



The Official Newsletter
of the
Kansas Ornithological Society

The Horned Lark

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Vol. 20, No. 4

This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.

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

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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*
Division of Biology, Kansas State University,
Ackert Hall, Manhattan, KS 66506-4901

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

WEIGHT LOSS IN BREEDING BIRDS: A CONSEQUENCE OF REPRODUCTIVE STRESS OR AN ADAPTATION STRATEGY?

Author: John F. Cavitt
Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506

Adult passerines commonly lose mass during the course of breeding. This loss has historically been interpreted as the result of reproductive stress, but recently, an adaptational hypothesis has been proposed. The wing-loading hypothesis states that adults actively reduce mass in order to increase flight efficiency.

These hypotheses were tested by providing food supplements to House Wrens (*Troglodytes aedon*) breeding on a study area in central Illinois during the 1990-1992 breeding seasons. According to the stress hypothesis, supplementing adults should reduce the stress of procuring food and reduce the energetic cost to the parent, resulting in increased mass. The wing-loading hypothesis predicts that an increase in the food supply should have no effect on adult mass.

Additional food had no effect on mass except during the 1992 late season. Females that were given additional food during the late young stage had significantly higher mass than controls, but mass did not increase above the levels normally obtained by females during the early season. Supplemented adults potentially received 94% of their daily energy requirement in the supplements, but they obtained the same mass as controls throughout most of the experiment. These results suggest that mass loss in House Wrens may be an adaptation to increase flight efficiency.

HARRY W. MENKE AND FINNEY COUNTY, KANSAS BIRD POPULATIONS DURING THE FOLLOWING CENTURY

Authors: Thomas G. Shane and Marvin D. Schwilling
Garden City, Kansas and Emporia, Kansas

A brief biography of Harry W. Menke, his bird records and the habitats of Finney County are considered. Then a comparison of the bird populations of the periods 1890, 1950 and 1990 of Finney County are made. Populations of 30% of the recorded bird species have remained constant, 29% have increased, while 41% have decreased during the last one hundred years. The major decrease in populations was experienced by aquatic species.

GROWTH RATE OF BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD (MOLOTHRUS ATER) NESTLINGS PARASITIZING FOUR SPECIES OF GRASSLAND-NESTING BIRDS

Authors: Kelly Conrad, Stephanie Brown*, & Elmer Finck
Division of Biological Sciences, Box 4050, Emporia State University, Emporia, KS 66801; *Department of Biology, Southwestern University, Georgetown, TX 78626

The impact of Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) nestlings on the growth rate of Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*), Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*), Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*) and Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*) nestlings was assessed. Growth rates from 250 nestlings found in Chase and Lyon counties, Kansas, were analyzed. The data showed that Brown-headed Cowbird nestlings grew at a greater rate than parasitized and nonparasitized Grasshopper Sparrow nestlings and nonparasitized Dickcissel nestlings. Further, there was a significant difference in the growth rates between parasitized and nonparasitized Eastern Meadowlark nestlings. While a few differences in growth rate are significant, no clear trend has appeared which would indicate an major impact of Brown-headed Cowbird nestlings on their host nestling counterparts during the nestling stage.

RESTORATION OF THE MCPHERSON VALLEY WETLANDS AND THE EFFECT ON SHOREBIRD USE

Authors: Kristen J. Mitchell, Dwight W. Moore, and Todd W. Pesch*, Division of Biological Sciences, Emporia State University, Emporia, KS 66801, *McPherson Valley Wetlands, Box 91, McPherson, KS 67460

At the turn of the century, McPherson Valley Wetlands was an important wetland area for migratory water birds, however it was drained in the early 1900's for agriculture. Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks is currently trying to reestablish the area into a thriving wetland habitat. The restoration of the wetlands will make it an important stop over site in the central flyway and provide an alternate stop over site to Cheyenne Bottoms and Quivira National Wildlife Refuge to the west. Our research at this time will establish baseline data that will be used for future comparisons to evaluate the wetland. Specifically, we are examining the use of the wetlands by shorebirds and how that use changes as the restoration proceeds through the fall of 1994. Preliminary data indicate a seasonal pattern to shorebird use with water levels greatly affecting use by shorebirds. With these data we hope to establish possible techniques for managing the wetland.

NESTING SUCCESS IN NEWLY FORMED MARSH COMMUNITY IN THE BAKER WETLANDS

Author: *Cal Cink, Baker University, Baldwin City, KS 66006*

No Abstract

NESTING OF HENSLOW'S SPARROW IN OSAGE COUNTY, KANSAS

Authors: *Jean H. Schulenberg, Gerald L. Horak, Marvin D. Schwilling, and Elmer J. Finck
Biological Sciences, Box 4050. Emporia State University, Emporia, KS 66801-5087*

Henslow's Sparrows (*Ammodramus henslowii*) were censused at Melvern Reservoir in Osage County, Kansas during the summer of 1993. Twenty-five singing males were distributed among four unburned grassland sites. One nest was found 26 May by G. L. Horak. The nest, which contained 4 eggs, was located in a standing dead clump of Little Bluestem, (*Andropogon scoparius*). Breeding habitat on 14 survey sites, including a 1 x 1 square meter area around the nest, was described and measured. Habitat requirements appear to be the presence of standing dead grasses, protective live grass cover, an accumulation of litter, and enough room to move freely between the grass clumps and beneath the litter cover.

AVIAN DENSITY AND DIVERSITY IN RIPARIAN AREAS AND SHELTERBELTS

Authors: *Terri A. Abbett and Elmer J. Finck
Division of Biological Sciences, Box 50,
Emporia State University, Emporia, KS 66801*

Shelterbelts and riparian areas are the primary habitats for many woodland species of birds in eastern Kansas. A comparison of these two habitats provides a basis for evaluation of woodland habitat quality for birds. Ten km of each of the two habitat types were surveyed to determine avian diversity, density, and species richness. To assess habitat five under story and four over story vegetation variables were measured, including: grass cover, forb cover, percent bare ground, shrub canopy, percent canopy, tree diversity, stem density, and diameter at breast height. Two-way analysis of variance was used to detect significant differences between habitat type and site location. There was no significant difference in bird diversity between habitats. However, there were significant differences in density, and species richness between habitats and locations. There were also significant differences in grass cover, bare ground, forb cover, and

tree diversity. Several interactions between habitat and location were found.

COMPARATIVE AVIAN USAGE OF ROWCROP, BURNED AND UNBURNED CRP FIELDS, AND GRAZED PASTURES IN EASTERN KANSAS

Authors: *David S. Klute and Robert J. Robel
Division of Biology, Kansas State University,
Manhattan, KS 66506-4901.*

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) was authorized in 1985 primarily to reduce soil erosion on agricultural lands by removing highly erodible cropland from production and establishing permanent vegetative cover on it. An added benefit of the program has been an increase in habitat for wildlife. In an effort to evaluate the suitability of this habitat for wildlife we monitored avian usage of row crop fields, and burned and unburned CRP fields in 1991-1993 and on grazed pastures in 1993. Avian relative abundance was highest in unburned CRP fields with burned CRP and row crop fields exhibiting lower avian abundance. Grazed pastures had a higher relative abundance of avian species than did burned CRP fields. Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferous*) and mourning doves (*Zenaidura macroura*) were the most common avian species in row crop fields. Burned and unburned CRP fields were dominated by dickcissels (*Spiza americana*). Grasshopper sparrows (*Ammodramus savannarum*) and dickcissels were the most common avian species in grazed pastures. Estimates of avian productivity revealed low nesting success and a high degree of brown-headed cowbird (*Moluthrus ater*) parasitism.

HOW GOOD ARE ANNUAL CENSUSES IN REPRESENTING ANNUAL VARIATION IN WINTER BIRD POPULATIONS?

Authors: *Christopher Smith, Martin Stapanian, Elmer Finck, Division of Biology, Ackert Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506*

Annual means of weekly winter bird censuses over a 14 year period are compared with Christmas Bird Counts for the same area around Manhattan, Kansas. The rank order of variability in annual censuses among 18 species of birds on both types of censuses correlates significantly. However, when the values for the two censuses are correlated for one species of bird at a time, only five show significant correlations. The failure of the two censuses to match for some of the species with the most variable annual populations probably results from regional population movements during each winter.

POPULATION TRENDS OF WINTERING LOGGERHEAD SHRIKES IN KANSAS

Authors: *Kate M. McGrath, Elmer J. Finck*
Division of Biological Sciences, Emporia State
University, Emporia, KS 66801

Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) populations have been decreasing in several states over the past twenty years. They are on the threatened species list in several states and on the endangered species list in eastern Canada. We hypothesized that the population of wintering Loggerhead Shrikes would decrease in Kansas similar to other states. Christmas bird counts were surveyed to assess the population trends of the five regions in Kansas. The regions in the central and western part of Kansas were slightly increasing, although not significantly. One region in eastern Kansas was decreasing, yet insignificantly. These data showed that the population was not decreasing significantly, unlike other midwestern states.

MICROBES IN NESTS OF OPEN- AND CAVITY- NESTING BIRDS

Authors: *E. Dale Kennedy, S. Kate Dietrich, and Douglas*
W. White, Division of Biology, Kansas State
University, Manhattan, KS 66506

Microbes may have unappreciated effects on avian nesting success as agents of disease or transformers of waste products. Differences in light, microclimate and nesting material between open and cavity nests may influence microbial communities. We surveyed microbe diversity and abundance in nests of seven cavity-nesting and six open-nesting species. Significantly more microbes occurred in cavity nests. Microbial levels may be low in open nests because of exposure to sunlight or low moisture levels.

GOLDEN EAGLES IN MEADE COUNTY, KANSAS

Author: *Thomas L. Flowers*
P.O. Box 87, Meade, KS 67864

Several Golden Eagle nests have been located in Meade County, Kansas. Nest locations show a decided preference for north-facing cliff sites and all nests located are in close proximity to Black-tailed Prairie Dog towns. This is an update of the December 1992 article in the Kansas Ornithological Society Bulletin.

KBBAT: YEAR TWO AND COUNTING

Authors: *John Zimmerman and Bill Busby**
Division of Biology, Kansas State University,
Manhattan, KS 66506
**Kansas Biological Survey, Lawrence, KS 66045*

The Kansas Breeding-Bird Atlas Project has completed the first two seasons of a five year effort. Over 150 volunteers have accepted responsibility to complete 556 blocks. That's 74% of the total 752 blocks and exceeds our goal for the end of 1993. The number of completed blocks, however, is only 155, just 21% of the total, and falls well below our goal. The state is divided into seven geographic regions. The three eastern regions (NE,EC,SE) average between 63 to 67 species per block. The two central regions average 52 species per block, and the two western regions average between 31 and 34 species per block. The average time spent in completing a block ranges from 26 hours in the NE region to 9 hours in the NW region and reflects the decrease in habitat diversity from east to west in the state.

Fall Meeting Attendance

Over 80 person attended the Fall Meeting at Hays, October 1 - 3, 1993. They were:

Chuck & Jan Ely, Greg Wilson, Katherine Mermis, Earl Carlson, Hays; Scott & Diane Seltman, Nekoma; Mike Rader, Wilson; James & Jean Piland, Waldo; Mike & Janice Speers, Paul Schowalter, Larned; Ray & Karen Ganoung, Hoisington; Joyce Davis, Dodge City; Tom & Sara Shane, Barbara Campbell, Leonard Rich, Garden City; Art Nonhoff, Holcomb; Tom Flowers, Meade; Allen Jahn, McPherson; Chuck & Jaye Otte, Junction City; Chris Smith, John Hughes, David Klute, John Zimmerman, Dale Kennedy, Doug White, Jim Mayhew, John Cavitt, Lowell & Wanda Johnson, all of Manhattan; Rose Fritz, Gregg Friesen, Bob Regier, Tim Wagner, Newton; Henry Pelzl, Roy & Pat Beckemeyer, Dennis Zehr, Wichita; Mike Dwyer, Andover; Bill

Welch, Mulvane; Gene Young, Max Thompson, Winfield; Jean Schulenberg, Admire; Gerald Horak, Craig Olawsky, Terri Abbett, Marvin Schwilling, Kelly Conrad, Dwight Moore, Brenda Schleicher, Kate McGrath, Elmer Finck, all of Emporia; JoAnn Brier, Topeka; Galen Pittman, Stan & Janet Roth, David & Emily Seibel, Lawrence; Amy & David Rose, Eudora; Bill Busby, Roger & Jan Boyd, Calvin Cink, Kristen Mitchell, Baldwin; Chris Hobbs, Bonner Springs; David & Linda Bryan, Overland Park; Mick McHugh, Kansas City; John Schukman, Leavenworth; C.J. Ochs, Hiawatha; David Pantle, Denver; Ferdinand & Jo Dirckx, Broomfield, Colorado.

KOS Fall Meeting Field Trips Checklist

On Sunday morning, October 3rd, 40 plus KOS Fall Meeting participants enjoyed birding field trips in and around Hays, including Cedar Bluff Reservoir (where several of us finally were able to add Barn Owl to our life lists!). A total of 95 species were seen.

Pied-billed Grebe, White Pelican, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Cattle Egret, Black-crowned Night-heron, Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Mallard, Northern Pintail, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, American Widgeon, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk, American Kestrel, Ring-necked Pheasant, Wild Turkey, Northern Bobwhite, American Coot, Killdeer, Wilson's Phalarope, Ring-billed Gull, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Barn Owl, Great Horned Owl, Long-eared Owl, Short-eared Owl, Common Nighthawk, Chimney Swift, Belted Kingfisher, Red-

bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker.

Say's Phoebe, Horned Lark, Barn Swallow, Blue Jay, Black-billed Magpie, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, House Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, Townsend's Solitaire, American Robin, American Pipit, Cedar Waxwing, Loggerhead Shrike, European Starling, Orange-crowned Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Northern Cardinal, Rufous-sided Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Clay-colored Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Lark Bunting, Savannah Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Le Conte's Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Red-winged Blackbird, Western Meadowlark, Brewer's Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, House Finch, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

KOS TOP TEN BIRDS OF THE YEAR

October 1, 1992 - September 30, 1993

The "Top Ten Birds of the Year" is always a fun announcement at the Annual Meeting Banquet. Max Thompson announced this year's list and compiled the list with the help of numerous other KOS members. The information for the list is drawn from hotline reports, first hand reports, records from the Kansas Bird Records Committee, etc. Keep in mind that this list does not constitute acceptance by the Kansas Bird Records Committee, and records will first have to be submitted and then accepted by the Committee before they can become "official" records. As in past years, consideration is given to previous state records or specimens; geographic location in the state, season of sighting, nesting, etc. and the judgment of the individuals involved in compiling the list. So if your "best bird" didn't make the list, keep in mind that this is all in fun!

1. **Phainopepla** - September 8, 1993 - Garden City (Finney County) - Leonard and Betty Rich
2. **Costa's Hummingbird** - Summer 1990 (?) - Sharon Springs (Wallace County) - Mrs. Shirley Chisum, J. D. Dick, J. D. Rising
3. **Pyrrhuloxia** - January 2, 1993 - Elkhart (Morton County) - JoAnn Garrett, Evelyn Johnson, Nanette Johnson, Sebastian Patti
4. **Common Black-headed Gull** - December 8, 1992 - Perry Lake (Jefferson County) - Chris Hobbs
5. **White-winged Dove** - September 15, 1993 - Colby (Thomas County) - At a sunflower processing plant
6. **Virginia's Warbler** - May 9, 1993 - Overland Park (Johnson County) - Barbara Buehler
7. **Black-throated Sparrow** - December 5, 1992 - Overland Park (Johnson County) - Chris Hobbs
8. **White-throated Swift** - April 8, 1993 - Arkansas City (Cowley County) - Gerald Wiens
9. **Rufous-crowned Sparrow** - November 1, 1992 - Morton County - Mick McHugh
10. **Golden-crowned Sparrow** - December 22, 1992 - Jefferson County - Richard Rucker

HONORABLE MENTION

Hammond's Flycatcher
Groove-billed Ani
Red-throated Loon
Connecticut Warbler

Items of Special Interest

- Franklin's Gull nesting at Cheyenne Bottoms, Summer 1993
- Inca Dove nesting in Garden City, Summer 1993

Special Species . . .

CASSIN'S SPARROW

by Roy Beckemeyer

Two of my favorite places are the prairie and the alpine tundra. Though fundamentally different ecosystems, they share some remarkable similarities: unlimited views of vast expanses of sky, tough plant life clinging tenaciously to the sod, frequent and awesome thunderstorms and nearly constantly blowing wind.

Although I've always been interested in the outdoors and for many years have made an avocation of studying the ecology of prairies and alpine tundra, I've really been a birder for only the past two years. In that time I have come to realize that the birds living there are part of the reason for my fascination with the prairie.

Prairie birds seem to be so much more a part of the sky! Whether it's a cloud of Larkspurs and Horned Larks billowing up out of a frozen field, or a single Upland Sandpiper whistling its plaintive call as it flutters to earth like a falling leaf, prairie birds seem to revel in the open sky.

The wonderful breeding displays of grassland birds remind me of a daytime version of fireworks going off. A field of Cassin's Sparrows resemble a barrage of rockets, zooming up to crest and then floating down, their song an audible analog for the visible cascade of

light that fireworks produce. In fact, Cassin's Sparrow is the special species that seems to characterize the prairie avifauna for me. With no treetops from which to advertise their availability, they swoop up into the open air and back down, their stylized song intricately choreographed to their flight maneuvers.

My wife's mnemonic for their song: "Up in-the Aaaaaiirrrr, Tweeeet Tweeeet," although probably closer to reality, isn't dramatic enough for me. I prefer to conjure up an image of myself as a conductor on stage, the sparrows a choral troupe swirling around me, their voices repeating the opening strains of a symphonic movement: "Daa Daa Duuummmmm, Dumm Dumm!"

Surely Tchaikovsky would have written a "Cassin's Symphony" to finish off this overture if he had ever had the opportunity to stand on the short grass prairie amidst a colony of Cassin's Sparrows in May. But since he didn't, I'll have to continue to imagine my own version.

So, if you happen some spring upon an apparent madman in a field of Cassin's Sparrows swinging a sagebrush baton, don't worry—it's probably just me taking my annual refresher course in "Prairie Bird Music Appreciation 101."

A FORTNIGHT INTO AUTUMN, DREAMING

by Roy Beckemeyer

Sometime before dawn
in the shivering-clear morning,
I'll climb from my bag
of feathery down,
metamorphosis complete.
Then, all hollow bones,
all round eyes,
all wings,
I'll flap up to join
the horned owl returning
to his perch in that old sycamore.

Sitting side by side,
we'll watch the moon's pale light

illuminate facets
of crystalline frost
(a false image, below,
of the glitter above),
then together we'll hold court
on the night's hunting success.
(Perhaps we'll cough up pellets,
the weft and warp
of interlocked bones
giving mute testimony
to keen, practiced skill.)

While all around us
October will hang,

suspended between
summer and winter
between south wind and north,
like Orion the Hunter,
straddling the meridian,
halfway between
rising and falling,
like the owl and I,
perched between the sky
and its icy, tarnished reflection.

(1976, in a central Kansas pasture)

KOS T-SHIRTS AND SWEATSHIRTS ARE AVAILABLE

There is still time to purchase them as holiday gifts for your special birding friends

For more information, see page 8

Costa Rica - A Tropical Adventure

Roger and Jan Boyd will be guiding a tour to Costa Rica June 19 - July 3, 1994. This will be their 14th tour of the tropics and their 5th to Costa Rica. While a major emphasis of this tour is the birds (Costa Rica has over 850 species of birds) they will make every effort to look at all aspects of tropical nature including plants like orchids and bromeliads, butterflies and other animals like monkeys.

If you didn't attend the Fall Meeting at Hays, you need to see a copy of this trip itinerary! The tour, which starts and ends in San Jose, Costa Rica, costs \$1795.00, plus approximately another \$650 for air travel to San Jose. This tour is limited to 12 participants plus the Boyds. If you are interested, or just would like more information, contact Roger or Jan at: 520 Third Street, PO Box 379, Baldwin City, Kansas, 66006, 913/594-3172

Please Welcome the Following New Members Who Have Joined Since 5-1-93

Linda Baker, Overland Park; W. Lee Bond, Hays; Ken and Jean Butler, Leawood; John Cavitt, Manhattan; Ferdinand & Jo Dirckx, Broomfield, CO; Linda and Erica Elliott, Hays; Dick Galbraith, Wichita; Kathy Laizure, Columbus; George Leff, Kansas City; Bert McClard, Wichita; Kate McGrath, Emporia; Dorothy Morgan, Lakin; The Nicholas Family, Derby; Art and Karen Nonhoff, Holcomb; Amy Rose, Eudora; Brad, Karen and Jay Sadler, Great Bend; Christopher Smith, Manhattan; and Bill Welch, Mulvane.

Just A Friendly Reminder

1994 Membership Dues are payable January 1. You should receive a renewal card and return envelope in the mail in December. Please fill in the category, name and complete address and return it along with your check in the return envelope to our new treasurer:

Gregg Friesen
515 East 4th
Newton, KS 67114

Thank you for your continued support of KOS!

Miscellaneous Notes

- The Fall Board Meeting Minutes and the Fall Meeting Minutes will be in the next issue of the *Horned Lark*.
- While you've got your checkbook out writing that check for 1994 dues, include a second check to help support the *Rare Bird Alert Fund*.
- Thank you Rose Fritz for all your hard work as KOS Treasurer the past several years, we appreciate your diligence and dedication!

HELP WANTED: Lynda Berendsen is a first grade teacher in LeCompton. She is interested in help with information she could use in teaching her class as well as to use in giving talks and demonstrations in schools. She is particularly interested in the themes: Kansas Birds, Saving Bird Habitats, Migration, and Owls in Kansas. Her mailing address is RR1, LeCompton, KS 66050.

KOS T-Shirts and Sweatshirts for Sale

The KOS has ordered more "Horned Lark" T-shirts and has also had the same design printed on long-sleeved sweatshirts! The T-shirts are pre-shrunk 100% cotton and are white. The sweatshirts are also white and are 50% cotton/50% polyester. Both shirts are only available in white so as to enhance the beautiful true-to-life colors of the lark's design. T-Shirts are available in sizes form S to XL for \$10 each and XXL for \$11 each (there are limited numbers of the S and XXL sizes). The sweatshirts are available in M to XL for \$15 each and XXL for \$18 each. These shirts are available by mail (if ordered pre-paid) from KOS Business Manager, Galen Pittman, 12042 258th Street, Lawrence, KS 66044. Please make checks payable to the Kansas Ornithological Society, NOT the Business Manager.

Postage and handling charges are as follows:

1 shirt (any size or type) = \$2.50
2 shirts " " " " = \$3.25
3 shirts " " " " = \$3.50
(add \$0.25 for each shirt over 3)

If you bought one of these T-shirts in the past and like it, you will love the same design on our new sweatshirts! These shirts would make excellent gifts for all of your family members and friends and don't forget that Christmas and Hanukkah are just around the corner. KOS membership decals are also available by mail for \$1.00 (postage and handling included).

KOS YOUNG NATURALIST AWARD

You may recall that in June we had a brief note titled "Know a Good Kid?". The idea is to recognize those youngsters who are interested and involved in birds and nature. We will be getting certificates made up and plan to have a write-up featured in the *Horned Lark* to tell everyone about the young people recognized in this program. Attached in this newsletter (the last page) is a nomination form. Join in and take this opportunity to encourage our youngsters' fledgling interest in the natural world.

Birding Hotspot

Since no one submitted a Birding Hotspot for this issue, let me just suggest one. Your local (or nearest) Christmas Bird Count. We included in this issue as

complete a list as we could muster at press time, as well as others from past years and who you may want to contact regarding that count.

Christmas (or Mid-winter if you prefer) Bird Counts are a lot of fun for those who have never participated in one. You get to meet other birders and often learn good birding areas that may even be in your own area. Birding skill doesn't matter—the compiler will match up rookies with experienced counters and everyone benefits.

There are usually around 40 counts across the state and anywhere from 400 to 600 people participate. There should be at least one new count this year (Flint Hills NWR), and everyone is always trying to de-throne Manhattan in the friendly rivalry to see who will have the most species on their count! Join in the fun and participate in a Count this holiday season!

Christmas Bird Counts - 1993

Last year there were 39 Christmas/Mid-Winter Bird Counts (CBC), the year before that 42. These are a lot of fun, and a chance to meet other birders and learn new birding locations. Following is a list of the CBC's that we are aware of at press time. Following that is a list of CBC's from last year and who compiled that count in case you are interested in trying to contact them to see about this year's count.

A couple of the counts have question marks after them indicating a tentative date has been set, but not necessarily confirmed. Contact the compiler or listed contact person for more details. The *Kansas Rare Bird Alert* (913-372-5499) usually has regular updates of upcoming CBC's as we move into that season, so that is also a source of information. Have fun this holiday season and participate in a couple of these annual events!

Friday, December 17

- *Quivira NWR*, Meet at the headquarters building around 7:00 a.m. and if it is like past years bring your lunch.

Saturday, December 18

- *Wichita*, meet at Lawrence-Dumont Stadium at 7:30 a.m. Wallace Champeny compiler, 316/455-3543
- *Lawrence*, Galen Pittman compiler, 913/842-7105.
- *Manhattan*, John Zimmerman compiler, 913/537-0238(h) or 532-6659(w).
- *Dodge City*, meet at Inn Pancake House, 1610 W. Wyatt Earp Blvd for breakfast at 7:00 a.m., Joleen Fromm compiler, 316/227-6342.
- *Wilson Reservoir*, Mike Rader compiler, 913/658-2595.

- *Flint Hills NWR*, meet at Refuge Headquarters, call Dave Wiseman for more information, 316/392-5553.
- *Halstead/Newton*, call Dwight Platt for more information, 316/283-6708.
- *Topeka*, Joanne Brier compiler, 913/232-4317.

Sunday, December 19

- *Garden City*, Marie Osterbuhr compiler, 316/276-8145.
- *Udall-Winfield*, Max Thompson compiler, 316/221-1856.
- *Waconda Lake (Glen Elder)*, Mike Rader compiler, 913/658-2595.
- *Baldwin*, Roger Boyd compiler, 913/594-3172.
- *Oskaloosa/Perry Lake*; Richard Rucker compiler, 913/842-3845.

Have a Safe and Happy Holiday Season!

Be Careful on the roads, whether driving a CBC or to and from a Holiday Party!

We need your help on KBBAT blocks next year!

