



# The Horned Lark

The newsletter of the  
Kansas Ornithological Society

December 2006

Vol. 33, No. 4

## President's Message

Thanks for your confidence to elect me the KOS President for 2007. I joined KOS in 1954 and have been proud to be a member for 52 years. Since I first served as President in 1972, the society has come a long way.

In those days, we could scarcely pay our bills until the January dues came in. We are now a solvent society thanks to a generous gift from the estate of **Madge Hilbisch**. The society has a reserve fund of \$115,000, which helps to meet operating expenses that are not fully funded by dues. However, some of these funds are restricted and can only be used for the purposes designated by the donors.

If we want to continue keep our dues at the present level, members need to be forthcoming  
*(continued on page 2)*

## From the field

I live with a reformed cat. Her name is Suzy.

Suzy lived on the family farm 10 years until she gracefully relinquished her free access to the outdoors. Her days there were filled with sunshine, fresh air, and plenty of opportunity to interact with nature. She also got to experience aggressive dogs, stray cats, wandering skunks and raccoons, moving vehicles, and inclement weather.

My mother held Suzy in the highest esteem.

"No way!" Mom said when I told her I'd watched Suzy stalking birds in the backyard. "Suzy's not a hunter."

Then Suzy brought Mom a young cottontail.

Recently on the KSBIRD listserv we discussed stray and feral cats and "removing" them from the environment. Not everyone agrees on how this

should be done, but I do believe most consider cats in the outdoors to be a real problem.

The American Bird Conservancy estimates cats kill hundreds of millions of birds each year. And it's not just feral cats doing the killing. It's cats like Suzy. The instinct to hunt can't be quelled, no matter how well the cat is fed—and Mom took good care of Suzy.

Suzy now lives with me in Wichita. She enjoys playing with toys, stalking them, batting them with her paws, and carrying them around in her mouth. She suns in the windows and sleeps in a comfortable cat bed. From the rocking chair, she watches birds and squirrels at the feeders on the other side of the sliding glass door.

She's content and safe. The wildlife is safe from her, too.

Let's keep cats indoors where they belong. —CKM



## Stan Roth: Avian Conservationist of the Year

Some Lawrence High School alumni remember him as the teacher who knew a lot about nature, especially bats. Some professionals at the Kansas Forest Service know him as a volunteer who measures champion tree nominations.

KOS members know **Stan Roth** for his contributions to learning more about the natural history of Ferruginous Hawks in Kansas, his presence at KOS

meetings, and his assistance with Christmas Bird Counts. He was named the 2006 Avian Conservationist of the Year at the fall KOS meeting in Winfield.

Stan and his high school biology students spent eight years studying Ferruginous Hawks along the Smoky Hill River. **Max Thompson** described his work as a "major contribution" to knowledge about the species.

*KOS president Gene Young presents Stan Roth with the 2006 Avian Conservationist Award. Photo by Cheryl Miller, © 2006.*



## President's Message, *continued*

with donations to the unrestricted portion of our endowment. We currently have to draw around \$1,000 per year from the endowment to fund the society's business. While the restricted funds grow from our investments, the general endowment grows very little. I would like to see us have a concerted effort to increase our endowment and will work for

that during my tenure.

Estate gifts are always welcome. Due Madge's foresight and her estate gift, KOS is a solvent society today. I ask all of our members to donate to the endowment and to think of estate gifts for the future.

Thank you.

*Max C. Thompson*

## KOS Board of Directors

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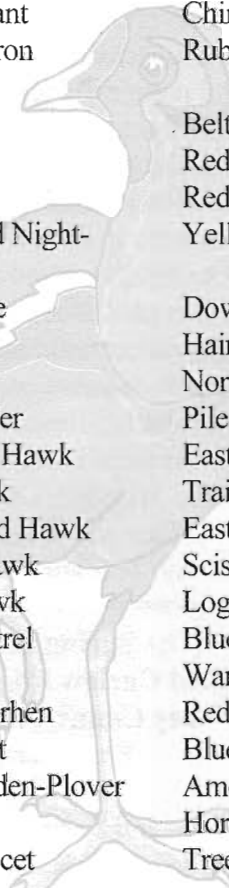
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# KOS fall meeting species compilation

Snow Goose  
 Canada Goose  
 Wood Duck  
 Gadwall  
 American Wigeon  
 Mallard  
 Blue-winged Teal  
 Northern Shoveler  
 Northern Pintail  
 Green-winged Teal  
 Ring-necked Duck  
 Ruddy Duck  
 Ring-necked Pheasant  
 Wild Turkey  
 Northern Bobwhite  
 Pied-billed Grebe  
 Horned Grebe  
 Eared Grebe  
 American White Pelican  
 Double-crested  
     Cormorant  
 Great Blue Heron  
 Great Egret  
 Snowy Egret  
 Cattle Egret  
 Green Heron  
 Black-crowned Night-  
     Heron  
 Turkey Vulture  
 Osprey  
 Bald Eagle  
 Northern Harrier  
 Sharp-shinned Hawk  
 Cooper's Hawk  
 Red-shouldered Hawk  
 Swainson's Hawk  
 Red-tailed Hawk  
 American Kestrel  
 Prairie Falcon  
 Common Moorhen  
 American Coot  
 American Golden-Plover  
 Killdeer  
 American Avocet



Greater Yellowlegs  
 Lesser Yellowlegs  
 Solitary Sandpiper  
 Spotted Sandpiper  
 Least Sandpiper  
 Baird's Sandpiper  
 Pectoral Sandpiper  
 Long-billed Dowitcher  
 Wilson's Snipe  
 Franklin's Gull  
 Ring-billed Gull  
 Black Tern  
 Rock Pigeon  
 Eurasian Collared-Dove  
 Mourning Dove  
 Yellow-billed Cuckoo  
 Eastern Screech-Owl  
 Great Horned Owl  
 Barred Owl  
 Common Nighthawk  
 Chimney Swift  
 Ruby-throated  
     Hummingbird  
 Belted Kingfisher  
 Red-headed Woodpecker  
 Red-bellied Woodpecker  
 Yellow-bellied  
     Sapsucker  
 Downy Woodpecker  
 Hairy Woodpecker  
 Northern Flicker  
 Pileated Woodpecker  
 Eastern Wood-Pewee  
 Traill's Flycatcher  
 Eastern Phoebe  
 Scissor-tailed Flycatcher  
 Loggerhead Shrike  
 Blue-headed Vireo  
 Warbling Vireo  
 Red-eyed Vireo  
 Blue Jay  
 American Crow  
 Horned Lark  
 Tree Swallow

Northern Rough-winged  
     Swallow  
 Bank Swallow  
 Barn Swallow  
 Carolina Chickadee  
 Tufted Titmouse  
 White-breasted Nuthatch  
 Carolina Wren  
 Bewick's Wren  
 House Wren  
 Ruby-crowned Kinglet  
 Eastern Bluebird  
 American Thrush  
 Gray Catbird  
 Northern Mockingbird  
 Brown Thrasher  
 European Starling  
 American Pipit  
 Sprague's Pipit  
 Cedar Waxwing  
 Tennessee Warbler  
 Orange-crowned  
     Warbler  
 Nashville Warbler  
 Yellow-rumped Warbler  
 Black-throated Green  
     Warbler  
 Common Yellowthroat  
 Wilson's Warbler  
 Summer Tanager  
 Spotted Towhee  
 Clay-colored Sparrow  
 Field Sparrow  
 Vesper Sparrow  
 Lark Sparrow  
 Savannah Sparrow  
 LeConte's Sparrow  
 Song Sparrow  
 Lincoln's Sparrow  
 Swamp Sparrow  
 White-throated Sparrow  
 White-crowned Sparrow  
 Dark-eyed Junco  
 Northern Cardinal

Indigo Bunting  
 Painted Bunting  
 Dickcissel  
 Red-winged Blackbird  
 Eastern Meadowlark  
 Brewer's Blackbird  
 Common Grackle  
 Great-tailed Grackle  
 Brown-headed Cowbird  
 House Finch  
 American Goldfinch  
 House Sparrow

**See you  
 in Brown  
 County!**

KOS is heading northeast!

Lisa Weeks and her crew will host the spring KOS meeting May 4- 6, 2007. Brown County will be the base of operations.

Possibilities for field trips include Brown State Fishing Lake, Mission Lake, Pony Creek Lake, Nemaha Wildlife Area, Nemaha County State Park, and the Missouri River.

Look for more details in the March Horned Lark.



# Fall KOS meeting paper abstracts

*Editor's note: Abstracts appear as they were submitted. Please contact the authors for more information.*

**Identification of adult sapsuckers of the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*) complex.** Presenter: *Mark Robbins*. Authors: *Mark Robbins*, Division of Ornithology, University of Kansas Natural History Museum, Lawrence, and *David Seibel*, Science Department, Johnson County Community College, Overland Park, Kansas.

Great care must be exercised in the identification of sapsuckers because of overlap in plumage characters and because of hybridization. The proportion of black vs. white on the back and the presence or absence of red in the dark malar in adult males are the most reliable plumage characters for separating Red-naped and Yellow-bellied sapsuckers under field conditions. The presence or absence of red in the nape should only be considered suggestive and the other two characters should be ascertained to reach an identification.

Hybridization should be considered as a possibility for any sapsucker that has a combination of the above key characters and has an unusual amount of red on other regions of the head and chest. A bird taken in eastern Kansas may be the first hybrid specimen of Yellow-bellied x Red-breasted

away from the very limited contact zone in British Columbia.

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## **Identifying Hepatic Tanagers (*Piranga flava*) from other *Piranga* tanagers.**

Presenter and Author: *Mark Robbins*, Division of Ornithology, University of Kansas Natural History Museum, Lawrence.

In any plumage state, bill color and facial pattern distinguish Hepatic Tanagers from all other possibilities.

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## **Evaluation of recent reports of Ivory-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis*).**

Presenter and Author: *Mark Robbins*, Division of Ornithology, University of Kansas Natural History Museum, Lawrence.

Independent evaluations by a number of people have concluded that there is no irrefutable evidence for the presence of Ivory-billed Woodpecker (Sibley et al. 2006, Jackson 2006, unpubl. data).

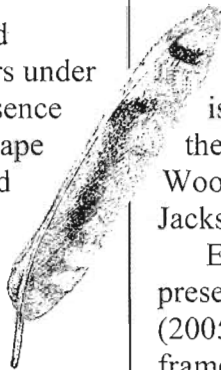
Evaluation of video evidence presented by Fitzpatrick et al. (2005) indicates that none of the frames (fields) are consistent with Ivory-billed Woodpecker. For example, in field 33.3 of the Luneau video, the white patch is incorrectly sized, positioned, and proportioned to be the white patch on the dorsal surface of the wing of an Ivory-billed Woodpecker viewed from the angle proposed by Fitzpatrick et

al (2005). The estimates of size of the bird based on this physical reconstruction of this plumage patch are invalid (Sibley et al. 2006, unpubl. data). The size, shape, and timing of appearance of the patch in the Luneau video are consistent with the underwing of a Pileated Woodpecker taking off in flight. Simulations by Univ. of Kansas personnel of this and another video frame using Pileated Woodpecker specimens under conditions similar to the original Luneau video demonstrate that the video is consistent with the underwing of a Pileated Woodpecker and not an Ivory-billed Woodpecker.

All of the reported visual observations of Ivory-billed Woodpecker have been fleeting and none reported several key field marks such as the white bill, the light irides, or the diagnostic underwing pattern. Acoustic evidence presented by both Fitzpatrick et al. (2005) and Hill et al. (2006) is inconclusive. The current evidence does not constitute substantial or irrefutable scientific evidence for the persistence of Ivory-billed Woodpecker, yet millions of dollars continue to be spent for the "recovery" of the species.

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**The Spring 2006 Long-billed Curlew Migration in the Finney County, Kansas Region.** Presenter: *Thomas G. Shane*. Authors: *Thomas G. Shane* and *Sara J. Shane*, Garden City, Kansas.



The first Long-billed Curlews (*Numenius americanus*) arrived 22 March 2006 on the border of Finney and Haskell counties, Kansas. Two days later a small number of curlews were forced to wait out a snowstorm and a warm up period by loafing in the bare areas of fields. A flock of curlews landed and went to roost in a western Finney County wheat field the evening of 1 April. The following morning the birds started calling just before sunrise, then as the sun broke the horizon the curlews took flight to the southwest back toward the alfalfa fields on the south side of the Arkansas River.

An estimated 3,466 curlews used a primary roost flight path from the sandhills in eastern Kearny County northwest into Finney County during the 26 day migration period. Lower densities of curlews were observed as far east as Gray County which could realistically put the number close to 5,000 curlews using the area as a stopover site. The maximum roost flight totaled 1,322 curlews in 65 flocks ranging from 1 to 125 birds on the evening of 4 April. The largest flock, estimated at 320 curlews, was observed on 2 April. The last 26 curlews were observed on 16 April.

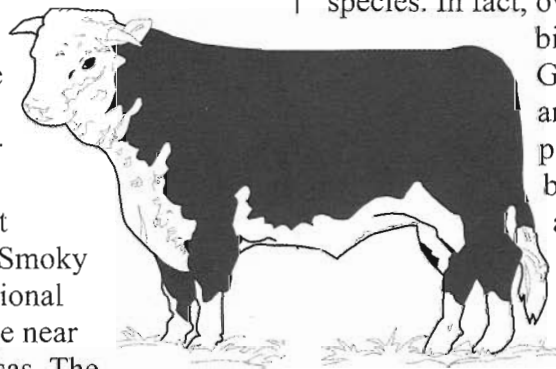
Electrical transmission lines could be a significant mortality factor. Two near misses by curlews were observed. The curlew migration appears to fall in a safe window between two major alfalfa chemigation periods. However, the area should receive some intensive

monitoring since 25% of the worlds Long-billed Curlew population uses the area as a spring migratory stopover site.

**Abundances of breeding birds in central Kansas prairie managed with fire, haying, or grazing.** Presenter: *Bill Busby*. Authors: *Bill Busby*, Kansas Biological Survey, Lawrence, and *Alexis Powell*, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

We examined the response of breeding birds to four different management practices at Smoky Hill Air National Guard Range near Salina, Kansas. The management treatments were cattle grazed, hayed, burned, and idle (unburned and ungrazed). All five grassland specialist species exhibited significant differences in abundance in response to habitat type.

Three of five grassland specialists (Eastern Meadowlark, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Henslow's Sparrow) avoided burned sites relative to other habitats, while one species, Upland Sandpiper, was most abundant at burned sites. Dickcissel and Henslow's Sparrow were most common in idle sites, and Grasshopper Sparrow preferred grazed sites. Results are consistent with other studies in tallgrass prairie showing species-specific responses to habitat structure and, for most species, avoidance of burned sites.



**Diet and Foraging Behavior of Shorebirds: Developing a water quality standard for the Great Salt Lake, Utah.** Presenter: *Christian Edwards*. Authors: *Christian Edwards* and *John Cavitt*, Zoology Department, Weber State University, Ogden, Utah.

The Great Salt Lake, located in northern Utah, provides crucial breeding habitat for a large number of shorebird species. In fact, over 5,000,000 birds visit the Great Salt Lake annually. Large populations of brine shrimp and brine flies, plus many other invertebrates, offer ample

food sources and make the lake an ideal breeding spot for many shorebirds. However, more than 100 years of mining have contaminated the Salt Lake Valley aquifer and have left the Great Salt Lake with high levels of selenium. In order to obtain information concerning the contamination levels, we have studied the diet and foraging habits of two species of shorebirds found regularly within the Great Salt Lake region. The American Avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*) and Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*) overlap in breeding and foraging sites throughout much of the Great Salt Lake. We hope that by collecting and examining these birds, and their gut contents, we will be able to more fully understand the condition of the Great Salt Lake



and develop an effective water quality plan for its future.

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**Colony Locations and Nesting Success of the Western Snowy Plover in Nebraska, Kansas, and Oklahoma.**

Presenter: *Matthew G. Sexson*.  
Authors: *Matthew G. Sexson* and *Greg H. Farley*, Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas.

As a result of the detectable Western Snowy Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus*) population decline throughout North America, the species was listed as threatened in Kansas in 1987. Information regarding breeding colony location, reproductive success, and habitat use are valuable in guiding management and conservation activities at state and regional scales.

Within the tri-state area, Western Snowy Plover nests were identified at eight sites in 2006, including Quivira National Wildlife Refuge, Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area, and Wilson Reservoir in Kansas. In addition, Western Snowy Plover nests were located and monitored at Quivira National Wildlife Refuge in 2005 (n = 232) and 2006 (n = 100), and Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area in 2005 (n = 31) to estimate reproductive success through apparent nest fate. At the conclusion of each breeding season, nest-site characteristics were quantified and recorded. In 2005 and 2006, nests were significantly different from random sites, as nest sites had a greater proportion of sand, gravel, and rock. In addition, nest sites had a lower proportion

of soil and a shorter mean maximum vegetation height in both years.

In 2005, nests that were successful were significantly different from unsuccessful, as successful nests had a greater proportion of gravel. However, no significant difference was detected when comparing successful nests to unsuccessful in 2006. Our data also suggest, with significance, that use of artificial nest pads and predator exclusion structures might contribute to improved nest success.

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**Distribution of Yellow-throated Warbler (*Dendroica dominica*) in Kansas.** Presenter: *John Schukman*. Authors: *John Schukman*, 14207 Robin Rd., Leavenworth, Kansas 66048; *Pete Janzen*, 3137 Mascot, Wichita, Kansas 67204; and *Bill Busby*, Kansas Biological Survey, Lawrence.

We surveyed stream watersheds and collected observations of Yellow-throated Warbler (*Dendroica dominica*) in eastern Kansas during 2006. We found this species along 7 of 10 watersheds and in 9 of 16 counties. The Missouri River in Leavenworth County had the most occurrences with 15 followed by the Spring River in Cherokee County (8), Marais des Cygnes River in Linn and Miami counties (4), Blue River/Mill Creek in Johnson County (4), Caney/Little Caney River in Chautauqua and Montgomery counties (2), Arkansas/Walnut River in Cowley County (2), and Neosho River in Labette County (1). It was not present at sites

surveyed along the Marmaton River in Bourbon County, Cow Creek in Crawford County, Verdigris and Fall River in Montgomery and Wilson counties, Marais des Cygnes River in Franklin County, Neosho River in Neosho and Allen counties, and the Kansas River in Wyandotte County.

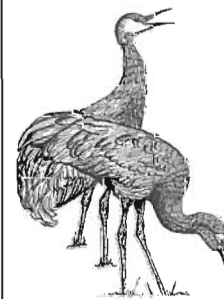
Yellow-throated Warbler populations in Kansas appear to be limited to sites with well-developed riparian woodland with numerous sycamores, and with an overall substantial landscape forest base. Future work will include GIS analysis to determine habitat attributes.

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**Preliminary Report on Avian Diversity and Cotton Crops.** Presenter and Author: *Eugene A. Young*, Science Division, Northern Oklahoma College, Tonkawa.

Kansas is one of the top agricultural states in the nation and some of the traditional crops grown provide habitat for nesting and foraging birds. Some avian species utilize these crops during the breeding season, spring and fall migration, or



during the winter months. Certain avian species have become pest to various grain producing crops, especially sorghum and corn, often to

the point that crop damage caused by blackbirds and Sandhill Cranes may be extensive enough to require damage control. A relative new comer to the agriculture industry



in south-central Kansas has been cotton.

Unlike other seed producing grain crops, cotton appears to provide little food for birds. On several Christmas Bird Counts the past couple of years it has been noticed that there is a lack of avian species diversity observed within cotton fields. Preliminary data is presented on species diversity and abundance on various agricultural fields in north-central Oklahoma (Kay County), and south-central Kansas (Cowley County) as a result of winter bird surveys. Both species diversity and abundance were lowest amongst cotton fields and highest in sorghum and corn.

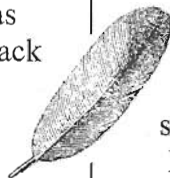
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### Identification of Short-billed and Long-billed

**Dowitchers.** Presenter and Author: *David Seibel*, Science Department, Johnson County Community College, Overland Park, Kansas.

Long-billed (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*) and Short-billed (*L. griseus*) dowitchers can be extremely difficult to distinguish visually in the field. In addition to subspecific and individual variation, feather wear and molt can compound the problem by making some characters normally associated with one species appear to be present in the other. For example, Short-billed Dowitchers in alternate plumage are typically paler ventrally than Long-billed, but during pre-alternate and pre-basic molt, adult Long-billed Dowitchers have variable amounts of pale feathering on

the belly and flanks. Mis-interpretation of classic characters such as the amount of white in the rectrices is also a common problem, because the upper tail coverts often hide the rectrices and have a similar pattern (more white than dark) in both species.



Identification techniques recently described by Lee and Birch (2006, *Birding* 38(5): 34-42; <http://www.surfbirds.com/ID%20Articles/dowitchers1005/dowitchers.html>) include a variety of subtle characters that can also be difficult to interpret and confusingly complex, but when properly applied they are powerful new tools for distinguishing the two species.

I analyze these characters using numerous photos of both species in various plumages and present a mnemonic summarizing most of the distinguishing characters of adults: Long-billed = *long* [bill, tarsi, and tail], *straight* [bill and supercilium; flat forehead, acute loral angle; alternate plumage with straight white tips of lower scapulars and wing coverts, and (when fresh) white-fringed vertical black bars on sides of breast], *dark* [alternate plumage overall dark dorsally, with much reddish feathering ventrally; basic plumage with dark-centered, brown-edged wing coverts, dark breast and sides, and limited pale on chin] but *hunch-backed and short-winged*. Short-billed = *short* [bill, tarsi, and tail], *not straight* [distal third of bill usually decurved gradually; supercilium strongly arched, forehead higher, wider

loral angle (eye higher relative to bill); alternate plumage with V-shaped white tips of lower scapulars and wing coverts, and round spots instead of bars on sides of breast], *pale* [alternate plumage with extensive buff edges and internal markings dorsally, giving almost striped appearance, and typically paler orangish ventrally with extensive whitish belly; basic plumage with distinct whitish margins on wing coverts, paler breast and sides, and more extensive pale chin] but *flat-backed and long-winged*.

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### Birds from Kansas: A New

**Book.** Presenter: *Max C. Thompson*. Authors: *Max C. Thompson*, Southwestern College, Winfield, Kansas; *Charles Ely*, Nacogdoches, Texas; *Bob Gress*, Great Plains Nature Center, Wichita, Kansas; *Chuck Otte*, Kansas State University, Geary County Extension Office; *Sebastian Patti*, Chicago, Illinois; *David Seibel*, Johnson County Community College, Overland Park, Kansas; *Eugene A. Young*, Science Division, Northern Oklahoma College, Tonkawa.

A new book on the birds of Kansas is planned, with an anticipated publication in 2010. Thompson, Ely, Patti, Seibel, and Young will write the species accounts, with each responsible for about one-fifth of the species. Gress will head up the photography collection and Otte will develop the maps. The book will include species accounts and color photographs for each species and will be completed as one volume covering all species.



# KOS fall meeting minutes, September 30, 2006

## **KOS Membership Meeting Morning Session 30 September 2006 Winfield, Kansas**

President Gene Young called the meeting to order at 1120 hours.

Gene presented the slate for officers for the upcoming year. This includes:

President: **Max Thompson**

Vice President: **Nancy Leo**

Business Manager: **Pete Janzen**

Recording Secretary: **Gregg Friesen**

Treasurer: **Dan Larson**

Horned Lark Editor: **Cheryl Miller**

KOS Bulletin Editor: **Gene Young**

At Large Members: **Bob Broyles** and **Patty Marlett, Matt Gearheart** and **Chuck Otte**.

The meeting was adjourned at 1130 hours.

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## **KOS Fall Board Meeting 30 September 2006 Winfield, Kansas**

Present: Gene Young, Patty Marlett, Tom Shane, Cheryl Miller, Nancy Leo, Pete Janzen, Gregg Friesen, Mark Land, Max Thompson, Matt Gearhart

The meeting was called to order at 1200 hours.

**President's Comments and Announcement:** No comments or announcement.

### **Old Business Committee reports**

**A. Membership:** Mark Land. Membership numbers are up to 311 as compared to 314 last year.

Membership does build through the year as members renew. Mark is working on an updated membership directory. This takes some time as he gains permission from members before putting their names in the directory. The redone membership brochure will have a check box for people who do not want their name in the directory. Patty will help with layout of the new membership recruitment brochure. Note that libraries and exchanges will be excluded from the membership directory.

Mark moved to have names in the directory from now on unless new members check a box asking that their names be excluded. All present members will be asked before their names appear. Gregg seconded the motion. The motion carried on a voice vote.

### **B. Publicity:**

This committee is nonexistent, as no one can be found willing to serve on the committee.

### **C. KBRC:**

Max Thompson. The first round of the process for this year's records is complete. Nothing is pending.

**D. Finance:** Max Thompson. Max met recently with members of the trust department of Home National Bank. We did divest our GMAC stock for a loss of \$4,000 but have already made this up since the divestment. We are making over \$4,000 per year on our investments. Current assets

stand at \$11,5202.40. Our interest is 4.18 percent. Money is divided into 25 percent equities, 65 percent bonds, and 10 percent cash (CDs). A number of books planned for the future (Birds of Kansas and the Birds of Sedgwick County) will require some funds.

**E. Conservation:** This year's conservation award will go to Stan Roth. Bill Busby will chair the committee in the future.

**F. Student Research:** We received no applications for research funds this year and will present no award. Note only two student papers this year. Both presenters will get a yearlong membership to the KOS.

### **Editors Report**

**A. Horned Lark:** Cheryl Miller reporting. Cheryl reports the process is on track. The deadline for the December issue is November 1, 2006.

**Bulletin:** Mark Land asked that the business manager be sure to insert a note in the bulletin is not in the mailing of the HOLA to avoid multiple requests from libraries. Cal Cink will edit his last Bulletin with the winter issue and Gene Young will likely pick up the task after this.

**E. Business Manager:** Pete Janzen reporting (see attachment). Pete noted we made \$65 on the spring meeting. We still have a number of shirts and checklists. Printing or updating a new checklist will wait pending sale of the current inventory. The move to sell shirts through the





ABA publication was not overly successful. We will now mark the price down to try to move the current inventory. Ordering of a new shirt is in the works but will likely not occur until 2008 given the current inventory.

**F. Treasurer:** Dan Larson was absent. An attached budget is noted with the budget being based on the 2006 budget. An addition to the budget needs to be about \$2,000 for the publication of the Birds of Sedgwick County. Gregg moved to accept this budget with the addition of the money for the Birds of Sedgwick County. Pete Seconded the motion and the motion carried on a voice vote.

**G. Non-game Advisory Board:** Dan Larson was absent and the topic was tabled.

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### Items discussed from October 6, 2005 to present:

**A. Meeting Schedule:**  
Current plans are for the Fall meeting to be at Kansas State University in 2007 and Fort Hays State University in 2008. There is no set location for the Spring 2007 meeting yet but several options are being explored. Max Thompson moved to accept the plan for the 2007 meeting. Cheryl seconded the motion and the motion carried on a voice vote. Tom Shane moved to accept the plan for the 2008 meeting in Hays. Max Thompson seconded the motion and the motion carried on a voice vote.

**B. Status of Birds of Sedgwick County.** The manuscript is to the editor (Cheryl Miller) and is nearly ready for publication.

### KOS Projects:

**1. Walk In Birding Program.** Ken Brunson has talked to individuals about helping with a walk in birding program through the state. The discussion focused on the KOS helping in the selection process but not taking a deeper role. Tom Shane moved to participate at this level. Max Thompson seconded the motion. The motion carried on a voice vote. Gene Young will pursue this issue more with Ken.

**2. Birds of Kansas Book.** Max Thompson and Chuck Ely with the help of Chuck Otte, Gene Young, David Siebel, Sebastian Patti are working on this project. Bob Gress will coordinate getting photos for the book (color photos with a preference for photos by Kansas photographers). Publication is not expected till 2010.

**3. Birds of Kansas Web site.** Ken Brunson has noted some money available for putting together a web-based site on birds in Kansas (see attachment email). This would be modeled after the Kansas Herp Atlas. Our role is uncertain. This issue needs to be pursued more with a note of several issues in this area.

**4. Thanks.** Chuck Otte was acknowledged for his extensive work on web-based resources for birders and others in Kansas.

**5. Vertebrate Checklist for Kansas.** Gene Young noted the letter (see attachment) sent to the editors of this checklist noting details that are of question (including listing Muscovy as a viable population in the state).

**6. Donation.** The donation of a book (Spanish edition of Birds

of North America by Kenn Kaufmann) donated to Horace Mann Elementary School in Wichita by the KOS was noted.

### New Business

**1.** Max noted no IBA (Important Bird Areas) in Kansas. The issue of the cost of this and the logistics of getting sites recognized was noted and no further action was noted.

**2.** Some discussion on the methods of publishing Christmas Bird Count date was noted. There is considerable cost in publishing the data in the Bulletin with this being our single biggest expense. Several options were put out including paying the cost to have all counts be National Audubon Society counts and having the data published and accessible on the web. More discussion is needed on this topic.

There is some thought of making spring count (North American Migration Count) data available. Currently much data exists but little is available to anyone to use.

The meeting was adjourned at 1336 hours.

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### KOS Membership Meeting Afternoon meeting 30 September 2006 Winfield, Kansas

President Gene Young called the meeting to order at 1611 hours.

### Reports:

**Membership:** Mark Land reviewed the information in the above report.

**Publicity:** The open status of this committee was noted.



**Finance:** Max Thompson reviewed data from the Board meeting.

**Conservation:** Rob Penner presented briefly about the work of the committee.

**Student Research:** John Shuckman reviewed information from the board meeting on the topic.

**Horned Lark:** Cheryl Miller reviewed information from the board meeting.

**Bulletin:** Gene Young noted a need for papers for publication.

**Nominations:** Gene Young once again reviewed the names on the ballot for the upcoming

year's officers.

Officers nominated include:  
 President: **Max Thompson**  
 Vice President: **Nancy Leo**  
 Business Manager: **Pete Janzen**  
 Recording Secretary: **Gregg Friesen**

Treasurer: **Dan Larson**  
 Horned Lark Editor: **Cheryl Miller**  
 KOS Bulletin Editor: **Gene Young**

At Large Members: **Bob Broyles, Patty Marlett, Matt Gearheart, and Chuck Otte.**

David Siebel moved to cease nomination, and Mike Thompson seconded the motion. The motion

was accepted by a voice vote. After discussion David Siebel moved to accept the slate for the positions stated. Roger Boyd seconded the motion and the motion carried by a voice vote.

**Meeting Schedule:** The fall 2007 meeting will be at Kansas State University and the fall 2008 meeting at Fort Hays State University. The location of the spring 2007 meeting is not yet set.

**New Business:** None noted.

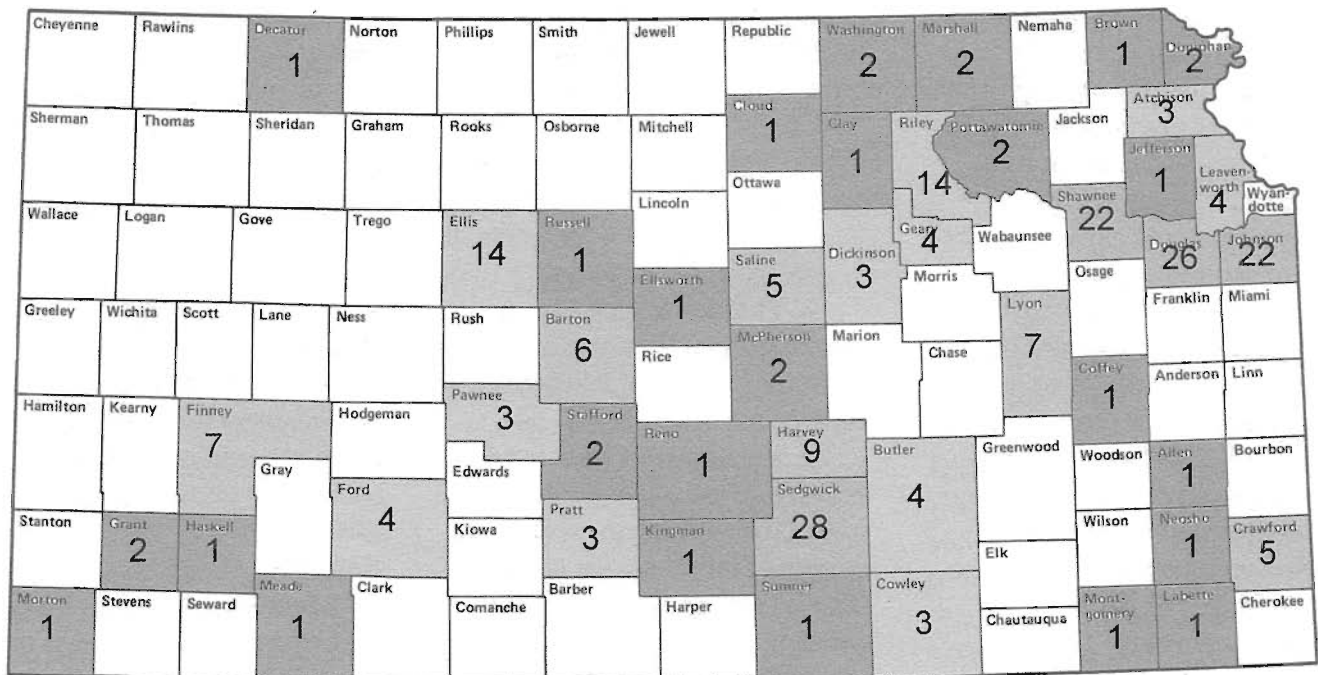
**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 1632 hours.

Minutes submitted by Gregg Friessen, Recording Secretary.

*Thanks to Max Thompson and the local committee for hosting the KOS fall meeting in Winfield!*

## KOS membership distribution by Kansas county

If you've ever wondered where KOS members reside in Kansas, look at the map below.



Map created by Chuck Otte, © 2006. Membership data provided by Mark Land



# Ferrets in Kansas?

By Bill Busby

Birders in western Kansas can count on ticking off Burrowing Owl and Ferruginous Hawk without much fuss. With a little planning and luck, they can find Golden Eagle and Mountain Plover, too. These and other wildlife species that are associated with prairie dog colonies may become easier—or harder—to find depending on the outcome of two divergent efforts.

The first effort is an initiative by several private landowners in Logan County in northwestern Kansas who wish to receive Black-footed Ferrets on their land. Together, the landowners have over 35,000 acres of land and about 10,000 acres of prairie dogs. At the landowner's request, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service officials visited the area this past summer to assess the potential for reintroducing this federally endangered prairie dog predator. The ferrets would come from captive breeding facilities in Colorado. According to Dan Mulhern of the USFWS office in Manhattan, the prairie dog resource in Logan County may well be sufficient to support the dining and habitat needs of a small ferret population. He also says experimental reintroductions are being considered for late 2006 or 2007. He noted that surveyors this summer observed hundreds of Burrowing Owls and many raptors while conducting the prairie dog counts.

Complicating ferret reintroduction plans is a 1903



©Gen Busby, 2006.

Kansas statute allowing townships or county officials to mandate eradication of prairie dogs on private lands and to bill the landowner for costs of control. In counties that maintain active control programs, prairie dog eradication efforts have been fairly effective (for instance, how many Burrowing Owls have you seen in Wallace County in recent years?). Logan County, which has had a less active control program, now

faces mounting pressure from landowners who are concerned about prairie dogs spreading from their neighbor's ranches onto their own. They are concerned that prairie dogs compete with livestock for forage, a claim that appears self-evident when one looks out over the short vegetation on a dog colony, but which has not been demonstrated by grazing research in Kansas. In any event,

*(continued on page 12)*

# Ferrets, *continued*

county commissioners are starting to put the squeeze on landowners with prairie dog colonies.

Ranchers who wish to keep their prairie dogs are frustrated because they feel it is their right to manage their land as they see fit and see this as "taking" of private property by the government. The landowners who want ferrets are trying to cooperate with their neighbors and county officials who don't want prairie dogs to spread. Their efforts to control the dispersal of prairie dogs off their properties include grazing restrictions to create vegetative visual buffers, experiments with barrier fences, and lethal elimination of prairie dogs along their common borders.

Black-tailed Prairie Dog populations in the Great Plains have been in decline for years due to habitat loss (conversion to cropland), persecution (poisoning, primarily), and plague (an

introduced disease to which prairie dogs are quite susceptible). In 2000, the USFWS responded to a private petition by announcing they were considering listing the species as federally threatened or endangered. States with dog populations were encouraged to conduct population surveys and develop a state conservation plan. In Kansas, a 2000 survey using aerial flights estimated a total of 130,000 acres of prairie dogs towns statewide, with most of the towns being in the western one-fifth of the state. This compares with an estimate of 2,000,000 acres in 1901 by Lanz.

Whether populations of prairie dogs and the many other wildlife species associated with them, included ferrets and a variety of grassland birds, will wax or wane in the Sunflower State depends largely on human attitudes toward the critters and what actions follow those attitudes.

## Additional sources

- Hays Daily News:  
[www.dailynews.net/hdnews/prairiedogs/index.html](http://www.dailynews.net/hdnews/prairiedogs/index.html)
- Audubon of Kansas:  
[www.audubonofkansas.org/prairiedogs.php](http://www.audubonofkansas.org/prairiedogs.php)
- Black-footed Ferrets:  
[www.fws.gov/endangered/ia07.html](http://www.fws.gov/endangered/ia07.html)
- Kansas Black-tailed Prairie Dog Conservation and Management Plan. 2002. Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks.

## Statement of non-profit status and copyright:

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## Ten best birds of the year

**Gene Young** presented the following birds as best of the year, for the period October 2005-September 2006, at the fall KOS banquet.

**1. Hepatic Tanager.** 22 April. Elkhart. First state record. *Pete Janzen*;

**2. Gray Hawk.** 19-30 October. Wichita. First record with physical evidence. *Mark Bryant*;

**3. Lesser Nighthawk.** 21 September. River Bridge, Morton County. *Chris Hobbs, Sebastian Patti, and Max Thompson*;

**4. Costa's Hummingbird.** 9 October. Pottawatomie County. *Ted Cable and Doris Burnett*;

**5. Band-tailed Pigeon.** December. Sheridan County. *Michael Goss*;

**6. White-tailed Kite.** 6-24 September. Nelson Environmental Study Area, Jefferson County. *Galen Pittman*;

**7. Vermilion Flycatcher.** 20 April. Middle Springs, Morton County. First nesting record. *Mark Corder*;

**8. Common Raven.** 4 April. Point of Rocks, Morton County. First confirmed nesting in approximately 100 years. *Arpi Nyari, Mark Robbins, Hobbs, Patti and Thompson*;

**9. White-throated Swift.** 3-6 October. Tuttle Reservoir, Riley County. Seventh state record. *Mark Mayfield*;

**10. Eurasian Wigeon.** 29 October. Quivira National Wildlife Refuge, Stafford County. *Tyler Hicks*.



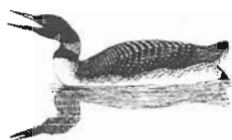
# Kansas spring season roundup

June 1– July 31, 2006

Mark Corder, compiler

Three Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks top the 2006 Summer Roundup—one in Johnson County and two at Quivira NWR. An immature White Ibis graced the fish ponds in north Lawrence with its presence in late July following the sighting of a Glossy Ibis earlier in the month at Quivira.

A very late Common Loon spent the first fortnight of June at



Tuttle Creek which presaged the appearance of Cinnamon Teal and a very late Greater White-fronted Goose both at Quivira a few weeks later.

Raptor reports were extremely scarce during the period although it is apparent from this and recent years that Cooper's Hawks continue to increase their breeding activity in the State. Common Ravens seem to have a continuing interest in what Morton County

has to offer with two seen flying over the Elkhart sewage ponds in mid-June.

The Ottes reported a first summer Laughing Gull in Geary County in July at the same time that Least Terns were being recorded in unusually high numbers in Sedgwick County. Bob Gress reported the new location of the Least Tern colony located within the city limits of Wichita. It had 11 nests—five with chicks and six with adults incubating eggs.

Five reports of lone White-winged Doves came from five different counties. Single Greater Roadrunners were found in four different counties. The Greater Roadrunner seen in late June in Cowley County appears to have become a permanent resident near the entrance to the student center at the college.

Only one "unusual" hummingbird made this summer's list—a solo adult male Calliope in Pratt. Late Olive-

sided and Least Flycatchers were seen on June 14 and June 22, respectively.

Rounding out the list were: Bay-breasted Warbler (13 June), Ovenbird and MacGillivray's Warbler (22 June), Vesper Sparrow (7 June), Harris's Sparrow (1 June and 27 June), Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Lazuli Bunting (22 June), and Bobolink (7 July, in Linn County, suggesting possible breeding).

Finally, of special interest were several Henslow's Sparrows found in Shawnee Mission Park in early June. At least six were seen and heard in an area of tall, thick grass below the spillway. It is of some note that park management delayed mowing until the birds completed their nesting. Excellent photographs accompanied an article on the birds in *The Kansas City Star*.

You may reach **Mark Corder** at [buddesystem@msn.com](mailto:buddesystem@msn.com).

<u>Species</u>	<u>Number and Location</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Observer(s)</u>
<u>Black-bellied Whistling-Duck</u> D	1 at sub-division pond, Olathe	Johnson	06/29	BW
	2 QNWR	Stafford	07/26	RG
Greater White-fronted Goose	1QNWR	Stafford	<u>07/04</u>	MG, AM
Cinnamon Teal	1 male QNWR	Stafford	<u>06/30</u>	SS, TC, DB
	1 pair seen over July 4th holiday	Stafford		MG, AM
Common Loon	1 Tuttle Creek Res	Riley	<u>06/01-14</u>	TC, LJ
Pied-billed Grebe	12 ad and 3 imm, Winfield Gun Club	Sumner	07/30	MT, GY



<u>Species</u>	<u>Number and Location</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Observer(s)</u>
Western Grebe	1 QNWR	Stafford	07/04	MG, AM
Least Bittern	2 QNWR	Stafford	07/28	T & SM
	2 Slate Creek Wetlands	Sumner	07/30	MT, GY
<u>White Ibis</u>	1 imm fish farm N of Lawrence	Douglas	07/30	MRO, M:obs
<u>Glossy Ibis</u>	1 QNWR	Stafford	07/04	MG, AM
Mississippi Kite	1 over Pittsburg residence	<u>Crawford</u>	06/30	RM
Cooper's Hawk	3 fledged young, KSU campus	Riley	07/26	LJ
Peregrine Falcon	1 dark bird near Rozel	Pawnee	07/23	SS
King Rail	1 ad and chick QNWR	Stafford	07/23	RG
	1 heard calling QNWR	Stafford	07/23	PJ
	1 Winfield Gun Club	Sumner	07/30	MT, GY
Virginia Rail	Several with young QNWR	Stafford	07/23	PJ
	2 QNWR	Stafford	07/28	T & SM
Sora	1 on res pond, Pittsburg	Crawford	06/26	RM
	2 KCP&L Wetland	Johnson	07/29	ML, MG
Common Moorhen	2 ad, 5 imm, Slate Creek Wetlands	Sumner	07/30	MT, GY
Snowy Plover	<u>60</u> QNWR	Stafford	07/23	PJ
Piping Plover	1 QNWR	Stafford	07/04	MG, AM
Solitary Sandpiper	2 Baker Wetlands	Douglas	07/14	DS
Willet	1 Elkhart sewer ponds	Morton	<u>06/22</u>	SP, KH
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	12 sod farm near Colwich	Sedgwick	07/23	PJ
	6 sod farms S of Overland Park	Johnson	07/29	ML, MG
	12 Slate Creek Wetland	Sumner	07/30	MT, GY
	14 sod farm near Colwich	Sedgwick	07/30	DV
	2 sod farm N of Lawrence	Douglas	07/31	BA
Short-billed Dowitcher	1 alternate plumage, QNWR	Stafford	07/23	PJ
Laughing Gull	1 1 <sup>st</sup> summer, Milford sewer ponds	Geary	07/08	C & JO
California Gull	1 3 <sup>rd</sup> year Cheney Res	Reno	06/18	PJ, KG
Least Tern	5 nesting area in Wichita	Sedgwick	06/18	BG, PJ, KG
Eurasian Collared-dove	2 feeding fledgling in Washington	Washington	06/06	DT
White-winged Dove	1 flying past Point of Rocks	Morton	06/13	TC





<b>Species</b>	<b>Number and Location</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Observer(s)</b>
White-winged Dove	1 res in Winfield	Cowley	06/16	MT
	1 imm Great Bend res	Barton	06/28	RG
	1 res in Wilson	Ellsworth	07/03	MR, BN, JG
	1 in Wichita on Arkansas River	Sedgwick	07/21	TSw
Greater Roadrunner	1 running across road	Kiowa	06/11	GF
	1 flying across road	Barber	06/11	GF, EF
	1 carrying a lizard near Pratt	Pratt	06/16	MB
	1 Southwestern College, Winfield	Cowley	06/27	MT
Burrowing Owl	2 ad and 4 young at nest	Geary	06/18	C & JO
	1 seen near Cassoday	Butler	06/18	RK
	1 pair and 4 young	Pawnee	07/23	SS
Western Screech-Owl	1 .05 mile E of w river crossing	<u>Morton</u>	06/13	TC
<u>Calliope Hummingbird</u>	1 ad male at farmstead near Pratt	Pratt	07/27	L & JQ
Rufous Hummingbird	1 female Larned res	Pawnee	07/24	DK
	1 ad male in Larned	Pawnee	07/24	DK
Olive-sided Flycatcher	1 Elkhart shelter belt	Morton	<u>06/14</u>	TC
Least Flycatcher	1 calling, Elkhart shelter belt	<u>Morton</u>	<u>06/22</u>	SP, KH
Yellow-throated Vireo	1 in Winfield	<u>Cowley</u>	06/22	MT, DS, GY
<u>Common Raven</u>	2 over Elkhart Sewer Ponds	Morton	06/14	TC
Purple Martin	<u>350</u> post breeding, north Wichita	Sedgwick	07/14	PJ
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1 female, Wichita feeder	Sedgwick	06/04	HG
	1 heard at Wichita golf course	Sedgwick	07/23	HG
Rock Wren	1 res in Manhattan	Riley	07/24	LJ
Chestnut-sided Warbler	1 at "water bubbler"	Thomas	06/04	PM
Bay-breasted Warbler	1 male, 1 female, Lake Quivira	Johnson	<u>06/13</u>	MC
Ovenbird	1 singing, Middle Springs, CNG	Morton	<u>06/22</u>	SP, KH
MacGillivray's Warbler	1 Elkhart shelter belt	Morton	<u>06/22</u>	SP, KH
Henslow's Sparrow	2-3 singing, Shawnee Mission Park	<u>Johnson</u>	06/05	MG, ML
Vesper Sparrow	1 feeding in stubble field	<u>Pottawatomie</u>	<u>06/07</u>	DR
Harris's Sparrow	1 Manhattan res	Riley	<u>06/01</u>	TC
	1 res SW of Towanda	Butler	<u>06/27</u>	RB
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	1 male singing in Elkhart	Morton	<u>06/22</u>	SP, KH



<b>Species</b>	<b>Number and Location</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Observer(s)</b>
Black-headed Grosbeak	1 male at farmstead NE of Larned	Pawnee	07/23	SS
Lazuli Bunting	1 at Elkhart shelterbelt	Morton	<u>06/22</u>	SP, KH
Painted Bunting	1 male at Wilson State Park	<u>Russell</u>	<u>06/13</u>	MR
Bobolink	1 pair in re-claimed mined land	Linn	07/07	MG, ML

**Key:**

- Underlined dates, locations or comments indicate unusual, late or early sightings.
- Underlined species indicates unusual species.
- Underlined species in bold** indicate species with no records or fewer than 10 records for Kansas.
- D** indicates documentation was submitted to KBRC (Kansas Bird Records Committee).

**Abbreviations:** Cimarron National Grassland (CNG), Quivira National Wildlife Refuge (QNWR), Reservoir (Res), residence (res), adult (ad), immature (imm).

**Observers:** Bob Antonio, Mike Blair, Robert Broyles, Doris Burnett, Ted Cable, Mike Cooper, Eric Friesen, Gregg Friesen, Janie Galliard, Matt Gearheart, Rob Graham, Harry Gregory, Kevin Groeneweg, Kellye Hart, Pete Janzen, Lowell Johnson, Don Kazmaier, Ron Klataske, Mark Land, Robert Mangile, Terry and Sam Mannell (T & SM), Paula McDaniel, Aaron Mitchell, Ben Nondorf, Chuck and Jaye Otte, (C & JO), Sebastian Patti, Lee and Jane Queal (L & JQ), Mike Rader, Dave Rintoul, Mark Robbins (MRo), David Seibel, Scott Seltman, Tom Swan (TSw), Dan Thalmann, Max Thompson, Don Vannoy, Brad Williamson, Gene Young.

# It's time to renew your KOS membership!

(or become a new member)

New Member                       Renewal

Please clearly mark your choice of membership category below.

- Student                                      \$5
- Regular Individual                         \$15
- Regular Family                              \$20
- Sustaining Individual                      \$25
- Sustaining Family                         \$30
- Contributing                                 \$40 or more
- Life Member                                 \$300 or two payments of \$150)

Please mail this form and your dues payment to:

Dan Larson  
KOS Treasurer  
3636 SE 77th  
Berryton, KS 66407

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City, State, Zip Code

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Telephone

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