printers (cards donated on this occasion). They are to leave at businesses stating an appreciation for helping to preserve the environment for birding. Cards can be purchased in lots of 1,000 for \$98 or 2,500 for \$200. Pricing is a bit high due to color printing and printing on both sides of the card. Members thought the cards would do well to have the KOS website printed on them. John Bollin moved to have 2,500 cards made with the website added. The motion was seconded and carried by voice vote.

### **New business**

**Endorsements:** Discussion focused on the issue around

signing on to statements, letters, or a stance KOS is asked to join or endorse. The concern has been that our 503c status prevents such but the wording states that we only cannot be involved in politics to the degree that a substantial part of our business is such. The question becomes one of timing as often we are given minimal notice and getting board approval to sign on can be cumbersome. The pros and cons of allowing a smaller group of the board to make a decision were discussed with no clear direction taken. In the end the decision making process remains unchanged in this area.

**Honorary life memberships:** Chuck Otte and Max Thompson asked about an honorary life membership for Lawrence and Ruth Smith of Elkhart and for Richard Johnston of KU. Both have donated much to the organization and the knowledge of birds in the state. Eugene Young moved to grant the memberships. The motion was seconded and carried by voice vote.

**KOS hats:** Nancy Leo asked about the option of putting Bob Regier's donated design on a hat. Other noted that reducing it in size would make the design more less recognizable. The idea was tabled.

**Zazzle:** Some discussion focused on our selling items through Zazzle, an online merchant. The concern is promoting items through a venue that might affect our 503c status. This needs further attention.

**Spring meeting:** The spring meeting is currently planned for east central Kansas

counties. This includes Anderson, Franklin and Allen counties. Options for the fall meeting remain open.

**WSU class presentation:** Cheryl Miller reported being asked to give a presentation to a class at WSU. She asked if some of the remaining books, *The Birds of Sedgwick County*, could be donated to give to class members. Given that the book has paid for itself, there would be no loss involved. Terry Mannell moved to allow this and the motion was seconded and carried by a voice vote.

**Student involvement:** Terry Mannell asked about ways to promote student attendance at meetings. He wondered about a motion to allow students to attend free. Others noted that this is an issue for local committees and no motion is required. The idea will be encouraged when local committees plan for meetings noting that this will likely not be workable for banquet costs but rather just for meeting registrations.

Gregg Friesen moved that the meeting adjourn. The motion was seconded and approved by voice vote at 1:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Gregg Friesen, Corresponding Secretary.

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**General membership meeting,** October 1, Kansas Wetlands Education Center, Great Bend.

The meeting was called to order at 4:22 p.m. by Chuck Otte.

## Officer reports

**Treasurer:** Terry Mannell reported on the checking account balance of \$8,499.59 and an investment balance of \$123,503.60.

**Vice President:** Henry Armknecht reported on a need to continue to work to gain new members.

The honorary memberships for Richard Johnson and Lawrence and Ruth Smith were noted.

**Election of the board:** The slate of officers and board members noted earlier in the day was again reviewed. The floor was open for other nominations with none received. Max Thompson moved to accept the slate and approve these individuals for positions as noted. The motion was seconded and approved by voice vote.

**Spring meeting:** Plans for the spring meeting May 4, 5, and 6 were reviewed with the meeting to be in east central Kansas.

Max Thompson moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and approved by voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 4:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Gregg Friesen, Corresponding Secretary.



# 2011 Ivan L. Boyd Recognition Awards:

## Eugene and Eulalia Lewis Scott Seltman

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KOS honored three people with the Ivan L. Boyd Award at the 2011 fall meeting. One award was presented jointly to Eugene and Eulalia Lewis (nominated by Tom Shane); the other was presented to Scott Seltman (nominated by Mike Rader).

### Eugene and Eulalia Lewis

When nominating the Lewises, Tom Shane wrote:

“Gene Lewis served as the fourth treasurer for KOS, holding that office from 1969 to 1988. Gene was also the chairman for the KOS Dingus Natural Area Committee. Gene and his wife Eulalia participated in the Breeding Bird Survey, running the Dover route from its inaugural year 1967 until 1980. They both authored and co-authored several notes and memorials for KOS publications; Gene also wrote the history of the Dingus area. Gene served two terms as president of the Topeka Audubon Society. Eulalia actively promoted the successful Chickadee Checkoff legislation in 1979 and 1980.

“The couple spent many of their summer vacations pioneering the future breeding bird atlas era. They would spend part of a week in an under-birded county such as Ottawa, Smith and Republic, locating as many breeding and

summer birds as possible. A good example of their work on the summer birds of Mitchell County can be found in the October 1976 KOS Newsletter. During the summers of 1983-1985, they participated in the Pomona Reservoir Summer Bird Count, which was patterned after a Christmas Bird Count. They have retired to the pine-covered slopes of southwestern New Mexico, but they remain interested in Kansas birding.”



### Scott Seltman

In his nomination, Mike Rader wrote:

“Scott Seltman has a long and storied past with KOS, beginning around 1979. He was an avid birder from the start, making many contributions to the knowledge of Kansas avifauna in the form of specimens donated to science.

“Scott shined in those early days with his field observations, so much so that he was asked to serve

on the first Kansas Bird Records Committee in 1981. Scott served on the KBRC until the early 1990s, assisting in the forming of the committee as we know it today. Scott and his wife Diane became life members of KOS in 1984. He has served KOS by being on the Board of Directors as an at-large member (1982), Fieldtrip Coordinator (1983), compiling the first Kansas Christmas Bird Count in Rush/Pawnee counties in 1982 and creating the Cedar Bluff CBC in the late 1980s. Scott helped in the initiation of the Kansas Rare Bird Alert (1983) and later took over the duties of coordinating that service from Marvin Schwilling in 1990. He ran the alert several years before passing it on to Gene Young.

“Scott served on the KOS Resolutions Committee (1986) and in 1987 became the editor of the KOS Newsletter. In this role, he initiated the seasonal roundup, which has been a continuous feature in the publication. Scott passed the editorship to Don Vannoy in 1990. He still wrote the seasonal roundup during Don’s term of service, writing and compiling it for six years.

“I first met Scott on a KOS-sanctioned field trip to Cherokee County in May 1986. Honestly, my life hasn’t been the same since! I remember being amazed by how well Scott could hear and identify

birds in the heavy undergrowth and forest, especially since he seemed like just a humble bumpkin farmer from way out in Nekoma, Kansas. It really got me thinking that I should start spending more time with this guy. After that year, we began a friendship that was initially based on birds, but expanded to a common ground of political beliefs, classic rock music, and many others things.

“In 1992, Scott took on an important role as one of the regional coordinators for the Kansas Breeding Bird Atlas project. He spent countless hours doing field observations and maintaining contact with other observers. Scott took on many blocks himself, with a mix of great habitats which he was interested in surveying and, by default, doing the drudgery of many blocks out in the “wheat field desert” that nobody else wanted.

“In 1992, Scott forged a partnership with Ted Cable to produce *Birds of Cimarron Grasslands*, one of the best comprehensive annotated checklists available in Kansas. The recent 2011 revision of this work was a major undertaking and well worth

the wait. Scott’s field bird observations are strewn throughout the volumes of *Birds in Kansas* and the recently released *Birds of Kansas* revision. Scott also has participated in the North American Migration Count in Stafford County for several years, filling in for me as compiler when I had graduations and other things that kept me from being there.

“Scott has been a stalwart on the Christmas Bird Counts I have compiled, being one of the only people I can almost always count on to do the western and central Kansas reservoirs with me each year. One highlight was the Cedar Bluff CBC in early 1991. Scott, Diane and I walked the shelterbelts in the wildlife area and had 90 Long-eared Owls, 20 Short-eared Owls and an Eastern Screech-Owl fly out of the big E-shaped belt. He was truly excited after that!

“Having attended college in California, Scott’s vast experience with birds from the West comes to the forefront when identifying extra-limital species that show up in Kansas. He’s always willing to share that knowledge to make people better birders. His expertise could be limited to shorebirds and

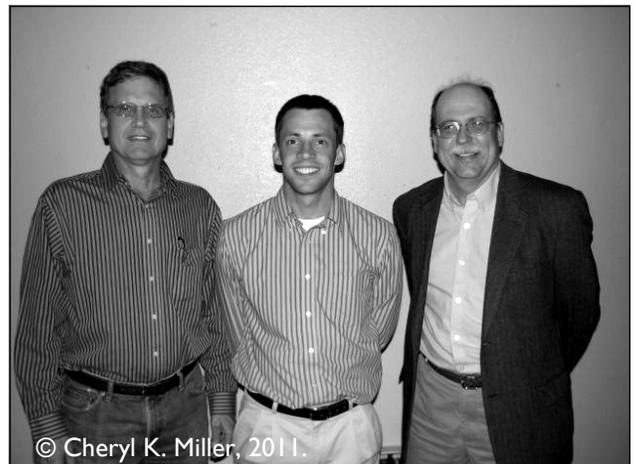
waterfowl from hundreds of trips to Cheyenne Bottoms and Quivira – it’s not. It could be limited to grassland sparrows, longspurs, pipits, and raptors he sees continually on his travels through the western half of the state – it’s not. He is equally adept in bird identification for any species that might show up in Kansas, from anywhere on the continent.

“Scott has continued to provide valuable information on species such as Lesser Prairie-Chicken and other grassland birds, helping to gain a better picture of their range and abundance in Kansas. I’m certain that his recent work conducting avian surveys as a consultant for wind energy interests will provide important information to companies interested in making sound, ecologically-friendly decisions as to placement of wind farms and transmission lines.”



## Best Student Papers

Each year, a KOS panel of judges select one of the presented student papers for the Best Student Paper Award. Two papers tied for the distinction this year. Scott Schmidt, graduate student at Fort Hays State University, presented “Understanding the birds and the trees: Where does quality habitat come from?” Levi Jaster, graduate student at Emporia State University, presented “Patterns of territory distribution and pairing success in Henslow’s Sparrows (*Ammodramus henslowii*) breeding in restored grasslands.” At right, he is flanked by John Schukman and Chuck Otte.



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# Avian Conservationist: Tom Flowers

KOS honored Tom Flowers with the 2011 Avian Conservationist Award. In his nomination, Tom Shane wrote:

“Outstanding conservationists are those persons who take their love of birds, their land ethic and their conservation skills to higher levels and reach out to their neighbors in hopes these values will be understood and adopted. In this stead, Thomas L. Flowers has made conservation a career as a district conservationist through the Natural Resources Conservation Service stationed in Meade the past 29 years. He joined KOS in 1976. He has conducted a spring bird walk at Meade State Park the past 25 years and has given more than 100 bird talks to numerous organizations in southwestern Kansas and western Oklahoma. When he arrived at Meade, the official county bird list stood at just more than 200 species. Now, more than 350 bird species have been recorded for the county. He started the Meade Christmas Bird Count 25 years ago and hosted the KOS fall meeting at Meade in 2003.

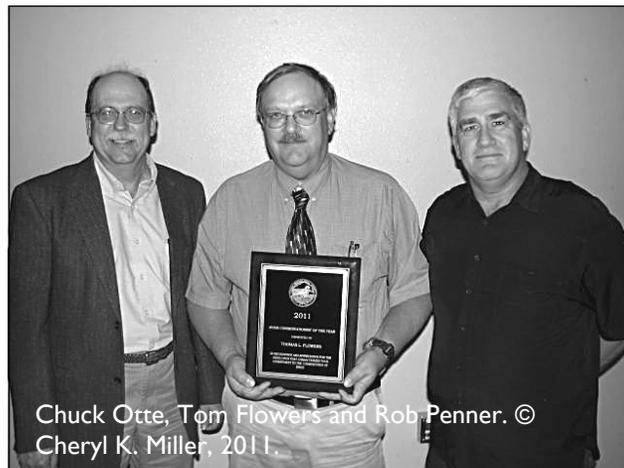
“Tom established a banding station at Meade State Lake and several other localities in Meade County, and more than 50,000 birds were banded during that 29 year period. He has given dozens of bird banding demonstrations for Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, church groups and for classes of students from towns all over southwest Kansas. He has published ornithological papers and notes in

the KOS Bulletin, the Oklahoma Ornithological Society Bulletin and the American Birding Association’s Winging It. He also shared his banding records of several thousand House Finches with Cornell University.

“For several years, Tom published a weekly newspaper article on birds in the Dodge City Daily Globe. He has also assisted graduate students from Fort Hays State University, Kansas State University, and the University of Kansas with their research. He assisted researchers with shrike DNA sampling. Tom also spent dozens of hours in the field helping raptor biologist Karen Steenhof in recovering transmitters from her Idaho Prairie Falcon research.

“Tom developed a popular wetland game for teachers and students. He organized a playa lakes Breeding Bird Survey with the assistance of dozens of volunteers from Greensburg and further west. He has been a Cub Scout pack master and a Boy Scout assistant scout master. He helped Fort Hays State University graduate school contemporary, June Kliesen, lead Comanche County flower walks for two years. In recent years, he has helped his mentor and former major professor, Dr. Charles Ely, with a multi-state moth distribution study.”

Tom Flowers was moved by



Chuck Otte, Tom Flowers and Rob Penner. © Cheryl K. Miller, 2011.

this recognition and wanted to share the following message.

### **Dear KOS membership:**

“Thank you for presenting me with the Avian Conservationist of the Year Award. I am humbled by this award knowing the caliber of people who have previously received it. I hope that I can continue my work in ornithology, and especially in youth education, which led me to this award in the first place. I fully intend to carry the torch forward.

A special thank you must go to my friend, mentor and former college professor, Dr. Charles Ely. Although I was always interested in the great outdoors, he piqued my interest in birds and eventually mentored me as a bird bander. I still find myself seeking his expertise and wisdom.

“I would also like to challenge our membership to take a kid birding. Recently my eyes were re-opened to the wonders of the bird world by Meade second grade students as they examined molted flight feathers and the warming properties of down feathers. If you want to really see a bird, look through the eyes of a child.

“Thank you again for this prestigious and humbling award.”

