



# The Horned Lark

Kansas Ornithological Society

December 2012

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## President's message

Little things.

Kirtland's Warblers are little birds. At one time they were thought to be rapidly headed toward extinction. Each one weighs only about half an ounce which may be slightly heavier than most of our common warblers. I had the privilege of visiting the breeding grounds near Grayling, Mich., in June. I knew little about them, and still do. The good news is that their population has stabilized and even increased several fold from the low point of about 500 in the 1970s. One fact the naturalist in Michigan shared with us is that the entire world population of Kirtland's Warblers would fit in a bushel basket.

The recovery of Kirtland's Warblers did not happen by accident. A number of factors have led to the recovery including habitat development and protection, as well as

predator and cowbird control.

KOS recently held our fall meetings in Winfield. Each fall meeting includes the registration and reception, business meetings, presentation of research papers, a banquet and speaker, an auction to support student scholarships, bird watcher's hour to share photography, sales of KOS merchandise, field trips, lunch, and a compilation of sightings. Each part of the weekend might be considered to be a small thing, but taken as a whole it is a very important part of KOS.

A quick trip to the official KOS website ([ksbirds.org](http://ksbirds.org)) shows that this was the 63rd fall meeting of KOS. Fall meetings in the early years were field trips. Presentation of papers became part of the fall meetings beginning in 1979.

KOS has two periodical  
*(continued next page)*

## From the field



Perhaps a foreshadow of an irruption into Kansas, this male Red Crossbill visited Cheney State Park on October 21. © Kevin Groeneweg, 2012.

## President's message, *cont.*

publications. For each issue of the Horned Lark or KOS Bulletin, someone has to collect the materials, build the layout, assure that the publication meets quality standards of layout and content, and get it published and mailed to members.

What is my point? There are many ways to contribute to the mission of KOS. Every person reading this can participate in ways that enhance the entire organization. It does not have to be something big. Do something that matches your skills and interests. Start with something you are comfortable doing – even if it seems like a small thing. The entire organization will appreciate your efforts.

Thanks go to Max

Thompson, Gene Young, and everyone who helped with the meetings in Winfield. Major thanks go to Cheryl Miller for her tenure as editor of the Horned Lark – and to Mark Van Horn for agreeing to take over for her.

As I write this, we are still making plans for our spring meeting. Since spring meetings are mostly field trips, we will all be attempting to observe birds – hopefully to include a good selection of warblers. If you attend the meeting and think you see a Kirtland's Warbler, be sure to take a photo!

*Henry Armknecht*

President



Gene Young studies one of the marshes at Slate Creek Wetlands while Sam and Terry Mannell await their turn at the scope. The fall KOS meeting was held in Winfield. © Cheryl Miller, 2012.

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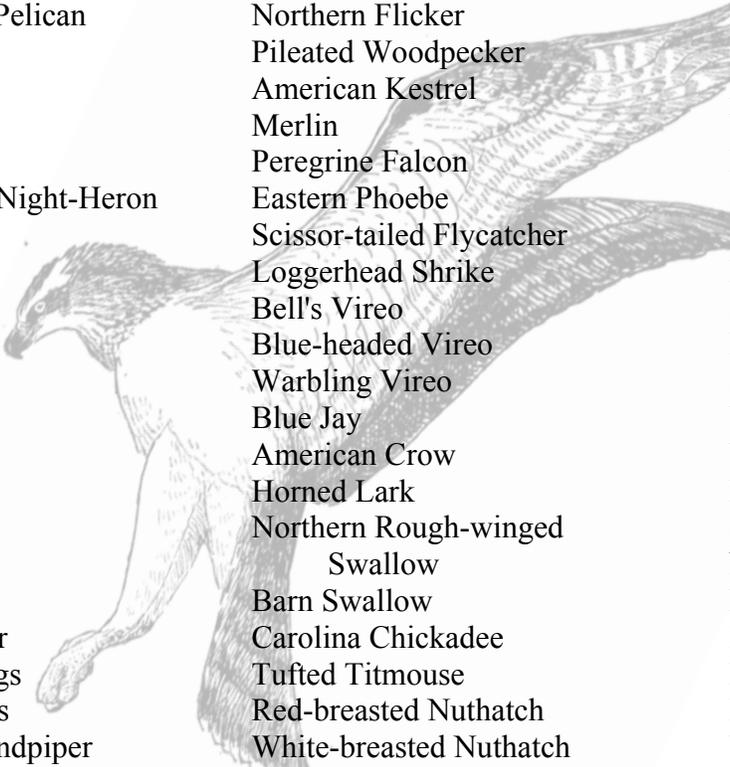
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# KOS fall meeting species compilation

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KOS fall meeting attendees found the following 127 species in Cowley and Sumner counties, October 5 – 7, 2012.



Canada Goose  
Wood Duck  
Mallard  
Blue-winged Teal  
Green-winged Teal  
Northern Bobwhite  
Ring-necked Pheasant  
Wild Turkey  
Pied-billed Grebe  
Double-crested Cormorant  
American White Pelican  
Great Blue Heron  
Great Egret  
Snowy Egret  
Little Blue Heron  
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron  
White-faced Ibis  
Turkey Vulture  
Osprey  
Bald Eagle  
Northern Harrier  
Cooper's Hawk  
Swainson's Hawk  
Red-tailed Hawk  
Sora  
American Coot  
Killdeer  
Spotted Sandpiper  
Greater Yellowlegs  
Lesser Yellowlegs  
Semipalmated Sandpiper  
Western Sandpiper  
Least Sandpiper  
Baird's Sandpiper  
Pectoral Sandpiper  
Stilt Sandpiper  
Long-billed Dowitcher  
Wilson's Snipe  
Franklin's Gull  
Ring-billed Gull  
Herring Gull  
Forster's Tern  
Rock Pigeon  
Eurasian Collared-Dove  
Mourning Dove  
Great Horned Owl  
Barred Owl  
Common Nighthawk  
Chimney Swift  
Belted Kingfisher  
Red-headed Woodpecker  
Red-bellied Woodpecker  
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker  
Downy Woodpecker  
Hairy Woodpecker  
Northern Flicker  
Pileated Woodpecker  
American Kestrel  
Merlin  
Peregrine Falcon  
Eastern Phoebe  
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher  
Loggerhead Shrike  
Bell's Vireo  
Blue-headed Vireo  
Warbling Vireo  
Blue Jay  
American Crow  
Horned Lark  
Northern Rough-winged Swallow  
Barn Swallow  
Carolina Chickadee  
Tufted Titmouse  
Red-breasted Nuthatch  
White-breasted Nuthatch  
Carolina Wren  
Bewick's Wren  
House Wren  
Sedge Wren  
Marsh Wren  
Ruby-crowned Kinglet  
Eastern Bluebird  
Swainson's Thrush  
American Robin  
Gray Catbird  
Northern Mockingbird  
Brown Thrasher  
European Starling  
American Pipit  
Sprague's Pipit  
Cedar Waxwing  
Orange-crowned Warbler  
Nashville Warbler  
Common Yellowthroat  
Palm Warbler  
Yellow-rumped Warbler  
Black-throated Green Warbler  
Wilson's Warbler  
Spotted Towhee  
Chipping Sparrow  
Clay-colored Sparrow  
Field Sparrow  
Vesper Sparrow  
Lark Sparrow  
Savannah Sparrow  
Henslow's Sparrow  
Le Conte's Sparrow  
Song Sparrow  
Lincoln's Sparrow  
Swamp Sparrow  
White-throated Sparrow  
White-crowned Sparrow  
Dark-eyed Junco  
Summer Tanager  
Northern Cardinal  
Rose-breasted Grosbeak  
Indigo Bunting  
Red-winged Blackbird  
Eastern Meadowlark  
Western Meadowlark  
Common Grackle  
Brown-headed Cowbird  
House Finch  
Red Crossbill  
Pine Siskin  
American Goldfinch  
House Sparrow

# Kansas summer season roundup

June 1 – July 31

Jon King, compiler

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The summer of 2012 was one of severe drought across Kansas. Well below average precipitation coupled with record-breaking heat wreaked havoc across the state ruining crops, scorching rangelands, and threatening livestock. Hill City recorded the extreme temperature of 115°F on June 29, an all-time record for Kansas. Such extreme conditions undoubtedly affected Kansas avifauna. Overall marsh bird numbers were down, with southeastern specialties such as Mottled Duck or Glossy Ibis notably scarce. However, the lack of water created excellent shorebird habitat in June, partially explaining high numbers of unseasonable summering shorebirds. Eastern and southern breeding species continue to expand their breeding ranges within Kansas, as expected.

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, annual since 2000, continued its streak with a single bird at Cheyenne Bottoms 4 June (BZ), lingering to 5 June (SSc) when photographed. Eight unidentified whistling ducks seen briefly in Sedgwick County 2 July (PJ) likely pertain to this species. The summer's lingering arctic geese included a Snow Goose at the Kensington sewer lagoons 7 June (JK), and two Greater White-fronted Geese at Cheyenne Bottoms 3 June (DMs). Mottled Ducks were notably absent, reported annually from Cheyenne Bottoms and/or

Quivira National Wildlife Refuge since 2007. Rare summering ducks included two Cinnamon Teal photographed at Cheyenne Bottoms 23 June (SSc), lingering to 27 June (MRa), and a single bird at Elkhart sewer lagoons 13 June (DH). More importantly, a lone Greater Scaup lingered at Slate Creek Wetlands to 7 June (MT, GY), one of very few summer records for Kansas. Other lingering summer *Aythya* included two Canvasback at Cheyenne Bottoms 8 June (BSe), two Canvasback at Quivira 4 July (many observers), one Ring-necked Duck at Cheyenne Bottoms 27 June (MRa) lingering to 2 July (ER), one Lesser Scaup at Cheyenne Bottoms 8 June (BSe), and two Lesser Scaup at Quivira 4 July (many observers). Hooded Merganser is considered occasional in summer away from far eastern Kansas, so five individuals scattered throughout central Kansas was quite strange. Singles were reported from Graham County 1 June (SSe), Cheyenne Bottoms 8 June (CM, BM), Reno County 15 June (JMi), Smith County 16 June (JK), and Rooks State Fishing Area 10 July (JVK).

Game birds of interest included four Scaled Quail in the Cimarron National Grassland 8 June (JMa). A total of 38 Greater Prairie-Chicken individuals were reported from Ellsworth, Lyon, Morris, Osborne, Rooks, Russell, Smith, and Stafford Counties

(many observers). Observations of Lesser Prairie-Chicken consisted of 7 individuals reported from Ford and Morton counties (many observers).

A Common Loon was discovered on Melvern Lake 7 July (NA, MG, ML). The summer of 2012 hosted a modest invasion of Wood Storks into Midwestern states, with discoveries in Missouri, Indiana, and northern Kentucky. Kansas was no exception when Jeanette Reed, Trent Reed, and Nick Varvel found two **Wood Storks** at Marais des Cygnes National Wildlife Refuge and Wildlife Area on 15 July, with both birds lingering to 18 July. The storks were photographed on multiple occasions and represent Kansas' tenth official state record, pending acceptance by Kansas Bird Records Committee. Reports of Neotropic Cormorant were relatively few this summer with only a single bird at Rooks State Fishing Area 4 – 13 June (JVK). A rare summer resident away from Cheyenne Bottoms and Quivira, American Bitterns included a single bird at Kansas City Power and Light Wetlands 1 June (NA, MG, RWr), and two on the Trading Post Breeding Bird Survey in Linn County 3 June (NA, MG), where they were potentially breeding. Least Bittern were seemingly lacking from typical haunts with no reports from Baker Wetlands, Cheyenne Bottoms, or Quivira.

Only four individuals were reported with one at KCPL Wetlands 1 June (NA, MG, RWr), two at Slate Creek Wetlands 2 June (MT, GY), and one at Marais des Cygnes 22 July (MVH). Glossy Ibis were in short supply this summer as well, with one reported from Cheyenne Bottoms 7 July (HC, RS). A White-faced Ibis at Milford Lake's Smith Bottoms 2 June (CW) was slightly easterly in June.

An Osprey lingered to 9 June at Clinton Lake (NV), where an early transient also appeared 27 July (MA, JK), remaining through 30 July (MA, JK). The Mississippi Kite's breeding range continues expanding northward, with three observed in Colby 23 July (DW). Early kettling occurred in Garden City 18 June (TS) with 40 Mississippi Kites tallied. Northern Harriers are rare and local summer residents in northeastern Kansas, with individuals reported from Mill Creek Streamway 10 July (MH), Hillsdale Lake 21 July (NV), and Marais des Cygnes 29 July (NV). Reports of Broad-winged Hawk, another localized breeder in northeastern Kansas, included six in Johnson County (many observers) and one at Clinton Lake 6 June (BSe). More notable for northeastern Kansas was a Swainson's Hawk seen in Wyandotte County 11 July (JVK). Reports of Ferruginous Hawk included two in Ford County 11 and 22 July (AS).

Black Rail singles were noted at Quivira 6 June (JMa) and 2 July (JMi). Despite severe drought conditions, King Rail persisted at Quivira with no fewer

than eight individuals reported 6 July (DMJ, MM), while the only report away from Cheyenne Bottoms and Quivira was a single bird at Ottawa State Fishing Lake 23 June (JC). A Sora at KCPL Wetlands 1 June (MH, RWr) and 3 June (NV) may have been a late spring migrant or breeder, while a road-killed Sora in Chase County 2 July (JK) was likely a breeder. The only Common Gallinule reported was at Cheyenne Bottoms 7 July (RS). A Sandhill Crane heard in Barber County 23 July (SL, JP) was highly unseasonal.

Though water was scarce, shorebird habitat was exceptional at Cheyenne Bottoms in June and produced a variety of unseasonable shorebirds. However, a continual lack of water coupled with excessive heat transformed Cheyenne Bottoms into a barren moonscape for much of July. Quivira was similarly parched, though Little Salt Marsh retained enough water for a decent variety of shorebirds and Kansas' first Red-necked Stint. Under the drought conditions, water levels in many Kansas reservoirs receded favorably, with Clinton Lake, Hillsdale Lake, and Slate Creek Wetlands producing their share of shorebirds during July. Unseasonable *Pluvalis* were well-represented this summer. June Black-bellied Plovers at Quivira included one 1 June (JC), and one 2 July (MRa), while Cheyenne Bottoms had six 2 June (MRa), one 16 June (BSa), two 4 July (SSc), and one 6 July (JVK). Late migrant or over-summering American Golden-Plover at Cheyenne Bottoms included five



2 June (MRa), one 8 June (CM), one 21 June (JK), and one 27 June (MRa). Presumed early migrants included one at Slate Creek Wetlands 18 July (MT) and one at Clinton Lake 30 July (MA, JK). The lack of water at Cheyenne Bottoms did not discourage breeding Snowy Plovers too much with an estimated 85 individuals 3 July (RWe). However, there were three juveniles at Cheney Reservoir 28 July (PJ) where considered rare, totally unexpected, and a first summer record for the decently-birded Cheney. Lingering and over-summering Semipalmated Plovers at Cheyenne Bottoms were one 1 June (JC), and six 8 June (BSe), while one lingered to 16 July at Quivira (EM). More notable was a bird found away from Cheyenne Bottoms and/or Quivira on 3 June at Slate Creek Wetlands (MT, GY). Piping Plovers at Cheyenne Bottoms on 1 June and 2 June (JC) were most likely late migrants. Fall migrants consisted of one bird at Hillsdale Lake, first reported 24 July (JW), and 9 individual birds at Clinton Lake occurring between 25 July and 30 July (MA, JK, HL, MRo), where it is a rare migrant. A high count of 735 Killdeer were tallied at Marais des Cygnes 17 July (MA).



A Black-necked Stilt at Slate Creek Wetlands 7 June (MT, GYo) was unusual for

the locale and date. The first southbound Solitary Sandpiper was noted in Finney County 30 July (TS). June sightings of Greater Yellowlegs at Cheyenne Bottoms included four 8 June (BSe), and two 21 June (JK), while 24 on 27 June (MRa) likely represented southbound migrants. Six reports of Willet came from Cheyenne Bottoms with a high count of four 14 July (BSa), while Quivira hosted one Willet on 29 June (BJ). Whether these individuals represent spring migrants, fall migrants, or over-summering individuals remains uncertain. Reports at Cheyenne Bottoms indicated Upland Sandpiper migration was certainly underway by 7 July with at least 41 noted in morning flight in Russell County following a cold front (JK). Two Whimbrel at Cheyenne Bottoms 2 June (MRa) were slightly tardy. Long-billed Curlew are notoriously early fall migrants, with the first southbound individual at Cheyenne Bottoms 21 June (JK), followed by two 27 June (MRa), one 7 July (RS) and two at Quivira 29 June (GS). Three curlews at Slate Creek Wetlands 18 July (MT) are slightly easterly for this species, and one of very few records for the Slate Creek Wetlands. Nine Hudsonian Godwit at Cheyenne Bottoms 2 June (MRa) were late, while June Marbled Godwits included one 21 June (JK) and

one 27 June (MR) at Cheyenne Bottoms, and two at Quivira 29 June (BJ). The only southbound Ruddy Turnstones reported during the period were singles at Clinton Lake 27 and 30 July (MA, JK).

Despite all the notable shorebirds this summer, nothing compares with the adult **Red-necked Stint** discovered and photographed at Little Salt Marsh in Quivira by Barry Jones and Mary Pat Haddican on 1 July. This Eurasian shorebird is an annual visitor to the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts, with few interior North American records. The bird lingered to 2 July, when multiple parties were able to photograph it, documenting Kansas' first state record if accepted by KBRC.

White-rumped Sandpipers often pass through the state in early June, as one of the latest spring migrants. However 10,000+ present at Cheyenne Bottoms 2 June (MRa) was an impressive count for June, with 11 remaining by 21 June (JK), and at least one bird present at Quivira 29 June (BJ, GS). Away from Cheyenne Bottoms and/or Quivira, a Baird's Sandpiper at Slate Creek Wetlands 13 June (MT, GYo) was unseasonable. A Dunlin at Cheyenne Bottoms 2 June (MRa) was tardy. A southbound Buff-breasted Sandpiper at the Colwich Sod Farms 21 July (PJ) was slightly early, followed by at least 57 individuals before July's end. A Short-billed Dowitcher at Cheyenne Bottoms 1 June (JC) was slightly late, while at least 11 individual short-billeds were reported in the later half of July. Joining the long list of late

shorebirds was a Red-necked Phalarope at Cheyenne Bottoms 2 June (MRa).

A single Laughing Gull photographed at Clinton Reservoir 22 – 30 July (MA) was the only record this summer. On the tail end of Franklin's Gull migration, 400 visited Fall River State Park 2 June (DMk), and 14 remained 2 June at Milford Reservoir (CW). The only white-headed gull of note was a late Herring Gull at Cheyenne Bottoms 1 June (JC). Away from the usual breeding areas, Least Terns included one at Slate Creek Wetlands 7 June (MT, GY), and southbound Least Terns at Clinton Lake 26 July (HL, MRo) and 28 July (JK), where they are typically scarce. In late July, decent numbers of Black Terns built at Clinton Reservoir in the afternoons, with high counts of 309 on 26 July and 348 on 30 July (MA, JK). Notable among summer terns and slightly early was an adult Common Tern at Clinton Lake 25 July (MA, HL, MRo).

White-winged Doves continue to aggressively colonize Kansas, with a smattering of records throughout the Flint Hills and central Kansas regions where they are still largely uncommon. Notables were two birds in Clay County 2 June (CW), one in Cowley 4 July (DS), one photographed at the Flint Hills National Wildlife Refuge 7 July (NA, MG, ML), one on the Jamestown Breeding Bird Survey 7 July (PW, RWg) and seven in Ulysses 13 July (KH, SG), which was a local high count. Other White-winged Doves of mention were one in Osborne 15 July

(HA), two in Salina 20 July (BG) and one in Wellington 23 July (SL, JP). An impressive and unexpected 798 Mourning Doves were counted at Baker Wetlands 14 July (RB, DL).

July brings the first southbound hummingbirds, and the first western hummingbirds were a Rufous at the Seltman residence in Pawnee County 27 – 28 July (SSe) and a *Selasphorus* hummingbird in Wichita 26 July (TE). Typically southbound Peregrine Falcons arrive mid-to-late-July, so single Peregrines in Reno County 2 July (CH) and at Quivira 4 July (KB, NV) were early. More routine was a Peregrine attending the Wichita Purple Martin roost 23 July (PJ).

Four Acadian Flycatchers bred at Echo Cliff Park 15 June (TE), with a nest discovered 23 June (DL). This is a first breeding record for Wabaunsee County, and one the westernmost breeding records for Kansas. Willow Flycatcher is one of the later spring migrants in Kansas, with a singing bird in Russell County 3 June (JK). Up to three Willow Flycatchers showed at Marais des Cygnes 16 July (JC), though it is unknown whether these were early migrants or breeding birds. The first southbound Willow Flycatcher included one at Rooks State Fishing Area 26 July (JVK) and three at Clinton Lake 29 – 30 July (MA, GC, JM). Least Flycatchers arrived on time with singles at Baker Wetlands 26 July (JK), northern Douglas County 28 July (MRo), Horsethief Reservoir 29 July (JC), Chilton Park 30 July (JC) and two along the Kansas River near Lawrence 29 July (JK). Ash-throated

Flycatchers continued as local summer residents on the Cimarron National Grassland with two 8 June (JMa) and three 23 July (SL, JP).

Two White-eyed Vireos were located along the Arkansas River near Derby 7 June (JC), the western-most breeding locale for the species in Kansas. The eastern-most reports of Black-billed Magpie this summer came from Osborne, Russell, and Smith counties (JK), emphasizing the toll West Nile Virus has taken upon Kansas Black-billed Magpie populations. The only noteworthy sighting of Fish Crow was of two flying west along the Kansas River near Lawrence 18 July (JW, GYe) where the species is now an annual rarity. Other corvids of interest included two Chihuahuan Raven in the Cimarron National Grassland 7 July (IH).

A **Cave Swallow** near Isabel in Pratt County 1 June (PJ) was a major highlight of the season. If submitted to KBRC and accepted, this record represents the eighth for the state. Among late summer swallow congregations, a truly impressive and estimated 40,000 Purple Martins roosted at Via Christi-St. Francis Hospital in Wichita 19 July (KG). Preceding the major flight of Red-breasted Nuthatches occurring in fall 2012, Kansas hosted two of the species. One was encountered at the University of Kansas 9 July (PW) while one was photographed at



the Russell Cemetery 11 July (JK). Whether these birds fled forest fires and drought in the Rocky Mountains, originated in the boreal regions, or bred locally remains unclear. Neither was seen again despite subsequent visits.

Though Sedge Wren is seasonally common in eastern Kansas, two in Osborne County 12 July (JK) were getting westerly. A late Marsh Wren at KCPL Wetlands 1 June (RR) was apparently a late spring migrant; it was not reported subsequently.

Likely an early fall migrant, a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher appeared at Chilton Park 30 July (JC). Two Curve-billed Thrashers continued to entertain birders at the Hugoton Cemetery 8 June (JMa). A singing Wood Thrush appeared at Woodland Valley Park in Derby 13 June (JC), while an Ovenbird singing in Wellington 23 July (SL, JP) was likely an early fall transient. Three Northern Parula along the Arkansas River near Derby 7 June (JC) were noteworthy. On the subject of warblers, leftovers from spring migration consisted of a slightly westerly Magnolia Warbler in Russell County 3 June (JK), along with a Chestnut-sided Warbler in Elk Falls 2 June (DMk).

A Spotted x Eastern Towhee hybrid was reported in Smith County 17 July (JK) where both species breed. Very few Chipping Sparrows have been confirmed breeding across central Kansas though the species seems to be fairly common around evergreen trees there. Such birds included two in Stockton 2 June (JVK), four at Quivira 6 June (JMa), one in Smith County 10 June (JK),

one in Hutchinson 17 June (SM, TM), two in Rooks County 20 June (JVK), one in Russell 23 June (JK), two on the Jewell Breeding Bird Survey 5 July (PW, RWg), three in the Russell Cemetery 11 July (JK), six at the Kansas State University Agricultural Research Center 13 July (JK), two at the Bunker Hill Cemetery (JK, MRa), two at Wilson Lake 27 July (JVK), and six at the Smith Center Cemetery July (JK). Birders should strive to document breeding activity across central Kansas.

Summer Tanager numbers continue to increase with four territorial males noted along the Arkansas River near Derby 12 June (JC). Even better was an adult male Scarlet Tanager 7 June (JC). Two pairs of Rose-breasted Grosbeak at a Marion County residence throughout the summer (PJ) were good news. Farther west an adult female Rose-breasted Grosbeak and a young *Pheucticus* grosbeak in Barton County 21 June (JK) represent a first breeding record for the county. Painted Buntings continue spreading northward in recent years. Notable records include adult males at the Elkhart sewer lagoons 13 June (DH), Middle Spring 14 June (DH) and a singing male on the Kanopolis Breeding Bird Survey 29 June (MR). A report of 13 Painted Buntings from the Arkansas River near Derby 7 June (JC) was the highest reported count this summer, where the species has increased significantly in recent years.

While Dickcissels tend not to impress most Kansas birders, an impressive invasion of the species

occurred into the upper-Midwest, Great Lakes and even southern Canada. Such an invasion was attributed to drought conditions throughout the Great Plains, the core of the species' breeding range. While the invasion was not apparent to Kansans, multiple observers noticed decreased breeding activity throughout July and a number of Dickcissels in overhead morning flight (JK, MRo). Whether these migrants represent southbound birds or northbound invaders remains uncertain.

Though Bobolinks are known as local breeders in northeast Kansas, an adult male in Jackson County 11 July (JH) was just slightly southerly, while a flyover Bobolink in Anderson County 28 July (MA, NS) was likely an early migrant. July brought the first southbound Yellow-headed Blackbirds with at least five of the species actively migrating in Russell County 7 July (JK) and 60 in Finney County 15 July (TS). An individual at the Colwich Sod Farms 21 July (PJ) may have been southbound as well. More unusual was an easterly individual photographed at Marais des Cygnes 17 July (MA).

With the excessive summer heat, winter finches were probably the last thing on people's minds until Red Crossbills began showing signs of an invasion in early July. A total of 18 birds were reported across Kansas in July, with confirmed type 2s visiting Henry Armknecht's feeder in Osborne 8 July – 14 July (HA) and 12 – 14 individuals 9 July (HA, JK, JVK). Other large-billed, type 2-

sounding individuals included two photographed at the Seltman residence in Pawnee County 9 July (SSe), two at the Kansas State University Agricultural Research Center in Hays 13 July (JK) and one at Webster State Park 17 July (JVK). Invading crossbills were prevalent in central Kansas with 17 of 18 individuals reported there, though a large-billed bird photographed in Mayetta 22 July (MH) was easterly. Type 2 Red Crossbills reside in both the boreal and intermountain west regions, so it is not entirely certain where these invaders came from. However, the lack of type 2 birds recorded outside the Plains over the summer, coupled with large forest fires and drought throughout the Rocky Mountains suggests these birds originated in the west.

All data used in the making of this report were obtained from the listserv KSBIRD-L@listserv.ksu.edu, eBird.org, or personal contributions from observers.

**Observers:** Aaron Shipe (AS), Brian Grauerholz (BG), Betty Harding (BH), Brandon Magette (BM), Brett Sandercock (BSa), Brian Sevy (BSe), Christian Hagenlocher (CH), Calvin Wohler (CW), David Hawksworth (DH), Daniel Kerr (DK), Don Maas (DMs), David Marjamaa (DMj), Debra McKee (DMk), David Seibel (DS), Doug Ward (DW), Ethan Maynard (EM), Ed Raynor (ER), Glenn Caspers (GC), Greyson Yerby (GYe), Gene Young (GYo), Hilary Carter (HC), Hung Le (HL), Ian Hunter (IH), Judith Collins (JC), Jeff Hansen (JH),

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# Fall KOS meeting paper abstracts

**Habitat associations of grassland birds along a gradient of eastern red cedar succession.** *Scott W. Schmidt\* and Elmer J. Finck, Department of Biological Sciences, Fort Hays State University.*

Control of woody invasive species, primarily eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), is a priority land use issue among landowners and managers. While maintaining open habitat for obligate grassland bird species, there is a need to understand how brush management affects birds adapted to early-succession habitats, some of which are declining at statistically significant rates.

To assess bird-habitat associations in the context of brush management, study sites were stratified by percent



canopy cover of eastern red cedar, (0% canopy cover [open grassland], < 5% canopy cover [encroachment level], and > 5% canopy cover [infestation level]). We used repeated point count sampling to quantify abundance and species composition of breeding bird communities. Data were collected in mixed grass and sand prairie habitats of Barton County Kansas from 2011–2012. Our results indicate

that bird diversity within ecological function groups (nest placement and habitat preference) vary across the gradient of eastern red cedar encroachment. A cluster analysis defined three groups of species on the basis of their association with the encroachment gradient. Canonical correspondence analysis revealed that grassland bird species distributions were strongly correlated with percent tree canopy cover and visual obstruction. Sites with red cedar infestation were preferred by Lark Sparrows (*Chondestes grammacus*) and Bell's Vireos (*Vireo bellii*), which suggests that the current brush management recommendations might diminish quality habitat availability for these species of concern. Considering the diverse habitat requirements of grassland birds, landowners and managers should assess how conservation practices for one species might affect others.

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### **Bird occupancy in relation to habitat structure in the Cross Timbers of Kansas.**

*Nathan S. Holoubek\* and William E. Jensen, Department of Biological Sciences, Emporia State University.*

Oak savanna, once widespread across central North America, has functionally vanished from most of its range due to land conversion and disruption of historic disturbance

regimes. The objective of our research was to quantify avian habitat associations across a gradient from open-canopy oak savanna to closed-canopy forest in the Cross Timbers region of southeastern Kansas. By modeling bird occupancy in relation to habitat structure we predicted which species might benefit from restoration of open-canopy savanna. Four point counts were conducted at each of 60 stations in 2012. We modeled species-specific detection and occupancy probabilities against vegetative variables using program Presence (ver. 4.0). We first established the best predictors of detection ( $p$ ), and then used the top predictor(s) of  $p$  when modeling occupancy ( $\psi$ ). Of 25 species modeled,  $\psi$  for 5 was strongly associated with variation in vegetative characteristics, though relationships varied among species. Occupancies of Eastern Wood-Pewee, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Blue Grosbeak, and Indigo Bunting peaked at intermediate tree densities or canopy coverages. Orchard Oriole occupancy was highest at low tree densities. These species might benefit from reductions in tree density within otherwise closed-canopy forest. Moderate



relationships between  $\psi$  and various habitat variables were found for Northern Bobwhite, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Brown Thrasher, and Field Sparrow; these will be discussed. Point counts will resume in 2013. Quantifying bird habitat use in oak savanna will be useful in guiding future savanna restoration for avian conservation.

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**State acres for wildlife enhancement and grassland birds: Implications for the role of America's farmland in conservation.** *A.D. Thomas\**, *L. B. McNew*, *B. K. Sandercock*, *Division of Biology, Kansas State University.*

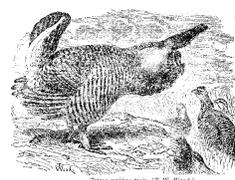
Grassland birds are in significant decline throughout much of their range because of ongoing habitat loss and degradation. Much of the historic prairie has been converted to crop production so it is important to understand the role land producers can play in the future of grassland bird conservation. In 1985, the U.S. created the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) for the prevention of farmland erosion. In 1996, wildlife habitat conservation for upland, lowland and endangered species was encouraged through set-aside programs within the CRP. State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) a specific type of CRP available for continuous enrollment since 2008, is intended to restore vital habitat for high priority wildlife throughout the United States. To understand the impacts of the SAFE program in Kansas, we

monitored tracts of land enrolled to estimate abundance, diversity, and relative use by sensitive species of grassland birds. Our study was conducted in 7 counties in two ecoregions of Kansas, the Smoky Hills and the Flint Hills. We conducted point-counts in SAFE fields in each county, which were compared to non-SAFE reference fields. We also compared percent cover of vegetation in enrolled versus non-enrolled fields. Our project results will have an impact on future conservation planning within the SAFE program as it relates to agricultural practices for Kansas.

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**Greater Prairie-Chicken predation pressure in central Kansas.** *Lyla M. Hunt\**, *L. B. McNew*, *A. J. Gregory*, and *B. K. Sandercock*, *Division of Biology, Kansas State University.*

Populations of Greater Prairie-Chickens (*Tympanuchus cupido*) have been steadily declining across most of their historic range over the last 40 years. Predation pressure has been cited as one of the most critical demographic mechanisms contributing to their population decline. We conducted a study examining the role of predators on adult survival and nest success in the Flint and Smoky Hills of Central Kansas. During 2006–2012, we collected genetic samples, monitored nest predation events,



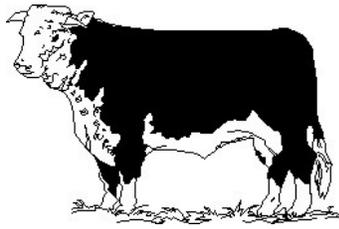
and assessed adult hen mortalities. Over 90% of nest failures and over 80%

of adult mortality were the result of predation. We observed seasonal variation in adult predation events with the majority of mortalities occurring during the lekking and nesting periods, and decreasing during the non-breeding period. We observed annual variation in mortality caused by different predator taxa. The highest incidence of mortality was attributed to mammalian predators in earlier years of our study, but switched to avian predators in later years. We also observed variation in prairie-chicken behavior and life-history strategies across different levels of landscape fragmentation. In more fragmented landscapes, hens had lower survival, exhibited greater reproductive effort, and had higher rates of conspecific nest parasitism than in less fragmented landscapes. This type of life-history strategy may be a response to increased predation pressure. Our findings suggest that predation pressure is driving Greater Prairie-

Chicken population dynamics and varies annually, seasonally and with different levels of fragmentation. Further long term studies focusing on predator population dynamics are a critical next step in future prairie-chicken conservation efforts.

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**Effects of grazing treatments on nest success of wet meadow breeding birds at Cheyenne Bottoms Preserve, Barton County, KS.** *Clinton J. Helms\**, *Jordana J. LaFantasie*, *Department of Biological Sciences, Fort Hays State*



University and Robert Penner,  
*The Nature Conservancy,*  
*Kansas Chapter.*

Cheyenne Bottoms Preserve (CBP) contains approximately 8,000 acres (~3,237 hectares) of wet meadow habitat that is being managed to provide quality habitat for breeding birds through the use of adaptive grazing techniques. Due to the imperiled status of grassland birds, an emphasis has been placed on managing for this particular group at CBP. When not entirely inundated with water, CBP, combined with the grazing management plan, can potentially provide high quality nesting habitat for numerous grassland birds by creating a mosaic of vegetation height and vegetation density. To examine the potential effectiveness of this management plan, I investigated the effects of adaptive rotational grazing treatments versus traditional season-long grazing treatments on common CBP grassland nesting species (e.g., Grasshopper Sparrow [*Ammodramus savannarum*], Dickcissel [*Spiza americana*], Western Meadowlark [*Sturnella neglecta*], and Eastern Meadowlark [*Sturnella magna*]) and attempted to determine if any significant trends could be inferred at the treatment-level scale. Specifically, I looked at avian diversity and avian nest success by employing point-count surveys and nest

searching/monitoring techniques. Preliminary results suggest a greater occurrence of nests in random rotational grazing treatments compared to season-long grazing treatments. Overall, there was a marked decrease in abundance of all target species, both between treatments and annually. The effects of an extensive drought, coupled with excessive heat, were evident in much of these data.

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**Changes in breeding phenology and reproductive success of long-distance migratory shorebirds: Comparative study over two decades.** Eunbi Kwon<sup>1\*</sup>, David B. Lank<sup>2</sup> and Brett K. Sandercock<sup>1</sup>, <sup>1</sup>*Division of Biology, Kansas State University,* <sup>2</sup>*Centre for Wildlife Ecology, Department of Biological Sciences, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC, Canada.*

Changes in breeding phenology are often the first indicator of biological response to modern climate change. Birds migrating long distances to the breeding ground are especially vulnerable to environmental changes, because their high energetic requirements and long-distance movements make the phenological synchrony among trophic levels critical for breeding success and survival through migration. The greatest climatic change for the next century is expected in the Arctic and significant advancement of the peak of invertebrate prey abundance has been already reported. In this field study, we

examined shifts in the breeding phenology of two arctic breeding shorebirds, Western Sandpiper (*Calidris mauri*, hereafter WESA; N=289 nests) and Semipalmated Sandpiper (*Calidris pusilla*, hereafter SESA; N=253 nests), by comparing long-term changes in the breeding performance of nesting birds during 1993–1996 and 2010–2011 near Nome, Alaska. During 1993–1996, the mean date of clutch initiation (DCI) ranged between 21–27 of May for WESA and 26–30 of May for SESA. In 2010 and 2011, the mean DCI was 29 and 30 of May for WESA and SESA respectively. In both species, the clutch initiation and hatching were negatively correlated with the daily mean temperature (regression coefficients were -1.87 and -1.09 for WESA and SESA). Greater nesting success was predicted by lower nest density for WESA, and by lower mean temperature of previous breeding season for SESA. Long-term monitoring on their breeding performance in relation to the environmental change will aid our understanding of the underlying mechanism for the population decline in long-distance migrants.

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**Demographic responses of Greater Prairie-Chickens to patch-burn grazing on private lands.** Virginia L. Winder\*, Amy N. Erickson, Lance B. McNew and Brett K. Sandercock, *Division of Biology, Kansas State University.*

Greater Prairie-Chicken (*Tympanuchus cupido*) populations have, in general,

declined range-wide over the last several decades. In the Flint Hills of Kansas, this decline coincides with a shift in rangeland management practices. Currently, many cattle producers use intensive stocking rates and burning regimes, resulting in less cover and lower heterogeneity of grassland habitat. Patch-burn grazing is a potential alternative management strategy that has been shown to maintain cattle yields and provide more suitable habitat for grassland wildlife. Our study investigates Greater Prairie-Chicken demographics in areas managed with traditional methods (intensive early stocking, annual burning) compared to patch-burn grazing in Chase, Greenwood, and Morris Counties in Kansas (> 54,000 ha in total). We use radio telemetry to track hens and monitor nest and brood success and vegetation surveys to characterize available and selected habitat in order to better understand habitat selection choices (% of nests in a habitat type / % availability of habitat). Here we present preliminary results from the first two breeding seasons of the study (2011–12). Thus far, we have monitored 96 hens and 87 nests. 2011 nest site selection data indicate strong selection for unburned areas; and nest success in areas where selection ratios were > 1 was 3.7 times as high (41%) as that in habitat with selection ratios < 1 (11%). Future analyses will model nest and female survival and relate these demographic parameters to habitat management. Hen

location data will also be used to analyze home-range size and seasonal movements.

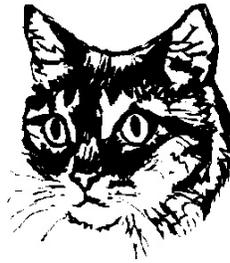
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**A proposed large scale approach to assess free-ranging cat populations and estimate associated impact on free-living bird populations.**

*Greg Farley and Andrée Brisson, Department of Biological Sciences, Fort Hays State University.*

The negative effects of feral, free-ranging and home-based domestic cats on native wildlife species are well documented. The direct impact on avian mortality in the United States is estimated at 1.4 – 3.7 billion individuals killed by cats each year (Loss et al. 2012); this effect is by no means limited to the US or North America. Significant recent efforts in many states by proponents of trap, neuter and release (TNR) programs have compounded this potentially controllable contributor to avian population declines. In addition to reviewing the policy and intent of TNR, as well as evaluating the limited scientific support for this approach, we propose a novel sampling protocol to improve the quality of data available on this issue. By adding a cat survey component to existing large-scale, long-term population sampling protocols (e.g., Breeding Bird Survey, Christmas Bird Count, Big Days, Breeding Bird Atlas) more



reliable estimates of cat numbers and locations will be generated. Data collected through standardized, repeatable methods are an essential early step to effective political and biological management of this important issue.

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**Patch-burn Grazing and Demographic Performance of Grassland Songbirds.** *Brett K. Sandercock\*, Jennifer L. Sojka, Christopher C. Then, and William E. Jensen.*

Population declines in grassland birds are an emerging conservation crisis in North America. Changes in rangeland management associated with intensification of agricultural production are thought to be negatively impacting birds in native grasslands. We conducted a 2-year study at Konza Prairie LTER site to test the potential benefits of patch-burn grazing for grassland vertebrates. We used transect surveys and nest searching to examine bird responses in five experimental treatments: season-long grazing with annual fire, patch-burn grazing with patches 0, 1, or 2 years post-fire, and an ungrazed site with annual fire. Species richness of birds was highest in patch-burn pastures that had been rested from fire for 1-2 years. Changes in bird abundance were species-specific: Brown-headed Cowbirds were common in all treatments, Dickcissels and Eastern Meadowlarks had reduced numbers in the year of burn in the patch-burn treatment, Grasshopper Sparrows and Upland Sandpipers preferred



grazed sites, whereas Henslow's Sparrows were found only in unburned areas. Estimates of demographic performance were based on 74 nests of four core species of grassland songbirds. Dickcissels were a preferred host with high rates of nest parasitism by cowbirds (>90%) and averaged 2–4 cowbird eggs per host nest in all five treatments. Nest survival was low across all treatments (7–20%), but unexpectedly, nest survival was highest in the patch-burn treatment in the year of burn, possibly because of density-dependent foraging strategies by predators. Our preliminary results indicate the greatest response to patch-burn grazing will be effects on bird densities and not demographic performance. Patch-burn grazing has great potential to increase biodiversity of grassland obligate species. However, species responses are unlikely to be uniform, highlighting a need to maintain habitat heterogeneity on private lands managed for cattle production.

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**Is there a landscape-scale grassland habitat threshold in the abundance of Upland Sandpiper?** *John Schukman\**, 14207 Robin Road, Leavenworth, KS 66048 and *Jeff Neel*, Manhattan, KS 66503.

Management recommendations for the Upland

Sandpiper (UPSA) (*Bartramia longicauda*) are to provide, at best, large tracts of contiguous prairie and, minimally, about 100 hectares. The abundance of UPSA compared to amount of habitat may not be proportionally linear between the extremes of large to small areas. In this study our aim was to test for evidence of a threshold in percent habitat and the abundance of UPSA from 15 Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) routes in eastern Kansas. We used Segreg statistical software to determine if the habitat-abundance relationship was linear or segmented. Using GIS we found grassland cover averaged 52% (12–96) in 75 circular 10 km landscapes surrounding 10-stop BBS sequences. Average abundance of UPSA was level at 1.4/year/10 stops up to 56% of grassland cover, beyond which UPSA abundance increased significantly. UPSA abundance averaged 5.4 birds/year/10 stops at 80% grassland cover. Further investigation and methodologies are proposed to explore other factors at multiple scales that could identify possible threshold responses of grassland birds to habitat cover.

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**Editor's note:** When more than one person is listed, an asterisk indicates the presenter's name. With the exception of minor editing, abstracts appear as they were submitted. Please contact the authors for more information.



**Statement of non-profit status and copyright:** The Kansas Ornithological Society is a 501(c) 3 organization created for the study, conservation and enjoyment of wild birds. The Horned Lark is the membership newsletter of the society and all material contained herein is copyrighted.

# KOS board meeting minutes

**KOS winter board meeting,** February 25, 2012, Great Plains Nature Center, Wichita.

**Present:** Chuck Otte, Terry Mannell, Lisa Weeks, John Bollin, Gene Young, Patty Marlett, Cheryl Miller, Donnie Kazmaier, Gregg Friesen.

**Absent:** Henry Armknecht, Greg Farley, Nancy Leo, Rick Tucker.

The meeting called to order at 10:08 a.m. by Chuck Otte, president.

**Agenda:** Chuck presented the agenda for the meeting.

**Minutes:** Terry moved to accept and the motion was seconded. The minutes were approved by voice vote.

## **Officer/committee reports**

**Treasurer:** Terry passed out the treasurer's report noting investments did well and we are up for the year. We ended up with a significant donation from an anonymous donor who wanted the money used for the Horned Lark and the website. The goal was to have the money used for resources that are available to everyone. In management of the resources, this money was moved to the investment fund. This does alter a bit the balance shown and was done to get a better return on the money. Note that we spent about \$1,000 more than we took in last year. If investment money had been added we would have broke even. The only other expense of note for discussion is

under book items and focuses on a website for the book Birds of Kansas. We should be getting a royalty check soon for book sales.

**Vice President:** Henry was not able to get to the meeting to give a report. Chuck noted the fall meeting schedule is set for the last weekend in September at Southwestern College in Winfield. The spring meeting is being arranged to take place at Garnet. This will be May 4 – 6, 2012.

**Membership:** We have quite a few new members this year (29 for the year cycle). We are down 48 from last year. Patty sent out letters to more than 40 people. We did get a couple members from the brochure. We had a big jump in life memberships. Publication exchanges tend to vary for a number of reasons. We are getting a number of new student memberships with an uncertain sense of how many maintain the membership.

**Bulletin Editor:** Gene reported he just got the proofs for the March issue. Gene noted getting some recent papers for the next few issues and said he is now the editor of the Oklahoma Bulletin. Gene reviewed the process for submissions.

**Horned Lark Editor:** Cheryl noted the proofs are in for the next issue. There will be a lot of material on Snowy Owls.

**Business Manger:** Lisa noted that we have items for sale

and did well on sales at the fall meeting.

**Student Scholarship Committee:** Reference the report from John Schukman. A new committee member is needed with the resignation of Tom Shane. Chuck moved to appoint Cheryl to the committee and the motion was seconded and approved on a voice vote.

## **Conservation**

**Committee:** Reference the report from Bill Busby with the letter related to the new farm bill. No action on this is needed at this time.

## **Kansas Bird Records**

**Committee:** The committee is on round two of the 2011 voting. Mark Robbins is chair of the committee.

## **Old Business**

**CBC Data:** Gene is working on a format that will allow CBC compliers to insert data easily via the web.

**Birds of Kansas website:** Chuck secured a number of web pages for the book with a link to the University Press of Kansas. There will be additions to the book in a PDF format for new birds to the state list.

**PowerPoint:** The first PowerPoint program ("Birds of Kansas") will be out within a few months and available to members to use at programs.

## **New Business**

### **Scholarship request:**

There may be a request from a

member who would like to go to a young birders' camp in Colorado and has asked about scholarship money. The member will be directed to the scholarship fund link on the website.

**Recruitment of new Horned Lark Editor:** Cheryl is looking at stepping down from the editor position of the Horned Lark. She notes this is a lot of work and she is looking for some time away from the task. Cheryl would be willing to edit a monograph if the project came up. This is an elected position and the board needs to begin looking at options for a replacement. Her last HOLA issue will be December 2012.

**Publication exchanges with other associations/societies:** There was a request from Nebraska for publications not received. We are now aware we are behind on some of the exchanges. Exchange material is kept in the library at the University of Kansas. Lisa will check on the availability of the material.

**Bulk mail:** The U.S. postal service is closing bulk mail sites which may slow the processing of materials such as the Bulletin and Horned Lark.

**Bob Gress:** Note that Bob Gress will be retiring soon (September of this year). He has a long relationship with KOS and has worked as the director of the Great Plains Nature Center.

**Meeting planning document:** We need a document listing information and tasks needed to put together a spring or fall meeting. Lisa agreed to start this process.

**Becoming an Outdoors Woman:** Lisa had a note from the staff helping with the program Becoming an Outdoors Woman. They want some resources such as maps or checklists or other material. Board members will help with this task.

**Adjournment:** With no agenda items left, Chuck Otte adjourned the meeting at 12:29 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Gregg Friesen, Secretary.

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**General membership meeting,** September 29, 2012, Southwestern College, Winfield.

Meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m. by Chuck Otte, president.

### **Officer/Committee Reports**

**Webpage:** Chuck asked members to please submit CBC dates so they can be put on the website.

**Membership:** Patty reported we currently have 324 members, which is up from previous years.

**Treasurer:** KOS received the first royalty check from the Birds of Kansas book (\$3,812.81). The Society also received a donation from an anonymous donor (\$3,000). Total income from 2012 is \$14,269.01 and total expenses are \$16,322.86, which includes a transfer (\$9,812.81) of funds to the investment account. This leaves the checking account balance at \$6,345.82.

**Presentation of slate of officers:**

Mike Rader presented the

following slate: President, Henry Armknecht; Vice President, Matt Gearheart; Corresponding Secretary, Curtis Wolf; Treasurer, Terry Mannell; Membership Development Coordinator, Patty Marlett; Business Manager, Lisa Weeks; Board Members, Nic Allen and Janeen Walters, Bulletin Editor: Gene Young, Horned Lark Editor: Mark Van Horn.

Thank yous were mentioned to the following outgoing board and committee members: Cheryl Miller (Horned Lark), Gregg Friesen (Secretary), Rick Tucker (board), John Bollin (board), and Bill Busby (Conservation Committee).

**Business Manager:** KOS Merchandise is available for purchase at the far end of the silent auction room. Members were also encouraged to join the KOS Facebook site.

**Bulletin:** We need more publications submitted. Please encourage students and novices to submit, even for incidental observations.

**Horned Lark:** Submissions are needed for the December issue by November 1. We also need the fall and spring meeting information submitted one month before the publication date of the issue preceding the meeting. Mark Corder is leaving the compiler position. Jon King will be taking over this duty.

**Student Research Award:** Two awards were presented this past year: Clinton Helms and Victoria Cikanek, both from Fort Hays State University. The committee is still taking applications for student research awards.

### **Other Announcements:**

The fall 2013 meeting will be held in Topeka.

The general session meeting was dismissed at 11:30 a.m. by Chuck Otte, president.

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### **Fall board meeting,**

September 29, Southwestern College, Winfield.

The meeting was called to order at 11:50 a.m. by Chuck Otte, president.

**Present:** Chuch Otte, Henry Armknecht, Curtis Wolf, Patty Marlett, Terry Mannell, John Bollin, Greg Farley, Lisa Weeks, Gene Young, Cheryl Miller, Matt Gearheart, Nic Allen, Janeen Walters, Mark Van Horn, John Schukman.

**Absent:** Gregg Friesen, Rick Tucker, Don Kazmaier, Nancy Leo, Rick Tucker.

### **Officer/Committee reports:**

**Membership:** Patty supplied a handout (Membership Report as of 9/29/2012) with breakouts of membership. It was noted that there was a significant increase in student members, most of which have been comped.

**Treasurer:** Terry supplied a handout (Income and Expense Summary 1/1/12 to 9/24/12).

It was noted that meetings have typically generated \$300 – 400 net profit; suggested there could be discussion on what to do with this surplus. A question was asked on how variable attendance at the spring and fall meetings have been, which all agreed it can be quite variable.

The \$3,000 anonymous donation was welcomed.

Problems with members receiving their newsletter in a timely manner was discussed. It was noted that bulk mail rate policies have changed which have caused delays. The question was asked if we should consider the possibility of electronic distribution. No decision was made.

**Bulletin:** It was noted that occasionally there is a need to print color in the Bulletin. It was also noted that KOS attempted to publish the recent book submitted by Tom Shane on the Ornithological History of Kansas, but the book was eventually published in Nebraska.

**Horned Lark:** Cheryl mentioned she was interested in doing another monograph.

For the roundup compilation in the Horned Lark, Jon King is going to try organizing it into a narrative as opposed to the listing that is currently being done. It was suggested that we will try it in the coming issues and evaluate what the membership thinks of it. Cheryl is recommending that Jon also have a backup list of the compilation just in case. It was also suggested that maybe we should make the list style of the compilation available electronically.

The board thanked Cheryl for her service as the Horned Lark editor.

### **Student Research**

**Awards:** John suggested that some standards need to be set concerning the awarding of the student research funds. He suggested that there should be minimum and maximum

standards set for in-state and out-of-state research. He suggested the following: In-state—\$500 minimum, \$750 maximum; out-of-state—\$400 minimum, \$650 maximum. A question was posed as to what defines in-state and out-of-state. Gene suggested not setting standards but instead just set preferences.

It was also asked whether there is a maximum amount that can be awarded each year. The answer was that it is flexible, depending on the number of requests and the income on the auction.

Terry also noted that he needed to define what accounts have restrictions for how money can be spent.

**Conservation:** Bill was not at the board meeting as he is the outgoing chair, but Chuck noted that KOS has not had much activity in the Conservation Committee in recent times. Henry will be responsible for appointing a new chair.

Gene noted that the Oklahoma Ornithological Society frequently comments on legislation and other items. This is something for Kansas to consider to play a more active role, especially in matters concerning Species in Need of Conservation recommendations, public comment periods, state/federal projects, etc. Cheryl noted Quivira's upcoming Comprehensive Conservation Plan public comment period.

### **New Business**

#### **Kansas Bird Records**

**Committee:** Chuck noted that the procedural bylaws of the Kansas Bird Records Committee

must be approved by the KOS Board. Chuck provided copies of revisions to the current bylaws. There was discussion on the listing criteria and the voting by members vs. alternate members.

Cheryl asked if records can be submitted without names attached in order to not sway voting. But it was noted that everyone pretty well knows who is submitting the records due to the listserv posts. Gene noted that the members of the KBRC need to uphold scientific integrity. Chuck noted that the KOS board must appoint the committee members and keep that in mind.

Terry offered a motion to accept the changes to the KBRC bylaws, except for the changes to section e(3), where the word “not” will be left in the statement. Seconded by Greg the motion carried.

**Youth Activities Committee:** KOS is considering this as a means to get more young birders involved, but we need some direction on how this committee should function (i.e. youth functions at KOS meetings vs. local or regional activities) and what KOS wants to accomplish with this committee.

Henry noted that we will need to consider the location of meetings in order to maximize participation by youth as transportation can be an issue for many of the possible participants. Henry suggested that we leave youth activities at the meeting up to the local committees. Terry noted that it might be beneficial to start on a local scale with local youth

“chapters” instead of statewide, but funding will be available for youth activities.

Janeen expressed interest in getting something arranged for the Topeka fall 2013 meeting.

#### **Upcoming meetings**

An opportunity fell through to partner with OOS for the Spring 2013 meeting. Terry noted that northwest Kansas could be an interesting option but didn’t have any contacts for people in that area.

The fall 2013 meeting will be in Topeka.

The spring 2014 meeting may be held at Rock Springs.

There were no suggestions for the fall 2014 meeting at this time.

The KOS board meeting was dismissed at 1:20 p.m. by Chuck Otte, president.

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**General membership meeting,** September 29, 2012, Southwestern College, Winfield.

Meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chuck Otte, president.

**KOS Officers:** No more nominations were submitted for KOS officers. Mike Rader made a motion to accept the slate of officers presented earlier. Greg Farley seconded. Motion carried.

**Announcements:** We need a location for the spring 2013 meeting. Contact a board member if you have ideas.

The afternoon business meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m. by Chuck Otte, president.

All September 29 minutes respectfully submitted by Curtis Wolf (Secretary-Elect).



## **Hummingbird in the Bookstore**

By Elizabeth Schultz

Just browsing,  
a hummingbird, solo,  
on its way south, flits  
into a bookstore,  
examines dictionaries,  
bestsellers, puzzles,  
the latest fiction,  
darts over a customer’s  
cap, lights in a hair-do,  
investigates earrings,  
wishing for flowers,  
hoping for insects,  
above all a shrub,  
tries cookbooks,  
greeting cards,  
maps are useless,  
flashes iridescence  
as the cash-register ca-chings,  
panics near the ceiling,  
which is not the sky,  
like all creatures,  
yearns for light  
and the path made clear.

# 2012 Ivan L. Boyd Awards:

## Cal Cink

## Richard Johnston

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Two distinguished KOS members are the recipients of the Dr. Ivan L. Boyd Award, recognizing them for outstanding contributions and service to the society. One award was presented to Cal Cink (nominated by Galen Pittman); the second to Richard Johnston (nominated by David Seibel).

### Cal Cink

When nominating Cal Cink, life member Galen Pittman wrote “Cal has had a more than 40-year career in Kansas teaching biology, bird banding, and studying birds in the field. He has made a significant contribution to Kansas ornithology and the Kansas Ornithological Society.”

Galen noted that Cal has been a member and a life member of KOS since 1972. During this time, Cal has served as vice-president (1980–1982), president (1982–1984), and Bulletin Editor (2001–2006).

In 1977, Cal earned a doctorate in ornithology from the University of Kansas and soon after started a teaching career at Baker University in Baldwin City. He is now a professor of biology and the chair of the department of biology and chemistry. Cal has authored or co-authored 23

articles in the KOS Bulletin since 1975, including papers on various aspects of the distribution, breeding biology, and ecology of Kansas birds. While Bulletin editor, he and Roger Boyd co-authored and published the results of the Kansas Winter Bird Counts from 2001–2006. He has contributed articles to the Horned Lark and presented several papers at KOS annual fall meetings. With Roger’s help, Cal coordinated three KOS fall meetings (1980, 1989 and 2004) that were hosted by Baker University.

Cal is an active field biologist and ornithologist and has participated on both the Lawrence and Baldwin

Christmas Bird Counts for more than 30 years. He has participated in the Kansas Breeding Bird Atlas project (sponsored by KOS) and is an active bird bander, holding a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Master Bird Banding Permit. Cal served as the president of the Kansas Academy of Science in 2001 and is an elected member of the American Ornithologist’s Union (1986). He is a member of several other North American ornithological societies and has published articles in their journals. For 11 years (1980–1990), Cal and Roger co-edited the annual “Winter Bird-Populations Study in North American Birds.”



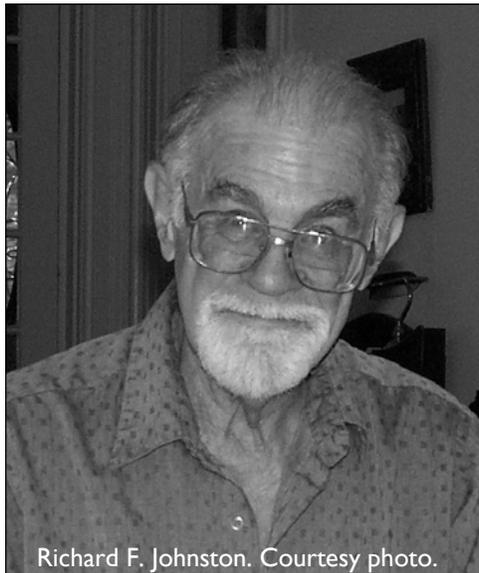
Cal Cink, left, accepts the Boyd Award from Chuck Otte, KOS president.

## Richard F. Johnston

In his nomination letter, David Seibel wrote of Richard Johnston's long and luminous career, stating that Richard not only served KOS in multiple capacities, but also contributed tremendously to the field of ornithology at large.

In 1957, Richard joined the University of Kansas faculty as head of the fledgling ornithology graduate program and as curator of the ornithology division at the Museum of Natural History. He is credited with helping to build both of these programs to international prominence before he retired in 1992.

David wrote, "During his 36 years at KU, Richard chaired at least 39 graduate committees (including those of Max Thompson, Cal Cink and Galen Pittman, each notable Kansans and current KOS members) and served on dozens of others (including mine). In so doing, he helped to shape the future of ornithological research and education throughout North America and beyond. He guided his students with a rare combination of compassion,



Richard F. Johnston. Courtesy photo.

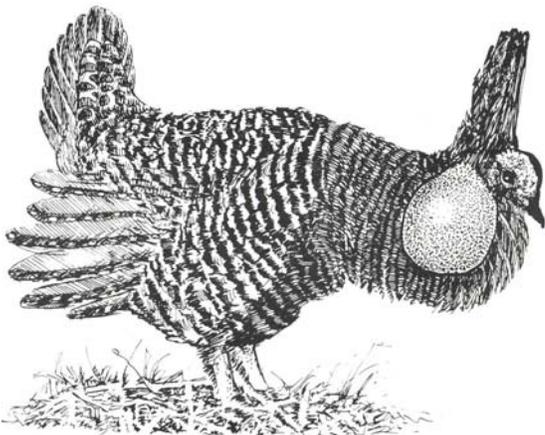
sophistication, humor and respect for individuality."

Since 1967, Richard has been a Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union, one of a handful of Kansas ornithologists so honored. In 1975, he and colleague Robert Selander were awarded AOU's prestigious Coues Award for their groundbreaking studies of evolution in the House Sparrow.

In 1968, Richard served as program director for systematic biology at the National Science Foundation. He also served as editor of *Systematic Zoology*

(1967–1970), as founding editor of *Current Ornithology* (1981–1988), and as editor of the *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics* (1968–1992). He also edited the *KOS Bulletin* (1958–1969), served on the Board of Directors (1996–1998), and was awarded an honorary life membership in the society in 2011.

Richard authored or co-authored 23 papers for the *Bulletin* and gave numerous presentations at annual meetings. He wrote the widely cited "Directory of the Bird-life of Kansas" (1960), "The Breeding Birds of Kansas" (1964), and "A Directory to the Birds of Kansas" (1965), as well as three additional monographs (including "Feral Pigeons", 1995, with Marian Janiga). He wrote dozens of papers, often co-authored with students, and published in regional, national and international scientific journals.



## Best Student Papers

Each year, a KOS panel of judges select one of the presented student papers for the Best Student Paper Award. For a second consecutive year, two papers tied for the distinction. Nathan S. Holoubek, graduate student at Emporia State University presented "Bird occupancy in relation to habitat structure in the Cross Timbers of Kansas." Lyla M. Hunt, graduate student at Kansas State University presented "Greater Prairie-Chicken predation pressure in central Kansas."

# Avian Conservationist Award: Rob Penner

In his nomination letter for the Avian Conservationist Award, Curtis Wolf said of Robert Penner: "I admire Rob's attitude to be a perpetual student of life, as he is always trying to learn new skills, even while possessing a doctorate degree in ornithology.

"And, I admire his willingness to always help out his friends. Most of Rob's work has been under the radar (or "Rader," as in Mike Rader, who is one of his great friends), a condition I think he favors. Along with his other close birding friends, Ken Brunson and Bob Gress, I can only imagine what really happened during several of their infamous birding outings. However, I believe Rob's work over his past thirty-two years in conservation deserves recognition."

Before coming to Kansas Robert Penner worked 16 years as a wildlife biologist for the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. He started his career with The Nature Conservancy approximately 16 years ago, first as a Land Steward and currently as the Cheyenne Bottoms avian programs manager. During his first year at the Cheyenne Bottoms Preserve he set up long-term avian monitoring programs for raptors, shorebirds and grassland birds. He also worked to achieve designation for the preserve as a Wetland of International Importance through the Ramsar Convention, and as a Globally



Rob Penner, center, accepts the Avian Conservationist Award from Curtis Wolf, left, and Mike Rader. © Cheryl K. Miller, 2012.

Important Bird Area through the American Bird Conservancy.

Even though Cheyenne Bottoms is known for its importance to shorebirds and waterfowl, Robert quickly recognized that the preserve could best meet its conservation goals by also concentrating on management for grassland birds. Consequently, he instituted the rotational grazing system that is used today, designed to create a mosaic of vegetation heights and densities across the preserve to maximize habitats for migrating, nesting, and wintering birds. Annual breeding bird surveys on the preserve have shown that the management plan is working, as seen by the steady increase in population trends for a number of target species over the past 15 years. There are many less-glorious tasks to managing the preserve with a small staff; however, Rob manages them well with what he has to work with, and has worked hard to

establish The Nature Conservancy name and image in Barton County.

Approximately six years ago, Rob started the avian monitoring program for TNC. He is responsible for designing and implementing avian surveys on all TNC preserves in Kansas. The data collected each year is used to monitor population trends and help guide management strategies on the preserves.

In addition to his avian monitoring work on TNC preserves, Rob also does monitoring work in some of the priority conservation areas in Kansas. He instituted and serves as project coordinator for shorebird surveys in the Flint Hills to document shorebird use within the Flint Hills region. The data gathered in 2011 helped document the importance of the region as a shorebird migration corridor and important stopover site for migrating American Golden-Plover, Upland

Sandpiper and Buff-Breasted Sandpiper, and as a core nesting area for Upland Sandpiper. Rob was able to gain interest in the project from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which resulted in designing the survey methods that will be used to develop population estimates for the whole Flint Hills region. Thanks to the survey work in 2011, the Flint Hills region was designated as a Globally Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society. It is his hope that designation of the Flint Hills as a Western Hemispheric Shorebird Reserve Network Landscape of Regional or International Importance can be achieved in the near future.

Rob also serves as the Kansas Important Bird Area Coordinator for the National Audubon Society. As a result of his work there have been two Globally Important Bird Areas identified for Kansas and several more are in the works. This has been a tremendous step forward, as no Audubon Important Bird Area program existed in Kansas prior to his efforts. Both the Flint Hills shorebird surveys and the Important Bird Area program have been in addition to his regular duties. This has resulted in him putting in nearly three months of extra work each year beyond what he is paid to do.

Rob has been a great friend, supporter and asset to the Kansas Wetlands Education Center since its beginning. He served on the exhibit design committee. He has given a number of bird-related public programs over the past three years, volunteered his time during special events, and wrote

the book “Birds of Cheyenne Bottoms,” of which the proceeds go to educational programs at the Center. More recently, Rob took the lead in the development of the “Top Twenty Birds of Cheyenne Bottoms” identification card, the first in what is hoped to be a series. He also oversaw the development of a new exhibit, “Birds of the Seasons” located under the pavilion behind the Center. It was paid for by TNC.

Rob is a Special Adjunct Professor at Fort Hays State University and serves on the graduate committees of three students. One of the research projects he is assisting with is the “Effects of Grazing Treatments on Nest Success of Wet Meadow Breeding Birds at Cheyenne Bottoms Preserve, Barton County, KS” by Clint Helms, a KWEC grad student. Rob has worked to secure funding for and has assisted Clint in field work this past summer.

Rob has conducted numerous field trips and programs on the preserves, especially at Cheyenne Bottoms. His field trips and talks have included numerous school and civic groups, universities and representatives from private and governmental conservation organizations. Rob puts in extra time and effort in any bird related project. Such efforts are exhibited through his volunteer work at the KWEC and the Wetlands and Wildlife National Scenic Byway. His volunteer work with the Wings N’ Wetlands Birding Festival at Great Bend (of which he has been involved from the inaugural



event) includes assisting with planning, organizing guides and helping to coordinate the festivals. Some of his additional work includes conducting Breeding Bird Surveys and numerous Christmas Bird Counts. Rob is also involved with Project Feeder Watch and the Nest Box Network (through Cornell University), the Great Backyard Bird Count and eBird. He also compiled and published “Cheyenne Bottoms Birds of Prey.”

On a more personal level, many people do not realize Rob’s artistic talent. He is an excellent artist and ink-line drawings of birds are his specialty (see the Golden Eagle above). He has recently undertaken the task of drawing all 337 species of birds documented at Cheyenne Bottoms. Additionally, Rob has recorded the most species seen in Barton County on the Kansas County Life List, and is at number 19 on the Kansas Lifetime Species List.

# Ten best birds of the year

During the fall KOS banquet, Gene Young presented the following birds as best of the year, for the period October 2011–September 2012.

10. Tie: **Snowy Owl** invasion, 65 counties, at least 131 sightings. Some reports were of the same birds, but there were probably about 150 individuals; **Gyrfalcon**, 31 December, Russell County, Mike Rader;

9. **Wood Storks**, 15 July, Unit G at Marais des Cygnes Wildlife Area, Linn County, Trent Reed, Nick Varvel and Jeanette Reed;

8. Tie: **Yellow-billed Loon**, 30 January, Tuttle Reservoir; Ted Cable; **Little Gull**, 28 April, Cheyenne Bottoms, Barton County, Mark Land;

7. **Black-bellied Whistling Duck**, first reported in early August and last seen 16 August, Webster Reservoir, Rooks County, Jon Vande Kopple. Another was seen on 5 June, at Cheyenne Bottoms by Scott Schmidt, and 3 April, Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, Fish Hatcheries, Pratt County, Mike Rader;

6. **Cave Swallow**, 23 September, Elkhart sewer lagoons, Morton County, two observed by Max Thompson et al.; and one in Pratt County, 1 June, Pete Janzen;

5. **Swallow-tailed Kite**, 12 August, Prairie Village, Johnson County, first seen by Robert McElwain while playing tennis. One seen again 26 August in Shawnee, Johnson County, by Debbie Reasoner and also reported by Nic Allen. It was seen by many observers over five of the next seven days. Another kite was reported 23 August, Marion County. Around 4:15 p.m., Gerald Weins stepped out the front door of his house and saw one fly overhead;

4. **Wilson's Plover**, 19 April, Baker Wetlands, Douglas County, Jon King;

3. **Long-billed Murrelet (Alcid species)**, 25 November, Cedar Bluff Reservoir, Trego County. Leif Anderson (KOS life member) and an



Arkansas birder reported this alcid. While the ID of the alcid may be in question, the fact it was an alcid is the reason it is on this list;

2. **Blue-throated Hummingbird**, 19 July, Russell, Russell County, Mark Arthur's residence. Observed for 20 minutes;

1. **Red-necked Stint**, 1 July, Quivira National Wildlife Refuge, Stafford County, Barry Jones and Mary Pat Haddican. The bird was in breeding adult plumage and last seen on 2 July.

**Honorable Mention:** Early **Red Crossbills**, 8 July, Osborne, Osborne County. Armknecht's residence, Henry Armknecht; Late **White-rumped Sandpipers**, 21 October, Cheney Reservoir, Reno County, Sean Fitzgerald; **Western Scrub Jay**, 4 November, Fort's Cedar View Bed and Breakfast Ulysses, Grant County, Sam Guy and Kellye Hart; **Rufous-crowned Sparrow**, 13 January, Russell County, Dave Klema; **Green-tailed Towhee**, 12–13 February, Wyandotte County, Barrett's residence; **Lewis's Woodpecker**, 11 May, Gove County, Pete Janzen; **Black-throated Gray Warbler**, 1 August, Larned, Pawnee County, at the Kazmaier residence, Don and Kathy Kazmaier; **Great Black-backed Gull**, 1 February, Tuttle Reservoir, Mark Land.

# Levels of birding mastery

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## Kansas summer season roundup, cont.

Jon King (JK), Jim Malcom (JMa), Joseph Miller (JMi), Jon Van de Kopple (JVK), Keith Brink (KB), Kevin Groeneweg (KG), Kellye Hart (KH), Lawrence Herbert (LH), Mike Andersen (MA), Matt Gearheart (MG), Mike Harding (MH), Mark

Land (ML), Mary Anne Marjamaa (MM), Mike Rader (MRa), Mark Robbins (MRo), Max Thompson (MT), Mark Van Horn (MVH), Nic Allen (NA), Phil Wedge (PW), Richard Stanton (RS), Rodney Wedel (RWe), Roy Wedge (RWg),

Rodney Wright (RWr), Sam Guy (SG), Sam Mannell (SM), Scott Schmidt (SSc), Scott Seltman (SSe), Topeka Audubon Society (TAS), Tom Ewert (TE), Terry Mannell (TM).

