



The Official Newsletter  
of the  
Kansas Ornithological Society

## The Horned Lark

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### From The Keyboard -

Regardless of whether it's been one month or three it seems like I just barely get one Keyboard column written and here I am writing another one! In spite of old man winter refusing to go away quietly spring migration is quietly moving in upon us. Turkey Vultures and Eastern Phoebes are brave harbingers of the upcoming season.

The eternally ancient calls of the Sandhill Cranes are still echoing through my head from last weekends visit to the Platte River in Nebraska. This is one of the most spectacular sights, year end and year out that a birder can enjoy. We got out of Nebraska just ahead of a blizzard that killed many birds in Nebraska including several hundred Sandhill Cranes. My mother called the day after the severe blizzard to relate her gathering of over a dozen juncos, blackbirds and sparrows which were dead in her farmyard. Even the brave harbingers can get caught off guard. But spring is still assuredly inching its way north. If by no other proof, the days are getting longer.

There are several exciting items in this issue. The spring field trip information is contained within. Get your registrations sent in and more importantly get your reservations called in to Elkhart. For those who have birded Morton County before I'm sure you're itchy to get back. For those of you who have never birded Morton County before, let me offer you just one word of advice. GO! Pull out any past issue of the Horned Lark that contains the birding roundup for the month of May and check out the Morton County listings. If that doesn't get your birding blood simmering I don't know what will!

We are also offering a couple of excellent articles (and I didn't even write them!) Galen Pittman of the Bird

Records Committee shows us how the committee works and what happens on some documentations. Thanks to Galen for working this up and to Mick McHugh for his rejected (that's such a nasty word) record.

Lastly a great article from an Internet birder in Connecticut that discusses how do birds see color and motion and how can I use do a better job of birding. We spend hours reading and writing about optics and references, but how often do we think about what we wear and how we act while we are birding? I think you'll find this to be a fascinating article. Enjoy the whole issue, get your spring meeting reservations sent in and have a good birding spring!

- - chuck

### Who's Who in KOS - 1996

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**Editor, *The Horned Lark*,** Chuck Otte, 613 Tamerisk,  
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# ANNOUNCEMENTS!

## **KBBAT BLOCK BUSTER WEEKEND FOR NORTHWEST KANSAS**

Sara Shane

We will work on a series of Kansas Breeding Bird Atlas (KBBAT) blocks in Cheyenne, Sherman and Wallace Counties, Kansas July 5, 6 and 7, 1996. This effort should finish up the Northwest Kansas Region. The 4th of July can be used as a travel day for those living in eastern Kansas. We will meet in Goodland the night of the 4th, work the 5th, 6th and the morning of the 7th leaving the afternoon for people to drive home. There is always a chance for Mountain Plovers, Long-billed Curlews and Ferruginous Hawks. Stan Roth found breeding Violet-green Swallows a few years back in Wallace County. Sebastian Patti has already turned up a singing male MacGillivray's Warbler in one of the Cheyenne County blocks. Bill Busby informs me that the motel expense in Goodland will be covered. Please let me know if you plan to make the trip, so I can reserve the appropriate number of rooms. Thank you! Sara Shane, 1706 Belmont, Garden City, KS 67846. Phone # 316-275-4616.

### ***Spring Meeting Information & Registration on page 12***

### ***Bird wild and wonderful Morton County, Cimarron Grasslands, Baca County Colorado or Black Mesa Oklahoma***

***May 4 & 5, 1996***

***Make your reservations and send in  
your registration today!***

*The KOS will hold its Annual Fall Meeting October 4, 5, and 6, 1996 in Harvey County, Kansas on the campuses of Hesston and Bethel College. Mark these dates on your calendars and be sure to attend. Look for registration information in June and September Horned Larks.*

### **AOU Checklist Changes**

*by Max Thompson*

The July 1995 issue of the Auk was recently released and it did include these splits so they are now "official". All you serious listers (the editor included) can now update your lists! Some of the changes are as follows:

- American Swallow-tailed Kite becomes Swallow-tailed Kite
- Common Black-headed Gull becomes Black-headed Gull
- Gilded Flicker, *Colaptes chrysoides* is separated from Northern Flicker.
- Scrub Jay is split into three: Florida Scrub-Jay, *Aphelocoma coerulescens*, Island Scrub-Jay, *A. insularis*, and Western Scrub-Jay, *A. californica*.
- Gray-breasted Jay, becomes Mexican Jay
- Bicknell's Thrush, *Catharus bicknelli* is split from the Gray-cheeked Thrush, *C. minimus*.
- Rufous-sided Towhee is split into Spotted Towhee, *Pipilo maculatus*, and Eastern Towhee, *P. erythrophthalmus*.
- Sharp-tailed Sparrow is split into Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow, *Ammodramus caudacutus*, and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, *A. nelsoni*.
- Northern Oriole becomes Baltimore Oriole, *Icterus galbula*, Bullock's Oriole, *I. bullockii*, and Black-backed Oriole, *I. abeillei*.

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## WHEN FAIR WEATHER TURNS FOWL

*John Rakestraw*

The old adage goes, "Everyone talks about the weather, but no one ever does anything about it." While we can't change the weather, different weather conditions should change the way we approach our birding. The birds are always out there, but different weather conditions may alter their behavior and their choice of habitat.

### **RAIN**

Birding in the rain may not be too pleasant, but a light rain can work to a birder's advantage. Songbirds will often forage closer to the ground in wet weather, taking advantage of cover. If the sun comes out after an extended period of rain, birds that have been inactive may go into a feeding frenzy. This makes the birds much more visible.

Light rain will usually not affect waterfowl and shorebirds, so look for them in their usual haunts.

### **WIND**

Strong winds can create some very challenging conditions. Search areas that provide birds with shelter from the wind. In grassland habitats, seek out shelterbelts or brushy areas. In hilly terrain, songbirds will take cover on the leeward side of a hill, while raptors will take advantage of the updrafts on the upwind side.

Look for shorebirds on the upwind side of lakes and marshes. Strong winds will push the water back, creating mudflats.

Waterfowl will seek shelter in quiet coves or along the upwind shore.

Small fish will be concentrated on the downwind side of lakes, so search these areas for mergansers, gulls, and other fish eaters.

### **COLD & SNOW**

Severe cold may convince you to stay inside, but it is not much of a problem for birds. Feathers provide excellent

insulation. A bird's main concern in cold weather is finding a consistent source of food. Look for fruit-bearing trees and shrubs, grain fields, and patches of sunflowers or other seed sources. If any of these food sources is next to cover, so much the better. Don't underestimate the productivity of the neighborhood bird feeders.

A fresh blanket of snow is very helpful if you are looking for larks, longspurs, or other ground-dwelling species. On bare ground, these birds are often invisible until they fly away. Snow cover makes it much easier for the birder to locate these birds from a distance.

### **MIGRATION AND WEATHER**

Much has been written over the years about the weather's effect on bird migration. These studies make for some fascinating reading and birders can learn a lot from them. But remember: Birds do not go to graduate school and they do not watch The Weather Channel, so they may break the rules.

In general, birds will take advantage of weather systems that are moving in the same direction the birds want to go. In the spring, southerly winds and clear skies are great for migrating birds. But these conditions may cause the birds to fly right over Kansas, resulting in poor birding. If northbound birds encounter northerly winds, the birds are forced to slow their progress, giving birders a better chance at seeing the birds before they move on.

If migrating songbirds encounter rain or a strong cold front, large flocks may be forced to land wherever they may be. This is known as a 'fallout,' and can provide some of the most exciting birding of the season.

Fallouts are not always predictable. But if a cold front is expected to arrive in your area around dawn during spring migration, it may well be worth your while to be out in your favorite warbler woods that morning.

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## **KBBAT BLOCKBUSTER WEEKEND - DICKINSON COUNTY**

Chuck Otte

I've agreed to see to the completion of 4 KBBAT blocks in southern Dickinson County. I am planning to get these pretty well wrapped up, with your help, in late June. Anyone interested in helping the weekends of June 15 & 16 and/or June 22 & 23 please let me know! These should be 4 fun blocks and if we can get a total of 8 people together we should be able to get most of these 4 done in one weekend and may not even need the second. Contact me at 613 Tamerisk, Junction City, KS 66441, 913-238-8800 or e-mail at [otte@jc.net](mailto:otte@jc.net). Additional work outside of these weekends by interested parties is of course acceptable. I run a Breeding Bird Survey route that goes through 2 of these blocks and there is some surprisingly good habitat here (it isn't all wheat fields!) Let me know if you are interested!

## Letters to the Editor -

### Do We Have a Useful KOS Checklist?

I have watched over thirty years the size of the KOS checklist get longer and larger, (in the earlier days we used the Baldwin Bird Club checklist.) It has not fit in a shirt pocket for ten years now. We have all had great fun looking for and adding new species to the list. There are many other field observations that need recording on our birding trips other than rare birds. The card has never been conducive to collecting much information about the day's sightings while in the field. the limited space for writing down numbers seen, locations, times, ages, and sexes is totally inadequate. I counted up the species presently on the checklist I have never used and came up with eighty.

I would propose that a list of 300 species with enough space to write in numbers observed along with other observations is all that is needed for collecting data on the birds of Kansas for the next and 21st century editions of *Birds in Kansas*. I can not see the use of publishing a list of 430 plus species compacted on a checklist card. That could be done on a sheet of 8.5 x 11 paper for a lot less money. A checklist or field card should be designed to collect information about our Kansas birds and not serve only to compete in the "who has the biggest state list" contest promoted by other bird organizations.

The list of birds I grew up with was Dr. Johnston's 1965, *A Directory to the Birds of Kansas*. If something is badly in need of updating, it is a list of birds of that size and of that content. The current *Birds in Kansas* by Thompson and Ely contains the information but is too big to take along with all the other birding gear of today. If all the latest information were condensed in an updated directory then a new birder would know what information is needed about a certain species. He would know if a species was rare in his part of the state and would be able to make more detailed observations and avoid having his birds repeatedly thrown out of the Christmas and other counts. He would know if the bird he was looking at had arrived two weeks early, or that the flock of 500 Brown Creepers was something worth taking careful notes about. I would ask the KOS Board to discuss the function of our checklist and maybe ask for additional input from other members before we spend a lot of money on a marginally functional checklist.

Respectfully,  
Tom Shane

### Response -

Tom brings up some excellent points that have been discussed all over the country by numerous state organizations, wildlife refuges, state and national parks,

virtually anyone who has a bird checklist. The ultimate questions comes down to what is the purpose of this checklist, how will people use it and how much information do we put in it?

The KOS checklist is a product of the Kansas Birds Record Committee (KBRC). I visited with their chair, Mick McHugh, about the checklist issue. There is in fact a brand new checklist about to come out! The KBRC feels that it is important to keep all the birds currently on the Kansas list (as accepted by the KBRC) on the KOS checklist. This is a problem confounded by splitting and lumping of species as has just happened with the recent changes to the American Ornithologist Union (AOU) checklist. The KBRC wants to keep moving forward with the times and feels that the best way to do this is by keeping the KOS checklist up to date and current with AOU names and recognized species and also by listing all accepted Kansas species. The new checklist will be a three fold style and based on what I've heard from other members of the KBRC should be a big improvement over the old list.

I empathize with Tom's concerns. To be right honest I seldom use the KOS checklist. I use a regional list but also create new lists of my own to use for Christmas counts, spring migration counts or whatever. Unfortunately many birders don't have the time and patience or resources to sit down at a typewriter or computer and generate new bird lists. For those who do have a computer (IBM compatible) I can provide the KOS list in many standard word processing formats. You can then do as I do and take this master list and construct the lists that you would like for your particular needs. We will never be able to create an "official" checklist to meet everyone's needs or that will even include all the species that some of us think should (or shouldn't) be there. But the KBRC and the KOS Board will keep listening and striving to meet as many of the needs of Kansas birders as possible. - Chuck Otte, Editor

Letters to the editor are always welcome and we look forward to your input on any and all KOS and Kansas bird matters.

### New KOS Members -

We would like to welcome the following new KOS members who have joined our ranks since the last newsletter!

Patricia Mickler, Great Bend; Tyler Hicks, Mulvane; Lorna Harder, Hesston; Janice Conrad, Lawrence; Tish Shippey, Winfield; Hope Leighton, Boulder Colorado.

Once again welcome to these new members. We could always use new members because we all knew there are a lot of birdwatchers who are not KOS members. Visit with your regular birding buddies that are not KOS members and see if you can't get them to join or buy them a first year membership to get them started!

Kansas Ornithological Society, Inc.  
Statement of Assets at the Close of 1995

**Unrestricted Funds**

General Fund	Beginning Balance		1,096.44	
	Receipts:			
	Contributions RBA	105.00		
	1995 carried forward	485.00		
	1995 Dues	3,605.00		
	Interest Earned	1,000.21		
	Meeting Overage			
	Spring	314.00		
	Fall	227.18		
	Sales: Checklists	29.70		
	Sales: Decals	4.00		
	Sales: Sweatshirts	84.00		
	Sales: T-shirts	43.00	5,897.09	
	Disbursements			
	Bank Charges	12.00		
	Corporation Fee	20.00		
	Expenses: Business Manager	248.96		
	Expenses: Kansas Bird Records Committee	170.71		
	Expenses: Membership Secretary	261.03		
	Expenses: President	76.53		
	Expenses: Rare Bird Alert	155.24		
	Bulletin Printing	1,691.69		
	Newsletter Printing	967.42	-3,603.58	
	Transfer			
	To: Business Manager Account	200.00	-200.00	
	<b>Ending Balance</b>			<b>3,189.95</b>
	Southwestern College Account Beginning Balance		18.57	
	No activity recorded during 1996			<b>18.57</b>
	Future Dues Beginning Balance		590.00	
	Receipts			
	1996 Dues	350.00		
	Disbursements			
	Transfer 1995 dues to General Fund	485.00	-485.00	
	<b>Ending Balance</b>			<b>455.00</b>
	KBBAT (Kansas Breeding Bird Atlas Project) Funds: Beginning Balance		333.00	
	Disbursements			
	KBBAT Expenses	120.61	-120.61	
	<b>Ending Balance</b>			<b>212.39</b>
	Business Manager Advance Beginning Balance		400.00	
	Transfer from General Fund	200.00	200.00	
	Disbursements:			
	Business Manager Expenses	206.59	-206.59	
	<b>Ending Balance</b>			<b>393.41</b>
	<b><u>Total Unrestricted Funds End of 1995</u></b>			<b><u>4,269.32</u></b>

## ***KOS Statement of Assets, continued***

### **Restricted Funds**

Book Royalty Account Beginning Balance		7,513.01	
Receipts			
Interest Earned	180.80		
Royalty Payments	520.02	700.82	
<b>Ending Balance</b>			<b>8,213.83</b>
Dingus Natural Area Beginning Balance		7,320.21	
Receipts			
Interest Earned	382.37	382.37	
Disbursements			
Liability Insurance	183.00	-183.00	
<b>Ending Balance</b>			<b>7,519.58</b>
Endowment Beginning Balance		1,000.50	
Receipts			
Donations	1,345.00		
Silent Auction Proceeds	399.00	1,744.00	
<b>Ending Balance</b>			<b>2,744.50</b>
Life Membership Beginning Balance		15,972.00	
Receipts			
Dues Received	837.50	837.50	
<b>Ending Balance</b>			<b>16,809.50</b>
Student Research Fund Beginning Balance		1,466.88	
Receipts			
Interest Earned	35.60		
Auction Proceeds	175.00	210.60	
<b>Ending Balance</b>			<b>1,677.48</b>
<b><u>Total Restricted Funds End of 1995</u></b>			<b><u>36,964.89</u></b>
<b><u>Total Assets End of 1995</u></b>			<b><u>41,234.21</u></b>

## **1996 North American Migration Count**

**May 11, 1996**

The next North American Migration Count (NAMC) is scheduled for May 11, 1996, semi-organized *everywhere* north of the Rio Grande. The purposes are to take a snapshot of migration and map the relative abundance/distribution of birds down to the field identifiable forms, i.e., Yellow-rumped "Audubon's" Warbler vs. Yellow-rumped "Myrtle" Warbler, etc.

This event has been gaining in popularity in Kansas over the past couple of years. Unlike Christmas Counts that are a circle surrounding a center point, the NAMC is county specific, which makes it much easier in many ways. Dave Rintoul is again organizing the Kansas counts. If you have conducted a count in past years you should be receiving information from Dave in the near future. If you are interested in starting a new count in a county or if you want to find out who is doing counts in your area give Dave a call: work, 913-532-6663 or home, 913-537-0781 or via e-mail, DRINTOUL@KSU.KSU.EDU. If you can get away the day before Mother's Day this is a fun, fun event which is starting to create some very good information. We've managed to have around 15 counts going in Kansas, but we would like to cover some more counties. Contact Dave for more information!

# What Color Should I Wear While Birding?

by Byron K. Butler

*The following article was a response by the author to a question asked on the Internet discussion group BIRDCHAT. The question was, "What is the best color clothing to wear while birdwatching". The author is a Ph. D. graduate student in ornithology and a regular contributor to BIRDCHAT. This article is adapted and edited from his response and he has graciously allowed it to be shared with the Horned Lark readers. Thank you Byron! - editor*

What color should I wear while birding? This question has been considered before by birders and professional field ornithologists. This question has been speculated upon, but never answered satisfactorily. Some of the responses posted by others have been good. The reason there is no adequate answer to this question is because we (humans) do not understand the perceptual world of any non-human animal. In fact, we frequently have a tough time understanding the perceptual world of humans different from ourselves. For example, it is hard to imagine what being blind, or even color blind, is like if you have normal vision. It may even be harder to imagine how other sensory modalities can be enhanced over our normal experience. Blind humans "switch" to their sense of hearing and can perceive their surroundings better with their ears than can sighted people. Dogs place a lot of importance on their sense of smell and make olfactory maps as well as visual maps. It is exactly this line of thinking that lead me to work on sensory systems in birds to begin with. While studying avian ecology and behavior I realized that many of the questions I wished to answer concerning communication in birds could not be properly addressed until we understood the visual perceptual world of birds. We still do not have this understanding, but we are slowly getting there.

Birds see color, i.e., they have color vision. Their color vision is not only good, but it is actually better than our own. These two definitive statements describe what vision researchers are pretty sure is true - however, at the highest levels of scientific rigor they have *not* been firmly established. Up until the early 1970s it was widely thought that birds had trichromatic (3 photoreceptor) color vision comparable to that of humans, or perhaps a bit inferior to ours. Then, around 1972, it was discovered that birds can see light in the near-ultraviolet (uv) range and series of new studies began. Today it is widely accepted that the avian eye, not the human eye, is the quintessential color vision system. It is now believed that birds see more colors (hues) than we do and the colors also appear more saturated to birds than do ours to us. They are able to do this because they have four (or more!) cones and pigmented oil droplets in those photoreceptors. Whereas we have short, middle and long (also called blue, green, & red, respectively) cones, they not only have short, middle, and long cones, but also a uv cone.

When we talk about what colors we wear (or *\*should\** wear) in the field, we assume these colors look the same to birds as they do to us. This assumption may not always be correct. Birds probably do see colors similar to the way we see them, but they are most likely never exactly the same, and may indeed be quite different. To clarify, a flower that is red to us is probably also red to most diurnal birds, but is probably seen by them as a different hue of red. If the flower (or other object) reflecting the red light is also reflecting uv light, the color (hue) seen by birds will almost certainly be different than anything we see. Those of you interested in studying this further can see my message on tetrachromacy posted to BirdChat several weeks ago (*contact the editor if you would like to see this reference*). Imagine you are standing in a forest or field looking at a bird that is, say, thirty yards away. What are you thinking? Most birders will be thinking about getting the correct ID, or may be trying to record a description (in memory or in writing) of an observed behavior. Either way, the birder is treating the bird as an object; i.e., you are over here looking at something over there. I call this the "aquarium syndrome" because the bird is viewed just like a goldfish in a bowl, something in another world to be looked *\*at\**. That other world is not understood by the observer, who is not a part of it.

When I teach birdwatching I try to get students to think about how the world looks from the bird's point of view. That is, get into the aquarium with the fish and try to understand what it is like to be in the aquarium looking out into the room. With the bird that is thirty yards away try to get a piece of your mind transported into the bird's head then, through the bird's eyes, look from its perch back at yourself. From its vantage point what would be the view? This exercise isn't restricted to colors of birders' clothing but is something to develop into a general practice -- do this anytime you are in the field. Birds are living entities and possess highly developed brains. Like you, they experience life and have individual perceptions. It is fun to not only see birds, but to see the birds' world. You then feel a closer communion with them.

Ok, you ask, so what is that world like? Again, no human knows. My best guess is that birds see colors slightly differently than we do in most cases and significantly different in some cases. Further, I assume colors appear even more saturated to birds than they do to us. Following these assumptions, earth tones should appear more natural to birds than bright colors that are not part of their normal environment. Since most of my birding is well away from human activity, I wear subdued earth tones except for dark blue jeans. Bright colors not only make us more conspicuous, but they amplify all our movements. For example, if you are wearing a white shirt with long sleeves and you move your

*What color should I wear... - continued*

arms that movement will be magnified against a natural background. Any other color that stands out against the background will have the same effect. The effect will be greater yet if the white also reflects uv.

Having said that, I must recall some bird photographers I saw in Florida a couple of years ago who were wearing bright yellow parkas. [I forget their names, but I believe they are well known.] I overheard a woman ask these photographers why they were wearing such bright colors and they replied that the yellow was the best color they found to permit them close approach to the birds. This makes no sense based on what I know of bird color vision. What I think is happening is this: the photographers were at the water's edge photographing long-legged waders. Yellow permitted close approach because it contrasted highly with the background. The birds were able to clearly see all their movements and with minimal vigil could know when to move away from threatening actions. Camo clothing in such situations increase the degree of uncertainty of the intention of each movement visible to the birds.

While this might work at a beach that gets a high number of human visitors, I don't think it would work in the woods. Bright yellows, hunter orange vests, and other conspicuous objects are not normally part of such environments, and so are novel items to forest birds. Many birds are understandably neophobic (wary of anything new). A well-known exception is small patches of red. As has been pointed out, a red hat can actually attract hummingbirds if the wearer is sitting still. The key is to sit still, a skill rarely employed by most birders. An alternative for fidgety birders is to carry a hankerchief-sized piece of red cloth and to hang it on a limb when in hummer country. Just about any red object will work. In the Arizona desert I hang a red hummer feeder from my pick-up truck - I can stop just about anywhere in suitable habitat and attract hummers in a few minutes.

It was observed that aside from bird photographers few birders wear camo clothing. I hypothesize this is related to the fact that few birders ever sit still for any length of time. These are hunting techniques. Apart from the list-and-run activity which generally defines competitive birding, in which time for sitting is not allotted, birders today tend to regard hunters as their enemies. And no one wants to look and behave like their enemy. This is really unfortunate because hunting has much to teach birders about how to stalk their quarry. Many other hunting techniques can be employed as well that I never see birders use. You don't have to kill the animal in order to find these techniques valuable, as bird and nature photographers know. If a birder is to sit and/or move slowly, I think camo is very effective. The Florida photographers who were wearing yellow were constantly moving, an important point. Hawkwatchers who man a station all day long would benefit from wearing cryptic clothing and restricting their movements.

I also always wear a hat, a baseball cap, so I can hide my face and eyes from birds. If you are a nice morsel for a predator, as most birds are, you are in constant danger of predation. You know you are in trouble if a predator has focused his stare on you. Think about the last time you noticed someone staring at you in a single's bar (Fatal Attraction)! Or on a bus, or at any other public place. You feel more comfortable when you look around and there are no eyes looking at you. This is the case for birds also - they look to see who is looking back. They know to watch for peering eyes and the ones that are still alive are good at it. The bird on a branch looking back at you is looking at your eyes to see what you are up to. It is no coincidence that our eyes are our best birding tools, and we go to great lengths to enhance them with fancy optics. The bill of the baseball cap provides a shield (an ultra-mini blind) by which I can hide my eyes and break up the outline of my face. I frequently turn my head and body away, looking off to the side of the bird, and then peek out from under my cap in a Princes Di fashion to try to sneak a candid camera view - another hunting tip. The point of this is that no matter what color clothing you have, if your big ole round face is sticking out like a neon sign then you've failed to pay attention to the part of you most that has the most salience to birds.

So, to summarize my answers: Avoid anything that reflects in the UV. Avoid bright colors as a general rule. You may wish to experiment with your own success in wearing bright colors in situations similar to that of the Florida photographers. Avoid wearing white. Do wear camo and subdued colors that match natural surroundings, especially when you intend to sit still. Sitting still means not only that you are seated, but also that you make yourself appear as small as possible and your arms and head are also still. Restrict your body movements at all times. Keep this in mind when hawkwatching, too. When you do move, move slowly and smoothly. Avoid jerky and fast movements. Disrupt the outline of your face and eyes. Hide your eyes as much as possible. Use your peripheral vision to sneak peeks. Never stare at a bird unless it is some species that is known to accept stares, e.g., eagles. Look off to the side of the bird about 30 degrees and pan across to 30 degrees on the other side of it, stopping only long enough to capture a look. Then look away, and do it again. Learn "intention" movements and stop for a while if the bird is behaving as if it might fly. After it settles down, pan again. Too many birders see intention movements then think they have to get a good look before the bird is gone. They don't realize that in doing so they are actually pushing the bird to fly. Learn to be patient. We take up birding because we want to stop to smell the roses, then we get so caught up in list-and-run birding we still never take time to smell the roses. Birdwatching is the activity that encourages us to use our time to look closely at birds for more than their field marks.

*Byron K. Butler  
Guilford, CT*



## A Tufted Duck for Kansas?:

### A case study of the pitfalls in documenting rare bird sightings for the KBRC

by Galen Pittman, KBRC Secretary

The KBRC, periodically, tries to promote the need for well documented sightings of rare birds that occur in Kansas. I think most experienced birders can understand that when evaluating sight records of rarely occurring species or especially first state records, that objective "proof positive" criteria are preferable to a method that might use a subjective "good ole boy" approach. After all, simply accepting an identification made by a field observer based on their "good intentions" could lead to some very unfortunate mistakes. It is not really a matter of doubting someone's word or trying to determine if they are being truthful or not. The KBRC goal is not to judge a birder's identification skills, but to attempt to judge if the documentation (the evidence provided) actually adequately supports the claim that is being made as to what species was observed! It is clearly harder to support a claim of a very difficult to identify species than one that is relatively easy. Just because the description of a bird allows for the possibility that the correct call was made, isn't enough. Usually there has to be some evidence that rules out similar species that are more common or likely. But, it may be necessary to rule out similar species that are actually less likely than the one that is being claimed. A birder with the most golden reputation and with the best track record imaginable should be held to the same burden of proof as anyone else. This criteria provides a much more unbiased and scholarly approach to evaluating bird records than to simply judge the correctness of the report based on who the observer was.

I believe that, on the whole, the KBRC tries very diligently to evaluate the documentations of bird sightings that it circulates for review. Of course there is sometimes a difference of opinion as to whether or not a record should be accepted or not, and that is precisely why there is more than just one or two voting members and why there are established rules for circulating and voting on records. When a documentation of a bird sighting is evaluated by the KBRC and accepted the appropriate evidence has to have been well presented in the write-up. On the other hand if a record is rejected, it usually fails because it doesn't make a convincing or unequivocal case for the correct identification. Several good field marks may have been mentioned, but if certain diagnostic marks are not mentioned or something is reported that is simply wrong for the species in question it will probably fail. By the way, don't think that it is impossible to get the KBRC to accept a record. Our overall acceptance rate (since 1990), for records that are circulated, is just over 81% (113/139), including 11 first state records and at least 25 additional 2nd, 3rd, 4th, or 5th state records!

To further demonstrate my point I would like to present a case study of an actual potential first state record sighting that, even though it was fairly well documented, was unanimously rejected by the Committee. The person who documented this sighting was KBRC Chairperson, Mick McHugh! I want to give Mick a lot of credit for not only taking the time to write up his sighting and allowing us to use it for this example, but for his commitment to the KBRC and what it is trying to accomplish. Mick is a very experienced birder who feels secure about his field identification skills (of which I will personally attest are considerable) and therefore doesn't let the fear of a potentially bruised ego get in the way of trying to add to our body of bird distribution knowledge in Kansas.

A synopsis of his write-up (KBRC # 95-12) written on 20 January, 1995, including a copy of a drawing (page 11) done at the time are presented. Also included are excerpts from several of the voting members comments that will hopefully illustrate the manner in which the Committee handled this record. Finally, there are Mick's comments as to why this record was not accepted.

One female Tufted Duck of unknown age was sighted on 22 December, 1994, for 5 minutes at the Overbrook Sewage Ponds in Osage county. The bird was seen at a distance of 50 yards through 8x42 binoculars at 2 P.M. with the sun behind the observer.

(The following note was submitted with the write-up and was also dated 20 January, 1995.)

To the KBRC: The one month delay in the writing of this record of Tufted Duck came about because I didn't "come to" about what this "strange duck" was until two weeks after I made field notes. When I initially saw the bird, I thought it was probably a melanistic unknown and deposited the notes in a field guide, and promptly forgot them. They came to light about two weeks later, when I needed the field guide. My past curiosity finally revived, and upon checking the Audubon Master Guide, I saw on page 179 that I had made a foolish error in not following through sooner.

Description of the bird as per Question # 18 on the KBRC Official Report Form:

I noticed a very dark duck with a group of diving ducks including Greater Scaup, Ring-necks, and Lesser Scaup.

*Tufted Duck.... continued -*

Several Northern Shovelers and Green-winged Teal were also present. The dark bird stayed slightly separated and my attention was called to its completely different look. As shown on the enclosed notes, the head was rounded with no obvious light feathering at the bill base or around (or posterior to) the light eye. The bill was very dark gray and had a dark band at the end (not a nail). I distinctly remember looking for a light band inside the dark band. There was none. The head and neck color was dark brown and had no obvious marks. The flanks were dark, with reddish "highlights" in the sun. The rump and tail appeared dark. The wings appeared darker than the flanks and breast and on one side had a broad white display of speculum. The wing on the other side had no speculum showing. No crest was noted. The bird appeared healthy. Unfortunately, I didn't scope the bird for a possible crest as I gave no thought (at the time) of female Tufted Duck.

**Exerts from several Committee member's votes on KBRC #95-12:**

"Dealing with imm. female or Ad. winter female Aythya fuligula and A. maria shouldn't be so difficult, but it is! The fact is, this bird was not identified in the field. The observer did not suspect the potential rarity and consequently did not critically study the bird beyond using binoculars. A scope study at 50 yards would have been more useful." .....Chris Hobbs.

"The field notes were very helpful, but for such a rarity, I feel a more detailed description is needed rather than the somewhat causal comparisons notes in 5 minutes of observation. (for example, an attempt to discern whether the bird had a crest would have been at least reassuring.) "...as Mick himself pointed out, there was a lengthy gap between the observation and the recognition that the bird was worth analyzing more carefully." .....David Seibel.

"Such a dark duck with reddish sides and a wing stripe could have been a female Tufted Duck or an immature Greater Scaup! The dark tip of the bill, not just the nail, strongly points to Tufted Duck, yet the reported "round" head with no sign of a crest or tuft as a female should have is troubling. I think if the tuft on the back of the head had been observed I

might have accepted the record. As it stands with somewhat mixed field marks observed, I think this documentation does not convincingly eliminate immature scaup. This bird may very well have been a Tufted Duck, but just isn't unequivocal." .....Galen Pittman

"I could have taken a female Lesser Scaup and written the same description. When I compared them, they were very close. He probably couldn't have seen a crest as it is very short in the female. It is actually smaller than a Ring-necked female. It is too similar to a female Lesser Scaup to be sure." .....Max Thompson. (This comment was made after he related a description, from a specimen, of a female Tufted Duck in the first part of his comments.)

"This species is extremely difficult to separate from several similar species. There is also the problem, as the observer mentions, of melanism; as well as hybrids." ...Lloyd Moore.

**Comments by Mick McHugh on why this record was rejected:**

The Committee believes that there is much to be learned by discussing the write-up of this record, and the reasons for its rejection. There are several obvious problems with my write-up. 1.) I waited a month before I wrote it up (this was only made possible by field notes and a drawing that I did at the time of the sighting ....the best thing that I did!). 2.) I didn't get all the necessary field marks. A bird that is not straight forward (e.g., male Painted Bunting) needs all its field marks recorded from bill to tail. 3.) I didn't go through the list of possible species that I should have considered. I simply wrote it off as a possible melanistic form....bad idea!

The members of the Committee obviously worked hard and fairly in refuting this write-up. The exerts provided show the value of a peer review of the report of any extremely unlikely or first state record occurrence in the state.

So... If you see a bird that you know to be extremely rare in Kansas or is listed with an asterisk (less than ten records) on the Kansas Checklist, get a report form and send it in. Its important! It means hard work for the KBRC, but the job of keeping the KOS Checklist as authoritative as possible is one that we take seriously.

**Membership Directory Update Coming**

We are starting to work on the KOS Membership Directory hoping to have it in your hands by late spring 1996. Take a look at your current listing in the 1994 edition (if you are in it). If you see errors or missing data please let myself (Chuck Otte) or preferably Membership Secretary, Margaret Wedge, know. If you would prefer not to have a phone number listed

or whatever other changes, you need to let us know. We are also trying to put together a listing of electronic mail addresses. If you have an e-mail address and would allow it to be included please just e-mail me at [otte@jc.net](mailto:otte@jc.net). And of course anytime you have a change of address please notify Margaret or myself immediately so you don't miss any important mailings!

Drawing that accompanied Tufted Duck report  
*(We regret that the drawing can not be included in this version of the newsletter.)*

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RETURN TO ROY BECKEMEYER  
957 PERRY ST  
WICHITA, KS 67203-3141

**SPRING 1996 KOS FIELD TRIP - MORTON COUNTY AND POINTS SOUTH AND WEST**  
**May 4 & 5, 1996**

Whether or not you follow the historic Santa Fe Trail to get there, you'll have a chance to see the remnants of that heavily traveled trade and military route between Old Franklin, MO, and Santa Fe, NM, if you attend this spring's KOS meeting in Morton County, KS. Birds, you say, well they are there as well. Pat and I saw our first McGillivray's Warbler in the brush below Point of Rocks a few years ago. Scaled Quail, Lesser Prairie Chickens, Ladder-backed Woodpeckers, and who knows what other southwestern specialties might be seen. Sounds like something you can't afford to miss. Home to the Cimarron National Grasslands, Morton County is the southwestern-most county in Kansas. It is an easy hop from there over to Baca County, CO, or to Black Mesa in Cimarron County, OK. Those new to Kansas birding should check out Zimmerman & Patti's "A Guide to Bird Finding in Kansas and Western Missouri", pages 189-193 for a taste of the area. A map of the Cimarron Grasslands can be obtained from the District Ranger, Cimarron National Grassland, 242 Highway 56 East, Box J, Elkhart, KS 67950 [316-697-4621]. For the Commanche National Grasslands in adjacent Baca County, contact Forest Supervisor, Pike & San Isabel National Forests, Commanche and Cimarron National Grasslands, 1920 Valley Drive, Pueblo, CO 81008 [719-545-8737].

Headquarters for the event will be Elkhart, KS. Make your lodging reservations soon, as Elkhart is a small place. **MOTELS:** The Elkhart Motel is downtown across the street from the post office. It has the lowest rates, \$21 - \$40. It has a restaurant, open from 6:00 am to 9:00 p.m. Phone: 316-697-2168. The El Rancho Motel is on Highway 56. Rates are \$28-\$40. Their restaurant is also open 6:00 am to 9:00 pm, but Saturday and Sunday opening is at 7:00 am. Sunday closing time is 2:00 pm. Phone: 316-697-2117. There is also a bed and breakfast in Elkhart, but on the Oklahoma side of the state line. The Cimarron Bed and Breakfast is operated by Kyle and Linda Martin. Phone: 405-696-4672.

**CAMPING:** The City of Elkhart has an RV Park in town on Border Avenue near the baseball fields. It is \$6.00 per night with full hook-ups (no restrooms or other facilities), and is first-come, first served basis (no reservations). Pay at City Hall when you arrive. The Forest Service has a campground on the grasslands at the Cimarron River for \$7.00 per night, with water and restrooms only (no hookups). The campground is at the Cimarron Recreation Area, 7.5 miles north of Elkhart on Highway 27, then 5 miles or so east of the highway.

Departure site for birding trips will be the parking lot of the El Rancho Motel. **FOOD:** It is suggested that you make use of the motel restaurants for breakfast and dinner. Plan to bring coolers and picnic lunch for Saturday the 4th, as you will likely be on the road birding, and there are few fast food locations in the area. Lunch and final bird list count will be done Sunday the 5th at noon at the Pizza Hut in Elkhart on a pay your-own-way basis.

**REGISTRATION:** This is very much a make your own arrangements trip, but if you will send the registration form in after making your reservations, I'll use the \$1.00 to make copies and mail a more specific itinerary and trip options list a couple of weeks before the event.

----- CUT HERE -----

**REGISTRATION FORM:**

KANSAS ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY SPRING 1996 FIELD TRIP TO MORTON COUNTY, KANSAS.

NAMES: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

IS THIS YOUR FIRST TIME IN MORTON COUNTY FOR A BIRDING TRIP & WHAT ARE YOU PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN SEEING? \_\_\_\_\_

WHERE WILL YOU BE STAYING? \_\_\_\_\_

SEND \$1.00 REGISTRATION FEE TO: Roy J. Beckemeyer, 957 Perry St., Wichita, KS 67203-3141.

MY PHONE NUMBER IS: 316-264-0049

## FALL ROUNDUP / October - December 1995 / by Chuck Otte

A lot of this fall could have been summed up by saying that for the most part a few rarities were found in the usual places. Dry mild weather, following a very active late summer tropical storm season produced a few surprises. Which is not to say that it was a boring fall at all. At least it wasn't boring to the airline pilots and FAA officials when migrating waterfowl apparently overloaded the KCI airport. The increased sensitivity of the newer Doppler and NEXRAD radar systems allow for wonderful weather coverage, but they can also allow for wonderful tracking of migrating birds. When you have that many waterfowl going through a Doppler radar path though it certainly indicates that there may still be a few bugs or birds in the system.

While Common Loons appear to becoming even more common in the area we had a first for the Kansas Rare Bird Alert. We had all 4 ABA loon species on the Kansas RBA Hotline at the same time. Hockey fans please excuse me while I refer to this as a "loon hat trick". The Yellow-billed Loon at Wilson Reservoir in December may well go down as the first sighting of this specie in Kansas (pending Bird Records Committee action on the write up). This loon was not un-expected having been seen in neighboring states in prior years.

Also not unexpected to be seen in Kansas was the Northern Wheatear in Ottawa County. It was unfortunate that this bird could not be re-found and birders need to continue to be diligent in the fall looking for this possibly overlooked species. Given the hurricane season that the Gulf of Mexico experienced we shouldn't be surprised by a frigatebird sighting either. Many states east of Kansas and as far north as Michigan also had frigatebird sightings this past year.

Western Grebes continue to be fall regulars at the large reservoirs, and as Kansas birders become more comfortable with this species more Clark's Grebes are also being identified. Kansas birders need to be paying close attention to those large reservoirs during November and December. Find a nice sunny spot out of the wind, set up the scope and spend some time checking out the middle of these large water bodies!

It also gave all the appearance of a major northern influx year with Northern Shrikes being found on a regular basis in the northwestern half of the state.

Morton County again became the place to be this fall with a well documented White-winged Dove leading the pack. Other good Morton county birds seen during the period were: Scrub Jay, Mountain Chickadee, Canyon Wren, Northern Shrike, Canyon Towhee, Scaled Quail and Evening Grosbeak. KOS members should be flocking to Morton County for the Spring Field trip! Inca Doves in Garden City and Wichita were also good finds.

Remember to call the hotline with your sightings (913-372-5499). Take good notes and fill out documentation on rarities (see form later in the Horned Lark) for the Kansas Bird Records Committee and remember that the rare bird sighting is not "official" until accepted by the KBRC. And our continuing thanks to Scott Seltman for keeping the hotline updated and for his many hours of proofing these reports and roundups!

### **BIRDING HIGHLIGHTS / October 1995 through December 1995**

Species	Location and number	Observers	Date	County
Red-throated Loon	1 imm at Cedar Bluff Reservoir	SS	12-02-95	Trego
Pacific Loon	1 at Wilson Reservoir	MR	11-05-95	Russell
Pacific Loon	2 at Wilson Reservoir	MR	11-12-95	Russell
Common Loon	<u>11</u> at Wyandotte County Lake	LM	10-31-95	Wyandotte
<b><u>Yellow-billed Loon</u></b>	1 at Wilson Reservoir	MR	12-10-95	Russell
		present through	12-15-95	

This is the first sighting of this species for Kansas. This bird was seen by several individuals and was near several Common Loons making for easy comparisons.

Horned Grebe	25 at Wilson Reservoir	MR	11-05-95	Russell
Red-necked Grebe	1 at Wilson Reservoir	MR	11-05-95	Russell
Red-necked Grebe	1 at Winfield City Lake	MT	11-11-95	Cowley
Western Grebe	1 at Clinton Reservoir	??	10-26-95	Douglas
Western Grebe	11 at Wilson Reservoir	MR	11-19-95	Russell
Western Grebe	2 at Perry Reservoir	RR	11-16-95	Jefferson
Western Grebe	3 at Tuttle Creek Reservoir	TC	11-18-95	Riley

Clark's Grebe	3 at Wilson Reservoir	MR	11-05-95	Russell
Clark's Grebe	2 at Wilson Reservoir	MR	11-19-95	Russell
Clark's Grebe	1 at Clark County State Lake	SS	11-11-95	Clark
Magnificent Frigatebird	1 possible ad. m. over Manhattan	TC	10-12-95	Riley
Tundra Swan	1 at QNWR Big Salt Marsh	MR	11-04-95	Stafford
Trumpeter Swan	1 at Hillsdale Res with neck collar	JBe	12-12-95	Miami
American Black Duck	2 at Wyandotte County Lake	LM	12-23-95	Wyandotte
Mottled Duck	a pair at QNWR Big Salt Marsh	SP, et. al.	10-29-95	Stafford
Northern Shoveler	1 full albino at Liberal	SS	11-18-95	Seward
Oldsquaw	1 at El Dorado Lake Dam	JN,PJ	11-25-95	Butler
Oldsquaw	1 m at Wilson Reservoir	MR	12-03-95	Russell
	still present or another one has arrived		12-14-95	
Black Scoter	9 at Wilson Reservoir	BMC	11-04-95	Russell
White-winged Scoter	1 at QNWR	TB	11-04-95	Stafford
White-winged Scoter	3 at Tuttle Creek Reservoir	TC	11-09-95	Riley
White-winged Scoter	1 at Perry Lake	DB	12-02-95	Jefferson
		seen again	12-03-95	
Hooded Merganser	<u>100</u> at Milford Reservoir	TC	11-18-95	Geary
Hooded Merganser	<u>125</u> at Wilson Reservoir	MR	11-19-95	Russell
Red-breasted Merganser	4 at Tuttle Creek Reservoir	TC	11-09-95	Riley
Red-breasted Merganser	several at Milford Reservoir	TC, et. al	11-18-95	Geary
Turkey Vulture	1 late bird	JD	11-24-95	Gray
Bald Eagle	5 at QNWR	GF	11-12-95	Stafford
Northern Goshawk	nw of Harvey County East Lake	BD	12-18-95	Harvey
Golden Eagle	1 at QNWR	GF	11-12-95	Stafford
Merlin	2 or 3 near Lake Afton	PJ,JN	10-29-95	Sedgwick
Merlin	1 at Kanopolis Reservoir	BT	11-05-95	Ellsworth
Scaled Quail	1 mile n of Elkhart along K-27	SP,MR,MM,GP,BF	10-27-95	Morton
Common Moorhen	4 at Pool #4, CB	DK,BG	10-21-95	Barton
Sandhill Crane	75,000 at Quivira's Big Salt Marsh	MT, et. al.	11-09-95	Stafford
Sandhill Crane	<u>50 - 100,000</u> at Wildhorse Lake	SS	11-11-95	Meade
Whooping Crane	1 south of CB	EM	10-20-95	Barton
Whooping Crane	2 on Nat Cons land near CB	EM	10-21-95	Barton
These birds were actually seen by many people on a Nature Conservancy Fieldtrip but reported by Ed Martinez				
Whooping Crane	2 at QNWR, sw Wildlife Drive	SP, et. al.	10-29-95	Stafford
Black-bellied Plover	2 at Pool #4, CB	DK,BG	10-21-95	Barton
American Golden-Plover	1 north of Rozel	SS	10-11-95	Pawnee
American Golden-Plover	10 following tractor nw of Larned	SS	10-16-95	Pawnee
Lesser Yellowlegs	1 at QNWR	JR	12-01-95	Stafford
Dunlin	1 in basic plumage at Wyan Co Lake	SS,DB	11-24-95	Wyandotte
Dunlin	4 at QNWR	JR	12-01-95	Stafford
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	1 at Bloomington Beach, Clinton L	SA	10-01-95	Douglas
Long-billed Dowitcher	17 at QNWR Big Salt Marsh	MR	11-04-95	Stafford
Long-billed Dowitcher	3 at QNWR	JR	12-01-95	Stafford
Pomarine Jaeger	1 dark phase from Wilson SP	MR	10-31-95	Russell
Bonaparte's Gull	100+ at Lake Afton	JSB	11-24-95	Sedgwick
Thayer's Gull	1 first winter bird at Perry Res.	LM	11-03-95	Jefferson
Lesser Black-backed Gull	1 probable adult at Tuttle	TC	12-26-95	Pottawatomie
Glaucous Gull	1 first winter bird at Perry Res.	KUO	12-02-95	Jefferson
		still present	12-05-95	
Sabine's Gull	1 first year bird at Clinton L	SA	09-23-95	Douglas
	seen again	CG	09-30-95	
	still present	SA	10-01-95	
White-winged Dove	in Elkhart	ED	11-15-95	Morton
		last seen	12-02-95	

This bird was found by many birders. Although there have been about 10 sight records for this species, this bird, which was photographed and videotaped, may apparently be the first fully documented record for White-winged Dove in Kansas.

Inca Dove	in Garden City at feeders	TSh,SSh	12-01-95	Finney
Inca Dove	in residential Wichita at feeders	VH	12-08-95	Sedgwick
		still present	12-16-95	
Greater Roadrunner	sw of Hutchinson	JVM	mid-Nov	Reno
Snowy Owl	1 ad male se of Shallow Water	??	12-24-95	Scott
		still present	12-31-95	
Long-eared Owl	7 at W Rolling Hills, Milford Lake	CO	11-24-95	Geary
White-throated Swift	1 flying over Olathe	MC	10-09-95	Johnson
Black-chinned Hummingbird	f. captured in Overland Park	JH	early Nov.	Johnson
Scrub Jay	4 at western Cimarron River crossing	SP,BF,MM,GP	10-27-95	Morton
Scrub Jay	2 at CNG campground	BP, VT	11-12-95	Morton
Carolina Chickadee	at Clark State Lake	SS	11-11-95	Clark
Carolina Chickadee	at Meade State Lake	SS	11-11-95	Meade
Mountain Chickadee	K-27 bridge & Boy Scout area	SP,MR,MM,GP,BF	10-27-95	Morton
Mountain Chickadee	in Elkhart	LRS	11-13-95	Morton
			to 11-18-95	
Canyon Wren	at Pt. of Rocks, CNG	DV,FV	11-25-95	Morton
	seen again	JR	12-27-95	
	This is only the third record for Canyon Wren in the state.			
Northern Wheatear	1 s and 5 w of Minneapolis	KC	11-07-95	Ottawa
	This is the first report of this species for Kansas, but unfortunately repeated visits to this location failed to find the bird again. Northern Wheatears were found quite regularly on both coasts this fall however, and Kansas birders need to be on the lookout for this specie more in the future.			
Mountain Bluebird	f. near Cheney Dam	PJ,JN	10-29-95	Sedgwick
Mountain Bluebird	20 at SW Milford Lake	CO	11-02-95	Geary
Mountain Bluebird	<u>250</u> at Wilson Reservoir	MR	11-05-95	Russell
Townsend's Solitaire	1 at Kanopolis Reservoir	BT	11-05-95	Ellsworth
Sprague's Pipit	arriving in western Kansas	SS	10-03-95	Pawnee
Sprague's Pipit	arriving in western Kansas	SS	10-05-95	Rush
Sprague's Pipit	20 north of Rozel	SS	10-11-95	Pawnee
Northern Shrike	1 adult, State Line Rd, Elkhart	SP,MR,MM,GP,BF	10-27-95	Morton
Northern Shrike	1 juv nw of Larned	SS	10-29-95	Pawnee
Northern Shrike	2 at Wilson Reservoir	MR	11-05-95	Russell
Northern Shrike	1 at QNWR	TB	11-04-95	Stafford
Northern Shrike	1 at Wilson Reservoir	PJ,JN,CG	11-11-95	Russell
Northern Shrike	2 at QNWR	BP,VT	11-11-95	Stafford
Northern Shrike	1 at QNWR	GF	11-12-95	Stafford
Northern Shrike	1	SS	11-14-95	Rush
Northern Shrike	1 adult	SS	11-22-95	Pawnee
Northern Shrike	1 at Milford Reservoir	DLS	11-23-95	Geary
Northern Shrike	1 at south end of QNWR	JR	12-01-95	Stafford
Northern Shrike	1 below dam at Tuttle Creek Res	LM,GP	12-27-95	Pottawatomie
Solitary Vireo	eastern race in Elkhart alleys	SP,MR,MM,GP,BF	10-27-95	Morton
Wilson's Warbler	a late at North Fork CNG	SP,MR,MM,GP	10-27-95	Morton
Canyon Towhee	shelterbelt n of Elkhart cemetery	SP,MR,MM,GP	10-27-95	Morton
Canyon Towhee	at shelterbelt (same one?)	SP	12-29-95	Morton
Rufous-crowned Sparrow	at Pt of Rocks, CNG	SP,MR,MM,GP	10-27-95	Morton
Le Conte's Sparrow	at Milford Lake, Curtis Creek	CO	10-11-95	Geary
Le Conte's Sparrow	several south of K-96 bridge	CG,PJ	10-22-95	Sedgwick
Sharp-tailed Sparrow	1 at Baker University Wetlands	AP	10-07-95	Douglas
Golden-crowned Sparrow	1 in shelterbelt at Kirwin NWR	RR	10-20-95	Phillips
Smith's Longspur	10 at Lyon County State Lake	BP, VT	11-11-95	Lyon
Chestnut-collared Longspur	10 north of Rozel	SS	10-11-95	Pawnee
Brewer's Blackbird	<u>70 - 100,000</u> between CB & QNWR	GP,GG,SA	11-05-95	Barton/Stafford
Evening Grosbeak	female in Elkhart alleys	SP,MR,MM,GP,BF	10-27-95	Morton
Evening Grosbeak	w side of Cheney Reservoir	PJ,JN	10-29-95	Kingman

## Key to Abbreviations found in Birding Highlights

ad. = adult

CB = Cheyenne Bottoms

CNG = Cimarron National Grasslands

e = east

f. = female

imm = immature

juv = juvenile

L = Lake

m. = male

Nat Cons = Nature Conservancy

NWR = National Wildlife Refuge

plum = plumage

QNWR = Quivira National Wildlife Refuge

RML = Reclaimed Mine Lands of LaCygne Lake

SP = State Park

w = west

**LIST OF OBSERVERS:** Steve Addinal (SA), Timothy Barksdale (TB), James & Susan Barnes (JSB), Jim Bell (JBe), William Brecheisen (WB), David Bryan (DB), Ted Cable (TC), Mark Corder (MC), Kathy Collmer (KC), Joyce Davis (JD), Bob Dester (BD), Elsa Durkee (ED), Bob Fisher (BF), Gregg Friesen (GF), Chet Gresham (CG), Bob Gress (BG), Greg Griffith (GG), Jan Hall (JH), Vern Heinsohn (VH), Pete Janzen (PJ), KU Ornithology (KUO), Dan Kilby (DK), Dan LaShelle (DLS), Brad McCord (BMC), Mick McHugh (MM), Ed Martinez (EM), Jay and Verna Miller (JVM), Lloyd Moore (LM), John Northrup (JN), Chuck Otte (CO), Sebastian Patti (SP), Brandon Percival (BP), Galen Pittman (GP), Alexi Powell (AP), Mike Rader (MR), John Rakestraw (JR), Richard Rucker (RR), Scott Seltman (SS), Sara Shane (SSh), Tom Shane (TSh), Lawrence & Ruth Smith (LRS), Bill Trelc (BT), Van Truan (VT), Max Thompson (MT), Don Vannoy (DV), Fran Vannoy (FV)

## **Partners in Flight Organizational Meeting Scheduled**

*by Bill Busby*

An organizational meeting for a Partners in Flight working group in Kansas will be held on the afternoon of Tuesday, May 7 in Manhattan. The goal is to establish a Partners in Flight working group in the State and to develop a conservation plan for land birds for our area. In addition, the Partners in Flight Southern Great Plains Region will meet the day before (May 6) to discuss population and habitat objectives for the region.

Partners in Flight is a program that was organized to provide for avian conservation throughout the Western Hemisphere. It relies on the interest and cooperation of people in state and federal agencies, academic institutions, private organizations, industry, and the public. A recently developed conservation strategy, designed for initial use in the United States, contains four steps:

- I. Identify and prioritize species most in need of conservation
- II. Set population and habitat conservation objectives
- III. Turn general objectives into concrete programs (land use prescriptions and practices, bird conservation areas, etc.)
- IV. Implement bird conservation plans and monitor success, making use of partnerships, funding, research, education and outreach, and policy.

Some of the most notable accomplishments of Partners in Flight so far have come from the efforts of people working at the state and regional levels. At present, 37 states have set up state working groups. If you are interested in attending either of the meetings or interested in more information, please contact Bill Busby, Kansas Biological Survey, 2041 Constant Ave., Lawrence, KS 66047 w: 913-864-7692 e-mail w-busby@ukans.edu.



# Kansas Bird Records Committee Official Report Form

Date of this report: \_\_\_\_\_ KBRC No. (committee use only) \_\_\_\_\_

1. Species: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
(Common name) (Scientific name)

2. Sex/Age: \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Number observed: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Date(s) of sighting: \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Duration of sighting: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Location (including county): \_\_\_\_\_

7. Observer(s) (your name): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Other observers (not making this report): \_\_\_\_\_

9. Description of habitat/setting: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Distance from bird: \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Optical equip: \_\_\_\_\_

12. Time of day: \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Lighting conditions/sun angle: \_\_\_\_\_

14. Previous experience with this or similar species: \_\_\_\_\_

15. Reference material consulted and how this influenced your identification: \_\_\_\_\_

16. How long after the sighting did you first write this description? \_\_\_\_\_

17. Vocalization heard (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

18. DESCRIPTION: (Include only what was observed). Describe, in detail, all relevant and diagnostic field marks and/or behaviors that would distinguish this species from similar ones. Please include any photographs, recordings, sketches, and copies of original field notes that were made at the time of the sighting that would aid in identification. USE OTHER SIDE.

Mail completed form to:

**Kansas Bird Records Committee Secretary, Galen L. Pittman, 12042 258th Street, Lawrence, KS 66044**

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PRELIMINARY CALL FOR PAPERS

KANSAS ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
ANNUAL MEETING, 1996

The KOS will meet October 5 and 6, 1996 at Newton, KS. The contributed papers will be presented on Saturday, October 5. The only requirement is that the papers deal with birds in some way. We especially encourage graduate and undergraduate students to present the results of their studies. Interesting papers are also often given by people who consider themselves amateurs, but who nevertheless have considerable expertise to share. We encourage you to share your experiences with the members and guests who will be attending. Both long and short presentations are welcome.

We are again requesting that all contributors submit an abstract or short summary (approximately 150 words) of their presentation. A second and final call will be made in the summer issue of the newsletter.

COMPLETE THIS FORM AND MAIL TO:

Roy Beckemeyer  
Vice President, KOS  
957 Perry Street  
Wichita, KS 67203-3141  
Phone: (316) 264-0049  
E-Mail: royb@southwind.net

Contributed Paper for KOS Annual Meeting, Oct. 5, 1996:

AUTHOR(S): \_\_\_\_\_

-

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

PAPER TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

ABSTRACT: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Time for presentation and questions (circle one): 10 min.    15 min.    20 min.

Audio-Visual equipment required: \_\_\_\_\_

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