



The Horned Lark

Kansas Ornithological Society

Winter, 2014

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Kansas Top Ten Birds 2013-2014

Seems like several species are not even considered anymore, though they are great finds in Kansas. They just don't quite cut it: Barrow's Goldeneye, Lesser Goldfinch, Lesser Black-backed Gull, White-winged Dove, Golden-crowned Sparrow, or Common Redpoll.

1. HOODED ORIOLE, 4/30/2014 — Kathy McDowell, Douglas County; *first state record*.
2. BEAN GOOSE (TAIGA RACE), 1/25/2014 — Rob Penner and Mike Radar, Minooka Park, Wilson Lake, Russell County; *if accepted first state record*.
3. CRESTED CARACARA, 2nd record, 9/1/14 — Mike Blair, Barber County (video).
4. HEPATIC TANAGER, 5/11/2014 — Will Chatfield-Taylor and Jeff Calhoun, Elkhart Shelterbelt, Morton County; *second state record*.
5. GRAY VIREO, 5/10/14 — Will Chatfield-Taylor, D. Burnett, T Cable, N. Shipley, M. Rader, D. Wiggins, (maybe others), Elkhart Shelterbelt, Morton Co.
6. GRAY FLYCATCHER, 5/10/2014 — Will Chatfield-Taylor, D. Burnett, T Cable, N. Shipley, M. Rader, D. Wiggins, (maybe others), Morton County; *would be eighth state record*.
7. CAVE SWALLOW, 6/17/2014 and a different one on 7/8/2014 — Mick McHugh, Linn County.
8. SOLITARY SANDPIPER, 12/29-30/2014, — Jeff Calhoun, Derby CBC; *first winter record*.
8. RUFF, 11/6/2013 — Jonathan Lauterbach, QNWR and 7/27/2014 — Barry Jones, QNWR; *tenth and eleventh state records*.
9. LITTLE GULL, 8/16-25/2014 — Millers, Barry Jones, et al, QNWR.
9. ICELAND GULL (Kumlien's race), 2/21/2014 — Jonathan Vande Kopple, Rooks County.
10. WOOD STORK, 6/23/14 — Sue Newland, Linn County.
10. ROSEATE SPOONBILL, 8/20/2014 — Tom Ross, who told Jack and Norma Dennett, Sumner County.
10. MCGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER FALLOUT, 5/11/2014 — Ted Cable, Mike Rader, Doris Burnett, Nate Shipley, David Wiggins, Jeff Calhoun, and Will Chatfield-Taylor; *more than 100 estimated*.

Honorable Mentions

Great Kiskadee from 29 Sept through 24 Nov 2013

Morton County: Red-naped Sapsucker, Cassin's Vireo, Western Scrub Jay (plus Finney County)

From the Keyboard

By the Editor

Where I live, the sun comes over the horizon about eight hours a day, rising at 08:30 and setting about 16:30; it very often is overcast with slate grey clouds. This makes birding in winter difficult to reconcile with my work schedule. Yet winter's solstice has a reward--for it is nice to be up late on a Saturday, sipping coffee and savoring a slow start to the day, without feeling guilty about shucking out of the prime birding hour for a few more hours of indulgent sleep. Anyway, I have to bird wherever and whenever I can.

Like during the first week of December when I saw some species of smallish Eurasian raptor snag a Rook in flight from a swarm of rooks while I was waiting for an espresso during a coffee break in a training exercise. What was amazing was that the rook survived; partly this was because the rook was larger than the raptor and because the rest of the swarm quickly turned on the raptor. There was a racket. The raptor quickly beat a retreat and the lucky bird flew off to a perch to recover its wits.

There is always something to see when birding, even when the backyard and the small patch of forest has all the usual winter suspects. And the usual winter suspects (and some summer suspects too) are moving ever further north as the planet warms so they are good to enjoy. Recently I read an article posted to the KSBirdlist highlighting some of the eBird data that is being used to forecast this movement north. It's nice to know that the observations of common birds, the robins and indigo buntings and house wrens, can contribute this kind of picture to the science literature and then be used to make evidence based predictions.

Thanks to all of you who will count birds during the CBCs this year. It's a great data set and good fun as well.

Mark Van Horn



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The President's Pen

By Matt Gearheart

Greetings KOS Friends!

First and foremost, it is a great honor to serve as your new KOS President, following in the footsteps of many other well-renowned leaders. I would especially like to extend my gratitude to Henry Armknecht for his excellent mentorship as President for the past 2 years. I must also express appreciation to working with such a proficient Board of Directors, this makes the new President's job much easier.

One of my first memories with the KOS was attending the Fall 1998 meeting in Lawrence, KS, which also happened to be the 50th anniversary of the organization. It was really great to meet many veteran birders, attend field trips with them and even meet Pete Dunn. I was a true fledgling amongst the full-feathered flock; however, I quickly learned this was not a bad thing. I think the best thing about KOS is how it has such a wide diversity of species in its membership -from the beginner novice birder I was, to esteemed scientific professors, all are welcomed with open wings to join. Now, I can honestly say, some of my best friends are those I met thru KOS. This seems like a great time to remind you to renew your membership or better yet, send a gift membership to a fledgling friend.

Reflecting back on 2014, I have many excellent birding memories – (is it bad that I tend to remember birding milestones better than other life events?) I got to see many Lifers in Southern California with friends from Wichita, was fortunate to pick up a few Kansas Life birds, such as the Little Gull at Quivira and the Hooded Oriole in Lawrence, and I have even enjoyed adding new birds to our yard list in Lenexa. The KOS Spring meeting in Junction City and Fall meeting in Salina were both great successes. Besides being very interesting and covering a wide array of subjects, I believe we had more paper presentations this year than in many years. Many thanks are due to Chuck Otte, Mike Rader and many others who helped make these events top-notch!

As we finish the CBC season and begin our 2015 year lists and birding goals, be sure to mark your calendar for the Spring KOS meeting to be held in Scott City on May 1-3. More details will be coming soon. We have not decided yet for a Fall meeting location- please feel free to send along any suggestions or better yet -help volunteer.

...And as the sign at the Elkhart sewage lagoons says "Enjoy the Birds"

-Matt Gearheart

2014 Avian Conservationist of the Year

Mike Rader, nominated by Chuck Otte

I can't remember when I first met Mike Rader, but it didn't take long before it seemed like I had known him, and his family, my entire life. His excitement and enthusiasm about birds, and their habitats, and their survival, is infectious to anyone he is around. Since its inception in 2005, Mike has nominated many individuals for the Avian Conservationist of the year award, and it is my privilege to now nominate him for this award.

Mike Rader has a passion for helping others understand and care about birds. A native of north central Kansas, Mike didn't become an avid birder until college, where he was strongly influenced by Ted Cable. But after that birds become his driving force. Mike spent summers in college, and a short time after graduation from Kansas State University, working for the Corps of Engineers at Perry Lake and Truman Lake. He went to work full time for Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, now KDWP, in 1989. First at Wilson Lake as a Conservation Worker, and now as Wildlife Education Coordinator out of the Pratt Office, Mike spends considerable time working on projects that will benefit birds and all wildlife, and helping other people learn more about the wildlife around them.

Mike has long been an integral member of KOS. Mike joined KOS in 1987 and started serving on the board, as a Director, in 1988. He served an additional director's term recently and served as KOS President from 1994 thru 1996. He often helps with KOS meetings either on the local planning committee or as a field trip leader and was a great help when I was president serving on the nominating committee.

Conserving our avian resources has become Mike's life long, all-consuming work. Certainly, Mike's birding is his passion, but making sure that we still have birds to watch has become his driving force. Even before his current position with the Department, Mike spent time presenting both formal and informal educational programs at Wilson Lake and in local schools in the Wilson Lake area. Just ask his three daughters about all the school programs that he gave! In his current position he also writes a regular article about birds for the Kansas Wildlife and Parks magazine.

In 1999, when it was decided to take the EcoMeet competitive program, a high school competition that challenges students on their knowledge of Kansas plants, animals and ecosystems, from a regional program to a state wide event, Mike was in the lead helping to establish more regional meets and organize and conduct the state wide meet. He is still heavily involved in this program today. Through this event, students that have an interest in the natural world are encouraged and challenged. Because of this event, thousands of students now know more about the natural world and dozens have ended up in careers focused on conserving and educating others about our natural world.

In the current era of tight budgets, Mike understands the importance of citizen science in producing baseline knowledge that will be used for future decisions on conservation issues. Since the late 1980's he has compiled dozens of Christmas Bird Counts, as many as six in one season, but also participating in many others. He runs two Breeding Bird Survey routes and was very involved in the 1990s when the Kansas Breeding Bird Atlas was being conducted. When we started the BirdinginKansas.com website, a project to provide county by county information on birding locations, Mike stepped up to the plate and has written eight county accounts, to date.

Mike has also long been involved in KACEE, the Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education. He has served on their board and strives to constantly become a better professional and to help others be better conservation educators.

The Senegalese environmentalist, Baba Dioum, in 1968, said “In the end we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught.” Mike Rader has taught us all about birds of Kansas and turned us into better conservationists.

KOS Fall Meeting Checklist

*For a complete checklist by county visit ksbirds.org; compiled by Chuck Otte. Thanks go to all our field trip leaders.

Field trips went to Ellsworth, Ottawa and Saline county. For the day, 102 species were spotted.

Cackling Goose
 Canada Goose
 Wood Duck
 American Widgeon
 Mallard
 Blue-winged Teal
 Northern Shoveler
 Northern Pintail
 Redhead
 Ruddy Duck
 Northern Bobwhite
 Ring-necked Pheasant
 Wild Turkey
 Pied-billed Grebe
 Double-crested Cormorant
 American White Pelican
 Great Blue Heron
 Great Egret
 Turkey Vulture
 Osprey
 Northern Harrier
 Sharp-shinned Hawk
 Cooper's Hawk
 Swainson's Hawk
 Red-tailed Hawk
 American Coot
 Killdeer
 Spotted Sandpiper

Franklin's Gull
 Ring-billed 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
 Eastern Wood-Pewee
 Least Flycatcher
 Eastern Phoebe
 Scissor-tailed Flycatcher
 Blue-headed Vireo
 Warbling Vireo
 Blue Jay
 American Crow
 Horned Lark
 Cliff Swallow
 Barn Swallow
 Black-capped Chickadee
 Tufted Titmouse
 Red-breasted Nuthatch
 White-breasted Nuthatch
 House Wren
 Carolina Wren
 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher

Ruby-crowned Kinglet
 Eastern Bluebird
 American Robin
 Gray Catbird
 Brown Thrasher
 European Starling
 American Pipit
 Sprague's Pipit
 Cedar Waxwing
 Orange-crowned Warbler
 Nashville Warbler
 Common Yellowthroat
 Yellow-rumped Warbler
 Spotted Towhee
 Eastern Towhee
 Chipping Sparrow
 Clay-colored Sparrow
 Field Sparrow
 Vesper Sparrow
 Lark Sparrow
 Savannah Sparrow
 Song Sparrow
 Lincoln's Sparrow
 White-crowned Sparrow
 Dark-eyed Junco
 Northern Cardinal
 Indigo Bunting
 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 2014 Summary

Jon King, compiler

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck: One at CBWA 6/7 (CW(rep)).

Greater White-fronted Goose: One at CBWA 7/17 (DS).

Snow Goose: Laggards included singles at CBWA 6/5 (PV) and Webster Res. 6/10 (JVK), along with five at Wilderness Wetlands (Johnson) 6/19 (LB).

Gadwall: One at KCPL wetlands (Johnson) 6/1 (ML) was a rare summer sighting in e KS.

Northern Shoveler: Rare in e Kansas during summer. Two near-flightless individuals at Baker Wetlands 6/1 (DL,RB).

Cinnamon Teal: One at CBWA 6/19 (MR) with another sighting there 8/18 (PL), a drake at Hain SFL 6/19 (JC-ph). Most notable though, was a drake at Neosho WA 6/1 (AB).

Canvasback: Rare summer visitor in e KS with singles reported from Neosho WA 6/8 (AB-ph) and JEC 6/11 – 7/6 (BMa).

Ring-necked Duck: One at Neosho WA 6/6 (AB-ph).

Lesser Scaup: Sightings from Barton, Cowley, Edwards, Neosho, Pratt, Riley, Rooks, and Stafford.

Hooded Merganser: A good summer for this rare and regular summer resident with sightings from Barton, Clark, Douglas, Ford, Linn, Riley, Rooks, Sedgwick, and Stafford.

Ruddy Duck: Two at Cedar L. (Johnson) 6/7-9 (RW) where rare during summer.

Common Loon: One 1st summer individual at Leavenworth SFL 6/21 (JT-ph), one at Lyon SFL 8/1 (JMv), and one 1st summer individual at Perry L. 8/16-24 (DA-ph).

Pacific Loon: One at Perry L. 7/17-8/28 (CM,SN,ph.). This is Kansas' second summer record.

Clark's Grebe: An "apparent" bird at CBWA 6/19 (SS). The bird was distant.

Wood Stork: One imm. at MDC WA Unit G 6/23-29 (CM,SN,ph.).

Neotropic Cormorant: Singles at JEC 6/5-11 (BMa), one in the MDC area 6/24 (MMh), one at the Wichita heron rookery 6/26 (PJ et al.), and an ad. at Quivira 7/31 (JnL). Reported throughout the period at CBWA with nesting confirmed by many observers.

Brown Pelican: One at Cheyenne Bottoms 6/19 (RP), 1 ad. of the Atlantic race at Quivira 7/3 (JC-ph,PJ).

Great Egret: Highest count: 312 at Wichita rookery 6/26 (PJ et al.).

Snowy Egret: Highest count: 143 at Wichita rookery 6/26 (PJ et al.).

Little Blue Heron: Highest count was 503 at Wichita rookery 6/26 (PJ et al.).

Cattle Egret: Highest count: 3639 at Wichita rookery 6/26 (PJ et al.).

Roseate Spoonbill: One imm. visiting an oxbow in n Sumner 8/20-21 (ND,mo-ph).

Osprey: One at JEC 7/9 (JH,JW) was early and another at Cedar Bluff Res. 7/26 (JC) was slightly early.

Mississippi Kite: Reported at Topeka in Aug for the second year in a row 8/11 – x. Maximum of 3 there 8/13 (JMa). This species is still rare in far northeast Kansas away from Kansas City.

Swainson's Hawk: One on the Trading Post BBS (Linn) 6/14 (MG,ML) was easterly in Jun.

Black Rail: Reported throughout the period at Quivira, where expected.

King Rail: Several Jul reports from Quivira, where expected. Not reported elsewhere.

Sora: One at Heritage Park 7/17 (MGo,NV) was unseasonable.

Common Gallinule: Reported throughout the period at Barton and Stafford where expected, but elsewhere one at Clinton L. 7/17 (JK).

Snowy Plover: Away from Barton and Stafford where expected, sighted throughout the period at Wilson L. (Russell) with 16 there 7/27 (MR) including young, and throughout the period at Webster Res. with a maximum of 6 there 7/21 (JVK) including downy young.

Piping Plover: One at Wilson L. (*Russell*) 7/13 (MR), and sightings throughout the summer at Webster Res. with a maximum of four there including downy young (JVK). One at Nesho WA, 8/28-29 (AB).

Black-necked Stilt: Highest count was 120 at Quivira 7/15 (BJ).

American Avocet: Highest count was 2140 at Quivira 7/15 (BJ).

Lesser Yellowlegs: Two at Hain SFL 6/22 (DA,DH,JC,TE) were not expected in mid-late Jun.

Solitary Sandpipers: High counts were 27 at Neosho WA 8/4 (AB) and 32 in ne *Douglas* 7/19 (JK).

Whimbrel: One at CBWA 7/17 (AS,NS) was an excellent summer sighting.

Red Knot: Two ad. at Quivira 7/28 (MR).

Dunlin: One at Quivira 6/2 (MR) and another at Wilson L. (*Russell*) 7/13 (MR) were unseasonal.

Least Sandpiper: Highest count was 1510 at Quivira 7/15 (BJ).

White-rumped Sandpiper: Two at Quivira 7/18-28 (DS,GP) were unseasonal as were 14 at Quivira 7/15 (BJ).

Wilson's Snipe: One at Quivira 7/18 (NV) was early.

American Woodcock: Seldom reported in summer, so singles at Banner Creek Res. 7/1 (JH) and Iron-woods Park 7/31 (CE) were notable.

Red-necked Phalarope: Two at Quivira 7/18 (DS-ph,GP) and continuing into Aug, were early. Two HY individuals at Neosho WA (AB-ph) were early and easterly. One at Wilson WA (*Russell*) 7/27 (MR) was early.

Red Phalarope: Ad. f. at Quivira 7/18 (DS-ph,GP).

Little Gull: One HY individual at Quivira 8/16-24 (AM,BM,MM,ph.).

California Gull: One 1st summer individual at Webster Res. 6/23-26 (JVK-ph).

Herring Gull: Unseasonable sightings included a very bleached individual at Clinton L. 6/7 (MG-ph) that was relocated at Perry L. 7/17-19 (CM,SN). An ad. visited Perry L. 8/20 (DS-ph).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: One second-summer individual at CBWA 7/11 (MR-ph) may be Kansas' first Jun-Jul record. Another imm. visited Perry L. 8/20-24 (DS-ph).

Caspian Tern: Rare during Jun, with one at Milford L. (*Clay*) 6/16 (KK-ph) and two at Webster Res. 6/9 (JVK).

Common Tern: Two at JEC 6/28 – 7/9 (mo) were rare in summer.

Black-billed Cuckoo: A good summer for the species with sightings from *Chautauqua*, *Cowley*, *Harvey*, *Linn*, *Neosho*, *Osborne*, and *Rooks*.

Short-eared Owl: Two in *Clark* 7/3 (SR).

Greater Roadrunner: One in *Edwards* 7/5 (EF) and one in *Stafford* 7/10 (ME,PM) were at the n edge of the species range. One just e. of CBWA, 7/27 (RP).

Black-chinned Hummingbird: Two imm. in *Elkhart* 8/16 (MR), in the same location where a territorial male and female were observed during spring suggested breeding.

Rufous Hummingbird: One in *Riley* 7/23 (IH) was easterly.

Calliope Hummingbird: One in *Dodge City* 7/31 – 8/2 (JC-ph).

Prairie Falcon: One in *Saline* 8/16 (JCo) was early that far east.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Latest spring migrants were singles at Scott SP 6/2 (MH,NW) and L. Olathe (TS).

Least Flycatcher: Earliest arrival was a single in c *Reno* 7/17 (JM).

Ash-throated Flycatcher: Away from *Morton* where expected, singles at *Arkalon Park* 7/19 (MGo,NV,ph.) and in *Clark* 7/13 (JC-ph).

Great Crested Flycatcher: 15 in sw *Pawnee* 6/7 (JVK,SS) on a 10 mile route was a good count there and one in *Satanta* 6/23 (DH,JC,TE) was westerly.

White-eyed Vireo: One singing in *Manhattan* 6/9 (DM) was slightly westerly during summer.

Fish Crow: One at Kill Creek Streamway Trail (*Johnson*) 6/6 (NV). Although this species is now uncommon and expected in the Kansas R. valley during spring, it is still rare there during summer.

Sedge Wren: Highest count was 29 at the Baker Wetlands 8/17 (RB).

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: West-most sightings were singles at Clark SFL 7/15 (DA,JC) and Cedar Bluff Res. 7/5 (MG,NV).

Curve-billed Thrasher: Sightings continue at the Hugoton Cem. with two there 6/17 (MHu,NW).

Louisiana Waterthrush: Apparently a local breeder in the Red Hills. This season, one was in c *Comanche* 6/17 (JnL).

American Redstart: One in c *Reno* 8/14 (AM,BM) was likely an early migrant.

Black-throated Green Warbler: One in c *Reno* 8/14 (AM,BM,ph.) was likely an early migrant.

Mourning Warbler: Singing m. in ne *Douglas* 6/1 (MRo). Migrants can be regularly found into the beginning of Jun.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: A singing and calling individual in *Wichita* 6/6 (PJ) was quite late.

Spotted x Eastern Towhee: One m. at *Webster WA* 7/22 (JVK-ph).

Cassin's Sparrow: Slightly easterly sightings included singing individuals at *Quivira* 6/5 (PV), *Byron Walker WA* 7/4 (JC), and *CBWA* 6/20 (RP).

Chipping Sparrow: In recent years an expected summer resident in c KS, with sightings this summer from *Ellsworth, Pratt, Reno, Rice, Russell, and Stafford*. This summer's west-most sighting came from *Dodge City* 7/9 (DA).

Vesper Sparrow: A very local breeder in ne KS with one in c *Jackson* 6/26 (MH).

Lark Sparrow: Easterly sightings included singles in *Washington* 7/2 (WB) and n *Riley* (DR).

Henslow's Sparrow: Six on the *Kanopolis BBS (Ellsworth)* 6/21 (MR) were westerly.

White-crowned Sparrow (Gambel's): One late individual in *Morton* 6/4 (CH-ph,LT).

Summer Tanager: Sightings slightly west of normal include one heard near *McPherson SFL* 7/4 (EM), and one singing in w *McPherson* 7/3 (JC,PJ). Further west, two visited *Clear Cr. (Ellsworth)* 7/15 (DK).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: Sightings s and w of the expected breeding range include an ad. m. singing in *Belvidere (Kiowa)* 6/2 (JnL,JsL), a pair four miles sw of *Little River (Rice)* 7/3 (JC,PJ), a heard only individual at *Kingman SFL* 7/4 (JC), and one in c *Reno* 7/14 (AM).

Rose-breasted x Black-headed Grosbeak: One m. at *Rooks SFL* 6/12 (JVK).

Painted Bunting: One ad. m. at *Wilson WA* (MHb,RH) was somewhat northerly although the species is becoming regular here.

Lazuli Bunting: One m. at *Webster WA* 7/22-24 (JVK-ph).

Bobolink: Territorial m. and f. in *Jackson* 6/27 (JH) where the species seems to be a rare and regular breeder. In central KS, sighted at *Quivira* throughout the period as expected, but one in c *Reno* 6/9 (BM,AM) was more surprising.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: Rare summer visitor east to the *Manhattan* area, so four at the *Riley KSU Beef and Dairy Unit* 7/13 (JR) were noteworthy.

Bullock's Oriole: One in e *Dickinson* 7/4 (CO) was easterly.

Pine Siskin: Early bird at *Quivira* 8/18 (JM).

Some Abbreviations: *Cheyenne Bottoms WA* (CBWA), *Jeffrey Energy Center* (JEC), *Marais des Cygnes* (MDC), *Quivira National Wildlife Refuge* (Quivira), photo (ph), *Reservoir* (Res.), *State Fishing Lake* (SFL), *Wildlife Area* (WA)

Observers: *Andrew Burnett* (AB), *Andrew Miller* (AM), *Al Schirmacher* (AS), *Barry Jones* (BJ), *Bryant Miller* (BM), *Brandon Magette* (BMa), *Corey Enriken* (CE), *Chuck Otte* (CO), *Catherine Hamilton* (CH), *Carol Morgan* (CM), *Danny Akers* (DA), *Dallas Hewett* (DH), *Dave Klema* (DK), *Dan Larson* (DL), *David Rintoul* (DR), *David Seibel* (DS), *Elmer Fink* (EF), *Galen Pittman* (GP), *Irwin Hoogheem* (IH), *Jeff Calhoun* (JC), *Judith Collins* (JCo), *Jeff Hansen* (JH), *Jon King* (JK), *Jonathan Lautenbach* (JnL), *Joseph Lautenbach* (JsL), *Joseph Miller* (JM), *Jim Malcom* (JMa), *John Row* (JR), *John Tollefson* (JT), *Jonathan Van de Kopple* (JVK), *Janeen Walters* (JW), *Karen Kryschtal* (KK), *Luke Tiller* (LT), *Marsha Ebaugh* (ME), *Matt Gearheart* (MG), *Malcom Gold*

(MGo), Margaret Higbee (MHb), Mike Harding (MH), Mike Hudson (MHu), Mark Land (ML), Myron Miller (MM), Mick McHugh (MMh), many observers (mo), Mike Rader (MR), Mark Robbins (MRo), Norma Dennet (ND), Nate Schirmacher (NS), Nick Varvel (NV), Nathan Wilhite (NW), Pete Janzen (PJ), Pat Leuders (PL), Patty Marlett (PM), Phil Vreeman (PV), Roger Boyd (RB), Roger Higbee (RH), Robert Penner (RP), Scott Selman (SS), Sue Newland (SN), Samantha Robinson (SR), Tom Ewert (TE), Terry Swope (TS), Warren Buss (WB)

Remembrance of Prof Johnson

By David Seibel

Professor Johnston was a great man, as much because of his personal character as his prolific and enduring ornithological work. Graduate students flocked to him for advice and guidance, and he always obliged with the utmost kindness, wisdom, and personal attention. As a result, he mentored an extraordinary total of 39 successful master's or doctoral students at KU and served on the graduate committees of dozens more, including mine.

I know the number of his students because of research I did in the past few years - with much help from Tom Shane and Galen Pittman - for Dr. Johnston's nomination for the KOS Ivan L. Boyd Award (which he won in 2012) and a series of lectures on the history of Kansas ornithology that I presented for the Kansas Humanities Council last year. By 2012, Dr. Johnston was suffering from dementia, but to the very end he had moments of clarity that revealed his wit and charm. I had the pleasure of telling him he had won the Boyd Award, and he expressed his typical humility, surprise, and great appreciation for the recognition. Fellow KOS members, we did good that day.

In his honor, here's a brief summary of Dr. Johnston's contributions to Kansas ornithology and to the field in general:

Ph.D., U.C. Berkeley, 1955

KU Professor & Curator of Ornithology, 1957–1992

Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union, elected 1967 (one of a handful of Kansas ornithologists so honored)

Directed National Science Foundation's Systematic Biology Program, 1968-69 (only zoologist ever to do so)

Editor of Systematic Zoology, 1967–1970

Editor of Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics, 1968–1992

Founding editor of Current Ornithology, 1981 (to 1988)

Published 3 monographs and dozens of scientific papers, often coauthored with students

Won AOU's prestigious Elliot Coues Award (with Robert K. Selander), 1975

Contributions to Kansas ornithology:

Wrote two directories to Kansas birds (1960, 1965) and nesting species (1964)

Authored or coauthored 23 papers for the KOS Bulletin and numerous presentations at annual meetings

Edited Kansas Ornithological Society Bulletin, 1958–1969

Served on KOS Board of Directors, 1996–1998

Won Ivan L. Boyd Award, 2012

Dr. Johnston is missed by those of us fortunate enough to have known him. His legacy lives on through his many students (and his fine family), and his work will continue to benefit us all.

2014 Fall KOS Board Meeting

Present: Henry Armknecht, Matt Gearheart, Curtis Wolf, Max Thompson, Lisa Weeks, Gene Young, Cheryl Miller, Art Nonhof, Chuck Otte

Absent: Patty Marlett, Janeen Walters, Nic Allen, John Vande Kopple, Mark Van Horn

- I. Henry called the meeting to order at 12:03pm
- II. Treasurer's Report – Max Thompson (Handout provided)
 - a. Max presented a handout --“Kansas Ornithological Society Balance Sheet 9/15/12014” listing all fund balances as well as a listing of incomes and expenses.
 - b. Max noted that he was disappointed that information about the death of Celia White Markum (longtime member and past president of KOS) and information about the memorial established in her name was not published in the KOS newsletter. So far, this memorial fund has received \$570. We will need to decide what to do with these funds, which have no restrictions.
 - c. Max noted the investment fund account balance of \$188,289 and noted that these funds are liquid if needed. The investment fund has done very well this past year. Max has a copy of the investment statement if anyone is interested in how these funds are invested.
 - d. Max noted that a group met at the Dingus Area last Fall. The property seemed to be in good shape. The Dingus fund has plenty of funds available if we ever decide anything needs to be done. The group did agree that a new sign needs to be installed, but Max did not think this has happened yet. Matt will check with Bill Busby about a sign.
 - e. Discussion about the Markum Memorial Fund. Gene Young made a motion to move the Markum Memorial Funds to the Endowment. 2nd by Chuck Otte. Motion Passed.
- III. KOS Bulletin Report – Gene Young
 - a. Nothing more to report than what was said at the General Business Meeting.
- IV. *Horned Lark* Report
 - a. Mark was not present as he is still stationed overseas.
 - b. Chuck Otte noted that Mark's schedule is incredibly busy, and we may need to find a new HOLA Editor, but he was not sure who we could get. Max suggested that Mark continue to be editor this year, but that we work on finding a replacement.
 - c. Chuck is taking over the Bird Roundup from John King.
- V. Old Business—Combining KOS Bulletin with OOS Bulletin discussion
 - a. Gene Young noted that this topic has been something we've discussed for some time now. Art Nonhof asked for some history on this subject. Gene explained that he was approached by KOS and OOS members, including a couple who belong to both organizations, and since he is editor of both, this might be the time to pursue combining both Bulletins. Art asked if this would be a board decision or a decision of the entire membership, of which it was agreed that it is a board decision. Art also asked if this would change where the KOS Bulletin was printed.

Gene noted that the OOS Bulletin is printed at NOC for substantially cheaper costs; however, OOS is also responsible for mailing out the publication.

- b. Gene Young said he will be attending the OOS meeting in the coming weeks and will address this again with them.

VI. Old Business—15-year index

- a. Gene mentioned that he and Max had looked into this and it appears we are at the 10-year mark, so this will be addressed in the future.

VII. Old Business—Strategic Plan

- a. Mark Van Horn had initiated work on a strategic plan for KOS over 1 year ago.
- b. Henry asked where we were on the strategic plan? And if anyone had time to continue working on this? It was agreed that this was something that probably would not get done due to everyone's schedules and time commitments.

VIII. New Business—PayPal Discussion

- a. Patty Marlett had emailed the board previously about the possibility of setting up PayPal to allow online membership renewals. Lisa suggested PayPal would also be useful for merchandise sales and registrations for meetings, etc. Max noted that there is a fee for using PayPal, but it is negligible.
- b. Gene Young made a motion that KOS set up a PayPal account to be used for memberships and any uses (i.e. registrations, merchandise, etc.) as deemed beneficial in the future. 2nd by Matt Gearheart. Motion passed.
- c. Lisa will be in contact with Patty and Max to make sure what needs to be done to get this set up, including setting up the account, establishing an email address attached to the account, and bank account information to use.

IX. Student Research Committee Report

- a. John Schukman provided a handout from the committee showing 2013 student presenters, 2013 Best Paper Award recipients, 2013 Student Research Award winners, 2014 Student Research Award winner and 2014 student presenters.
- b. It was noted that we need to get addresses from all student presenters this year, so we know where to send the free KOS memberships.
- c. There also has been some discussions about problems with purchasing society memberships for winners of the Best Paper Awards in recent years. Max suggested that instead of KOS paying for a society members of the student's choosing that we simply give winners a \$60 check and the student can do with it what they want. Chuck made this motion. 2nd by Gene. Max then amended the motion to rename the Best Student Paper Award the Celia Markum Award. 2nd by Chuck. Both motions passed.

X. New Business—Future Meetings

- a. Matt reported that several people have proposed that the Spring 2015 meeting be held in Scott City on May 1-3, 2015. Tom Shane has expressed a willingness to help with (but not chair) the local arrangements.
- b. There have been no arrangements made for the Fall 2015 meeting, which will be held on Oct. 3-4, 2015. Several locations were suggested, including Emporia (ESU), Hillsboro (Tabor). Board members are encouraged to talk with individuals to find a host.

XI. New Business—Merchandise Sales

- a. Lisa Weeks reported that sales of merchandise have struggled, and asked for suggestions on what can be done. Lisa noted a good supply of 2011 KOS shirts, and it was proposed that these extra shirts be sent to the Kansas Wetlands Education Center to be sold. All thought this was a good idea, and Lisa will work with Curtis Wolf on arranging this. Curtis suggested that the KWEC set up the shirts for sale on consignment and issue checks to KOS as they are sold.
 - b. Lisa asked what the purpose of the merchandise was, and all agreed that income and promotion of KOS was the main drivers. She also suggested possibly looking into a KOS ballcap.
- XII. New Business—ksbirds.org web hosting fee
- a. Chuck noted that the ksbirds.org web hosting fee will be coming due sometime. He will take care of this when due.
- XIII. Adjourn—Meeting was adjourned at 12:54pm so the Board could finally go eat.

~Respectfully submitted by Curtis Wolf, KOS Corresponding Secretary

The Thing With Feathers: The Surprising Lives of Birds and What they Reveal About Being Human (Book Review)

By Eugene A. Young

The Thing With Feathers: The Surprising Lives of Birds and What they Reveal About Being Human by Noah Strycker (2014, 288 pages, \$27.95 hardcover, ISBN 978-1-59448-635-7, Riverhead Books, Penguin Group LLC, NY).

This is a fun read. Whether you are a professional ornithologist, naturalist, avid or novice bird watcher, historian, or sociologist, you will enjoy this book. This is an endearing, inquisitive look at birds from a uniquely humanistic perspective that provides a keen insight to many aspects of ornithology, but also ourselves. It is organized into three “Parts” (Mind, Body, Spirit), each with a series of chapters, but not your traditional chapter 1, 2, 3. Instead, each chapter has a unique title, which is captivating, making one want to jump from one to the other...the only downside of the book.

There is a brief “Introduction” that starts with the following: “Imagine what might happen if birds studied us. Which human traits would catch their interest? How would they draw conclusions?” This leads into the basic premise of scientific study, observation. He makes a strong argument, that while this “is pure anthropomorphism,” the more we examine avian life histories, the more we actually find “parallels” with ourselves. The author goes on to break the book into three “Parts” followed by Acknowledgments, Notes and Sources, and an Index.

“Part One: Body” is a look at everything from migration, flocking, smell, irruptions, to flight. In the chapter “Fly Away Home: How Pigeons Get Around,” he provides an amusing story of Welsh ornithologist, Ronald

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Kansas 2014 CBC Shirts

CBC Participants

You'll be the envy of other Kansas CBC participants when you saunter in wearing this new design.

Available on the front or back of t-shirts (short or long sleeves), sweatshirts, and fleece. Simply place your order at <http://www.zazzle.com/kosbirds>



Gifts

Other KOS designs are available on the Zazzle website. Any of the designs would make great holiday gifts for the birders in your life.



Order and pay for merchandise directly through the KOS Zazzle store. You may choose where to ship the items. Visit <http://www.zazzle.com/kosbirds>.

2014 Fall KOS General Business Meeting

October 4, 2014

Salina, KS (Kansas Wesleyan University)

- I. Henry Armknecht called the meeting to order at 11:26am
- II. There was no Membership report available—Patty Marlett was not present.
- III. Max Thompson presented the Treasurer's Report.
 - a. Investment funds were transferred to a different firm last year. Since then, investments have increased 18%. Including the investment fund and checking account balance KOS has over \$199,000 in liquid assets.
 - b. The Dingus Nature Area is currently valued at \$110,540 by Linn County; however, we are maintaining the value at \$56,000.
 - c. Other fund balances include: \$95,260 in endowment, \$39,540 in life membership account, \$37,554 in book royalty fund, \$9,947 in Dingus fund, and \$5,979 in Student Research fund
 - d. It would be nice for someone to find a way to use the book royalty funds for a project, which is what they are there for.
- IV. There was no Vice President Report-Matt Gearheart
- V. There was no Secretary Report-Curtis Wolf
- VI. Lisa Weeks presented the Business Manager's Report
 - a. Please buy KOS t-shirts. There is a table setup in the lobby and we need to get rid of these shirts in stock.
 - b. Also there are Kansas bird checklists available for sale.
- VII. Gene Young presented the KOS Bulletin Report
 - a. Apology for delays in mailings. The March and June issues were delayed due to computer failures.
 - b. Currently there are no manuscripts waiting to be published. Professors please encourage students to publish their research. Novices, your anecdotal data is definitely publishable. There are many resources and mentors available in KOS to help you out if you need help in putting information into a publication. Also, KBRC reports can easily be made into manuscripts, and these are very useful even if the report is not accepted by KBRC.
- VIII. John Schukman presented the Student Research Committee Report
 - a. There was one student research award granted this year: Eric Wilson, who will be presenting today.
 - b. Reminder that all student presenters will receive a free 1 year KOS membership and we need all their addresses. There is a sheet to provide this information at the registration table.
- IX. Chuck Otte presented a Christmas Bird Count Report
 - a. Please get the dates to Chuck for your CBC as soon as possible so they can be added to the KOS website.
- X. Mike Rader presented the KOS Nomination Committee slate of candidates that will be voted on this afternoon:

President – Matt Gearheart

VP – Robert Penner

Corresponding Secretary - Curtis Wolf

Membership Development Coordinator - Patty Marlett

Treasurer - Max Thompson

At-Large Board Members – Jen Rader & Jeff Calhoun

Board Member (to fill vacancy of John Vande Kopple) – Cheryl Miller

Business Manager - Lisa Weeks

Editor, The Bulletin - Eugene Young

Editor, The Horned Lark - Mark Van Horn

Henry Armknecht stays on the Board as Past President and the term of At-Large Board Member Art Nonhof does not expire

There were no other nominations from the floor

XI. Announcements

- a. Reminder that funds from the Silent Auction fund the Student Research Fund
- b. There are many other KDWPT brochures that are available at the registration table. Everyone is welcome to take these.
- c. Henry thanked Mike Rader for his behind-the-scenes work on the meeting, and it was also noted there were many others who helped with the meeting arrangements-Shannon Rayl, Smoky Hills Audubon, Salina Area Chamber of Commerce, and the City of Salina.
- d. There appeared to be only 1 presenter this year for Bird Watcher's Hour, so the listed afternoon presentation times would be bumped up 30 minutes.

XII. The Business meeting was adjourned at 11:45

Continued after lunch—Called to Order at 4:35pm

- I. Vote on the slate of candidates for the KOS board. Chuck Otte motioned that we cease nominations and that we cast a unanimous ballot for the officers as presented by the Nominating Committee. Somebody seconded it. Motion was passed.
- II. Announcements
 - a. Mike Rader reminded everyone to sign up for the Sunday fieldtrips
 - b. Shannon Rayl gave directions to the evening banquet and fieldtrip meeting places
 - c. Henry thanked the local committee and presenters.
- III. Adjourned at 4:40pm

~Respectfully submitted by Curtis Wolf, KOS Corresponding Secretary

2014 KOS Fall Meeting Paper Abstracts

The Effects of Seasonal Climate and Food Availability on Woodland Avian Flock Composition -

Samual D. Richards and Calvin L. Cink Department of Biology and Chemistry, Baker University*

This research explored the environmental factors that influenced composition of mixed species bird flocks in an oak-hickory forest in northeast Kansas through the fall and winter seasons. Throughout the experiment sixty-five individual birds of 6 different species were trapped, banded, measured, and color-marked for individual recognition. Temperature and snow cover were recorded for days of trapping and flock observation. Observations of flock composition were made on the same day in two areas, one with small feeding trays baited with seed, and one (control) with no supplemental food source. Numbers of each species were counted in the flocks, as well as individuals identified by color marks. Those individuals new to a flock were identified by the lack of color marks or a leg band. Flock size grew as ambient temperatures decreased during the fall and appeared to be highest in late winter when temperatures were lowest and snow covered the ground. Flock size was greater in areas with supplemental food compared to control areas. New individuals never captured in the fall appeared to be recruited to flocks as winter progressed. Wind appeared to influence flock activity in an inverse relationship resulting in low levels of activity during periods of strong winds. Bird-hunting hawks were observed only once and caused rapid break-up and dispersal of the flock. Core species in flocks were more predictable than in other published studies.

Blazing and grazing for conservation: habitat use by Upland Sandpipers in an experimental landscape -

Brett K. Sandercock, Division of Biology, Kansas State University, and Virginia L. Winder, Benedictine College*

Upland Sandpipers (*Bartramia longicauda*) are a terrestrial species of migratory shorebird that require native grasslands for breeding and migration. Intensification of grazing management for cattle production may impact habitat quality and reproductive success. We investigated space use and habitat-specific demography of sandpipers in an experimental landscape with different fire and grazing treatments in northeast Kansas. To investigate space use, we radio-tracked 37 sandpipers with intensive daily monitoring for a 2-year period. Resource utilization functions (RUF) based on individual home ranges showed preferences for higher elevation, recently burned areas, high stocking rates, and habitat edges. To investigate nest placement and nest survival, we monitored an average of 30 nests per year for a 9-year period. The strongest predictor of nest placement was burn treatment with preference for sites not recently burned. Nest placement affected reproductive success because the highest rates of nest survival were in unburned and ungrazed sites. Our demographic results indicate that conservation of Upland Sandpipers and other grassland birds will require partnerships with private landowners to reduce use of prescribed fire and grazing intensity.

How many Northern Flicker species are there in North America? -

Joseph D. Manthey, Mark A. Geiger, Robert G. Moyle, Biodiversity Institute and Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of Kansas*

Avian species range from monomorphic to highly polytypic. Some species, such as Dark-eyed Juncos in North America, may be morphologically diverse, though currently published genetics has not been able to identify any phylogeographic structure. The Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*) and Gilded Flicker (*Colaptes chrysoides*) are a polytypic superspecies group with a complex history of species splitting and clumping. There are up to 13 described subspecies within this superspecies group, which represent slight geographic variation of five main morphological groups: red-shafted flickers of western North America (*cafer* group), yellow-shafted flickers of eastern North America (*auratus* group), Cuban flickers of the Caribbean (*chrysocaulosus* group), Gilded flickers of the U.S. southwest and Mexican northwest (*chrysoides* group), and Guatemalan flickers of

Central America (*mexicanoides* group). These groups are largely differentiable by variation in shaft color, malar color, throat color, crown color, and back barring. Here, I use various genetic sequencing methods to obtain genetic data for all five morphological groups. I assess genetic structure of all morphological groups, as well as potential gene flow among them. With this data, the *mexicanoides* group is the only genetically distinct lineage within the superspecies group, with large amounts of gene flow among other morphological groups.

Citizen Science and its Importance for Creating Effective Ecological Niche Models – Jacob C.

*Cooper**, KU Biodiversity Institute, University of Kansas

Occurrence data is paramount for understanding species geographical and ecological characteristics, which are often analyzed via ecological niche models. Gathering occurrence points has always been challenging, and many data-gaps exist. Ornithologists have long relied on citizen science data to improve upon our knowledge of bird distributions through such initiatives as breeding bird atlases and the North American Breeding Bird Survey. Despite these programs, most citizen effort is placed towards recreational birding and often escapes formal collection. Given the number of birders worldwide, tapping into this resource has attracted a lot of attention in recent years and has led to the creation of several public databases for bird observations, including eBird. The increasing popularity of such interfaces has led to an all-time high of public data collection and provides an unprecedented amount of locality information. With this influx of crowd-sourced data, these models can be even more effective in predicting distributions and understanding species' ecological requirements.

Functional Relationships Among Lesser Prairie-Chicken Survival, Habitat Use and Movements

- *Samantha Robinson**; *R.T. Plumb* and *J.M. Lautenbach*, Division of Biology, Kansas State University, *D.A. Haukos*, U.S. Geological Survey, Kansas Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS USA, *J.C. Pitman*, Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism

Wintering ecology of Lesser Prairie-Chickens (*Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*) has not been studied as extensively as breeding season demographic rates and habitat use. This is especially true for the contemporary northern range of the species, where they have expanded since the 1980s. As a non-migratory species of concern, relationships between survival, habitat characteristics and movement are required to accurately inform management decisions. Females were captured during the spring lekking season using drop-nets and walk-in drift traps. Each captured female was fitted with a VHF radio transmitter or GPS satellite transmitter. Nonbreeding movements were estimated for Lesser Prairie-Chickens in two ecoregions within Kansas, the Red Hills mixed grass prairie, and the Northwestern Short-Mixed-grass Prairie and CRP Mosaic. Home range size was estimated using kernel density estimators. Vegetation measurements were collected at point locations for birds throughout the nonbreeding season. Initial analyses show no significant relationships between survival and any of the chosen covariates. These lack of relationships are likely due to the random nature of non-breeding season mortality. Future estimations of annual survival relationships using broad-scale habitat variables may indicate significant relationships.

Object Permanence demonstrated by a Double Yellow Headed Amazon Parrot *Amazona oratrix* and an African Grey Parrot *Psittacus erithacus* - Lauren Brown, Ashtyn Stephens, Andrew Sensenig*

Tabor College

Object permanence is the ability of an animal to recognize the existence of an object after it disappears from the senses. Many species rely heavily on vision, and hence object permanence can be tested in such an animal by showing it an object and then hiding it with a visual barrier. Object permanence has been demonstrated in parrots, crows, Capuchin Monkeys, adult cats, dogs, two year old humans and other great apes. An adaptive explanation for object permanence is that it enhances food acquisition in complex environments, such as when the subject loses sight of the food while climbing or hunting, and it improves escape from an approaching predator that weaves in and out of the landscape.

Conservation genomics reveals multiple evolutionary units within Bell's Vireo - Luke B. Klicka*, Biodiversity Institute -Ornithology Division, University of Kansas; Kevin J. Burns, Biology Department, San Diego State University; Barbara E. Kus, United States Geological Survey, San Diego, CA; Pascal O. Title, Biology Department, University of Michigan

The Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii*) is a widespread species of North American bird consisting of four subspecies (*V. b. pusillus*, *V. b. medius*, *V. b. bellii*, and *V. b. arizonae*) breeding from central Mexico to the central and south-western United States. Subspecies were delimited in the late 1800's and early 1900's on the basis of plumage variation. The subspecies *V. b. pusillus* is federally endangered, and the other three are listed by Partners in Flight as birds of conservation concern. This is the first study to examine geographic variation in the Bell's Vireo using genetic data. We reconstructed evolutionary relationships within the complex using mitochondrial ND2 and genome wide variation in the form of SNPs. We sequenced ND2 for 87 individuals from throughout the breeding range of the Bell's Vireo, and obtained SNP data for a subset of those individuals. Bayesian analyses of these data identified two major clades within Bell's Vireo. The two clades follow an east/west division with a potential contact zone in New Mexico. The eastern clade contains *V. b. bellii* and *V. b. medius*, while the western clade contains *V. b. pusillus* and *V. b. arizonae*. Support for these clades, and additional within clade structure, was discovered with the SNP data. Most notably, all the endangered Least Bell's Vireo individuals grouped into a well-supported clade. The east and west clades are approximately 3% divergent in their mitochondrial sequence data, a similar level to that observed between other avian species. Using BEAST and an ND2 divergence rate of 0.0115 per lineage per million years, we estimate the two clades diverged from 1.1 - 2.0 million years ago.

A Comparison of Diurnal and Nocturnal Foraging Behavior by Black-crowned Night-herons (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) at an Artificial Weir -Rachel E. Renken*, Alan D. Maccarone, Biology Department, Friends University; Bayleigh L. Hamilton, Wichita High School East, Wichita

To better understand how time of day and light level affect foraging patterns and feeding success in a primarily nocturnal wading bird, observations were made in 2013 on Black-crowned Night-herons at an artificial weir located in the Little Arkansas River in Wichita, Kansas. Numbers of foraging birds at the weir were recorded using intervals of 1-h during both day and nighttime periods. Strike rates, capture rates, relocation rates, prey sizes, and rates of aggression were compared. A similar number of Black-crowned Night-herons used this site during the day and at night. Nor did mean strike rates, capture rates, or relocation rates differ between day and night. However, focal birds captured significantly larger fish during the day, when they also experienced rates of intra- and interspecific aggression three times higher. Since basic foraging patterns did not differ by time of day, it is likely that differences in the behavior, detection, and availability of prey account for the capture of larger fish during the day than at night. We have continued this study in 2014, and will report and differences between years. Thus far, it appears that diurnal foraging by Black-crowned Night-herons appears to be important in meeting increased energy demands during the breeding season.

A Telemetry-based Study of Great Egret (*Ardea alba*) Nest-Attendance Patterns, Food-Provisioning Rates, and Foraging Activity -Alan D. Maccarone* and Heather M. Stone, Biology Department, Friends University; John N. Brzorad, Lenoir-Rhyne University, Hickory North Carolina

The breeding season is a demanding period in an adult bird's annual cycle because it must balance energy gains with the competing demands of reproduction and self-maintenance. To better understand how this balance is reached, nest-attendance patterns, food-provisioning rates, and foraging patterns were studied in radio-tagged Great Egrets (*Ardea alba*) breeding in a mixed-species colony in Wichita, Kansas from 2011-2013. A total of 777 records of feeding sites yielded travel times, flight velocities, and flight distances. Prey-capture rates, capture efficiencies, prey sizes and aggressive interactions were recorded at rivers, ponds, and weirs. Food-provisioning intervals (Mean = 196 ± 18 min; Range = 30-2044 min) differed among radio-tagged birds and among years. Round-trip distances to feeding sites in 2011 (16.3 ± 17.8 km) and 2012 (16.0 ± 7.0 km)

were similar but both were longer than those in 2013 (11.1 ± 3.3 km). Flight distances to feeding sites also differed among birds and increased with breeding stage. Strike rates and capture rates differed by year but not by microhabitat (rivers, ponds, weirs), while capture efficiency differed among these microhabitats. Fish captured at weirs averaged 6 times heavier than those caught at rivers or in ponds. Aggression rates at weirs were 5-10 times greater than at ponds and rivers. Distances to foraging sites were combined with published values for flight energetics to estimate flight costs, and prey-capture rates were combined with caloric values of fish to estimate energy gain for each bird.

Habitat Use by Secretive Marsh Birds in Moist Soil Managed Wetlands in Eastern Kansas - Eric Wilson*, William Jensen, Department of Biological Sciences, Emporia State University, Richard Schultheis, Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism

Moist soil management is a common form of wetland management for waterfowl, where wetlands are de-watered in spring and flooded in fall to enhance summer vegetative production. The use of moist soil managed wetlands by other marsh birds (e.g., rails) has received little study. Our objective was to determine variation in abundance of the American bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*), Least bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*), King Rail (*Rallus elegans*), Virginia Rail (*Rallus limicola*), and Sora (*Porzana carolina*) in relation to habitat structure within moist soil managed wetlands in Eastern Kansas. We used call-playback surveys to survey marsh bird abundance, and also recorded abundances of common songbirds. Study sites included the Flint Hills National Wildlife Refuge and the Marais des Cygnes National Wildlife Refuge and State Wildlife Area in eastern Kansas. Surveys were performed during the spring migration and summer breeding seasons of most marsh birds in Kansas. Six individual marsh birds of three species, Least Bittern, American Bittern, and Sora, were detected in only three of 31 wetland units across all sites. Vegetation cover and height were generally greater at points where these birds were detected. Dickcissels (*Spiza Americana*) and Red-winged Blackbirds (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) were generally more abundant at points with greater vegetation cover and height and less abundant at points with greater water coverage and depth. We are currently surveying marsh birds in fall using flush counts, which might reveal patterns with habitat structure. Call-playback surveys will resume in spring.

Ciprofloxacin-Resistant Bacteria in Bird Species Exposed to Varying Levels of Human Disturbance - Jeffrey J. Carter*, Greg H. Farley, Eric T. Gillock, Department of Biological Sciences, Fort Hays State University

The emergence of bacteria resistant to prescribed antibiotics presents a difficult challenge for treatment of human disease. Over time many antibiotic compounds have become ineffective due to spread of resistant genes, which has greatly decreased the number of viable treatment options for bacterial infections. This study focused on the bacterial flora assayed from avian species to assess the potential spread of antibiotic-resistant genes through the environment. We tested for bacteria resistant to ciprofloxacin in nestlings of nine bird species located in three study sites in western Kansas. Study sites were selected to reflect a gradient of human disturbance where antibiotics were introduced into the environment. A total of 194 Individual nestlings were sampled during two field seasons, with 12 individuals housing bacteria resistant to ciprofloxacin. All three study sites were represented in these positive results, which may indicate antibiotic resistant genes are more widespread in the environment than previously thought. Several of the species assayed are Nearctic – Neotropical migrants, suggesting a potential for the spread of these genes through environmental vectors.

Possible Effects of Black-Tailed Prairie Dogs on Abundance and Diversity of Raptors in Mixed and Shortgrass Prairie of Western Kansas - Nina M. Luna* and Greg Farley, Fort Hays State University

Black-tailed prairie dog (*Cynomys ludovicianus*) distribution has been significantly reduced by habitat modification for farmland, government-supported eradication programs, and disease. Black-tailed prairie dogs are a possible keystone species of the Great Plains and organisms such as ferruginous hawks and golden eagles have had population decline where prairie dog populations declined. This study quantifies and compares spe-

cies diversity and individual abundances of raptors on rangelands with and without prairie dogs. We conducted raptor surveys from April 2013 to January 2014 in western Kansas. Objectives were: 1) quantify raptor species diversity and abundance, 2) identify seasonal patterns by species 3) assess possible ecological associations with common raptor species. More individual raptors ($n = 175$) were on the prairie dog treatment than non prairie dog treatment ($n = 107$). Observations of ferruginous hawks ($n = 38$) and golden eagles ($n = 31$) were abundant during the overwintering period on prairie dog treatments. Prairie dog treatment ($n = 13$) had 4 more species detected than non prairie dog treatment ($n = 9$). Burrowing owl, prairie falcon, merlin, and bald eagle were only observed on prairie dog treatment.

Grasshopper Sparrows on the Move: What Explains Variation in Within-Season Breeding Dispersal in a Declining Songbird? - Emily J. Williams*, W. Alice Boyle, Kansas State University, Division of Biology
Grassland birds are declining throughout North America, likely primarily due to habitat loss. The grassland-obligate Grasshopper Sparrow (hereafter, sparrows) is declining at 3% per year, including in their core breeding range in the Flint Hills of Kansas. During the 2013/14 breeding seasons, we observed that many sparrows dispersed 1-3km within our 3,487-ha study area at the Konza Prairie Biological Station, presumably between nesting attempts. Consequently, patterns of sparrow relative abundance changed dramatically over the breeding season. We hypothesized that these dispersal events are due to spatial and temporal changes in relative predation/parasitism risk associated with different land use. We predicted that dispersers have lower nest success than individuals that maintain consistent territories, and that nests of dispersing individuals suffer higher parasitism rates. We captured and individually marked ~400 male Grasshopper Sparrows between May-July 2013/14 on 18 plots managed with cattle, bison, or no grazers, and burn frequencies of 1-3 years. We found a total of 116 nests via rope-dragging and behavioral observations. Nests were monitored every 2 days to determine nest fate, and daily nest survival was estimated in Program MARK and in Program R (Package RMark). Preliminary results indicate that dispersing individuals experienced much lower overall nest survival (0.11) than non-dispersed individuals (0.47). Contrary to prediction, parasitism rates were not different between dispersers or non-dispersed birds ($P=0.9853$). Ongoing studies quantifying temporal and spatial patterns of predation risk, food abundance, and habitat change will help determine the consequences of different land management regimes on grassland bird movements and habitat quality.

Female Lesser Prairie-Chicken Response to Grazing Practices in Western Kansas Grasslands - John D. Kraft* and J. Lautenbach, Division of Biology, Kansas State University, D. A. Haukos, U.S. Geological Survey, Kansas Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, Kansas State University, J. C. Pitman, Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism, C. A. Hagen, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

The Lesser Prairie-Chicken (*Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*; hereafter LPC) is a grouse species endemic to the grasslands of the southern Great Plains. In March, 2014, cumulative habitat degradation and subsequent population decline led to the listing of this species as "Threatened" under the Endangered Species Act. The vast majority of the species range occurs on private grazed lands. Therefore, LPC population responses to livestock grazing strategies need to be investigated and quantified for conservation planning. We investigated the effects of various grazing pressures on reproductive success and habitat use within Kansas grazed lands. During the springs of 2013 and 2014, individuals were captured on breeding/display grounds (leks) and fitted with either a 17-g VHF bib-style transmitter or a 22-g model 100 GPS Platform Transmitting Terminal (PTT). Locations of tagged birds, nest sites, and broods were recorded. Grazing data were collected via producer correspondence and vegetation surveys. Initial results indicate that functional grasslands are an important resource for LPC populations during all seasons. Furthermore, measures of LPC habitat use and reproductive success were positively related with lower values of grazing intensity (AUM and percent forage utilization rates). Analyses indicated loamy upland, limy upland, red clay prairie and saline subirrigated ecological sites were used more than other available range sites. Understanding and creating meaningful relationships be-

tween livestock production and LPC population demography will provide additional information for LPC conservation and management.

Lesser Prairie-Chicken Habitat Use in Kansas and Colorado – Dan S. Sullins*, *Kansas Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, Department of Biology, Kansas State University*

The range of the lesser prairie-chicken (LPC) has decreased ~85% over the past 100, primarily due to the loss and degradation of available habitat. Kansas contains the largest portion of the LPC range where the majority of the now federally threatened species reside. To appropriately implement and assess conservation efforts for LPC, a clear understanding of habitat use across its northern range in Kansas and Colorado is needed. Therefore, my objective was to estimate the relative importance of habitat variables (visual obstruction, percent forbs, and litter depth) with the probability of use by LPC among multiple study areas in Kansas and Colorado. Logistic regression was used to estimate effect size for explaining habitat use between variables measured at used ($n = 4,325$) and available points ($n = 3,688$). The predictive power of variables related to cover, nesting, and food suitability were assessed in separate model groups. Of each grouping, the quadratic relationship of forbs was the best supported food variable, and overall best univariate predictor of LPC use, litter depth was an informative nesting variable, and the quadratic relationship of vegetation height (dm) at which 25% visual obstruction occurs was the best supported cover variable. All were positively related with LPC use and had 95% confidence intervals that did not overlap zero. Best supported single variable models were combined to assess multivariate predictors. Overall, the additive model including food, nesting, and cover variables was the best predictor of LPC occupancy. Future management efforts should consider these variables when identifying and evaluating LPC habitat.

A Big acknowledgement to all whom presented and did the research to further Ornithology in Kansas and beyond! From the KOS Board.

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Lockley, using Manx Shearwaters from Wales's Stockholm Island transplanted in Venice and Boston only to travel back to their burrows in 14-days (average of 65 mi/day, over land) and 12-days, 12-hours, 31 min (average 250 mi/day, over the Atlantic Ocean) respectively. Although he goes off on a tangent about mammals (pp. 9-10), it does help to put into perspective birds' abilities to navigate as a result of flight. He provides a nice history of our fascination with avian navigation, focusing on the pigeon. You may ask why the pigeon--perhaps because they were domesticated at least 5,000 years ago, "even before chickens." He even pointed out that Genghis Khan and Julius Caesar used pigeons for "long distance communication." Pigeons' homing abilities were so important that an estimated 1/2 million were used in WWI and the British used 250,000 in WWII. Strycker goes on to discuss the science behind pigeon navigation, which readers should find fascinating, since it includes sight, orientation to the sun, navigation by stars, use of magnetic fields, use of nostrils and smell, and sense of infrasound, the low-frequency noise made by oceans and air currents, all for orientation.

In the chapter "Spontaneous Order: The Curious Magnetism of Starling Flocks," he provides an interesting perspective on a much maligned species, the European Starling. Have you seen the viral video "Murmuration" of a large starling flock (google it, readily available on-line)? In this chapter he explains how the video came to be, but more importantly, he helps us understand this "collective behavior" and how physics is playing the critical role to decipher how it's done.

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Ever hear of John Bachman, Charles Darwin, John James Audubon, or Kenneth Stager? You will in “The Buz-zard’s Nostril: Sniffing out a Turkey Vulture’s Talents.” This chapter provides a nice historical overview of how science works, all by examining whether new world vultures can smell.

The author even puts in perspective the Snowy Owl irruption of 2011-2012, including a mention of their movement into Kansas (p. 71). This chapter “Snow Flurries: Owls, Invasions, and Wanderlust” provides a synopsis of historical irruptions. He also sheds light on the unpleasant reality that birds in North America are struggling when you consider during this invasion “Washington had closer to 100 sightings than the 1,000 in 1916, and that’s with magnitudes more human observers than existed a hundred years ago” (p. 77). He continues to point out it was probably the best documented irruption considering the advent eBird, which docu-mented the largest concentrations being centered in the Great Plains. He uses a couple of paragraphs to es-tablish that Snowy Owls, as well as other species, those that we’re familiar with in Kansas, also make periodic winter irruptions: redpolls, crossbills, and nuthatches. But, the ultimate question is, why do these irruptions occur? Thus, the rest of the chapter is devoted to the scientific examination of irruptive behavior.

The last chapter in Part One, “Hummingbird Wars: Implications of Flight in the Fast Lane” is really fun with tidbits of information that make you want to learn more about these miniature marvels. For example, a study in 1985 only found 13 confirmed instances of predation on adult hummingbirds in North America, including “praying mantises, spiders, fish, and frogs.” As a result of few natural predators, these diminutive critters ac-tually have relatively lengthy life spans, between 5.5 and 6.1 years. Broad-taileds have been known to live about 12 years (p. 94). On the other hand, a hummingbird in Central and South America might have it a little more dangerous. He reports a study in Venezuela where a pair of Bat Falcons captured 10 species of hum-mingbirds in 164 days, an estimated 100 individuals. The author even dives into physiology, indicating that hummingbird hearts have been measured at over 1,200 beats per minute, with up to 250 breaths per minute. But my favorite tidbit, we all know that hummingbirds at feeders are fiercely competitive and territorial; how-ever, did you know the Aztecs knew about their violent tendencies, thus named them their “god of war: Huitzilopochtli.” The term roughly translates “as the ‘hummingbird on the left,’ who demanded occasional human sacrifices to stave off the end of the world” (pp. 97-98).

In “Part Two: Mind,” the author examines everything from fear to memory in birds. The “Fight or Flight: What Penguins are Afraid of” describes his curiosity of how 300,000 Adelie Penguins fit into a valley about a mile wide at Cape Crozier, Antarctica. Since they are not molested by human contact, these birds will act with curiosity, untying shoelaces, preening his pants, and lining up behind him as if to play “follow-the-leader.” The stories of capturing penguins to apply GPS tags are vividly described and hilarious. All of this is an intro-duction to the “fight or flight” response, with a nice discussion on the physiological aspects and how it relates to emotions. Strycker illustrates that examining penguins actually helps us to understand ourselves and ulti-mately how that examination helps us understand penguin habits.

The chapter “Beat Generation: Dancing Parrots and Our Strange Love of Music” ties birds together with the modern era of the internet and “You Tube” with the story of “Snowball: The Dancing Parrot.” It’s a wonder-ful summary of how a rescued parrot, observed on “You Tube” was able to captivate a scientist, resulting in a detailed study demonstrating the first time another animal, besides humans, coordinated movement to an “external musical rhythm.” This sets up an interesting discussion on the ability for animals, including birds, to dance in general, and how this relates to evolution. The perception, is that animals that have the ability to vocalize, have the ability to dance to music. But not any vocalization will do. It might be more about the abil-ity to “mimic vocal sounds,” which interestingly enough our closest relatives, monkeys and apes, lack this abil-ity. It appears the list of true mimics is relatively small: “songbirds, parrots, hummingbirds, whales, dolphins,

porpoises, walruses, seals, sea lions, elephants, some bats, and humans.” He then takes us on a journey to the significance of music to humans...a clever way of examining our own evolution with music, but using birds to help us understand.

In “Seeing Red: When the Pecking Order Breaks Down,” you can read about the hierarchal system within a chicken coop and how this led to the term “pecking order.” You also learn about professional tennis (yes, I said tennis) and the use of logic in sports in general, which is tied back to the significance of the color red to chickens. It’s an amusing journey, but along the way you will probably learn something you didn’t know before, very informative.

As typical with all of his chapters, the last chapter in Part Two, “Cache Memory: How Nutcrackers Hoard Information,” starts with an interesting set of facts which grasps you, making you want to know more. Ever wonder how Clark’s Nutcracker got its name? Or why we don’t have Clark’s Crow? Have you heard of Lewis’s Woodpecker? The first couple of pages in this chapter will help you answer those questions by examining the work of Lewis and Clark in association with Alexander Wilson. Then the author takes you on a journey to understand how Clark’s Nutcrackers remember up to “5,000 caches” of pine seeds through a winter. Strycker accomplishes this first by explaining our own ability to use memory, with an examination of “memory” games and the development of “memory athletes.” Eventually we learn about Stephen Vander Wall’s study of the nutcracker while a graduate student at Northern Arizona University. The author has a remarkable ability to tie together the old with the new, the legendary tales with the facts. Readers jump from the Greek poet Simonides, to the USA Memory Championship, to the similarities of the human brain and a computer, all in an effort to comprehend the ability to memorize. Ultimately, he points out the brain, whether from a nutcracker or human, uses “spatial techniques to recall facts,” a trait lacking in computers. And in fact, birds, at least in recovering caches, are better than humans are.

“Part Three: Spirit” takes readers on a continued trek to understand avian courtship, intelligence, even relationships within the human species. The first chapter, “Magpie in the Mirror: Reflections of Avian Self-awareness,” puts into perspective the ability for mammals (humans, great apes, orcas, dolphins and elephants) to recognize themselves in a mirror. Up until 2008, they were the only animals known to be able to do so, until a study conducted by German researchers demonstrated that Eurasian magpies could recognize themselves as well. Suddenly, he suggests that ornithology had crossed into “psychology and even philosophy” as a result of asking: “What does it mean, anyway?” He uses this as an opening to understand magpies and intelligence.

We’ve all seen video or pictures of the elaborate courtship of Bowerbirds, and in “Arts and Craftiness: The Aesthetics of Bowerbird Seduction,” he provides a vivid understanding of these amazing birds. This chapter is the literary version of watching a documentary narrated by famed naturalist Sir David Frederick Attenborough.

In “Fairy Helpers: When Cooperation is Just a Game” he examines altruistic behaviors. His interest takes us back to Australia to understand fairy-wrens and cooperative nesting. Then he magically intertwines them with an understanding of our own altruism, to the point of demonstrating the mathematical concept of “game theory,” related to situations against cooperation, though cooperation would produce better results. Finally, he ties this together to get us to understand that science has a problem examining altruism. While we can define it, does it actually exist? He compares answering that to confirming or denying the “...existence of magic. It’s really a matter of personal philosophy.”

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KOS Perspectives: The news in Summer, across five decades

1964

Mr. and Mrs. Wilson Dingus are now in Florida for the winter. They have spent most of 1963 traveling with a house trailer from Texas to Arizona to California to Kansas and to Florida. As of December 18, 1963, they had a year list of 429 species!

There are several reports of Snow Buntings from Missouri and a possible sighting at Amelia Betts' feeding station at Baldwin. Unfortunately, the birds flew before she or Kathryn Kelly could get their binoculars. I suggest that birders be on the lookout for them. I am not sure when the last sighting was made in the State, but specimens in the University of Kansas collections were last taken in 1879.

1974

As the accumulation of our nesting data has greatly increased over the past several years (we now have some 200,000 nest-record cards on file) we have been frequently asked if we could supply nesting records for certain areas, particularly for wildlife refuges and states. We are now able to supply breeding data for geographical areas on a limited basis. Our current procedure is that all cards for species for which we have more than 1000 records are continually updated and stored on magnetic tapes. A list of these species is given below. We are now in a position to answer requests for data on these major species for particular areas at a fixed cost for the computer time, and an additional charge for the number of lines printed and on the number of cards punched. The computer time is independent of the number of records printed, although it decreases with the number of species searched. The charge for the print-out is directly related to the number of records. Recently, we supplied all the Michigan records of these major species to a researcher for a cost of \$26.00. This amount was roughly divided equally between computer time and print-out, a total of some 3,500 records.

1984

HIMALAYAN TREK

Dr. Robert Waltner (KOS Member) is organizing another trek for the summer of 1984 (7 June-19 July). He lived in India for 17 years. Nepal treks in which he has participated have resulted in new records of birds for that country. The trip will be of interest to students as well as adults who especially enjoy adventure, photography, hiking, birding, and meeting new people. The trip features views of 20,000' peaks from a distance of 6 miles; camping in subtropical, temperate and alpine habitats; crossing passes in excess of 13,000'; leisurely pace carrying only day-packs; porters or pack ponies carry necessities; Hindi speaking tour leader with experience in ecology of the Himalayas; 200 species of birds; visit people of a different culture; "normal" tourist attractions i.e. Taj Mahal, Fatehpur Sikri, Jaipur, Red Forts in Agra and Delhi; six weeks with options for first or last three weeks; small group.

Total cost of \$3450 includes round trip air fare Wichita-Delhi-Wichita and tour expenses in India (based on current air fare rates and monetary exchange rates). Group size is limited to 5-10 participants.

TOP TEN

1. Golden-crowned Sparrow - Observed February 15 and 17 in Cowley County by James L. Barnes.
2. Western Tanager - Observed December 18 in Douglas County (Lawrence Christmas Count) by Roger Boyd and Cal Cink.
3. Varied Thrush - Observed May 9 in Wallace County by Ed and Jean Schulenberg.
4. Rufous-crowned Sparrow - Observed December 26 in Geary County (Christmas Count) by John Zimmerman and others.
5. Blank Brant - Observed April 21 and 14, a single bird in Lyon County by Gilbert Leisman.
6. Ash-throated Flycatcher - Observed on July 10, adults feeding 3 or 4 fledglings, Wolf Canyon, Meade County by Roger Boyd, Bill Starks, and Tim Wagner.
7. Cape May Warbler - Observed on December 19 in Cowley County (Udall-Winfield Christmas Count).
8. Great Egrets - Observed nesting June 13 (3 nests) in Sedgwick County by Bob Gress.
9. Long-eared Owl - Observed nesting on May 1 (young in nest) in Morton County (spring KOS meeting) by Calvin Cink.
10. Common Loon - Seven birds remained all summer at Wolf Creek Reservoir, Coffey County, Steve Williams and Dan Williamson.

KOS Perspectives: The news in Summer, across five decades

1994

Interstate Rest Areas *by Chuck Otte*

One of my favorite hotspots is not "a" spot, but rather a series of spots. Namely the rest areas along interstate highways. It seems that whenever I take a little extra time at these rest areas I can always find some good birding.

One of my favorite in Kansas is the east bound rest area on I-70 just west of Colby. A couple of years ago, birding spouse Jaye and I stopped there in March and found a Red-naped Sapsucker in the shelterbelt along the south side of the rest area. An extended stop there at the end of September this year yielded numerous "winter" sparrows and juncos obviously just moving into the region, as well as several warbler species.

South of Oklahoma City a ways, southbound on I-35, there is another wonderful rest area with good bushy scrub behind the restrooms. A little further south of that, just as you get into the Arbuckle Mountains, is another good rest stop. Jaye and I chased a first spring male Painted Bunting around juniper trees for 20 minutes before we finally figured him out!

Birders who have spent much time in the southwest are familiar with the Patagonia Lake area and the Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Sanctuary and a situation known as the Patagonia Picnic Table Effect. It seems that if you go to the Patagonia area, find a quiet picnic table and be patient, a really good bird is bound to show up before long. Well, it isn't just at Patagonia that this can happen. The trick is patience!

Best Bird of the Year

by Tom Shane

October 1, 1993 thru October 1, 1994

(Read at KOS Banquet, October 1, 1994)

1. Swainson's Warbler, May 9 - 10, 1994, Rush County, Scott Seltman
2. Phainopepla, Labor Day Weekend, 1994, Morton County, John Rakestraw
Phainopepla, September 25 - 30, 1994, Finney County, Leonard Rich
3. Pyrrhuloxia, January 9 - 16, 1994, Hamilton County, Art Nonhoff
4. Canyon Wren, December 30, 1993, Scott County, Tom and Sara Shane
5. Little Gull, October 14, 1993, Hillsdale Reservoir, Lloyd Moore
6. Black-legged Kittiwake, January 8, 1994 Hillsdale Reservoir, Christmas Count
7. Black-chinned Hummingbird - male, July & August, 1994, Finney County, Leonard & Betty Rich, Marie Osterbuhr
8. Broad-tailed Hummingbird, August 16, 1994, Pawnee County, Jonni Millington
9. California Gull, December 30, 1993, John Redmond Reservoir, Lloyd Moore
10. Brant, March 6, 1994, McPherson County, Alan Jahn

Sandhill Crane Ringing in NE Siberia

Since 1991 Sandhill Cranes have been ringed in the Avtakool River - Anadyr River Lowlands, Chukotka, NE Siberia. Green neck bands and conventional foot metal bands have been used. Any information on sightings of cranes marked with green neck bands should be sent to: Andrey Sokolov, Institute of Biological Problems of the North, K.Marx pr. 24, Magadan 685000, Russia. FAX: (413)-22-53082, email: IBPN@IBPN.Magadan.su

2004

Favorite Kansas birding spot: Hargis Lake

by Pete Janzen

Hargis Lake is a small man-made lake with peripheral wetland areas, located along Salty Creek in southwestern Barber County. I do not know the history of this site, but I believe it was a wetland basin that was significantly altered in order to facilitate water management in the general area. It is entirely privately owned, but adjacent county roads allow reasonably good viewing opportunities for birding, especially with the use of a spotting scope. For birders visiting the Red Hills area, this is an interesting spot to visit, offering a completely different set of birds than the rugged hill country a few miles to the west.

Hargis Lake is very similar to Quivira NWR in its habitats and avifauna, although it is obviously a tiny fraction of the size. Like other Kansas wetlands, water conditions can vary dramatically from year to year and season to season, but I have never seen the main lake dry up completely.

To reach Hargis Lake, go east 1 ½ miles on Corwin Road from the little community of Hazelton, located on Highway 2 in extreme southeastern Barber County. Where the road tees, go south for ¾ mile to Hargis Road and turn east again. After about ½ mile you reach the wetland areas. There are playa wetlands on both sides of the road at this spot. Black-necked Stilt nested south of the road several years ago. American Avocet is present throughout the summer and may nest at this site. During migration an excellent variety of shorebirds have been seen here, including Whimbrel and Hudsonian Godwit. South of the road the upper end of the main body of the lake is visible, where a number of waterfowl species have been observed, including one June record of Mottled Duck.

Continue on Hargis Road to the next intersection at Harper Road. Go south on Harper Road for ½ mile to an old concrete bridge at the outlet structure. From the bridge

you can view the deepest part of the lake. When the playas are dry, look for shorebirds in the exposed mud along the water at this spot. Other species expected here include a variety of herons, White Pelicans, Double-crested Cormorants, and waterfowl. Listen for rails in the cattails near the bridge. Black Rail has been recorded at this spot. This is also where the Roseate Spoonbill spent a few weeks during the summer of 2003. Continue south on Harper Road; there are some more wetland areas to the west.

The next intersection is with Hawkins Road. Take it back to the west and scan over the pastures south of the lake. There are many small potholes there that can be productive for shorebirds in wet years, but they are difficult to see well except from a few slightly higher points along the road. In the winter months if you are here at dawn or dusk, look for numbers of Short-eared Owls hunting over the grasslands along this road.

(Continued from page 23)

In the last chapter, “Wandering Hearts: The Tricky Question of Albatross Love,” he tackles the concept of “love.” He demonstrates it’s not a topic that scientists work on since it has too many meanings. But yet, culturally, socially, it’s an important subject. He explains the initial onslaught of hormones and chemicals involved with the initial “attraction.” He has an entire paragraph (p. 250) devoted almost exclusively to questions associated with albatrosses, known for their long-term monogamous relationships. He ties it together with the use of modern DNA studies showing many avian species thought to be in monogamous relationships actually being in more of a “steady” pair-bond (beneficial to raising young), since individuals in broods are sired by different males as a result of mothers being out for “surreptitious quickies.” He eventually turns us back into understanding the parallels between what albatross go through and what we as humans go through in these long-term relationships.

This is a thoroughly enjoyable book from cover to cover. It has great appeal for secondary education; it could entice young minds to want to become ornithologists. Amateur birding enthusiasts should find this very enjoyable and while it will provide some good scientific information, it should also make readers want to be more observant. I think the professional ornithologist will enjoy the book as well, allowing them to reminisce about their own parallel endeavors in the field...and perhaps rekindle the search for knowledge of questions long since forgotten. Lastly, it’s apropos that he summarizes that the brain “...needs a story—any story—to latch on to important information. Sometimes, a picture really is worth a thousand words” (pg 179-180). For that is what he so eloquently does with this book, makes readers “latch on.”

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