



The Horned Lark

The newsletter of the
Kansas Ornithological Society

December 2008

Vol. 35, No. 4

President's message

As I sit here watching the leaves falling like snow, I am reminded how quickly this autumn has gone. It seems ages ago that we had our fall KOS meeting in Hays, which was very successful and an enlightening event for everyone who attended. The papers presented at our meeting were all high caliber and informative. It is encouraging to see the dedication and research accomplished by our local universities helping in the conservation of Kansas birds. A big thank you goes to the Hays group for putting on such a notable meeting.

By the time you read this, the first snow will have occurred, a new president will have been elected, and hopefully we will continue to get a gasoline price reprieve. During these economically unstable days (with Christmas just around the corner), it is a time for being frugal.

Even though this may be a difficult period financially, I hope you will not forget our flying friends. They have it tough also, with a housing crisis of our making. You do not have to donate money. Volunteers are always needed on Christmas bird counts and would be greatly appreciated. Why not help the local Boy or Girl Scout troop and offer to lead a bird walk? Nowadays, most of our youths are nature deprived and would gain valuable experiences during these wilderness sojourns.

Instead of getting Uncle Fred that same tie for Christmas, why don't you make a donation in his name to some conservation group, or better yet, buy him a KOS membership? Everyone wins—Uncle Fred, KOS and you.

I'm concerned about our declining membership and would love to hear your ideas

(continued next page)

From the field



David Seibel took this photograph of a Mew Gull November 5 at Perry Lake, Jefferson County. © 2008.

President's message, *cont.*

about ways to increase our numbers. One idea I came up with has to do with friends who have let their KOS memberships lapse, perhaps by accident. Guess what I am going to get those friends for Christmas?



Nancy Leo

President

Looking for the perfect Christmas gift?

Try KOS merchandise on for size. From apparel to books, checklists to decals, we've got you covered. Envision your best birding pal wearing the lovely Sparrows of the Prairie T-shirt with artwork by nationally-published Kansas bird artist Dan Kilby and graphic design by Catherine Lewis. Shirts are short sleeve, 100% cotton, available in ash gray and white. Choose artwork on the front of the shirt, with the KOS logo on the sleeve, or one with the KOS logo on the front pocket and the artwork on the back of the shirt. Available in sizes S-3X for \$17 (includes shipping and handling and Kansas sales tax).

Nothing could be worse than experiencing the Kansas sun in your eyes and on your face when birding. For \$9 (includes shipping and handling and Kansas sales tax) you can sport a KOS cap and minimize some of the discomforts

of birding on sunny days! The cap features an embroidered Horned Lark on the front and an adjustable band for a secure fit in the Kansas winds.

The Birds of Sedgwick County and Cheney Reservoir by Pete Janzen makes a fine gift. With a brief ornithological history of the area, select birding sites and species accounts, this 115-page book makes a great addition to the nature-lover's collection. Kansas residents pay \$13.10; for out-of-state orders, pay \$12.32.

You also may purchase KOS checklists for 10 cents each and static-cling window decals featuring the Horned Lark for \$1 each. Postage varies for checklists and decals.

Mail your order and check (payable to KOS) to Lisa Weeks, 8902 W 99 Ter, Overland Park KS 66212. To check size availability on shirts please call (913) 642-8322 or e-mail lhw@kc.rr.com.

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Fall KOS meeting paper abstracts

Public Attitudes Toward the Effects of Avian Influenza on Waterfowl Hunting.

*Jason K. Black**, *Elmer J. Finck*, *Department of Biological Sciences, Fort Hays State University, and Helen Hands, Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area.*

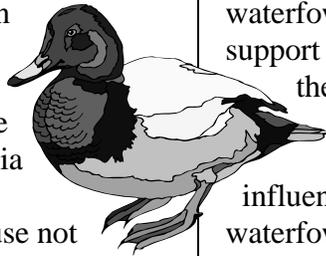
Wildlife managers are facing additional challenges in the twenty-first century due to emerging diseases in birds. Although

recent outbreaks of avian influenza have been confined to Asia and Europe, these outbreaks might cause not only biological issues, but also economic losses in ecotourism and sport hunting.

Avian influenza virus subtypes possibly affecting human health are present in wild bird populations with waterfowl as the primary reservoir.

Understanding how the perceived and actual threats associated with avian influenza affect waterfowl hunters is

important to wildlife agencies in the United States. To assess the attitudes of waterfowl hunters toward the effects of avian influenza on waterfowl hunting activity, we developed a 25 question mail survey. Our survey evaluated (1) waterfowl hunter opinions of surveillance efforts, (2) the adequacy and availability of current information and education efforts, (3) human health concerns, (4) waterfowl health concerns, and (5) concerns about the future of waterfowl



hunting. We selected the recipients for our survey based on Harvest Information Program stamp sales during the 2005-2007 hunting seasons.

Preliminary results from the survey indicated that avian influenza was not causing a decrease in the number of waterfowl hunters in Kansas.

Our survey also indicated that waterfowl hunters tend to support surveillance efforts by

the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks.

Understanding of avian influenza is low among waterfowl hunters, although they would like to be better informed.

Snowy Plover Nesting Success and Nest Density at Great Salt Lake, Utah.

*Christian Edwards**, *Greg Farley*, *Department of Biological Sciences, Fort Hays State University, and John Cavitt, Department of Zoology, Weber State University.*

The Snowy Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*) is a small (40 g) shorebird that inhabits the sparsely vegetated sand beaches, lagoons, river channels, and dry salt flats of North America. Throughout much of its range, Snowy Plover numbers have been declining over the past two decades. In fact, the Pacific Coast population has been designated as “Threatened” under the Endangered Species Act. Interior populations also have experienced declines and have

been given “Priority Status” by several state agencies and bird conservation organizations. Nesting success estimates at some interior sites are low due to predation and flooding events, potentially limiting the ability for populations to rebound. In addition, critical habitat loss has increased with urban expansion and other human activities. Great Salt Lake (GSL) is recognized both nationally and globally for its importance to breeding and migratory birds, due to the expansive mudflats and playas along the shoreline. During the 2008 breeding season, we quantified breeding productivity and nest density at three GSL study sites in an effort to provide information essential for the successful conservation and management of this species. Overall apparent nesting success rate was relatively high (65 of 109 nests [60%]); Mayfield nest survival was 46.1% for the three survey sites. We determined nest densities at each site by calculating two separate values: the number of nests found per searching hour and the number of total nests per km². We hope these new data will assist with successful future management of this shorebird.

Burrowing Owl Ecology in Western Kansas.

*Carol D. Grover**, *and Elmer J. Finck*, *Department of Biological Sciences, Fort Hays State University.*

Smoky Valley Ranch,

located in Logan County Kansas, is prime habitat for the Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*). A total of 96 nests was located and monitored from 24 March 2007 through 28 July 2007 and 64 nests were located and monitored from 28 May 2008 through 11 August 2008. Data collected at each nest included a GPS location of the nest, distance to nest from the burrow entrance, clutch size, brood size, and number of fledged juveniles. Juveniles also were trapped and banded. During 2008 additional data were collected which included distance to nearest perch, nearest permanent water source, nearest different habitat type, and perch height. Visual obstruction and percent cover also was measured at each nest compared to a paired random non-nest burrow in 2008. Based on our preliminary data in 2007 mean clutch size was 4.61, mean number of nestlings was 3.36, mean number of fledged individuals was 2.61, and apparent nest success was 33%. In 2008 mean clutch size was 4.05, mean number of nestlings was 2.79, mean number of fledged individuals was 2.56, and apparent nest success was 28%.

Kansas Shorebird Surveys.

Helen Hands, Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. Karl Grover, presenter.

During migration, millions of shorebirds stop at wetlands throughout Kansas. However, their presence has been documented quantitatively on a regular basis at only a few

wetlands – Cheyenne Bottoms (CB), Quivira National Wildlife Refuge (QNWR), and Slate Creek Wetlands (SCW). Although these wetlands are extremely important to migrating shorebirds, other Kansas wetlands also are important in most or some years. Regular survey data are necessary to identify wetlands important to shorebirds, so that these wetlands can be protected and managed for shorebirds. Thus, an annual, statewide survey of shorebird numbers was conducted twice monthly during late March-May and July-October during 2002-2006 to quantify shorebird use of wetlands throughout Kansas. Over 2,000 surveys were conducted at 48 sites. Not surprisingly, CB and QNWR attracted the most individuals and ranked high in species diversity. SCW had the second highest species diversity in spring. Peeps, Wilson's phalaropes, and dowitchers were the most common species in spring. Dowitchers and peeps were most common in summer-fall. Migration chronology peaked during the first two weeks of May in spring, but no peak was discernable during summer-fall. These data were published last spring in the Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science and are summarized in reports for 20 areas where surveys occurred regularly and have management potential. Shorebird surveys are continuing at 11 sites.

**Best Paper Award:
Negative Effects of
Mesquite Density on Lark**

Sparrow Nest Success. *Ashley M. Long*, William E. Jensen, Department of Biological Sciences, Emporia State University, and R. S. Matlack, Department of Life, Earth, and Environmental Sciences, West Texas A&M University.*

Fire suppression and intensive grazing has led to increasing dominance of woody vegetation in grassland ecosystems. Such encroachment has been shown to facilitate predators of grassland bird nests. In the shortgrass prairie of the southern U.S., mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*) is the most prominently encroaching woody species. We examined Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*) nest success in shortgrass prairie under experimental, prescribed burns (inter-annual fire frequencies of 2, 4, and 10 years) designed for mesquite control on the Crossbar Cooperative Management Area in the panhandle of Texas. We monitored 126 Lark Sparrow nests during the 2008

breeding season. Overall nest success was low, with only 2.4% of nests estimated to have fledged young. Daily nest mortality rates were compared to 10 explanatory variables of fire frequency, shrub habitat structure, and other covariates using an information theoretic model selection procedure. From the best fit model, we found that only mesquite density at the nest site significantly influenced Lark Sparrow nest success. Daily nest mortality rate was positively related to mesquite density ($P =$



0.017). Neither Lark Sparrow nest success ($P = 0.123$) or mesquite density ($P = 0.770$) was significantly affected by fire frequency. From our 2008 results, we predict that management practices decreasing mesquite density might increase nest success for this—and possibly other—bird species. Additional data will be collected in 2009.

Catastrophic Effects of Hail Storms on the Nesting Success and Survival of Grassland Birds.

Brett K. Sandercock, Matilde Alfaro, Page E. Klug, and Lance McNew, Division of Biology, Kansas State University; Rebecca Lohnes, Lab of Ornithology, Cornell University; and Bridget Sousa, Department of Biology, University of Kentucky.*

One of the major challenges in modeling population dynamics of sensitive species is predicting the occurrence of hail storms, hurricanes and frost, and the potential impact of rare disturbance events on population viability. We report the impacts of a major hail storm in June 2008 on the nesting success and adult survival in a community of grassland birds. Hail destroyed eggs and young in most of the active nests in a large area of tallgrass prairie at Konza Prairie Biological Station. Nest placement, aspect, and nesting cover provided little cover from storm damage. In addition to reproductive losses, mortality of incubating birds was recorded



for prairie chickens, upland sandpipers, nighthawks and songbirds. Renesting propensity varied as a function of the seasonal timing of breeding, which differed among grassland birds. While hail storms may be a rare event in Kansas, large scale negative impacts could have substantial impacts on the population viability of grassland birds. In the future, models of global climate change suggest that frequency and intensity of storms may increase in the Midwest.

Factors Influencing Capture Success of Neotropical Warblers in Western Kansas.

Ryan T. Schmitz, Greg H. Farley, and Elmer J. Finck, Department of Biological Sciences, Fort Hays State University.*

The Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) is a monitoring program used to track long-term avian population trends. Likewise, mist-netting during migration can be used to monitor breeding bird populations trends; however, variations in weather can influence catchability. From 1996 to 2007, we analyzed weather factors at local and regional scales that influenced capture success of four neotropical warblers in western Kansas and assessed if the Fort Hays State University bird banding site is a good estimator of central North American BBS population trends. With increases in local temperatures during the banding season (20 August to 31 October), capture success of the Orange-crowned

Warbler (*Vermivora celata*) increased. Similarly, with increases in regional precipitation during the banding period, capture success of the Wilson's Warbler (*Wilsonia pusilla*) increased. Trends in capture success were correlated positively with the number of individuals observed per BBS route for the Orange-Crowned Warbler; however, no trends were observed for the Nashville Warbler (*Vermivora ruficapilla*) and Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*). The results suggested that local and regional temperature and precipitation are related to capture success differentially between species and that the Fort Hays State University bird banding site can be used to track long-term breeding bird population trends for some neotropical migrant species.

A Type B Song of the Yellow-throated Warbler in Eastern Kansas.

John Schukman, Leavenworth.

Although known for some time, a type B song of the Yellow-throated Warbler (*Dendroica dominica*) was only recently recorded. This song type is rarely sung but it is heard where the density of this species is high. After conducting surveys in eastern Kansas the only location I have heard a type B song was in a localized area in mature bottomland forest at the Fort Leavenworth Military Reservation, Kansas, where the density of sycamores and Yellow-throated Warblers was high. I have heard the song from mid-

May to early June, just once or twice a year.

The 2008 Cliff Swallow Kill at Monument Rocks, Gove County, Kansas.

*Thomas G. Shane**, Sara J. Shane, Garden City, Curtis J. Schmidt, Sternberg Museum of Natural History, and Kathy Jasnoch, The Scott County Record, Scott City.

A kill of approximately 200 Cliff Swallows (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) was discovered and investigated between 3 and 9 August 2008 around the Monument Rocks outcrops in the Smoky Hill River Valley in western Gove County, Kansas. Possible reasons for the kill put forward by Kansas ornithologists included heat along with an infestation of the swallow bug,

lightning, poison, a hailstorm, and humans with guns; all of which are plausible. Dead adults and recently fledged swallows were randomly scattered in the vicinity of an isolated outlier column of rock on the north end of the east element of the Monument Rocks formation. A large colony totaling 488 of the mud nests typical of the species was clustered near the top of the northwest side of the rock column. The outer one-third of almost all the nests, which included the entrance, was missing. A layer of nest materials was found immediately below the colony. Six nests contained dead birds. These observations led us to conclude that a hailstorm was responsible for the destruction of the nests and the deaths of many birds.

From weather data and reports from local farmers and ranchers it appears that the storm occurred on 17 July 2008. This time period would account for the considerable decay of the carcasses examined during early August. Photos taken on 28 June 2008 showed all 488 nests intact and a very large number of swallows present. One photo revealed 438 swallows in the air, which accounted for less than 25% of the horizon. It would appear that the colony was completely occupied during the summer of 2008.

Editor's note: An asterisk indicates the presenter's name. Abstracts appear as they were submitted. Please contact the authors for more information.

KOS meeting minutes, October 4, Hays

KOS morning general membership meeting

Max Thompson called the meeting to order at 9:20 a.m.

Max noted that it has been difficult to find individuals willing to donate time for officer positions on the board. With some work invested, a list of individuals for board positions is below.

President: Nancy Leo; Vice President: Chuck Otte; Corresponding Secretary: Gregg Friesen; Business Manager: Lisa Weeks; Membership Secretary: Patty Marlett; Treasurer: Terry Mannell; *The Horned Lark* Editor: Cheryl Miller; *Bulletin* Editor: Eugene Young; At-Large

Members: Mike Rader (two year term); Henry Armknecht (two year term); Michael Andersen (one year left to finish a term); Rob Penner (one year left on current term).

The slate is presented to the membership for consideration.

Max moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:24 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Gregg Friesen, Corresponding Secretary

KOS board meeting

Present: Max Thompson (president); Nancy Leo (vice president); Gregg Friesen (corresponding secretary); Pete Janzen (business manager);

Terry Mannell (treasurer); Eugene Young (*Bulletin* Editor); Cheryl Miller (*The Horned Lark* Editor); Mark Land (membership chair); Patty Marlett; Lisa Weeks; Michael Andersen; Chuck Otte; John Schukman; Bill Busby.

Absent: Bob Broyles, Rob Penner.

Max Thompson called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.

President's comments:

Max presented a number of comments including tentative plans for a spring meeting in Pittsburg, KS. He also reiterated the problem in finding candidates for board positions.

Review of minutes from

last meeting: The board reviewed minutes from the last meeting. One change is indicated for the minutes of the general membership meeting that took place at 5:12 p.m. Item #2, the third paragraph should read:

“Chuck Otte moved that the membership fees for membership categories be changed to A. Regular members: \$20.00 per year. B. Sustaining members: \$30.0 per year. C. Life members: \$300 in a lump sum or \$150.00 each year in (2) two consecutive years, D. Family regular members: \$25.00 per year. E. Family sustaining members: \$35.0 per year, F. Contributing members and Libraries: \$45.00 per year. G. Student members \$5.00 per year (elementary through college, including full time undergraduate or graduate students). H. Any foreign category or subscription, add \$5.00 per year. Bob Broyles seconded the motion and the motion carried with a unanimous vote.”

Cheryl Miller moved to amend the minutes as noted and Patty Marlett seconded the motion. The motion carried on a voice vote.

The board noted minutes from email business for the past year.

Pete Janzen moved to accept the minutes as amended and Cheryl Miller seconded the motion. The motion carried on a voice vote.

Committee reports

Membership: Mark Land presented the membership committee report. He noted we lost several life members this

year and overall numbers are again down a total of 12 members. Mark noted that a total of 37 members did not renew from last year. Patty Marlett will be taking over as membership secretary next year.

Gregg Friesen moved to accept the report and Nancy Leo seconded the motion. The motion carried by a voice vote.

Treasurer: Terry Mannell presented the Treasurer’s report. Our expenses will once again exceed income though sales of shirts, hats, etc., have helped the bottom line. In short, some money from our investments will need to be used to pay bills for the coming year.

Pete Janzen moved to accept the report and Patty Marlett seconded the motion. The motion carried by a voice vote.

Finance committee: Max Thompson presented the finance committee report. He noted a review of the investment strategy with a balanced goal for both moderate growth and some long term growth. Our overall fund decreased by 2.9% which beat the benchmark S&P which dropped 11%. Our total monetary assets as of the 30th of September included \$121,512.

Terry Mannell moved to accept the report and Mark Land seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Business manager: Pete Janzen presented the Business Manager report. He noted we are in the black on merchandise sales with about \$2,000 dollars in merchandise in our possession. We have 330 copies left of *The Birds of Sedgwick County* and various clothing

items. Sales have been good.

Eugene Young moved to accept the report and Nancy Leo seconded the motion. The motion carried by a voice vote.

The Horned Lark: Cheryl Miller reported no problems with the publication of *The Horned Lark*. The deadline for the winter issue was noted.

Eugene Young moved to accept the report and Patty Marlett seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote.

Bulletin: Eugene Young reported on the *Bulletin*. He noted he has material for the next issue but needs material for the issue following the CBC issue.

Mark Land moved to accept the report and Max Thompson seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote.

Publicity committee: Terry Mannell reported on the publicity committee noting that some good coverage was provided for the Goodland Spring meeting with a radio spot on a local station.

Eugene Young moved to accept the report and Patty Marlett seconded the motion. The motion carried by a voice vote.

Kansas Bird Record Committee: Chuck Otte presented on the Kansas Bird Record Committee. Three positions will need to be filled at the next spring session of the committee.

Chuck also noted that the KOS web page is struggling a bit due to problems with the current server. He would like to negotiate to move the site to a

new server. The email service to board members is not working and should not be used at this time. Chuck reports he can likely find a server with more space for less money which would also be more reliable. On the current server the web based report form for the KBRC is down due to spam issues.

Terry Mannell moved authorize Chuck Otte to negotiate for a new Web service. Lisa Weeks seconded the motion and the motion carried by voice vote.

Eugene Young moved to accept the KBRC report and Cheryl Miller seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote.

Conservation committee: Bill Busby presented for the Conservation Committee. He noted that efforts of the committee focus on the Kansas Conservation Coalition which focuses on farm bill issues as this appears to have the biggest impact on conservation funding. Conservation on the Dingus Natural Area focused on the need possibly for work in the area to upgrade signage or other issues. A suggestion noted the possibility of once again putting something in *The Horned Lark* on the land given that it is a rather nice asset for the organization.

Pete Janzen moved to accept the report and Max seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote.

Student research: John Schukman presented on the Student Research fund. Terry Mannell moved to accept the report and Mark Land seconded

the motion. The motion carried by voice vote.

New business: Future meeting plans focus on the spring meeting in Pittsburg. A local committee is in place to run the meeting. Chuck Otte or Mike Rader will pursue options for a fall meeting location.

Discussion focused on our current printing costs for the *Bulletin* and *The Horned Lark*. The current printing costs and mailing costs are a significant part of our budget. Terry Mannell has talked with Northwest Printing in Hays who can do the printing for significantly less money and can also do the mailings for the organization. This will relieve the business manager of the task of mailing (a significant cost and time investment). The only issue with the current printer (Mennonite Press) has to do with cost. The quote from NW Printing is for a comparable product. Gregg Friesen moved to proceed with the change in printers and Patty Marlett seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote.

Discussion on CBC results focused on how the information on counts not in the Audubon system are reported. Confining it to the *Bulletin* limits access to the data in a world where much data is accessed on the Internet. Max appointed a committee of Chuck Otte and Eugene Young to pursue a web based option to present the data. Gregg Friesen moved to proceed with the program and Terry Mannell seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote.

The upcoming budget was

discussed. Terry Mannell has submitted this already as noted above. He did note that our increased sales have demanded that we pay sales tax quarterly. This is done through a web based program.

Max reported on the work on the new book *Birds of Kansas*. A contract has been signed by the authors and some funding issues are of note. The royalties have been signed over to KOS. Money is needed to cover printing and at present \$21,000 is needed. The hope is that money can be accessed from private sources for this. If this is not done, funding from the KOS Book Royalty Fund is an option. We do have the money to cover this. Terry Mannell moved to encumber \$21,000 from the Book Royalty Fund to cover this expense should it be needed. Mark Land seconded the motion and it carried by voice vote.

KOS received a copy of *Birding in the Northern Plains*. The organization will ask Tom Shane to review the book for the newsletter.

Adjournment: Gregg Friesen moved to close the meeting and Nancy Leo seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 1:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Gregg Friesen; Corresponding Secretary

KOS afternoon general membership meeting

The meeting was called to order at 3:59 p.m. by Max Thompson.

Committee reports

Membership: Mark Land

presented the membership committee report noting the current membership at 271 members. He encouraged members to keep address information current.

Treasurer: Terry Mannell presented the report noting income of \$15,754 and expenses of \$14,516 this year so far. We will have to use some money from our assets to pay for expenses this year with printing costs being the major expense. Our investments are holding their own. With the 2009 budget and with no changes we will need \$3 -4,000 from our investments.

The Horned Lark: Cheryl Miller had no specific comments, noting the newsletter is doing well.

Bulletin: Eugene Young commented that we need papers. Greg Farley asked about publishing some information (such as CBC results) on the Web and the plan for putting CBC data there was discussed.

Business manager: Pete Janzen reviewed the success with merchandise sales and noted the \$2,000 profit from sales of *Birds of Sedgwick County*. The change in printers was noted with expected savings. He commented that the issues of finances relates directly to the number of members in the organization.

KBRC: Chuck Otte reported and noted adding Common Crane to the state list and taking the Western Bluebird off the hypothetical list (due to photographic evidence). The current electronic reports submission form is off-line due

to spam issues.

Conservation: Bill Busby reported with a focus on working with the local coalition to affect the Farm Bill where most funding for conservation is placed.

Student research: John Schukman briefly reviewed awards presented.

Future meetings: The spring meeting is set for Pittsburg, May 1-3, 2009. No fall location is set yet but Mike Rader will be talking with representatives from the Dillon Nature Center in Hutchinson about hosting the event.

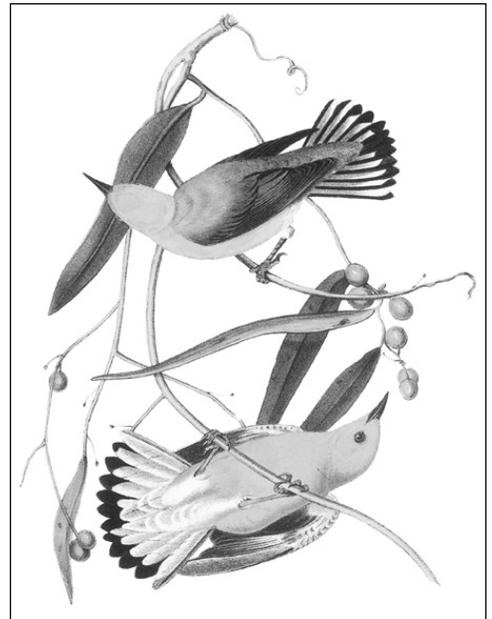
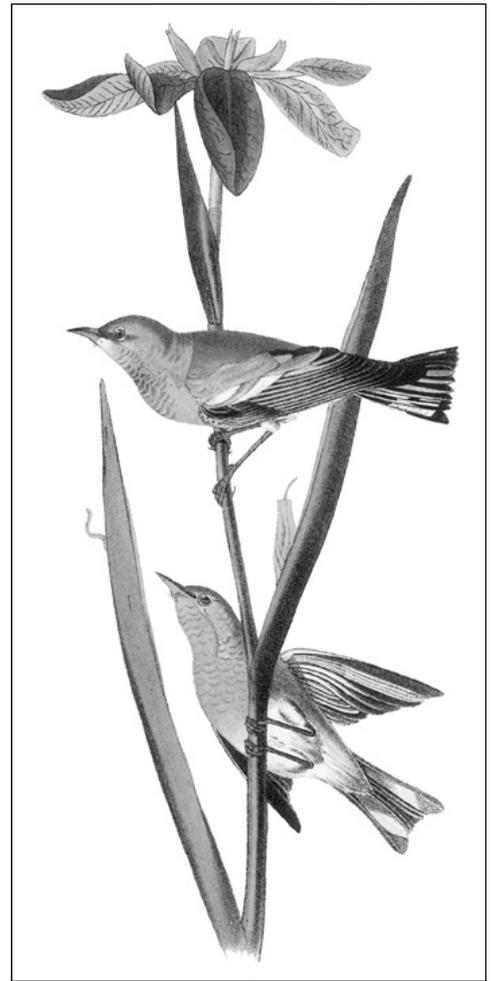
Election of officers: The slate of officers was presented for the upcoming year. This includes:

President: Nancy Leo; Vice President: Chuck Otte; Corresponding Secretary: Gregg Friesen; Treasurer: Terry Mannell; Business Manager: Lisa Weeks; Membership Secretary: Patty Marlett; *The Horned Lark* Editor: Cheryl Miller; *Bulletin* Editor: Eugene Young; At-Large Members: Mike Rader (two-year term); Henry Armknecht (two-year term); Michael Andersen (one year left); Rob Penner (one year left).

Joyce Davis moved to accept the slate and approve the officers as noted. Chuck Otte seconded the motion and it carried by voice vote.

Adjournment: Cheryl Miller moved to adjourn the meeting and Stan Roth seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 4:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Gregg Friesen; Corresponding Secretary.



Avian Conservationist Award: Bob Gress

For more than twenty five years, Bob Gress has been working to educate Kansans — and folks beyond our borders — about the natural wonders of our state.

In his nomination letter, Pete Janzen wrote, “A more patient and genuinely good person would be hard to find. I’m always humbled by the ability Bob has to appear enthusiastic and personable for the hundreds of public presentations he gives each year and questions he must answer each day from a public largely detached from the natural world.”

Bob has been employed since 1979 by the Wichita Department of Parks and Recreation and is now director of the Great Plains Nature Center.

A noted wildlife photographer, he began contributing his images to a long list of books on prairie natural history. Beginning with

Natural Kansas (1985), he most recently contributed to the *Guide to Kansas Birds and Birding Hot Spots* (2008), which he co-wrote with Pete Janzen.

In his role at GPNC, Bob helped shape the concept and mission of the center, plan the building and design the exhibits. He donated approximately 100 photos for the interpretive displays. An average of 28,000 people each year visit these exhibits, learning the story of the wildlife, plants and habitats of the Great Plains.

In 2003, the GPNC began producing the series of *Pocket Guides*. Bob has co-written and supplied the bulk of the photos for these very popular booklets. The first of these was *Kansas Raptors*. These guides are distributed for free to visitors to the GPNC and other nature centers and museums statewide.

Bob’s work is also featured in several books devoted to birds of the Great Plains, including the *Oklahoma Breeding Bird Atlas*, and both volumes of the *Birds of Kansas*. Bob is now overseeing the gathering and evaluation of photographs for the new *Birds of Kansas*, which is currently in development.

His contributions to the Wichita Audubon Society and the Kansas Ornithological Society have been largely unsung. He has contributed behind the scenes to both groups as a member of their nominating committees. He also served on the Kansas Bird Records Committee for two terms and is a past member of the KOS Board of Directors. He is also faithfully on hand at WAS meetings to make sure the audio-visual equipment is functioning and ready.

Ivan L. Boyd Award: Tom Shane

Tom Shane has served as KOS president and board member, and has organized numerous Christmas bird counts, breeding bird surveys and atlas blocks. A life member, he has been part of the society for more than 45 years.

In his nomination letter Greg Farley wrote, “Tom is exactly what is great about our society. He has an unbridled enthusiasm for birds, and has spent countless hours studying birds in the field and researching them at home, on campus, and on-line. He has also published many papers in the

Bulletin, a *Birds of North America* species account, and on many occasions reported ornithological material to the society at annual meetings.”

Considered the unofficial KOS historian, Tom remembers many of the important, influential individuals who shaped the society, as well as their particular contributions. Tom and his wife, Sara, have reported many impressive sightings, contributed photo documentation, led bird walks and made other contributions to the society. He is

one of the most visible and active member of KOS in southwestern Kansas, and birders in Garden City have clearly benefited from his efforts.

According to Greg, Tom’s most recent contributions on the migratory patterns of long-billed curlews may prove to be a significant contribution in understanding the ecology—and possibly successful management—for this important grassland species. He has also supported student research by KOS members.

KOS fall meeting: Awards, reunions, research



Photo left: Max Thompson, center, stands with Bob Gress and Tom Shane after they received their awards at the banquet Saturday night. Photo below left: Charles Ely, second from right, is surrounded by former students Gene Young, John Schukman and Ken Brunson between paper sessions. Photo bottom right: Geoff Hill, left, Auburn University, was the banquet speaker. Following his talk, he autographed his book Ivorybill Hunters.



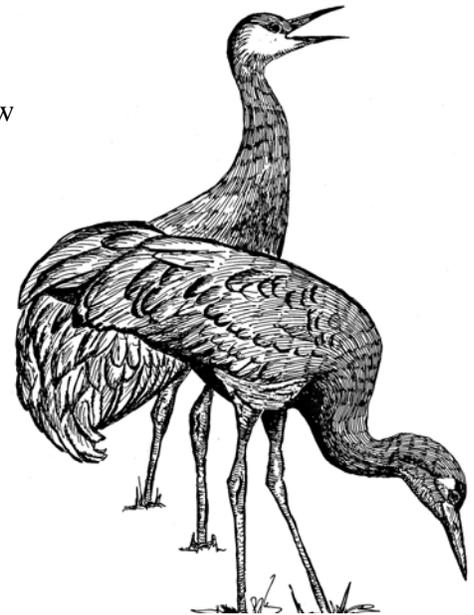
KOS fall meeting species compilation

Despite windy, rainy weather, KOS participants found 101 species of birds in Ellis, Russell, and Trego counties October 3-5.

Canada Goose
Wood Duck
Mallard
Blue-winged Teal
Northern Pintail
Green-winged Teal
Ruddy Duck
Ring-necked Pheasant
Wild Turkey
Northern Bobwhite
Pied-billed Grebe
Eared Grebe
American White Pelican
Double-crested Cormorant
American Bittern
Great Blue Heron
Great Egret
Green Heron
Black-crowned Night-Heron
White-faced Ibis
Turkey Vulture
Osprey
Mississippi Kite
Northern Harrier
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Cooper's Hawk
Swainson's Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
American Kestrel
Prairie Falcon
American Coot
Sandhill Crane
Killdeer
Least Sandpiper
Pectoral Sandpiper
Wilson's Snipe
Laughing Gull

Franklin's Gull
Ring-billed Gull
Common Tern
Forster's Tern
Rock Pigeon
Eurasian Collared-Dove
Mourning Dove
Barn Owl
Eastern Screech-Owl
Great Horned Owl
Common Nighthawk
Chimney Swift
Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Belted Kingfisher
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker (both ssp)
Least Flycatcher
Eastern Phoebe
Blue Jay
American Crow
Horned Lark
Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Barn Swallow
Black-capped Chickadee
Red-breasted Nuthatch
White-breasted Nuthatch
Carolina Wren
House Wren
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Eastern Bluebird
Townsend's Solitaire
American Robin
Gray Catbird
European Starling
American Pipit
Sprague's Pipit
Orange-crowned Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler (both ssp.)
Pine Warbler
Spotted Towhee

Chipping Sparrow
Clay-colored Sparrow
Field Sparrow
Vesper Sparrow
Lark Sparrow
Savannah Sparrow
Le Conte's Sparrow
Lincoln's Sparrow
White-crowned Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
Northern Cardinal
Red-winged Blackbird
Eastern Meadowlark
Western Meadowlark
Common Grackle
Great-tailed Grackle
Brown-headed Cowbird
House Finch
Pine Siskin
American Goldfinch
House Sparrow



Kansas summer season roundup

June 1– July 31, 2008

Mark Corder, compiler

Kansas experienced unusually cool and wet weather patterns in June and July. Perhaps as a consequence, shorebirds, waders and other species of birds favoring wet habitats (36 species) dominate the 2008 summer report. For example, Least Terns, primarily Quivira National Wildlife Refuge nesters, were reported from seven different counties. Thirty and fifty-seven Black Terns were seen in Stafford and Clay counties, respectively. A small nesting colony of Forster's Terns was located at Cheyenne Bottoms in early July by Matt Gearhart and Nic Allen.

Black-necked Stilts and American Avocets produced young at Quivira. Both Yellowlegs species were observed in late June and July. A flock of Western Sandpipers (estimated at 185 birds) was present at Slate Creek Wetlands in mid-July while a month earlier Mike Rader counted 600 White-rumped Sandpipers in Stafford County. He also observed more than 2,000 American White Pelicans at Cheyenne Bottoms on July 20. Single bird reports of Brown Pelican (Quivira), King

Rail (Slate Creek), Common Moorhen (Cheyenne Bottoms), and Black-bellied Plover (Quivira) are notable inclusions.

A possible Northern Caracara appeared in Woodson County on July 28. The sighting had sufficient credibility to warrant a fairly thorough search by several parties in the days following the initial report. Unfortunately, the bird was not relocated. To date, the KBRC has not received documentation relative to this extremely exciting report—a first state record if submitted and accepted.

Five different counties hosted White-winged Doves in July with a “pair” reported by Matt Farmer at the Marion Wildlife Area. No evidence of apparent breeding or nesting of this species was reported. A family of nine Barn Owls and individual Short-eared and Long-eared owls were also located in the state during the period. A Rufous Hummingbird put in an appearance at a feeder in Pawnee County in mid-July. A Broad-tailed Hummingbird did the same in Ellis County towards the end of the period.

Fish Crows were reported feeding young in Cherokee

County in July and were reported being seen and heard in both Crawford and Sedgwick counties. Intriguingly, Jeff Calhoun observed a trio of Wood Thrushes in the Rocky Ford Area of Tuttle Creek on July 13, and Pete Janzen found Chipping Sparrows feeding young in Ottawa and Cloud counties in late June. Five other species of sparrows made the report, including a very out-of-place Dark-eyed Junco in Riley County in late July, a Brewer's Sparrow in Morton County in July, and a White-throated Sparrow in Sedgwick County in early June.

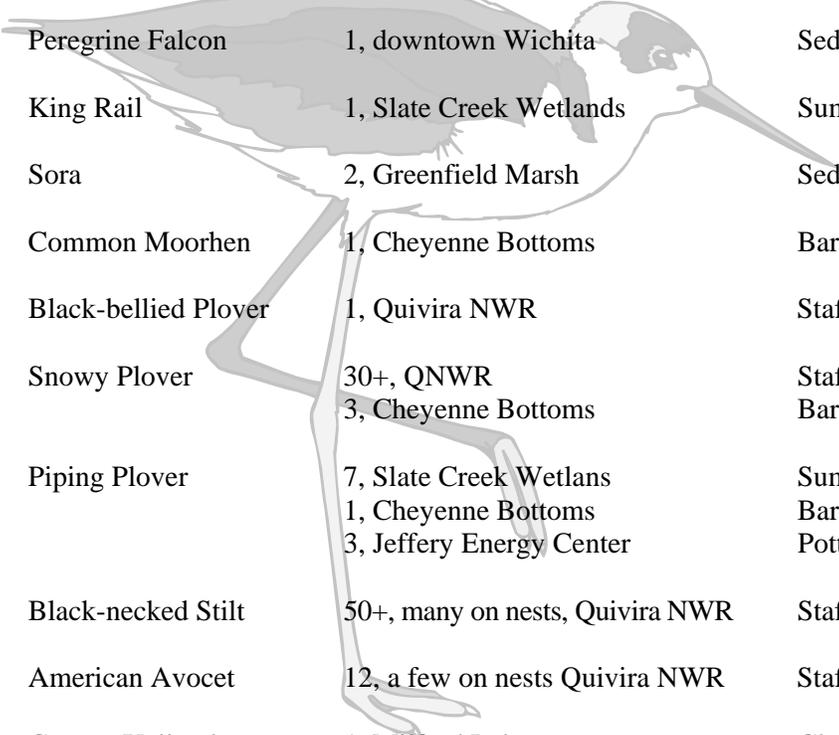
Painted Buntings were reported from five different counties during the period and Ted Cable submitted indisputable evidence of Pine Siskins having successfully bred in the state.

As always, thank you for your reports. For the winter roundup, I attempt to include records from Christmas bird counts. Please remember to share unusual sightings from CBCs to the listserv.

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>Mute Swan</u>	4, W side Tuttle Creek.	Riley	7/15	TC
Northern Pintail	1 f. w/6 imm. Minneapolis sewer ponds	Ottawa	<u>6/22</u>	PJ
<u>Mottled Duck</u>	1 TNC area at Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	7/6	MG,NA
Am. White Pelican	1, upper Milford Lake	Clay	6/22	PJ

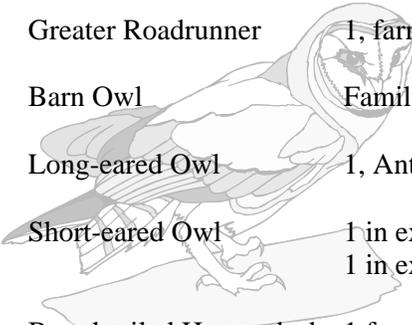
<u>Species</u>	<u>Number and Location</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Observer(s)</u>
Am. White Pelican	2,000+, Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	7/20	MR
<u>Brown Pelican</u>	1, Quivira NWR, Little Salt Marsh	Stafford	6/11	TH
Neotropic Cormorant	1, Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	7/5	MG,NA
	1 imm., Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	7/16	SS
	1 ad., 1 imm., John Redmond Res.	Coffey	7/29	MG,ML,MC
Double-crested Cormorant	600+, Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	7/20	MR
Least Bittern	6, Winfield Gun Club	Sumner	7/19	GY
Mississippi Kite	1, Overland Park	Johnson	6/05	HH
	1, Mission	Johnson	6/11	NL
	75+, over Ulysses	Grant	6/17	KH
Bald Eagle	Pair fledged 1 in Lawrence	Douglas	6/21	CT
	Pair seen in Derby	Sedgwick	7/24	JC
Cooper's Hawk	2 fledged in Mission Hills	Johnson	6/21	PWi
	Ad. feeding 4 imm., Oak Park, Wichita	Sedgwick	7/04	PG
<u>Northern Caracara</u>	1 possible, rural Woodson County	Woodson	7/28	SB
Peregrine Falcon	1, downtown Wichita	Sedgwick	7/18	BG
King Rail	1, Slate Creek Wetlands	Sumner	7/22	GY,MT
Sora	2, Greenfield Marsh	Sedgwick	7/27	PJ
Common Moorhen	1, Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	7/20	MR
Black-bellied Plover	1, Quivira NWR	Stafford	6/7	MR
Snowy Plover	30+, QNWR	Stafford	6/7	MR
	3, Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	7/20	MR
Piping Plover	7, Slate Creek Wetlands	Sumner	7/19	GY
	1, Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	7/20	MR
	3, Jeffery Energy Center	Pottawatomie	7/28	BMa
Black-necked Stilt	50+, many on nests, Quivira NWR	Stafford	6/7	MR
American Avocet	12, a few on nests Quivira NWR	Stafford	6/7	MR
Greater Yellowlegs	1, Milford Lake	Clay	6/22	PJ
	1, small pond	Harvey	7/7	CS
Lesser Yellowlegs	5, Quivira NWR	Stafford	6/20	SS
	1, Slate Creek Wetlands	Sumner	7/8	MT
	200+, Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	7/20	MR



Species	Number and Location	County	Date	Observer(s)
Solitary Sandpiper	1, at a pool, Derby Golf Club	Sedgwick	7/16	JC
	10, Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	7/12	S&DS
Willet	4, Slate Creek Wetlands	Sumner	7/8	MT
Sanderling	4, Slate Creek Wetlands	Sumner	7/19	GY
Semipalmated Sandpiper	2, Quivira NWR	Stafford	6/7	MR
	236, Slate Creek Wetlands	Sumner	7/19	GY
Western Sandpiper	185, Slate Creek Wetlands	Sumner	7/19	GY
Least Sandpiper	1, Quivira NWR	Stafford	6/7	MR
	41, Slate Creek Wetlands	Sumner	7/8	MT
	396, Slate Creek Wetlands	Sumner	7/19	GY
White-rumped Sandpiper	600+, Quivira NWR	Stafford	6/7	MR
	25, Quivira NWR	Stafford	<u>6/20</u>	SS
Baird's Sandpiper	12, Slate Creek Wetlands	Sumner	7/8	MT
	17, Slate Creek Wetlands	Sumner	7/19	GY
Pectoral Sandpiper	12, Slate Creek Wetlands	Sumner	7/19	GY
Stilt Sandpiper	4, Quivira NWR	Stafford	6/7	MR
	27, Slate Creek Wetlands	Sumner	7/19	GY
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	2, N Lawrence sod farm	Douglas	7/31	GP
Short-billed Dowitcher	3, Slate Creek Wetlands	Sumner	7/8	MT
	Few dozen, Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	7/12	S&DS
	2, Slate Creek Wetlands	Sumner	7/19	GY
Wilson's Phalarope	16, Quivira NWR	Stafford	6/7	MR
Franklin's Gull	15, Quivira NWR	Stafford	6/7	MR
	25+, Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	7/14	DM
	20+, Stockdale Pk., Tuttle Creek Res.	Riley	7/22	CG
	1, Jamestown Wetlands	Republic	7/12	PJ,GF
Forster's Tern	25, Quivira NWR	Stafford	6/7	MR
	Small nesting colony, Cheyenne Bottoms	Barton	7/5	MG,NA
Least Tern	13, Quivira NWR	Stafford	6/7	MR
	1, Pratt Fish Hatchery	Pratt	6/16	KB
	2, water skiing lake on K-10	Douglas	6/21	ML,MG
	2, near large puddle, NE of Ark City	Cowley	6/21	KG,CM
	3, Upper Milford Lake	Clay	6/22	PJ
	1, Sedgwick County Park, Wichita	Sedgwick	7/2	JC
	A few, Jeffery Energy Center	Pottawatomie	7/27	BMa
	3 (2 imm.), sandpit in Wichita	Sedgwick	7/27	PJ



<u>Species</u>	<u>Number and Location</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Observer(s)</u>
Black Tern	30, Quivira NWR	Stafford	6/7	MR
	57, Milford Lake	Clay	6/22	PJ
Eurasian-collared Dove	2, feeder in Topeka	Shawnee	7/14	BF
White-winged Dove	1, res., Larned	Pawnee	6/4	DK
	1 seen, BBS route	Mitchell	7/4	PW,RW
	1 fly by over Cimarron River	Morton	7/5	TC
	1, Rolla sewer ponds	Morton	7/05	TC
	2, separate locations, Larned	Pawnee	7/17	SS
	Pair, Marion Wildlife Area	Marion	7/18	MF
	1, res., Pittsburg	Crawford	7/20	BM
1, res., Clay Center	Clay	7/22	CW	
Greater Roadrunner	1, farmstead, S of Nekoma	Rush	7/22	SS
Barn Owl	Family of 9, Cheyenne Bottoms HQ	Barton	7/05	MG,NA, m: ob
Long-eared Owl	1, Anthony Lake	Harper	6/10	ES
Short-eared Owl	1 in extreme NW Pawnee	Pawnee	6/14	SS
	1 in extreme NE Hodgeman	Hodgeman	6/14	SS
Broad-tailed Hmngbrd	1 f., res. in Larned	Pawnee	7/30	DK
Rufous Hummingbird	1 ad. m., feeder in Hay's	Ellis	7/12	T&SM
Willow Flycatcher	1, Jamestown Wetlands	Republic	7/12	PJ,GF
Ash-throated Flycatcher	Numerous locations <i>(Several pair along the Cimarron River, one pair at CNG Work Station, and one at Point of Rocks)</i>	Morton	7/7	TC
Loggerhead Shrike	4, family group, Konza Prairie	Riley	6/19	BS
Bell's Vireo	1, Chase County Lake	Chase	6/14	MR
Fish Crow	2, calling, Frontenac	Crawford	6/7	BM
	1, calling, Pittsburg res.	Crawford	6/25	BM
	1, feeding young, Schermerhorn Park	Cherokee	7/16	LHe
	3-5 pair, Derby area	Sedgwick	7/24	JC
Wood Thrush	3, Rocky Ford Area, Tuttle Creek Res.	Riley	7/13	JC
Cedar Waxwing	Nesting pair, Tallgrass Prairie Natl Pk HQ	Chase	6/14	MR
	Pair, Minneapolis cemetery	Ottawa	6/22	PJ
Yellow-thrtd Warbler	5-6, Wyandotte County Lake	Wyandotte	7/20	DG,DL
Scarlet Tanager	1 near Saline River in NE Ellis County	Ellis	6/6	CSc
Eastern Towhee	1 N. of Augusta	<u>Butler</u>	7/09	PJ



<u>Species</u>	<u>Number and Location</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Observer(s)</u>
Chipping Sparrow	Ad. feeding juv., Minneapolis	Ottawa	6/22	PJ
	Ads. and juvs., Miltonvale	Cloud	6/22	PJ
	1, WSU Campus	Sedgwick	6/26	JC
<u>Brewer's Sparrow</u>	1, Cimmaron NG college pasture	Morton	<u>7/15</u>	DM
Grasshopper Sparrow	20+, Tallgrass Natl Prairie Preserve	Chase	6/14	MR
Henslow's Sparrow	2, Tallgrass Natl Prairie Preserve	Chase	6/14	MR
	3, CRP field, rural Eudora	Douglas	6/1	JW
White-throated Sparrow	1, res., Mulvane	Sedgwick	<u>6/8</u>	LH
Dark-eyed Junco	1, res., Manhattan	Riley	<u>7/28</u>	TC
Painted Bunting	1, E of Clinton Lake Dam	Douglas	6/10	NL
	1, Wakarusa causeway, Clinton Lake	Douglas	6/13	DG
	Pair, feeder, rural Medora	Reno	6/14	PJ
	Pair, N. Wichita	Sedgwick	6/14	PJ
	1, Clinton Lake Overlook Park	Douglas	6/14	PW
	4 singing males, Stockdale, Tuttle Creek	Riley	6/24	PJ
	2, Wichita	Sedgwick	6/27	PJ
12+, Stockdale Pk., Tuttle Creek	Riley	7/22	CG	
Pine Siskin	Several visiting feeder, Wichita	Sedgwick	6/09	PG
	7, feeders, Anthony Lake	Harper	6/10	ES
	9, feeders, Tuttle Creek Res.	Riley	end of June	TC
	1 imm., Seltman's feeder	Pawnee	7/11	SS

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: Cimarron National Grasslands (CNG), Headquarters (HQ), National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Wichita State University (WSU), residence (res.), Reservoir (Res.), adult (ad.), River (Riv.), male (m.), female (f.), immature (imm.).

Observers: Nic Allen, Scott Barlow, Kevin Becker, Ted Cable, Jeff Calhoun, Mark Corder, Bill Falk, Matt Farmer, Gregg Friesen, Matt Gearheart, Dan Gish, Cory Gregory, Bob Gress, Paul Griffin,

Kevin Groeneweg, Kellye Hart, Larry Herbert (LHe), Helen Hewins, Travis Heying, Leon Hicks, Pete Janzen, Don Kazmaier, Mark Land, Dan Larson, Nancy Leo, Brandon Magette (BMA), Bob Mangile, Terry & Sam Mannell (T&SM), Cheryl Miller, Dan Mulhern, Galen Pittman, Mike Rader, Brett Sandercock, Curtis Schmidt, Carolyn Schwab (CSc), Scott Seltman, Scott & Diane Seltman (S&DS), Chris Taylor, Max Thompson, Phil Wedge, Roy

Wedge, Priscilla Wilson (PW), Jeff Witters, Calvin Wohler, and Gene Young.

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Feather feature: Turkey Vulture nest location found in Russell County

By Gregg Friesen

After parting company with KOS members on the Wilson Reservoir field trip in October, my wife Joanna and I joined a group from the Kansas Native Plant Society on a flower outing. The walk through the Rocktown Natural Area provided some nice birding despite high winds.

As the walk drew to an end, Bob Broyles, Jeff Hansen and others called me over to show me an egg they had found in a hole near the upper end of a north-facing embankment. The egg had been near the back of the hole which extended into the embankment almost five feet. It was a large egg, sub-elliptical in shape, and colored with dark markings. Perplexingly, the site had no nesting materials. The egg measured 71 mm x 54 mm, making it larger than that of most local nesting hawks.

The egg and nest site remained a mystery to me until I quit thinking of hawks and broadened my mind a bit to consider other species. This was, it turned out, an unsuccessful nesting site of a Turkey Vulture.

Common in many areas of the state, Turkey Vultures arrive in Kansas in early March. They take up residence in many communities and rural areas and often stay until mid-fall. Recent evidence finds some birds remaining in northern areas



through the winter. They have been found in all 105 counties of Kansas.

The bird is easy to identify by its red bald head, dark body, and large wingspan. The birds are often found in large roosts.

They are not to be confused with the Black Vulture, a bird which enters the state only somewhat reliably in the southeast corner. The Turkey Vulture is the longer-winged and lighter-weight bird, allowing it to soar on “thermals” which would not support the



heavier and shorter-wing-spanned Black Vulture.

My first experience with a Turkey Vulture nest came during my completion of a breeding bird atlas in Butler County. A local farmer told of encountering an aggressive bird in the attic of an abandoned farm house used to store hay bales. While I was checking out the noise coming from the building by peering into the upstairs of the house, the bird hissed and became agitated. It quickly became clear that the best method to confirm a Turkey Vulture nest was to send someone else up to see the bird. (Turkey Vultures are known to spray regurgitated food—carrion in this case—on other creatures deemed a threat to their safety.)



Photo opposite page: Turkey Vultures are believed to have used this crevice as a nesting location in Russell County. Above: Gregg Friesen and others found a single egg near the entrance. Note the cracks along the midline. Turkey Vultures do not create a nest structure for their eggs.

Turkey Vultures often select nest sites that are dark and secluded. They nest in abandoned buildings, old silos, or caves and crevices, but essentially build no nest. While they may prepare the site, they build no structure to contain the eggs. On average, their eggs measure 70 mm x 49 mm, and, like the egg pictured above, are marked with dark spots. The female lays from 1 to 3 eggs in each clutch, and nest from April through June. If a nest or eggs are destroyed, the bird does not begin anew but rather abandons

nesting activity for the year.

Turkey Vultures are easily identified by the most novice of birders and even enjoyed by the most seasoned professional in the birding community. Their consumption of carrion plays an important role in the ecosystem. While vultures in many parts of the world are declining in number, the Turkey Vulture population is holding steady in Kansas. It is a unique member of the avian community and a graceful soaring bird of the prairie landscape.

References

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