



The Official Newsletter  
of the  
Kansas Ornithological Society

## The Horned Lark

613 Tamerisk, Junction City, KS 66441-3359

June 1995

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### From the Keyboard -

Somebody could have made a lot of money off of me this spring! If anyone would have come up to me and said "I'll bet you that we have 3 times the normal May rainfall this year," I would have been willing to bet a substantial sum that at least here in Geary County it wouldn't have happened! Especially this soon after the major flooding of 1993. But then Mother Nature does what she wants to, and here we are once again with crazy weather and birds not showing up when and where they should be, but showing up when and where they shouldn't be! That's what makes this bird thing so much fun!

In the couple of years that I have been editor there have been times when I've asked myself why I volunteered to be newsletter editor. You're coming up on deadline, you can't get anything together, the weather is crazy and you'd rather be birding to find out that nothing is back yet, etc., etc. But then a few things fall together and you remember why you actually enjoy doing this. John Rakestraw responded to my offer of someone to write a birding tips column and the first of his articles appears in this issue. Then someone else volunteers with an idea I hadn't even thought of. I'm not going to give away any surprises (or apply any pressure), but the first installment of that new feature should be in the September issue. Add to that a couple of letters from readers that perk you up at just the right time and it helps get the batteries charged for another issue. To everyone who helped supply the power, thank you for all you've done and all you're going to do!

Several members have written in, and while supporting the decision to keep this newsletter (and organization) focused on birds as I indicated in this space last issue, wished that I would pass along conservation concerns, as I do receive quite a bit of information regarding these concerns. So I'll try to walk the middle of the road and make most everyone happy.

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) was initiated a few years back to help protect species of plants and animals, and their habitat, that were in serious threat of becoming extinct. All of us as birdwatchers know that it all starts with habitat; after all-

no habitat, no existence. And while I'll be the first to admit that there have been a few (and I underline few) cases of ESA law abuses by zealots, for the most part the ESA has helped protect many habitats from abuse by those not understanding the importance of habitat, conservation and preservation. The ESA has undergone major attack in the US House of Representatives this spring and many of us fear that its only hope of survival in any form is for the Senate to blunt the attacks and moderate the damage done to this legislation. I strongly encourage you to write to Senators Dole and Kassebaum and in a short one page letter explain that you feel that it is important to keep and protect Endangered Species Legislation and encourage them to do likewise.

And now back to your summer birding, KBBAT blocks and Breeding Bird Survey routes!

--chuck

### Who's Who in KOS - 1995

President, Mike Rader, PO Box 395, Wilson, KS 67490

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Treasurer, Gregg Friesen, 515 E 4th, Newton, KS 67114

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## SPECIAL FUNDRAISER FOR STUDENT RESEARCH FUND

As an addition to the Silent Auction, there will be a special item being auctioned with proceeds going to the Student Research Fund. Long time KOS member Eugene Lewis (now of Silver City, New Mexico) is donating his 1891 copy of History of Birds in Kansas by Goss. Eugene notes that this copy is in excellent shape with just a little wear on the edges of the spine. Additionally, he will include another lesser known Goss volume called "A Revised Catalogue of Birds of Kansas," dated 1886. This is a small volume which Eugene describes as being in fair condition.

Here are the ground rules for this special item. The two books will be auctioned as one unit. Minimum bid is \$100 and all proceeds will go to the Student Research Fund.

Due to the special nature of these items, we will allow mail bids ahead of time as well as bids at the Fall Meeting. If you won't be present at the Fall Meeting and want to get your bid in, send it to Roy Beckemeyer, 957 Perry, Wichita KS 67023. In case of two identical high bids arriving by mail, the one with the earliest postmark will be the successful bidder. If you've ever wanted a copy of Goss' book, here's your opportunity to get one and contribute to a good cause at the same time! *And a SPECIAL thank you to Eugene for donating these fine items!*

### Did You Find a Banded Bird?

I'm sure a lot of us have seen birds that were marked with leg bands or neck collars or wing dyes or wing markers and have wondered to whom or how to report this information. The Bird Banding Laboratory naturally handles all the information regarding actual bird banding and can also serve as sort of a clearinghouse for other marked birds.

The information you need to report is your name and home address, date and exact location of recovery/sighting, species, and band number or color markings. The Bird Banding Laboratory can be contacted almost any way imaginable...take your pick:

National Biological Survey  
Bird Banding Laboratory  
12100 Beech Forest Road  
Laurel MD 20708-4037  
301-497-5790  
FAX 301-497-5784  
BBL@mail.fws.gov

## YOUR HOBBY IS BIG BUSINESS!

Very few of us probably think about the impact that our bird watching/bird feeding hobby has on the economy of Kansas or the United States. But a recent release from the US Fish and Wildlife Service examines that very issue.

In a study released by "The Economic Contribution of Bird and Waterfowl Recreation in the United States During 1991 Service" indicates that of the estimated \$18.1 billion Americans spend annually to watch wildlife, \$5.2 billion is spent on birdwatching, using the most conservative economic assumptions. This figure could run as high as \$9 billion according to the reports author, Rob Southwick of Southwick Associates. Using conservative assumptions, the number of jobs supported by birdwatching is 200,000.

How does that \$5.2 billion compare to other activities? In the same year as the study (1991) Americans spent \$5.8 billion on movie tickets and \$5.9 billion on tickets to sporting events such as football, basketball and baseball (a figure that was probably much lower last year and this year for those that used to follow baseball well know!)

Total retail sales figures from this study showed that sales generated from bird watching and bird feeding in Kansas were \$24 million with an economic impact of \$57 million and supported 810 jobs.

A separate study released by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation showed that birdwatchers visiting Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge pumped \$14.4 million into the economy of Hidalgo County, Texas. At nearby Laguna Atascosa NWR in Texas the local impact is estimated at \$3.98 - 5.63 million, Bosque del Apache NWR in New Mexico - \$3.3 million and at our own Quivira NWR \$636,000 dollars.

Unfortunately the down side to all of this, as noted by the report, is that loss of habitat threatens many of these species and subsequently could impact this rapidly growing "industry." Action by all of us in the upcoming years is critical to protect the habitats that these species need! (See "From the Keyboard," page 1!)

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# FALL MEETING NEWS...

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**PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT  
OF THE  
ANNUAL FALL MEETING OF KOS  
Salina, Kansas  
October 6, 7 & 8, 1995**

Salina area birders are counting the days until October when all of our KOS members will (we hope) be migrating to Salina for a weekend of birding fun. Numerous members of the Smoky Hills Audubon Society are working with area KOS members to put together a weekend with something for everyone.

The weekend will begin with a Friday evening reception at Salina's new Lakewood Discovery Center in Lakewood Park. The Discovery Center is surrounded by a park with walking trails and a small lake. It's a great place for birding. Children will love the Discovery Center, so bring them along.

The annual meeting will be Saturday, October 7 at Kansas Wesleyan University and is being sponsored by the college's biology department.

The guest speaker for Saturday evening's dinner will be naturalist and raptor expert Maure Weigel. Many of you are familiar with Maure's work as director of the Prairie Raptor Project, which he founded in 1979. He has presented environmental/educational programs to well over 100,000 people and currently directs the Kansas Golden Eagle Reintroduction Program and the Active Eagle Nest Monitoring Project, both in Kansas. The dinner will be at the Salina Country Club.

Sunday's field trips will include your choice of visits to the Smoky Hills Audubon Society pond, area lakes, parks, mature forested areas and the farm of KOS member Steve Burr, where we'll look for fall warblers and a resident Barred Owl along the banks of Mulberry Creek.

*Shannon Rayl, Local Committee Chair*

## PRELIMINARY CALL FOR PAPERS FOR FALL MEETING

*Just a reminder that the next issue will contain the formal call for papers for presentation at the fall meeting. Now's the time to get to work on those papers and presentations so that we can have another outstanding round of papers at our Fall Meeting!*

## SILENT AUCTION

.....shshshshshshshshshsh

*Please donate ahead of time or bring with you to the October meeting items for the fund-raising silent auction. This event was a great success at Garden City last year, and we would like to repeat it! Contact Roy Beckemeyer, or Shannon Rayl for more details.*

# PLAN TO ATTEND!!

## KOS SPRING BOARD MEETING 1995

Camp Aldrich, near Cheyenne Bottoms

*May 6, 1995*

**Members present:** Mike Rader, Roy Beckemeyer, Dwight Platt, Gregg Friesen, Shannon Rayl, Sara Shane  
**Non-voting:** Chuck Otte

President Mike Rader opened the meeting.

**KANSAS BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE MEMBERS:** Mike Rader reported that Lloyd Moore, Pete Janzen and Max Thompson had been re-elected to the Kansas Bird Records Committee and this election needed the approval of the board. Roy Beckemeyer moved that the Board approve the election of Lloyd Moore, Pete Janzen and Max Thompson to the Kansas Bird Records Committee. The motion was seconded by Gregg Friesen. The motion passed.

**BYLAWS AMENDMENT ON BOARD COMPOSITION:** Mike Rader recommended that the Bylaws be amended to make the two Editor positions elective positions and then make the Editors voting members of the Board. Roy Beckemeyer moved that the Editor of the Bulletin and the Editor of the Newsletter be elected positions and that the two Editors be voting members of the Board and that the board recommend amendments to the Bylaws to provide for these changes. Sara Shane seconded the motion. The motion passed.

**FOREIGN MEMBERSHIPS:** Gregg Friesen reported that payments for foreign memberships did not include the \$5 extra this year. The Board suggested that he let it slide this year but that the dues cards with the extra \$5 listed be sent out earlier this fall.

**FALL MEETING:** Announcement of the Fall Meeting will be in the June Newsletter. The details will be in the September Newsletter and the final details have to be submitted to the Newsletter Editor by August 10. Shannon Rayl reported on planning for the meeting and field trips.

**STUDENT RESEARCH:** Mike Rader announced that Tom Shane has agreed to chair the Student Research Fund Committee.

The Board adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

*--Respectfully submitted, Dwight R. Platt, Corresponding Secretary*

### ATTENDEES AT SPRING '95 KOS MEETING

Karen & Ray Ganoung, Harold & Wilma Larson, Lorna Harder, Paul McNab, Marion Kuehn, Roger Boyd, Joanne Brier, Dave & Linda Bryan, Pat & Roy Beckemeyer, Cal Cink, Joyce Davis, Gregg Friesen, Allen Jahn, Dan Mulhern, Chuck Otte, Jim & Jean Piland, Dwight Platt, Mike Rader, Judy Zanardi, John Rakestraw, Bob Regier, Walker Butin, David & Amy Rose, Paul Schowalter, John Schuckman, David Seibel, Scott & Diane Seltman, Tom & Sara Shane, Mike Stewart, Ray & Marge Streckfus, Margaret & George Wedge, C. Pamela Wilson, and John Radke.

### SPECIAL THANKS

Karen Ganoung did a lot of great work in preparing for the meeting and providing warm greetings and directions on Friday night. John Radke not only showed us around the Nature Conservancy's property, but was indefatigable in the face of rain, rain, and more rain. Thanks, too, to Roger Boyd and Cal Cink for their willingness to work while the rest of us played (Cal even had to rescue his mist nets in the midst of a lightning storm!) We were also pleased to have a number of guests from the Smoky Hills Audubon Society join us.

## BIRD LIST FROM THE SPRING MEETING

The 43 attendees at the Spring Meeting at Cheyenne Bottoms and Quivira NWR endured almost any weather imaginable! If you've never set out a severe thunderstorm warning at Cheyenne Bottoms, believe me it is quite an experience as several of us can attest! In spite of that, Saturday was a GREAT day for those of us at Quivira (I finally got my Black Rail!). We also hooked up with Loren

Padelford and a group of Omaha, Nebraska Audubon members on Saturday and had a lot of fun. The list totaled up to be 174 (give or take one or two, I could never get the same number twice when counting!) and even though warblers were tardy and noncooperative, there were still some wonderful highlights such as Western Grebe, Common Loon, Palm Warbler and Black-headed Grosbeak.

Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Eared Grebe, Western Grebe, American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, American Bittern, Great Blue Heron, Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Cattle Egret, Green Heron, Black-crowned Night-heron, Yellow-crowned Night-heron, White-faced Ibis, Canada Goose, Wood duck, Green-winged Teal, Mallard, Northern Pintail, Blue-winged Teal, Cinnamon Teal, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, Turkey Vulture, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Ring-necked Pheasant, Wild Turkey, Northern Bobwhite, Black Rail, King Rail, Virginia Rail, Sora, Common Moorhen, American Coot, Black-bellied Plover, American Golden-plover, Snowy Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Piping Plover, Killdeer, Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Willet, Spotted Sandpiper, Upland Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper, Least

Sandpiper, White-rumped Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Dunlin, Stilt Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Long-billed Dowitcher, Common Snipe, Wilson's Phalarope, Franklin's Gull, Bonaparte's Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Forster's Tern, Least Tern, Black Tern, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Barn Owl, Eastern Screech-owl, Great Horned Owl, Burrowing Owl, Chuck-will's-widow, Chimney Swift, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker (Yellow-shafted and Red-shafted races), Eastern Wood-Pewee, Willow Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Say's Phoebe, Great-crested Flycatcher, Western Kingbird, Eastern Kingbird, Horned Lark, Tree Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Bank Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Barn Swallow, Blue Jay, Black-billed Magpie, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Sedge Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Eastern Bluebird, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, Wood Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird, Brown

Thrasher, American Pipit, Cedar Waxwing, Loggerhead Shrike, European Starling, Bell's Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Orange-crowned Warbler, Yellow warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler (Myrtle Warbler Race), Palm Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat, Wilson's Warbler, Northern Cardinal, Black-headed Grosbeak, Blue Grosbeak, Dickcissel, Rufous-sided Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Clay-colored Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, LeConte's Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Harris' Sparrow, Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Western Meadowlark, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Great-tailed Grackle, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, House Finch, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

**What's your favorite, private little birding spot?**

**Do you have some knowledge about an Endangered Species?**

**How about a favorite species? What about a favorite birding story?**

**Contact Chuck Otte at the address on the front page of this newsletter and become a contributor.**

**See your name in print!**

**(If you're worried about your writing skills, relax. We're here to help you with that, too.)**

## --Winged Tips

*This issue of the Horned Lark brings us another new contributor, John Rakestraw, and what will become a regular feature on birding tips. John and his family live in St. John Kansas. John enjoys birding and writing. If you read Bird Watcher's Digest you will have seen an article by John in the March/April 1995 issue. We welcome John to the Horned Lark and look forward to many more of his well written articles!*

## Learning Shorebirds

by John Rakestraw

While providing some of the most exciting and challenging birding in Kansas, the vast numbers of shorebirds that pass through our state can be very frustrating to the beginning birder. But it is possible to become comfortable with these birds if you take a little time to study them.

The first step to learning the shorebirds is to adjust your attitude. If you go into the field expecting to identify every bird you see from the start, it will be a very unpleasant birding experience. What makes shorebirds so challenging is not necessarily identifying them, but just seeing them well. Many of the diagnostic field marks on shorebirds can only be seen at close range. Study the birds that are close. Don't waste the entire morning trying to identify the birds that are half a mile away. You might be thinking, "There may be a Temminck's Stint among those Least Sandpipers." Maybe. But even if you do find something different, at a great distance your identification is going to be tentative at best. Your time will be much better spent studying the birds at the edge of the road. Studying the common birds up close is the way to learn the shorebirds. As your skill grows, you will be able to make identifications at greater distances.

Once you have convinced yourself to concentrate on the nearby birds that you can see well, the next step is to make side-by-side comparisons of different species. Note the differences in shape and behavior. The quickest way to learn a new species is to compare it to a familiar one.

The hardest aspect of identifying shorebirds is dealing with the different plumages. Each species has from three to five distinct plumages and is usually in the process of molting from one to another. Most field guides simply do not have the room to show all these variations. So you may have better luck focusing on the shape of the bird rather than on its coloring. What is the bird's overall shape? Is it short and plump or tall and lanky? The size and shape of the bill is probably the most important field mark to look for. Is the bill about the same length as the head or is it longer? Is the bill straight, curved, upturned, or is it straight with a little droop at the tip?

It is impossible for most people to accurately estimate the

size of a bird in the field. Instead of guessing that your mystery sandpiper is about ten inches long, compare the bird to something else. If you notice that your bird is slightly smaller than a nearby Killdeer, you can look up the length of the Killdeer and have a good estimate of the size of your bird.

I strongly recommend two books for those interested in learning the shorebirds. "The Complete Birder," by Jack Connor has an excellent chapter on shorebirds. Connor separates each species into different categories based on shape and choice of habitat. This helps you learn what to look for when trying to identify a new shorebird.

"Shorebirds," by Hayman, Marchant, and Prater describes every species of shorebird in the world. The strength of this book lies in the detailed text and the illustrations which show all of the different plumages. This book won't fit in your pocket, but it should definitely be in your car or backpack.

Listed below are a few hints that will help you to separate similar species.

**GREATER/LESSER YELLOWLEGS:** When you see these two birds side by side, you will wonder how you ever confused the two. The Greater Yellowlegs appears huge compared to the Lesser, and its large upturned bill reminds one of a godwit. When seen individually, however, the birds can appear nearly identical. The one thing to look for is the bill. If the bill is about the same length as the head, the bird is a Lesser. If the bill is obviously longer than the length of the head, the bird is a Greater.

**LONG-BILLED/SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHERS:** It's a Long-billed. If you get a close enough view, look for the subtle differences in plumage (see "Shorebirds," mentioned above, or "Advanced Birding" by Kenn Kaufman). Your best bet at identifying the few Short-billed Dowitchers that pass through Kansas is to listen to the alarm calls as the birds take off. The Short-bills give a "tu-tu-tu," similar to a Lesser Yellowlegs. The Long-bills give a high pitched "keek."

*(Learning Shorebirds, contd)*

**PEEPS:** Peeps is a generic term for any of six different small sandpipers--Sanderling, Baird's SP, White-rumped SP, Western SP, Semipalmated SP, and Least SP. The Sanderling is uncommon in Kansas and noticeably larger than the other peeps. The other five can be quite confusing. There is a lot of variation among individuals of the same species. However, these birds usually keep to themselves. Even in a large mixed flock, the Least will usually form little clumps with other Least and so on. By carefully scanning these little homogeneous flocks, you will eventually find one bird that "looks just like the one in the field guide."

*Baird's Sandpiper:* The wing tips extend beyond the tail, giving the bird a long lean look, for a peep.

*White-rumped Sandpiper:* The wing tips extend beyond the tail, but this bird is a little plumper than the Baird's. The White-rump has fine streaks along its sides. The bird's white rump is only visible in flight.

*Western Sandpiper:* Be careful with this one. Look for a slightly longer bill with a drooping tip and rusty plumage on the back.

*Semipalmated Sandpiper:* This bird is small and plump with wing tips level with the tail. The bill is short and the legs are black. The plumage is usually a rather dull grayish brown with little marking on the breast.

*Least Sandpiper:* The smallest of the peeps, the Least Sandpiper has a tiny bill and yellowish legs. In breeding plumage, the Least is a warm rusty brown with strong breast markings.

These are just a few tips that have helped me. As you study the shorebirds, you will find your own tricks of the trade. Take your time, make side-by-side comparisons whenever possible, and don't be too proud to let some birds go unidentified. Remember, this is supposed to be fun.

## NEW MEMBERS

Margaret Wedge, Membership Secretary, does a wonderful job of keeping the editor posted of new KOS members. Unfortunately I occasionally misplace her letters so some of the following new members were new several months ago. The editor apologizes for the delay in the recognition of those new members and for any other oversights he causes. A KOS welcome to the following new members: Marsha Ebaugh, Kathy Speer, Wichita; Mark Stafford & Kay Brown, Arma; Chris Hase, Emporia; David Haight, Abilene; Jan Hall, Lawrence; Mike Stewart, Leavenworth; Debra Nusz, Garden City; Terrence & Mary Jo Kearns, Valley Falls; Mark Janos, Pueblo CO; and Joe Himmel, Greeley CO.

## BY-LAWS CHANGES PROPOSED

After discussion at the winter and spring board meetings the Board of Directors has voted to forward the following by-laws changes to the membership to be voted on at the Fall Meeting in Salina. These changes would remove the Bulletin and Newsletter Editor from being appointed positions, make them elected positions and make them voting members of the Board of Directors.

- Add "Editor of the Bulletin" and "Editor of the Newsletter" to the list of elected officers in Article IV, Section 1A so that it reads: "Elected Officers: President (Chairman of the Board), Vice-President, Corresponding Secretary (Secretary of the Board), Membership Secretary, Treasurer, Business Manager, four (4) Directors at large, Editor of the Bulletin and Editor of the Newsletter."
- Add "Editor of the Bulletin" and "Editor of the Newsletter" to the list of officers in Article V, Section 1A so that it reads: "Officers: President, Vice-President, Corresponding Secretary, Membership Secretary, Treasurer, Business Manager, Editor of the *Bulletin* and Editor of the Newsletter."
- Add "Editor of the Bulletin" and Editor of the Newsletter" to the list of officers that can succeed themselves as elected in Article V, Section 2C so that it reads: "The Corresponding Secretary, the Membership Secretary, the Treasurer, the Business Manager, the Editor of the Bulletin and the Editor of the Newsletter may succeed themselves as elected."
- Delete "Editor of the Bulletin" and "Editor of the Newsletter" from the list of appointed positions in Article V, Section 3A so that it reads "Appointed positions are: Librarian and the Chairman of each of the standing committees on Conservation, Membership, Publicity and Kansas Bird Records."
- Article V, Section 3B will read: "The Librarian shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the Board for a one year term which shall begin with the annual spring field trip. The Librarian may be reappointed at the discretion of the President and the Board." (The two editor positions are removed from this section.)
- Article VI, Section 2E would be amended to read: "Appoint the Librarian, subject to approval by the Board." (The two editor positions are removed from this section.)
- Add Section 8D to Article VI to read: "Be members of the Board of Directors." (This adds another responsibility to the duties list of the two editors.)

If you have any questions on these by-laws changes feel free to contact any of the Board of Directors.

**Is Your Landscape "For the Birds?"**  
**Part VI - Surviving Adverse Weather**  
*(Part VI of an ongoing series)*  
*by Chuck Otte*

Every once in a while the best laid landscaping and garden plans go down the drain...quite literally. Such was the case this spring for much of Kansas when it turned cold and wet, and *stayed* wet for quite some time (and it didn't warm up very early either!). These challenges create numerous problems for the home gardener.

Cold and wet soils create many problems. How fast perennial plants break dormancy and grow in the spring is dependent more on the soil temperature than on the air temperature. To warm the soil up in the spring requires lots of sunshine. We didn't have much sunshine in April and May and the ground stayed cold. Plants were, therefore, slow to leaf out and bloom.

Cold soil temperatures also affect how fast seeds germinate, as well as how fast transplanted flowers, garden plants, etc. take off and grow. When plants are transplanted into soils colder than they prefer, they often show very little growth (they just sit there). When this condition is coupled with wet soils they not only just sit there, they often start to turn yellow or even purplish or bluish. These are classic symptoms of slow nutrient uptake due to stunted root development, root development problems from low oxygen levels in the soil (it's all been replaced with water) or just plain cold weather shock. These symptoms usually soon disappear with warm weather and sunshine..

Wet soils create many other problems when we start planting into them. When wet soil is worked it tends to lose its structure. Soil structure is physical property that describes how it's three dimensional structure (or how it looks). Soils under native grass frequently have a granular structure. Deeper down in that same soil where the clay starts to accumulate, blocky or sub-angular blocky structure may appear. This structure has a major impact on how water infiltrates the soil, how much water the soil can hold and how easily roots can penetrate the soil.

When the soil starts to lose its structure, it tends to get compacted. When it dries out it forms large, very hard clods. Compacted soil takes up water much more slowly than non-compacted soil and roots have a great deal of difficulty penetrating it. When we plant into the wet soils that many of us had this spring, we can create compaction along any of the surfaces of that planting hole.

Over time the wetting and drying, the freezing and thawing and even the action of roots will break down this compacted soil. But what it means in the interim is that

those plants that were planted in this soil will probably be much slower in developing a good root system. Therefore they will dry out more quickly since the root soil mass is limited. These plants will have to be watched very closely for moisture stress when drier and hotter weather arrives.

Another problem that excessively wet weather creates is disease. Fortunately, many of the diseases we see on the leaves of our garden and landscape plants look much worse than they really are. A little dry weather and sunshine will help replace most of the leaves that are lost from diseases. As we move into warmer and drier times your watering management can also make a difference. The drier you can keep the leaves the fewer problems you'll have. Avoid excessive use of sprinklers and try to keep the water on the soil at the base of the plants. If you have to use a sprinkler use it early in the morning so the plants can dry off quickly. Removing leaves that have fallen off from disease problems from around the plants can help reduce the amount of reinfection of newer leaves. And sometimes you may just have to use a fungicide to stop the disease cycle. When possible you can use "natural" products like Bordeaux, sulfur or lime and sulfur combined to minimize risk to birds and beneficial insects. Occasionally severe cases necessitate that you go to some of the newer products. Read and follow all label directions with any fungicide.

Remember also that before we know it we'll probably be fighting hot dry weather and then we'll have a whole different set of problems to deal with!

### **Do You Have an E-mail Address?**

It seems that the information super-highway just keeps reaching out further and further. I transcribe the Kansas Rare Bird Alert on a regular basis (which means just as regularly as it gets updated) and place it on the Internet through Birdchat so people all over the world can access it. Many people don't want to wade through all those messages, BUT, they might still like to get the Kansas RBA. If you have an internet accessible e-mail address and would like to receive the transcription of the RBA (usually within a day or two of when Scott updates it), drop me a message at [COTTE@OZNET.KSU.EDU](mailto:COTTE@OZNET.KSU.EDU), give me your address and tell me that you want to receive the RBA. I'm already sending it to a half dozen KOS members and there's no reason why you can't be one of them!

--Meet your officers--

## A Tale of Friendship, Dogs and Birds...a KOS-related autobiography of Business Manager, Dawn Sharp

*(The following story is true, albeit a bit long-winded. Names have not been changed because no one is innocent. I've long felt I should go public with this, but I was afraid while alerting some to danger, I'd be giving others of you ideas! Beware, you might be getting involved!)*

All I wanted was a dog. So a friend introduced me to Ruth Fauhl and her Weimaraners. Ruth is my best friend. I have come to realize from the events of the past fifteen years, though, that she is a bit dangerous. I mean, look at me...through her unassuming manner and her clever manipulations (oh heck, subtle arm-twisting might be just as direct) I'm the Business Manager of the KOS. I've finally made room in my little house and schedule for my duties. I've got a little catching up to do, but I now know where everything is and am ready to forge ahead. But back to my tale.

Through Ruth, not only did I end up with a dog...I ended up with *three* at home for now, but with many others having passed through my house under the auspices of National Weimaraner Rescue. My Weims and I live in a small house near the eastern edge of Lawrence. I showed my show dog to his championship myself and I put Ruth's dog on the National Weim Obedience Top Ten while achieving his first obedience title. I work as a secretary in the School of Pharmacy at the University of Kansas and have some open plans that include teaching Geography sometime in the distant future. I do my best to get out to see some birds every so often, too. I especially enjoy taking children out birding. Some of my most memorable trips have been with my youngest (4-12 year old) friends. But that's another story.

I was still almost normal (I only owned one Weim) when Ruth asked me to travel along for just half a day on a CBC. What good could a person be when they could identify Cardinals, Blue Jays, Starlings and Sparrows (what did I know about sparrows?!)? Oh, so I only have to write down what everybody else sees...okay, okay, I can do that for half a day. The next year it was a whole day. I became the chief bird "spotter" and I'd added Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse and HOUSE Sparrow to my repertoire (I could still only identify about half a dozen species). I missed a couple of years because of finals, but in 1988 when I bought my first brand new car, I drove straight to Ruth's house (in April) and announced that I would be DRIVING that year's CBC.

To be completely honest, Ruth didn't get me here alone... she had help. One cold, damp, dank, dim November afternoon, Ruth and I were getting ready for a rousing game of Trivial Pursuit when the phone rang. All I heard was "Do you have room in your car for one more?" and "We'll be ready in fifteen minutes." I was swept up in the moment. We were going to join David Seibel, then president of the KOS, in an attempt to see the Brown Pelican that had been spotted at Perry Lake. (I've long

been anxious to let the membership in on this story...I'm afraid, though, that while alerting some of you to danger, I might be giving others of you ideas!)

There was a light rain as we headed north out of Lawrence. Just as we passed the city limits, Dave's windshield wipers stopped working. It didn't really matter at the time, but by the time we got to the bait shop in Perry, it was starting to RAIN. When Dave couldn't locate the problem, I figured we'd do the sane thing and turn around and head for home while there was still some light, but no. We were headed for the dam. I had joked that I had enough dog leads in my bag that we could pull the wipers up and down manually. As we pulled out toward the dam, I reiterated the comment...probably with panic in my voice. Dave bought a ball of twine and he and Ruth kept the windshield fairly clear by pulling the wipers up and down. I was in shock. But I still didn't see the real trouble up ahead.

We didn't see the pelican, but I did get a new gull and a tern despite the fact that the rain was blowing horizontally from the north into the car as we looked out over the reservoir. We stopped for gas on the way home (by this time Dave had tied the strings together and could control the wipers by himself) and I offered Dave some gas money. He refused. When he came back from paying, though, he said he would take me up on that offer...but I was to use the money toward my new KOS membership.

Eventually Ruth spread the news that I had a degree in journalism, that I had worked for a mailing firm, that I worked on computers and could type. (She really is dangerous, you know.) I began typing the *Horned Lark* for editor Don Vannoy when we handled everything over the phone and by mail. Then Chuck Otte became the editor and now we handle everything over the Internet and by fax. I had pitched in with mailing duties while Galen Pittman was Business Manager during which time he slowly worked to convince me to run for Business Manager. Most of that cajoling took place in Ruth's living room. And the rest is history.

Looking back on the events that led to my membership in KOS, I realize that you really do have to be careful of people like Ruth...she is the cause of both of my serious vices--Dogs and Birds. I'm always on my guard now. When Ruth and Mary Allen get together in my car for a count, I have to threaten them with walking home if they keep talking about wildflowers (it's a threat that usually works...they both qualify for senior citizen discounts). I just don't have time for another vice!!!

## SPRING ROUNDUP 1995

The Spring Roundup obviously didn't make it for this issue. There are reports about the report, though. The high water in Junction City earlier this year washed the report downstream. It seemed logical to think that it would eventually arrive in Lawrence, very near to Dawn's house, actually, but there was a hitch. There was an anonymous report by a birdwatcher along the Kaw that the report got hung up in some river debris and only washed

loose after some bird (sorry...it was there and gone too fast to get a good ID. All we know for sure is that it had wings) took some nesting material away to repair its nest and dislodged it. We're now on alert that it is again floating toward Lawrence, but at a very slow pace. Dawn is on watch and will grab it, hopefully before it goes over the Bowersock dam. Our current plan is to have it dried out in time for the fall issue! Thank you for your patience.

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Some of the Western Kansas KOS members held a farewell dinner for Dr. Ely on December 4, 1994. Left to right: Scott Selman, Diane Selman, Charles Ely, Ellen Rader, Mike Rader, Sara Shane and Tom Shane. (Photo by Andrea Shane.)

