



The Horned Lark

The newsletter of the
Kansas Ornithological Society

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President's Message

Another winter has come and gone and spring migration is practically over. We bird watchers are eternal optimists. We keep looking and hoping a very special bird will just be around the corner.

I had that experience in April when **Wally Champeny** called and said he had a Golden-crowned Sparrow in his yard in Oxford. I was optimistic that I would find it, but sitting in one spot for two hours and chatting with Wally, **Kevin Groeneweg** and **Cheryl Miller** finally made me wonder what I was doing wasting time looking for a bird that may or may not show up. I decided to leave.

Nevertheless, Wally called again a few days later and said it was back. Off to Oxford I went. Wally got into my truck with me and we sat. And sat. And sat. Finally, the wait was worth it. After 45 minutes, the Golden-crowned popped up on the

feeder in all its glory, alongside its close relatives—a Harris's Sparrow, an adult White-crowned, and a White-throated Sparrow. What does one call that grouping? I suppose a quadfecta.

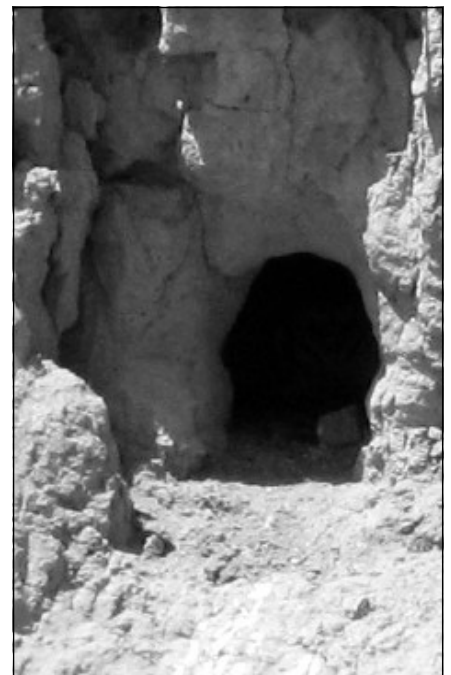
I guess these opportunities are why we are birdwatchers. We wait for that special moment when we see a new species or even some of the old ones.

Max C. Thompson

President

Photo right: Barn Owls often nest in cliff facings in northwest Kansas. Scott Seltman spotted an owl at this site before it ducked inside during a KOS field trip in Cheyenne County. Photo by Cheryl Miller, © 2008.

From the field



Fall 2008 KOS meeting: Hays

Fort Hays State University will host the fall meeting October 3-5, 2008.

Participants will gather Friday evening in the renovated Memorial Union and may undertake a bird specimen challenge.

All Saturday day activities will be held in Albertson Hall. Participants will come together for the morning business meeting and papers sessions. The board will meet for a catered lunch, and all will reconvene for the bird

watchers hour, afternoon paper sessions and business meeting. The silent auction will run all day: proceeds will support the student research fund. The evening banquet will be held in the new Robbins Alumni and Endowment Center.

Field trips to various birding spots are on the agenda for Sunday. A group of six to 10 people will be able to observe bird banding at the FHSU banding site.

One hundred years ago in Kansas

By John Schukman

On 1 November 1908 Edward E. Brown collected a female American [Black] Scoter at Lakeview, Douglas County. George Weyermiller took a female at Lawrence on 24 October 1908. Later, in his *Checklist of Kansas Birds*, Long¹ noted that the American Scoters collected in 1908 were the only records of this species in Kansas at the time. However, both specimens were misidentified and were actually Surf Scoters². Apparently, Kansas' first record of Common [Black] Scoter was shot by a hunter at Horton Lake, Brown County, in 1930 and identified by L. B. "Buck" Carson records.³

¹Long, W. S. 1940. *Check-list of Kansas Birds*. Trans. Kans. Acad. Science 43:433-456.

²Tordoff, H. B. 1951. *Reidentification of some Swans, Scoters and a Jaeger from Kansas*. Wilson Bulletin 63: 111-112.

³Schwilling, M. D. 1977. *Review of Kansas Scoter*. Kansas Ornithological Society Bulletin 28: 25-27.

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Conservation forum: Climate change and Great Plains birds

By Bill Busby

As our local climate yields to the effects of global warming, what are the implications for native bird populations? Which groups of birds will increase in our central Great Plains region and which are likely to disappear? A recent assessment by Playa Lakes Joint Venture and World Wildlife Fund examined these and other questions for the PLJV region in the central Great Plains. But before summarizing findings of the assessment, let's review some basics.

Birds and Climate Change

Why does climate change affect birds? Altered temperatures, precipitation and moisture availability, and a more variable climate with more extreme weather are hallmarks of climate change. These changes directly influence the tolerance birds have for environmental conditions. Climate change also affects birds indirectly by its impacts on habitats. This includes factors such as a rise in sea level, changes in fire regimes, and changes in vegetation and land use.

How do birds respond to climate change? Birds respond by adjusting the timing of life cycle events such as migration and breeding, and by shifts in ranges.

Climate change threatens bird populations when breeding efforts fail due to disruptions in food supply, or when suitable habitat shrinks or disappears. The most dramatic examples of threats affect birds occupying unique or scarce habitats such as islands or

mountaintops, or coastal lowland habitats susceptible to sea level rises.

Climate change will also give rise to complex interactions that are more difficult to predict. Invasive species are often the first to spread to new areas. Invasive species may compete with existing species or spread novel diseases to which native species are less tolerant. For example, evidence suggests a fungal disease linked to climate change is the cause of the extirpation of many species of Central American montane frogs.

Predictions for the Great Plains

The assessment, *Anthropogenic Climate Change in the Playa Lakes Joint Venture Region:*

Understanding Impacts, Discerning Trends, and Developing Responses, considers likely scenarios for the central and southern Great Plains. Below is a summary of some of the main points:

- Summers are becoming drier across the entire region, and in the North and East (including eastern Kansas), winters and springs are becoming wetter and warmer.

- The Southwestern and Southern regions (possibly including southwestern Kansas) are drying out, potentially reaching dust-bowl conditions by mid-century.

- Floods and droughts will become more frequent, with flooding and extreme precipitation events elevating sedimentation runoff into playas.

- Many types of habitat will be transformed by mid-century. Some

may effectively be eliminated, while others will shift to the North and East.

- Most bird species are expected to respond with easterly shifts in migration patterns, changes in the timing of migration and northerly shifts in overwintering and breeding ranges. However, not all species will respond to climate change the same way.

The assessment predicts birds likely to be winners and losers as a result of climate change in our area.

Winners—habitat generalists, species that expand their ranges from the south and southwest and spring breeders that will benefit from increased spring precipitation and milder winters.

Losers—habitat specialists, species that breed in summer or show drought mortality and species that migrate in late summer or early fall.

Species that inhabit widespread habitats may be able to successfully shift their ranges and adapt as climate and habitats change. Of most concern are those species that now occupy habitats that will become more isolated or even eliminated as habitats change, leaving these birds with few options.

For more information on the PLJV assessment, visit: www.pljv.org/cms/climate-change
For more general information on birds and climate change, go to: www.panda.org/about_wwf/what_we_do/climate_change/problems/impacts/species/cc_and_birds/index.cfm.

KOS: Extreme northwest Kansas

Approximately 20 fearless birders arrived in Goodland for the spring meeting. Right: Larry Haverfield showed several birders his property—home to nesting Ferruginous Hawks, Burrowing Owls, prairie dogs and black-footed ferrets. Below left: Lisa Weeks' face expresses the harshness of the blizzard. Below right: birders scanned the Goodland sewer ponds Saturday morning. Bottom: a panoramic view of the Arikaree Breaks.



Photo by Pete Janzen, © 2008.



Photo by Cheryl K. Miller, © 2008.



Photo by Cheryl K. Miller, © 2008.



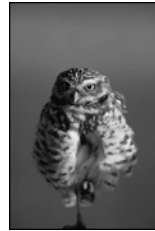
Photo by Cheryl K. Miller, © 2008.

Spring KOS compilation list

The calendar said May 2-4, but the blizzard-like conditions Friday, 15 degree windchill at dawn Saturday, and snow in the ditches when it was 73 degrees Sunday certainly sent conflicting messages. Participants observed 138 species in Sherman, Cheyenne, Wallace and Logan counties.

Canada Goose
Wood Duck
Gadwall
American Wigeon
Mallard
Blue-winged Teal
Cinnamon Teal
Northern Shoveler
Green-winged Teal
Canvasback
Redhead
Ring-necked Duck
Ruddy Duck
Ring-necked Pheasant
Wild Turkey
Pied-billed Grebe
Eared Grebe
Western Grebe
Double-crested Cormorant
Great Blue Heron
White-faced Ibis
Turkey Vulture
Mississippi Kite
Northern Harrier
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Cooper's Hawk
Broad-winged Hawk
Swainson's Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Ferruginous Hawk
Rough-legged Hawk
American Kestrel
Sora
American Coot
Killdeer
American Avocet
Greater Yellowlegs
Lesser Yellowlegs
Willet

Spotted Sandpiper
Marbled Godwit
Semipalmated Sandpiper
Least Sandpiper
Baird's Sandpiper
Long-billed Dowitcher
Wilson's Phalarope
Franklin's Gull
Rock Dove
Eurasian Collared-Dove
Mourning Dove
Barn Owl
Eastern Screech-Owl
Great Horned Owl
Burrowing Owl
Chimney Swift
Belted Kingfisher
Red-headed Woodpecker
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker (both ssp)
Least Flycatcher
Eastern Phoebe
Say's Phoebe
Ash-throated Flycatcher
Great Crested Flycatcher
Western Kingbird
Eastern Kingbird
Loggerhead Shrike
Warbling Vireo
Blue Jay
Black-billed Magpie
American Crow
Horned Lark
Purple Martin
Tree Swallow
Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Bank Swallow
Cliff Swallow
Barn Swallow
Black-capped Chickadee
Red-breasted Nuthatch
White-breasted Nuthatch
Rock Wren
Carolina Wren
House Wren
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher



Eastern Bluebird
Mountain Bluebird
Swainson's Thrush
Hermit Thrush
American Robin
Gray Catbird
Northern Mockingbird
Brown Thrasher
European Starling
American Pipit
Sprague's Pipit
Cedar Waxwing
Orange-crowned Warbler
Yellow Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler (both ssp)
Common Yellowthroat
Yellow-breasted Chat
Spotted Towhee
Cassin's Sparrow
Chipping Sparrow
Clay-colored Sparrow
Brewer's Sparrow
Vesper Sparrow
Lark Sparrow
Lark Bunting
Savannah Sparrow
Grasshopper Sparrow
Lincoln's Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
Harris' Sparrow
White-crowned Sparrow
Northern Cardinal
Red-winged Blackbird
Western Meadowlark
Yellow-headed Blackbird
Brewer's Blackbird
Common Grackle
Great-tailed Grackle
Brown-headed Cowbird
Orchard Oriole
Baltimore Oriole
Bullock's Oriole
House Finch
Pine Siskin
American Goldfinch
House Sparrow

Kansas winter season roundup

December 1, 2007 – February 29, 2008

Mark Corder, compiler

Weather had a significant impact on birding and birds during the Kansas 2007-2008 winter. Extended periods of extreme weather conditions and significant accumulations of snow precipitated the rescheduling—or outright cancellation—of some Kansas Christmas counts. It is rare, albeit not unheard of, for a CBC to not be held at all.

Arguably, the best bird of the period was a Yellow-billed Loon reported during count week on the El Dorado Lake CBC (Butler County). A very close second has to be the photographed Brant from Pratt County Lake. The Great Black-backed Gull (LaFarge Sandpit, Sedgwick County), the Northern Saw-whet Owl (Seltman shelterbelt, Pawnee County), the Golden-crowned Sparrow (Oskaloosa-Perry CBC), a single Common Redpoll (McPherson County), and the two Common Redpolls (Leawood residence, Johnson County) deserve honorable mention.

Two much-watched dam

areas, Tuttle Creek and Lawrence, attracted some nice winter gulls. A breeding plumage Franklin's Gull and a Laughing Gull were reported from mid-January at Tuttle. Lawrence contributed to the mini-bonanza gull sightings with California, Thayer's, Iceland and Lesser Black-backed Gulls. Clinton Lake, probably benefiting from the activity at the Kaw River dam, produced another California Gull and two Glaucous Gulls.



More than 3,100 Eurasian Collared-Doves were tallied on Kansas CBCs, indicative of their ability to expand their range and to survive some fairly severe weather. CBC participants combined counted 136 White-winged Doves in the state. And, a hardy Rufous Hummingbird spent a week in mid-December at a residence in Whitewater.

At the other end of spectrum was the disturbingly low number

of Loggerhead Shrikes counted on CBCs—a total of 56. Mountain Bluebirds were also scarce in the state with only 32 individuals being recorded on the combined CBCs. On previous CBCs—especially the Red Hills—hundreds if not thousands of this sky blue member of the *Turdidae* family have been recorded.

As noted by Thompson in his Christmas count summary, Kansas birders anticipated a very good finch year based upon reports early on in the period but the invasion never materialized. However, good numbers of Purple Finch were reported with 109 seen on the Quivira CBC. Good numbers of Red Crossbills and Pine Siskins were also observed during the period. Thompson banded an impressive 319 of the latter species during January and February in Cowley County.

You may reach Mark Corder at buddesystem@msn.com.

<u>Species</u>	<u>Number and Location</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Observer(s)</u>
<u>Trumpeter Swan</u>	1 ad., 7 imm., QNWR	Stafford	12/02-4	SS,MR,DK
	1, Bismarck Lk., Lawrence	Douglas	12/14	SR
	<u>17+</u> , near Rossville	Shawnee	12/17	BM
	1, Linn County CBC	Linn	12/22	RB (c)
	2, Clinton Lake	Douglas	1/26	DS,GP,MM
	1, Perry Lake	Jefferson	1/26	ML
	5-8, Fall River Lake	Greenwood	2/03	GW
<u>18</u> , between Silver Lake and Rossville	Shawnee	2/18	BM	
Tundra Swan	2, Quivira NWR	Stafford	12/04	MR,DK

Species	Number and Location	County	Date	Observer(s)
Ross's Goose	250+, Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	1/26	SS
<u>Brant</u>	1, Pratt County Lake	Pratt	1/24	MB
Am. Black Duck	2, Bismarck Lk., Lawrence	Douglas	1/02-18	AM, m:ob
Greater Scaup	15, Baldwin City CBC	Douglas	12/16	RB (c)
	15, LaFarge Sandpit, Wichita	Sedgwick	2/25	SS
	40, Lone Star Lake	Douglas	12/26	AP,S&KSh
Common Goldeneye	700, Winfield City Lake	Cowley	12/23	MT
<u>Barrow's Goldeneye</u>	1 female, Kanopolis Lake	Ellsworth	1/06	DG,JM
	1 male, Leavenworth St. Lake	Leavenworth	1/14	DF
	1 male LaFarge Sandpit, Wichita	Sedgwick	2/09	PJ
<u>White-winged Scoter</u>	1 female, Clinton Lk. Marina	Douglas	1/24	MA
Long-tailed Duck	1, Lone Star Lake	Douglas	12/26	AP, S&KSh
	1, residential pond, Derby	Sedgwick	1/20	KGr
<u>Yellow-billed Loon</u>	1, El Dorado Lake CBC	Butler	12/23 cw	CG,BL
Lesser Prairie-Chicken	1, CNG CBC	Morton	12/29 cw	SP (c)
Am. White Pelican	257, John Redmond CBC	Coffey	12/15	BC (c)
	1, Clinton Lake Marina	Douglas	1/25	GP,BA,DG
	2, Cheyenne Bottoms (all winter)	Barton	1/26	SS
Great Egret	1, Wichita CBC	Sedgwick	12/15 cw	PJ (c)
Bald Eagle	91, Junction City CBC	Geary	12/30	CO
Cooper's Hawk	1, Olathe res., eating Mourning Dove	Johnson	12/04	MC
Red-shouldered Hawk	1, Winfield CBC	Cowley	12/16	MT
	1, S. of Junction City	Geary	12/30	CO
Golden Eagle	1 imm., SW of Hays	Ellis	1/01	T&SM
	1, NE of Westphalia	Anderson	1/06	HA
	1, 9 mi NW of Ulysses	Grant	1/11	SG
	1 imm., along I-70	Wabaunsee	1/11	MR
Merlin	(multiple reports statewide in rural and urban environs)			
Prairie Falcon	2, near Nickerson	Reno	12/03	ML,MG
	1, Sim Park Golf Course, Wichita	Sedgwick	1/05	RB

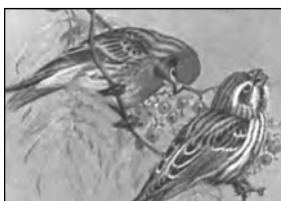


<u>Species</u>	<u>Number and Location</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Observer(s)</u>
Virginia Rail	1, Slate Ck. Wetlands CBC	Sumner	12/19	GY
	6, Wilson Lake	Russell	12/21	MR,DK
Sora	5, Wilson Lake	Russell	12/21	MR,DK
Sandhill Crane	3, 2 mi N of McCune	<u>Crawford</u>	2/3-8	SF,DB
Whooping Crane	2, Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	12/4-6	KG
<u>Laughing Gull</u>	1, Tuttle Creek Dam	Riley	<u>1/12-20</u>	LJ,TC,MR
Franklin's Gull	1, Tuttle Creek Dam (individual in breeding plumage with pink blush on breast)	Riley	<u>1/12</u>	LJ
California Gull	1 3 rd yr, Lawrence, Kaw Bridge	Douglas	1/08	AM,TS
	1 ad., Clinton Lake Marina	Douglas	1/24	MA
Thayer's Gull	1 immature, Wichita	Sedgwick	12/15	PJ
	1 ad., Bowersock Dam, Lawrence	Douglas	12/27	AP
	1, Lawrence, Kaw Bridge	Douglas	1/8	AM,TS
	1 1 st yr, Wichita	Sedgwick	1/21	PJ, BG
	2 1 st yr, LaFarge Sandpit	Sedgwick	2/9	PJ
Iceland Gull	1, 1 st winter, Lawrence, Kaw Bridge	Douglas	1/6	DS,GP,MM
	1, Clinton Lake	Douglas	1/8	AM,TS
	1 1 st yr, LaFarge Sandpit	Sedgwick	2/9	PJ
Lesser Blk-backed Gull	1 3 rd yr, Winfield City Lake	Cowley	12/23	MT
	1 ad., Cheney Res.	Reno	1/5	B&NB
	1 1 st winter, Lawrence, Kaw Bridge	Douglas	1/6	DS,GP,MM
	1 ad., Wichita	Sedgwick	1/21	PJ
	1 1 st yr, Wichita	Sedgwick	1/21	PJ
	1 3 rd yr, Wichita	Sedgwick	1/22	D&FV
Glaucous Gull	1, Clinton Lake	Douglas	1/2	AM
	1 ad., Kanopolis CBC	Ellsworth	1/6	MR
	2, Clinton Lake	Douglas	1/8	AM,TS
<u>Great Black-backed Gull</u>	1 1 st winter, LaFarge Sandpit	Sedgwick	2/18	PJ
Eurasian Collared-Dove	<u>1,032</u> , Scott City	Scott	12/17	MO
	50, feeder, Medicine Lodge (<u>3,142</u> , combined Kansas CBCs)	Barber	12/30	PJ
White-winged Dove	6, Elkhart CNG CBC (<u>136</u> , combined Kansas CBCs)	Morton	12/29	SP



<u>Species</u>	<u>Number and Location</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Observer(s)</u>
Inca Dove	6, SW of Medicine Lodge	Barber	12/30	SRo
	2, Elkhart, CNG CBC	Morton	12/29	SP
Greater Roadrunner	2, field near Argonia	Sumner	12/14	SR
	2, S of Garfield	Pawnee	2/9	D&KK
Long-eared Owl	5, Langley Cemetery	Ellsworth	1/6	JR,SEN.
<u>Saw-whet Owl</u>	1, shelterbelt, Seltman farm	Pawnee	12/14	StS
Rufous Hummingbird	1 imm., res., Whitewater	Sedgwick	<u>12/6-11</u>	TJ
Lewis's Woodpecker	1, SW of Kendall	Hamilton	1/1	HA
Ladder-backed Wdpckr	1 female, Tuttle Ck. Lake	<u>Riley</u>	2/9	CG
Eastern Phoebe	1, Baxter Springs sewer lagoons	Cherokee	12/4	LH
Loggerhead Shrike	(only <u>56</u> seen, combined Kansas CBCs, continuing to decline)			
Northern Shrike	2, SW of Nekoma	Rush	12/3	SS
	1, near Stockdale area, Tuttle Ck	Riley	12/29	LJ
	1, 6 mi. S. of Nekoma	Rush	1/2	SS
	1, Prairie Lake, NE of Holton	Jackson	114	CO
Mountain Chickadee	5, Fort's B&B, Ulysses	Grant	12/1-3	ML,MG,PJ
	3, Cimarron R. CNG CBC	Morton	12/29	SP
Bushtit	1, Garden City Zoo	Finney	1/5	T&Sh
	2 more seen, Garden City CBC	Finney	1/5	MO (c)
Red-breasted Nuthatch	<u>36</u> , KSU Hay's Ag. Research Ctr.	Ellis	12/6	MR
White-breasted Nuthatch	<u>1</u> ' <i>nelsoni</i> ' race, Syracuse	Hamilton	1/12	SS
House Wren	1, Wichita CBC	Sedgwick	<u>12/15</u>	PJ (c)
Mountain Bluebird	(only <u>32</u> seen on combined Kansas CBCs)			
Hermit Thrush	1, CB Campground	Barton	12/19	MR
	1 Slate Ck. Wetlands CBC	Sumner	12/19	GY
	9, Kanopolis CBC	Ellsworth	1/6	MR
Northern Mockingbird	1, shelter belt N. Pawnee Co.	Pawnee	<u>1/2</u>	SS
Brown Thrasher	1, Olathe residence	Johnson	<u>12/15</u>	M&EC
Curve-billed Thrasher	1, Leoti	<u>Wichita</u>	12/3	PJ

<u>Species</u>	<u>Number and Location</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Observer(s)</u>
Curve-billed Thrasher	1, NW of Elkhart CNG CBC	Morton	12/29	SP
Orange-crowned Warbler	1, CB Campground	Barton	12/19	MR
	1, feeder, Derby	Sedgwick	1/1	JCa
	1, Arkansas City CBC	Cowley	1/5	GY (c)
	2, feeder, Wichita for 2 weeks	Sedgwick	2/20	BR
“Audubon’s” Warbler	1, Slate Ck. Wetlands CBC	Sumner	12/19	GY
Eastern Towhee	1, CB Campground	Barton	12/19	MR
	1, Slate Ck. Wetlands CBC	Sumner	12/19	GY
<u>Golden-crowned Sparrow</u>	1, Oskaloosa-Riley CBC	Riley	12/16	BW (c)
Rusty Blackbird	1, pond near Elkhart Sewer Ponds	Morton	12/3	PJ
	3, feeder, Leavenworth	Leavenworth	12/12	DW
Brewer’s Blackbird	100, cattle pasture	Reno	12/3	ML, MG
Great-tailed Grackle	3, Hays	Ellis	<u>1/10</u>	TM
Snow Bunting	4, Lawrence CBC	Douglas	12/15	DS, DH
	6-7, Perry Lake	Jefferson	12/16	MG, AM
	1, N of Linn on Hwy 15	Washington	1/18	DT
Purple Finch	27, CB Campground area	Barton	12/19	MR
	12, feeder, Leavenworth	Leavenworth	12/12	DW
	17, Slate Ck. Wetlands CBC	Sumner	12/19	GY
	12, Wilson Lake	Russell	12/28	MR, DK
	109, Quivira NWR, CBC	Stafford	1/5	MR
	15, WSU Field Station	Sedgwick	2/10	CR
Red Crossbill	30, Johnson City	Stanton	12/03	PJ
	4, Topeka residence	Shawnee	12/05	JH
	14, cemetery, Russell	Russell	12/13	MR
	20, Fort’s B&B, Ulysses	Grant	1/4	KH, SG
	5, feeder, Topeka	Shawnee	1/4	JH
	123, Kanopolis CBC	Ellsworth	1/6	DG, JM
	12, Russell City Cemetery	Russell	1/12	M&ER
<u>Common Redpoll</u>	1, feeder, Lindsborg	McPherson	1/18-26	RK, KGr
	2, feeder, Leawood	Johnson	2/16	MC
Pine Siskin	24, KSU Hays Ag. Research Ctr.	Ellis	12/6	MR
	8, feeder, Leavenworth	Leavenworth	12/12	DW
	30, Fort’s B&B, Ulysses	Grant	12/26	M&ER, JC
	24, Wilson Lake	Russell	12/28	MR, DK
	45, Russell City Cemetery	Russell	1/12	M&ER
	<u>319</u> , banded, Winfield, Jan.-Feb.	Cowley	2/20	MT



Key:

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

Abbreviations: adult (ad.), Agricultural (Ag.), Center (Ctr.), Cheyenne Bottoms (CB), Cimarron National Grassland (CNG), Christmas Bird Count (CBC), compiler (c), count week (cw), Creek (Ck.), immature (imm.), Kansas State University (KSU), Lake (Lk.), multiple observers (m.ob.), Quivira National Wildlife Refuge (QNWR), residence (res), Reservoir (Res.), State (St.), Wichita State University (WSU).

Observers: Mike Anderson, Bob Antonio, Henry Armknecht, Bill and Nancy Beard (B&NB), Roy Beckemeyer, Darren Best, Mike Blair, Roger Boyd, Jeff Calhoun (JCa), Jack Conover,

Mark Corder, Mark and Elaine Corder (M&EC), Bob Culbertson, Shannon Ehlers, David Farmer, Steve Ford, Matt Gearheart, Dan Gish, Charlie Green, Cory Gregory, Bob Gress, Paul Griffin, Kevin Groeneweg (KGr), Karl Grover, Sam Guy, Jeff Hansen, Kellye Hart, Larry Herbert, David Herrin, Teresa Jacobs, Pete Janzen, Lowell Johnson, Don and Kathy Kazmaier (D&KK), Dave Klema, Robert Kruger, Mark Land, Bill Langley, Brandon Magette, Jim Malcolm, Terry Mannell, Terry



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Observations of wintering juncos in a Garden City, Kansas backyard

By Thomas G. Shane and Sara J. Shane

We first kept an occasional day list of the birds in our Garden City, Kansas yard, the winter of 1989-1990. At that time the yard was fairly barren with only three trees and four bushes. Since that time, we planted additional evergreens, deciduous shrubs and vines. Along with that, we increased cover with several brush piles for many bird species. We have always maintained numerous feeders containing a variety of seeds as well as ground feeding areas. Open

water has always been available even in subzero weather.

We report here the arrival and departure dates for the genus *Junco* along with a few notes. The Juncos are one of the annual winter residents present from late September through much of April. The southwest Kansas geographic location of the yard allows us to observe many forms of the Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*). We have used the groupings of former subspecies into types or forms published by *Beadle and Rising (2002). Sparrows of the United*

States and Canada. Academic Press.

Dark-eyed Junco

(*Junco hyemalis*)

Here we use all observations of all forms. Enough information was available to give us a fair trend of the departure dates for the species, whereas arrival dates for the various forms are reported below.

Fall Arrival: The earliest three dates or a Three Date Cluster was 26 and 28 September and 3 October, while the latest TDC was 20, 21, and 25 October with a

(continued on page 12)

Observations of wintering juncos, *cont.*

median of 13 October, n=18.

Spring Departure: The earliest TDC was 16 March, 3 and 5 April with the latest TDC of 16, 17, and 20 April, with a median date of 12 April, n=16.

High Counts: The average high counts for the first three five-year periods (1991-1992 through 1995-1996, 1996-1997 through 2000-2001, and 2001-2002 through 2005-2006) were 11, 16 and 36 juncos. The average high count for the most recent two winters (2006-2007 and 2007-2008) was 59 juncos. The gradual rise in the population for the first 15 years could have been the result of improved habitat. However, the sudden spike during the last two seasons may have been the result of very severe winter weather.



Slate-colored Junco
(*J. h. hyemalis*)

Fall Arrival: The earliest TDC was 26 September, 3 and 3 October while the latest TDC was 28, 29 and 30 October, with a median date of 18 October n=17. This form often makes up one third to one half of the total juncos during most winters. Setting up a mist net before sunrise on three occasions always resulted in this form being the first

captured at day break. One of 12 banded Slate-colored Juncos returned the following winter. The Cassiar Slate-colored Junco (*J. h. cismontanus*), a hybrid form, has arrived as early as 16 October and as late as 20 November, with a median date of 27 October, n=5. On 22 November 2003 one of the Cassiar juncos had a moderate amount of streaking on the breast, indicating a possible late hatch bird.

Oregon Junco
(*J. h. oregonus*)

Fall Arrival: The earliest TDC was 28 September, 4 and 11 October with the latest TDC of 28, 28 October and 8 November, n=16. The median date of arrival was 17 October. This form often makes up one-fourth to one-third of the total juncos during most winters.

Pink-sided Junco
(*J. h. mearnsi*)

Fall Arrival: This form was previously lumped with the Oregon Junco when the Oregon Junco was a separate species. Recent researchers and authors have been handling the Pink-sided Junco as a distinct form. The early arrival TDC was 3, 8 and 9 October while the late TDC was 24, 27 and 28 October, n=13. The median date of arrival was 16 October. This form often makes up one-fourth to one-third of the total juncos during most winters.

White-winged Junco
(*J. h. aikenii*)

This form nests only several hundred miles north of Kansas in a small range in and around the Black Hills. Consequently, the White-winged Junco has a low total population compared to the other forms wintering in Kansas. Only single White-winged Juncos were ever observed at one time. The earliest TDC included 30 October, 3 and 5 November while the latest TDC was 20, 23 November and 5 December, n=7. The median date of arrival was 8 November.

Gray-headed Junco
(*J. h. caniceps*)

This form has only been observed twice in 18 winters. The first observation was on 24 and 25 March 1992, and the second was one probable female that spent the entire winter from 28 October 2007 through 6 April 2008. The second bird of the season, a probable male, arrived on 6 April 2008 and stayed until 12 April. April 6 was the only day the two Gray-headed Juncos were present on the same day spending considerable time foraging together. This junco form is fairly common to the west of Kansas in the southern Rocky Mountains but is very rare in Kansas.

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The nomination deadlines for the Avian Conservationist and the Ivan L. Boyd awards are approaching! Go to www.ksbirds.org/kos/kos_projects.html, download the nomination forms and mail them in soon. The deadline for the ACA is July 1!