



The Horned Lark

Kansas Ornithological Society

September, 2020

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From the President's Pen

By Cheryl Miller

The COVID-19 pandemic stinks. It's stressful, restrictive and seems to have no end. It's forced people to interact differently, at the expense of building a social community. It's kept us apart for our KOS meetings, and it's threatening to dampen Christmas Bird Counts as well.

But the pandemic has also given us opportunity to bird differently. One way is via Facebook. During the early months of the pandemic, these Facebook pages became popular with birders.

- #BirdTheFeckAtHome—Self-isolating birders report their backyard birds. The group has a goal of seeing 4,000 species and is now past the 3,500 mark.
- Google Street View Birding—Members from around the world submit links to images of wild birds they find in Google Street View. Who knows, you might find a Sacred Kingfisher just by poking around New Zealand.
- Birdwatching—Admins share photos of wild birds in their natural surroundings from around the world. While international birding is off the table for awhile, this might help scratch that itch.

Not one of us is unaffected by the pandemic. My wish is that we each get through this safely so we can bird together soon, maskless and much closer than six feet apart.

- Cheryl

As Cheryl so eloquently put it, this pandemic stinks and it has impacted every aspect of our life including KOS activities. But survival comes from persevering.

The September and December Horned Lark and *Bulletin* are being sent in one mailing in an effort to save some Society funds. By the time this hits your mailbox we'll be well into December and that means a new year and a new KOS membership year will be just around the corner. Please take the time to fill out the membership form on page 12 and mail your check and the form to Max Thompson, KOS Treasurer. Or go online to our membership page: https://ksbirds.org/kos/kos_member.html and pay via PayPal. If you do renew online please send the information on the form or the membership page to Max at maxt@cox.net. Whichever way you choose to renew, thank you for your continued membership!

From the Keyboard

By the Editor

The sun rises and the sun sets. The hours of daylight lengthen and then they start to shorten. We're on our way to the shortest day of the year, the winter solstice, after which the hours of daylight, slowly, start to lengthen again. The birds migrate north and then all too soon they head back south. Gone are the flycatchers, swallows, vireos and warblers. Back are the sparrows of winter and flocks of waterfowl. No matter what happens in Kansas, in the USA, or in the world, the cycle continues

There is comfort in the steady rhythms of nature. In a year when everything got set on its ear, nature was my anchor. I remember talking with someone at work in early summer about how everyone in the office has times when their life is in chaos, but they come to work and coworkers become anchors of stability. This year everyone has been in chaos. This was very unsettling to many people. Everything you have ever done is now different. Is it a temporary different, a new different, is it a new normal or will we someday get back to the old normal?

Through all the upheaval, the sun rose and the sun set. Grass turned green, trees leafed out, spring flowers bloomed. Birds migrated north and went to their breeding grounds either here or elsewhere. Just as happened last year and just as well happen next year. While everything else was different, nature was anchored in its rhythms and is still anchored in its rhythms. Pandemic be damned, migration went on, thankfully!

The chaos continued into this fall with surges in the pandemic amplified by the craziness of national elections. Something was needed for stability. Something was needed for normalcy. And there were the birds. Always and still. It may sound funny to call a creature that has wings and can fly an anchor, but they have been for me!

We had to face the reality of another virtual KOS meeting. Adjustments were made to how elections would be held, how papers could be presented, how field trips would be held. "The way we've always done it" was put on the shelf and members stepped forward to adapt, adjust, carry on and persevere! I can't say thank you enough for everyone who helped make that happen.

Will we be able to have a "normal" spring meeting come May? Nobody knows and time will tell. But in the meantime, the sun will rise, and the sun will set. Birds will migrate north in the spring and I'll have Juncos and Harris's Sparrows at my feeders in the meantime. — *Chuck*



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http://ksbirds.org/kos/kos_officers.html

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KOS Virtual Annual Meeting, 2020

With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic the KOS Board decided to not host an in person meeting in early October. There was still an opportunity for presented papers, via technology and we still held elections, via email vote. As with the spring meeting, that had to be cancelled, birders were encouraged to go birding in their area and then join in on Zoom for the compilation. So here are some of the details from that Virtual Annual Meeting. The abstracts of the papers will be in the December issue of the *Horned Lark*. A special thank you goes out to Jenn Rader, Jeff Calhoun, Rachel Roth, and other behind the scenes. for all of their hard work to pull this virtual event together!!

Essentially, all but one board member agreed to serve another term. Nick Varvel has moved out of state and decided it was best to elect a new board member who was in Kansas. Thank you Nick for your time on the board and welcome Rachel Roth to the KOS board! The full list of board members and contact information is to the left, across the crease, on page 2!

The good thing about the presented papers this year is that they were submitted as recordings so anyone can go and watch them at their convenience. In a normal year, you'd have one chance to watch them in person and that would be it! To view these videos, at your convenience, point your web browser to https://ksbirds.org/kos/Fall2020/kos_2020_fall_meeting.htm where you can select which paper you want to watch. It is anticipated that these videos will be available for viewing for quite some time so you don't have to watch them all at one viewing! Click on "View the Presented Papers" to go to the YouTube site where they are hosted. Right below that link is a link to view the abstracts of each paper. The abstracts will also be the December *Horned Lark*.

Following is the list of birds that were seen, in Kansas, during the designated Fall Meeting period. The observation period was 12:00 a.m. (midnight), Friday, October 2nd through 12:00 p.m. (noon) Sunday, October 4th. Thanks to Jeff Calhoun for compiling this information!

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	Eared Grebe	Baird's Sandpiper
Greater White-fronted Goose	Rock Pigeon	Least Sandpiper
Canada Goose	Eurasian Collared-Dove	Pectoral Sandpiper
Wood Duck	White-winged Dove	Semipalmated Sandpiper
Blue-winged Teal	Mourning Dove	Short-billed Dowitcher
Northern Shoveler	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Long-billed Dowitcher
Gadwall	Common Nighthawk	Wilson's Snipe
American Wigeon	Chimney Swift	Spotted Sandpiper
Mallard	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Solitary Sandpiper
Northern Pintail	Rufous Hummingbird	Lesser Yellowlegs
Green-winged Teal	Sora	Willet
Redhead	American Coot	Greater Yellowlegs
Ring-necked Duck	Sandhill Crane	Red-necked Phalarope
Ruddy Duck	American Avocet	Sabine's Gull
Northern Bobwhite	Black-bellied Plover	Franklin's Gull
Ring-necked Pheasant	American Golden-Plover	Ring-billed Gull
Greater Prairie-Chicken	Killdeer	Herring Gull
Lesser Prairie-Chicken	Semipalmated Plover	Lesser Black-backed Gull
Wild Turkey	Snowy Plover	Forster's Tern
Pied-billed Grebe	Stilt Sandpiper	
Red-necked Grebe	Sanderling	

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Have you considered including KOS in your estate? Contact Treasurer
Max Thompson for details on how to make this happen.

Kansas Birding Roundup, Spring, (March 2020 – May 2020) Chuck Otte, compiler

This is the report of the spring birding season in Kansas, March through May. Spring. The season that all birders crave. The season that includes the four or five most exciting weeks that we all spend the rest of the year waiting for. We look forward to it in anticipation and when we see it ending we mourn its passing.

Neotropic Cormorants are apparently slowly becoming established outside of their traditional haunts of Cheyenne Bottoms and Quivira National Wildlife Refuge. Birders should be on the lookout for them anytime cormorants are encountered. While confirmed breeding has only been documented in Barton County, birders should be looking for evidence of breeding in other areas where they are routinely being seen.

There were more reports of “early season” flycatchers in this Roundup period. These reports are challenging because many of the species that were reported are aerial flycatcher specialists. Eastern Phoebes arrive in March and survive because they have the ability to glean insects from tree trunks, etc. But species that depend wholly on actual flycatching need to have a regular supply of flying insects that simply don’t occur regularly, yet anyway, in March.

Fish Crows are expanding their range and as they do we continue to monitor them and expand our knowledge of dates of arrival. We know that they are breeding far more broadly in Kansas than documented but just like American Crows, they get strangely quiet during the nesting season.

Wandering Lazuli Buntings and Black-headed Grosbeaks give birders in central and eastern Kansas delightful views when they show up at their feeders. We know that both of these species wander all over the state during migration and don’t try to record all of the sightings, just the ones that are significant due to new county records or extremes in time or place.

Bullock’s Orioles in Kansas are problematic. Are there any “pure” Bullock’s Orioles in Kansas? Possibly not but until there is additional research we’ll probably have to just consider them as Bullock’s type and continue to monitor them.

Wandering warblers were very evident this year especially in the western part of the state. The number of reports coming out of places like Morton and Hamilton Counties was downright mind jarring. Meanwhile, birders in the central part of the state felt left out, again, this year with warbler numbers seeming to be down, even for them! Warblers are certainly the height of excitement for many birders when it comes to spring migration!

Any report marked as having been turned in to the Kansas Bird Records Committee (KBRC) should be considered tentative until review by the Committee is completed. Thank you to everyone who reports and contributes sightings for this report. Please forward any noteworthy sightings to me at cotte@twinvalley.net or mailed to 11319 Dundon Rd, Milford KS 66514.

Species	Number and Location	County	Date	Observer(s)
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	1 possibly early in Ellinwood	Barton	3/27	MR
Trumpeter Swan	1 lingering at Pony Creek Lake	Brown	4/05	DM
Cinnamon Teal	1 easterly at Neosho WA	Neosho	3/19	JRg
Cinnamon Teal	1 easterly in De Soto Still present 4/14	Johnson	4/04	ABa, m.ob.
Surf Scoter	1 at Melvern Lake, continuing from Feb. Still present 3/21	Osage	3/13	KC, DP
Surf Scoter	1 at Lone Star Lake Still present 3/30	Douglas	3/21	NP
Surf Scoter	1 at Tuttle Creek Dam, east end	Pottawatomie	3/28	JRw
Surf Scoter	1 at Hillsdale Lake Still present 4/18	Miami	4/08	MGo
White-winged Scoter	1 at LaFarge Sandpits Still present 4/09	Sedgwick	3/29	KG
White-winged Scoter	1 at CBWA	Barton	4/02	RP

Species	Number and Location	County	Date	Observer(s)
Black Scoter	6 at Clinton Lake, 1 male, 5 females Still present 3/19	Douglas	3/14	TK
Black Scoter	1 at Wilson Lake	Russell	3/14	DK, MR
Black Scoter	1 at Lassiter Marsh, Perry WA	Jefferson	4/10	DMK, MP
Long-tailed Duck	1 at Wilson Lake	Russell	4/09	MR
Western Grebe	1 easterly at Baker Wetlands	Douglas	5/06	MLb
Eastern Whip-poor-will	1 westerly at Harvey Co West Lake	Harvey	5/17	GF
Chimney Swift	1 quite early in Lawrence	Douglas	3/28	PG, MZ
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	1 westerly along Plum Creek	Cheyenne	5/17	MK
Black-throated Hummingbird	1 male at rural residence near CBWA	Barton	5/10	RP
Common Gallinule	1 at Monahan Wetland area	Crawford	5/02	AG
Common Gallinule	1 in wetland near Wakarusa	Shawnee	5/26	RN, LN
Sandhill Crane	3 flying overhead	Miami	3/25	CY
Whooping Crane	8 at Big Sinkhole, southeast of Inman	McPherson	3/30	TE
Black-necked Stilt	1 early arrival at CBWA	Barton	3/27	RP
Black-necked Stilt	1 early arrival at Dodge City	Ford	3/27	CMM
Black-necked Stilt	Pair mating at Black Vermilion Marsh	<u>Marshall</u>	5/30	CMo, LZ, SN
Mountain Plover	1 easterly at CBWA	Barton	4/16	RP
Mountain Plover	3 somewhat easterly near Wakeeney	Trego	4/27	HA
Hudsonian Godwit	1 slightly early at MVWA	McPherson	4/04	DH
Ruddy Turnstone	1 at Harper WTP	<u>Harper</u>	5/18	CE
Dunlin	1 slightly early in Lawrence	Douglas	4/04	GP
Short-billed Dowitcher	1 early at CBWA, calling	Barton	3/13	RP
American Woodcock	1 westerly along river in Ellsworth	Ellsworth	3/16	RS
Willet	3 early in Lenexa	Johnson	4/04	AJ
Willet	Flock of 13 at Blue Rapids WTP	<u>Marshall</u>	4/26	CM, LZ, JZ
Iceland Gull	1 1 st cycle in flooded fields	Johnson	3/23	ML
Lesser Black-backed Gull	1 at Hillsdale Lake	Miami	3/19	MMH
Glaucous Gull	1 at CBWA	Barton	3/27	MR
Great Black-backed Gull	1 1 st winter bird at Rock Creek Marina Still present 3/15	Jefferson	3/01	GP, m.ob.
Least Tern	1 on watershed pond	<u>Rush</u>	5/16	HA, JC
Common Loon	1 on watershed pond	<u>Rush</u>	5/14	HA
Neotropic Cormorant	Continuing bird at Sedgwick Co. Zoo	Sedgwick	3/10	JBi
Neotropic Cormorant	1 at Hillsdale WA	Miami	4/18	Ago, ML, JM
Neotropic Cormorant	1 with flock of Double-crested along Turnpike	Butler	4/18	CE
Neotropic Cormorant	1 at Baker Wetlands	Douglas	4/19	KC
Neotropic Cormorant	2 at KCP&L wetlands	Johnson	5/11	ML
Great Egret	1 westerly at CNG	Morton	5/12	MN
Glossy Ibis	1 at Neosho WA	Neosho	4/14	ABu
Glossy Ibis	1 at Pracht Wetlands	Sedgwick	5/03	PJ, m.ob.
White-faced Ibis	1 somewhat early at Neosho WA	Neosho	3/28	ABu
Black Vulture	1 over Perry Lake Dam	Jefferson	4/10	DMK, MP
Black Vulture	1 soaring with Turkey Vultures, Shawnee	Johnson	4/25	ML
Black Vulture	1 soaring with Turkey Vultures, Lansing	Leavenworth	4/27	EP
Turkey Vulture	Several noticeable groups early for sw KS	Finney	3/26	TSh, et. al.

Species	Number and Location	County	Date	Observer(s)
Red-shouldered Hawk	1 soaring near Wilmore	<u>Comanche</u>	5/18	GF
Swainson's Hawk	1 slightly early near Healy	Scott	3/15	CE
Short-eared Owl	1 on Konza Prairie	Riley	5/13	DSm
Lewis's Woodpecker	1 adult at Governor's Mansion, Topeka Still present 3/18	Shawnee	3/01	DA
Lewis's Woodpecker	1 near Elkhart	Morton	4/28	WJW
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1 late near Tonganoxie Still present 5/19	Leavenworth	5/12	KC, JS
Ladder-backed Woodpecker	Wilson Lake, Minooka Park	<u>Russell</u>	4/14	DK
Pileated Woodpecker	1 westerly southwest of Belvidere	Kiowa	3/27	JC
Merlin	1 prairie race at upper end of Wilson Res	Russell	5/10	MR
Dusky Flycatcher	1 in Deerfield	Kearny	5/02	SSh
Black Phoebe	1 at CNG, KBRC Still present 4/06	Morton	4/05	LD
Black Phoebe	1 at CNG, Middle Springs, KBRC Appears to be different bird than one first sighted on 4/05 based on photos	Morton	4/07	PJ
Eastern Phoebe	1 in Klema farmyard, slightly early	Russell	3/05	DK
Say's Phoebe	1 near St Francis, slightly early	Cheyenne	3/11	MK
Vermilion Flycatcher	1 near Arkansas City	Cowley	4/05	LV
Vermilion Flycatcher	1 at CNG	Morton	4/05	LD
Vermilion Flycatcher	1 at CNG Middle Springs	Morton	4/06	LD
Northern Shrike	1 somewhat late in Shawnee	Johnson	3/23	KE
White-eyed Vireo	1 at Ford SFL	<u>Ford</u>	4/30	JC
White-eyed Vireo	1 at Circle Park area, Dodge City	Ford	5/03	JC
White-eyed Vireo	1 at Sternberg Natural Area	Ellis	5/04	HA
White-eyed Vireo	1 lingering at Konza Prairie	Riley	5/30	DR
Warbling Vireo	1 somewhat early near Topeka	Jefferson	4/05	TM
Fish Crow	1 somewhat early at Schermerhorn Park	Cherokee	3/07	JR
Fish Crow	1 slightly early at Hillsdale Lake	Miami	3/19	MMH
Fish Crow	1 calling near Frankfort	<u>Marshall</u>	4/26	JZ, LZ
Chihuahuan Raven	1 west of Johnson City	Stanton	5/09	WA, DT
Violet-green Swallow	1 at Pratt County Lake	<u>Pratt</u>	4/15	MPn
N. Rough-winged Swallow	1 slightly early	Douglas	3/24	RB
Cave Swallow	1 at TNC Property at CBWA	Barton	5/18	RP
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1 coming to feeders, Garden City Still coming to feeders 5/24	Finney	5/17	SSh
House Wren	Early arrival in Paola	Miami	3/29	RW
House Wren	Early arrival near Hoyt	Jackson	3/29	LZ
Sedge Wren	1 early at Baker Wetlands	Douglas	3/11	MZ, PG
Golden-crowned Kinglet	1 late at Elkhart Shelterbelt	Morton	5/02	BPv
White-throated Sparrow	1 late at Riverfront Park Trails	Douglas	5/21	MRb
Townsend's Solitaire	1 lingering at Lake Afton	Sedgwick	4/14	BP
Gray-cheeked Thrush	1 at Roadside Park near Blue Rapids	<u>Marshall</u>	5/09	KG
Pine Siskin	14 coming to feeders in Garden City Juveniles also seen coming to feeders so nested nearby	Finney	5/24	SSh
Pine Siskin	1 coming to feeders in Hays	Ellis	5/28	HA
Pine Siskin	3 still coming to feeders in Topeka	Shawnee	5/31	RC
Lesser Goldfinch	1 at Calhoun residence, Dodge City	Fort	4/18	JC
Lesser Goldfinch	1 at Middle Spring, CNG	Morton	5/09	WA, DT

Species	Number and Location	County	Date	Observer(s)
Lark Sparrow	1 slightly early southwest of Haviland	Kiowa	3/27	CMM
Dark-eyed Junco	1 late at Finnup Park, Garden City	Finney	5/14	SSh
Golden-crowned Sparrow	1 at Perry WA	Jefferson	4/11	LZ
Rufous-crowned Sparrow	1 at Scott SP	Scott	5/26	SSh, TSh
Canyon Towhee	1 at Point of Rocks, CNG Still present 5/21	Morton	5/16	AMi, JMi
Orchard Oriole	1 slightly early male, QNWR	Stafford	4/24	BJ
Bobolink	1 near Syracuse	<u>Hamilton</u>	5/13	JC
Bullock's Oriole	1 easterly in Newton	Harvey	5/10	CS, MP
Bullock's Oriole	1 near Tonganoxie	<u>Leavenworth</u>	5/12	JT
Bronzed Cowbird	1 at Samson Bridge & Rest Area Still present 5/31	Seward	5/26	SDH
Worm-eating Warbler	1 westerly at KS-27 Park	Hamilton	5/10	JC
Louisiana Waterthrush	1 slightly early near Lansing	Leavenworth	3/25	JS
Golden-winged Warbler	1 at Kill Creek Park	Johnson	4/28	ABa
Golden-winged Warbler	1 at Lemon Park	<u>Pratt</u>	5/06	MR
Golden-winged Warbler	1 at Blue Valley Recreation Complex	Johnson	5/23	ML
Blue-winged Warbler	1 in extreme western part of county	<u>Gove</u>	4/30	CF
Blue-winged Warbler	1 on Flint Hills Nature Trail near Rantoul	<u>Franklin</u>	5/06	MGo, KC, TSw
Prothonotary Warbler	1 northeast of Johnson City	<u>Stanton</u>	5/01	OS
Connecticut Warbler	1 at Fitch Reserve	Douglas	5/17	MRb
Connecticut Warbler	1 at Kill Creek Park	Johnson	5/21	JWi
Common Yellowthroat	1 at Baker Wetlands	Douglas	3/06	MZ, MP
Common Yellowthroat	1 at Wellington Lake	Sumner	3/25	FSQ
Cape May Warbler	1 slightly early at Baker Wetlands	Douglas	4/28	TK
Northern Parula	1 slightly early at Schermerhorn Park	Cherokee	3/28	JR
Northern Parula	1 quite westerly at KS-27 Park	Hamilton	5/10	JC
Bay-breasted Warbler	1 at Ford SFL	<u>Ford</u>	5/03	CMM
Blackburnian Warbler	1 westerly at KS-27 Park	<u>Hamilton</u>	5/10	JC
Blackpoll Warbler	1 early in Northrock Pasture	Harvey	4/20	CS
Blackpoll Warbler	1 at Frazier Park	<u>Grant</u>	5/11	SG
Pine Warbler	1 early in backyard, Shawnee	Johnson	3/10	EB
Pine Warbler	1 at Kaw River SP	Shawnee	3/11	MP
Prairie Warbler	1 male near Arkansas City	Cowley	4/25	DS
Prairie Warbler	1 at Baldwin Woods	Douglas	5/02	PW
Prairie Warbler	1 along W 135 th St Olathe	Johnson	5/23	JWi
Black-throated Green Warbler	1 in rural residential yard	<u>Washington</u>	5/07	DT
Black-throated Green Warbler	1 at Elkhart Cemetery/shelterbelt	Morton	5/09	WA, DT
Western Tanager	1 female at feeders in Newton	Harvey	5/11	CS
Black-headed Grosbeak	1 at backyard feeders	Shawnee	5/10	GC
Lazuli Bunting	1 just west of Ellis	<u>Trego</u>	5/13	HA
Indigo Bunting	1 early in Lawrence under feeder, photos	Douglas	3/04	CCG
Painted Bunting	1 female at residential feeder in Hays	Ellis	5/04	MA

Locations and notes: CBWA – Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area, CNG – Cimarron National Grasslands, KBRC – Kansas Bird Records Committee report filed, MVWA - McPherson Valley Wetlands Area, QNWR – Quivira National Wildlife Refuge, SFL – State Fishing Lake, SP – State Park, WA – Wildlife Area, WTP – Water Treatment Ponds.

Underlined county name indicates new county record. Underlined number indicates an exceptionally high count. County name followed by an asterisk () indicates a new confirmed breeding record.*

Observers - Individuals: Dallas Alexander, Medhavi Ambardar, Will Anderson, Henry Armknecht, Aaron Batterbee (ABa), Jeremy Birket (JBi), Roger Boyd, Emily Brosnan, Andrew Burnett (ABu), Jeff Calhoun, Randy Carman, Kathy Carroll, Glenn Caspers, Lucas Deccico, Stephen DeHart, Kathy Ellis, Corey Entriken, Tom Ewert, Christopher Frick, Gregg Friesen, Andrew George, Malcolm Gold (MGo), Kevin Groeneweg, Peter Grund, Caryl Chacey-Guba (CCG), Sam Guy, Will Jaremko-Wright (WJW), Dallas Hewitt, Pete Janzen, Allen Jetmore, Barry Jones, Mark Keller, Dave Klema, Thomas Koffel, Mark Land, Matt Longabaugh (MLb), Micky Louis, John Mallery, Terry Mannell, Mick McHugh (MMH), Debra McKee (DMK), Christi McMillen (CMM), Don Merz, Anthony Miller (AyM), Joseph Miller (JMl), Carol Morgan, Lynnea Nelson, Rochelle Nelson, Sue Newland, Mark Nolen, Rob Penner, Erin Persinger, Diane Persons, Brandon Percival (BPv), Barbara Peterson, Mark Peterson (MPn), Mark Pheasant, Galen Pittman, Marie Plinsky, Nicholaus Pumphrey, Jenn Rader, Mike Rader, Jacob Riggs (JRg), Dave Rintoul, Mark Robbins (MRb), John Row (JRw), John Schukman, Roger Schultz, Carolyn Schwab, Olivia Seger, David Seibel, Sara Shane (SSh), Tom Shane (TSh), Faith Shapley-Queen (FSQ), Dylan Smith (DSm), Terry Swope (TSw), Dan Thalmann, John Tollefson, David Tønnessen, Liza Vaughn, Phil Wedge, Jeff Witters (JWi), Rodney Wright, Craig Yerby, Molly Zahn, John Zempel, Linda Zempel **Groups:** m.ob. – many observers

Calling All Shorebirders!

We are looking for proficient “shorebirders” to help with the **International Shorebird Survey** in Kansas starting in 2021. International Shorebird Survey volunteers have been gathering information on shorebirds and the wetlands they depend on since 1974. The data is used for conservation planning and population estimates across the hemisphere to aid the recovery of imperiled shorebird populations. This data will also be essential to the development of the Midcontinent Shorebird Conservation Initiative. But, we need your help to expand the project. Kansas has a number of sites that have been identified as potentially important to shorebirds. The problem is we really have no current information on most of these sites and we also need help identifying additional sites that may host shorebirds. We only have three sites that have surveys being conducted on a regular basis: Cheyenne Bottoms, Quivira NWR and Neosho Wildlife Area. Whereas a few new areas recently came on board, data from Kansas and the Great Plains is sorely needed.



The survey can be as easy as visiting a site just three times a year during migration and if you use eBird, conducting this survey just takes a tiny bit more effort.

If you are interested in participating in one of the largest shorebird surveys in the world, please contact Robert (rpenner@tnc.org) for more information or with any questions.

Mississippi Kites: A Western Kansas Update

By Tom and Sara Shane

1706 N. Belmont Pl., Garden City, KS 67846

We decided to head east on 14 August 2020 to see the Swallow-tailed Kite that had made an appearance in North Newton, KS. We assumed after many decades of waiting for one near us that I-135 was going to be about as close as one would get to Garden City in our lifetimes. We had a very successful trip observing and photographing the kite and seeing old friends. The following day we still had “kite fever.” For several years we had thought about searching for Mississippi Kites in the counties without breeding records to the north and west of Garden City. We decided to make it work in the next few days, since it was an optimal time period for locating the birds when young kites were just leaving the nest and giving their distinctive calls.

In the 19th Century, N.S. Goss discovered that the species was primarily concentrated in south-central Kansas, in the Medicine Lodge area. In 1936 a small colony of kites was located at Meade Lake in a small 2 acre grove of trees by Professor C. W. Hibbard while on a summer paleontology trip from KU. By the summer of 1961 Professor Henry Fitch (also from KU) discovered a large colony of Kites then supported by many large stands of trees. A few nesting Mississippi Kites were first reported in Garden City in 1951 at the local zoo and park (Marvin Schilling pers. comm.) Ted Cable and Scott Seltman have the earliest date listed from Morton County as the summer of 1963. The authors have compared notes from memory and estimate the kites were in Scott City by 1980. The Mississippi Kite was first observed in Goodland in 1990 (John Palmquist pers. comm.).

We first had to decide what determined the region of western Kansas. Dr James D. Rising had used a map in his 1974 KU Museum publication blocking off 32 counties west of a line from the counties of: Decatur south to Gove, east to Trego then south to Ford, east to Edwards then south to Comanche. We examined the Mississippi Kite dot map from Chuck Otte’s Species County Maps on ksbirds.org. The Mississippi Kite map dated from early 2020 showed 18 counties with confirmed breeding records with the majority in the south and southwestern parts of Western Kansas. However, three counties in the northwest had confirmed breeding records. There was a band of 14 counties in the middle of the region that had sight records, but no breeding records.

The following kite observations were made over a four day period, 16 through 19 August 2020, and are reported by date and in the order visited. We covered as much of each town as possible. Time spent surveying is given to standardize these data if ever needed. While driving toward a given town we would look for that part of town that exhibited the best stand of trees, often the old part. Adult kites and fledgling kites both have a slightly different calls. Sara has become very efficient at recognizing the fledgling call, so she listened as we drove the streets and recorded data. Tom drove and watched the dead trees and utility poles for kites, with both of us looking for individuals in the air. The weather was excellent, reaching temperatures in the low nineties, mostly clear and very little wind all four days.

16 August 2020, a 269.6 mile trip.

Wichita County (Leoti); a 54 minute count period starting at 12:01 pm CDT, with 4 adults and 1 fledgling observed.

Greeley County (Tribune); a 31 minute count period starting at 12:15 pm MDT, with 15 adults and 3 fledglings (2 in trees and one in the air observed).

Wallace County (Sharon Springs); a 30 minute count period starting at 1:13 pm MDT, with 4 adults and 1 fledgling being located. It was very dry in Wallace Co. Later we made a quick drive through the little town of Wallace, but found no kites.

Logan County (Oakley); a 36 minute count period starting at 3:43 pm CDT, with 6 adults and 1 fledgling observed. Oakley is probably the cleanest and most manicured city in western Kansas with few dead limbs in trees or dead trees standing. Earlier we drove through the small town of Winona and found no kites.

Scott County (Scott City); a 46 minute count period starting at 5:04 pm CDT, with 13 adults and 7 fledglings (2 family groups with 2 young and 3 with single chicks observed).

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17 August 2020, a 173.5 mile trip.

Stanton County (Johnson); a 60 minute count period starting at 1:01 pm CDT, observations included 15 adults and 14 fledglings (one family had 2 chicks and 8 others were single chicks observed in trees and an additional 3 juvenile kites observed in a small kettle over the town, plus an additional single in flight). Earlier we pulled through the very small town of Big Bow for a few minutes and found no kites.

Hamilton County (Syracuse); a 55 minute count period starting at 1:32 pm MDT, observations included 23 adults and 14 fledglings (two families with 2 young and 8 others were single chicks perched in trees and an additional 2 in the air).

18 August 2020, a 112.8 mile trip.

Hodgeman County (Jetmore); a 23 minute count period starting at 2:05 pm CDT, 12 adults and 4 fledglings were located (3 fledglings in trees at different locations and one in the air). A tiny rock lodged between a brake rotor and the heat shield made us head for home early, so we did not visit the far south end of town. However, this was the easiest town to confirm breeding. We just arrived from the west and as we crossed the city limit line there was a fledgling kite perched in a dead tree just 20 yards north of the highway.

19 August 2020, a 418.8 mile trip.

Thomas County (Colby); a 54 minute count period starting at 11:21 am CDT, 9 adults and 3 fledglings were located in different areas in trees. Henry Armknecht had observed kites on 30 June 2016 at one of the locations that we had near the intersection of US 24 and K 25, but no breeding evidence was observed.

Rawlins County (Atwood); a 20 minute count period starting at 1:06 pm CDT, with no kites located. The town presented good habitat including a variety of trees with dead limbs and some dead trees.

Sheridan County (Hoxie); a 32 minute count period starting at 2:28 pm CDT, with no kites located. Comparing Hoxie to the other towns it would be rated average with a fair number of trees, some with dead limbs.

Trego County (Wakeeney); a 45 minute count period starting at 4:55 pm CDT, with 19 adults and 2 fledglings in trees in different areas observed. Mark Keller reported since the census that he has been visiting relatives in Wakeeney for years and has observed them back close to 1990.

Gove County (Quinter); a 25 minute count period starting at 5:59 pm CDT, observations included 20 adults and 6 fledglings (2 in the top dead limbs of a spruce, 2 in a dead pine, and 2 on top of an old TV antenna). We pulled slowly through the small town of Gove and found no kites.

Lane County (Dighton); a 28 minute count period starting at 7:23 pm CDT, with 3 adults and 1 fledgling on an electric utility pole were located. Christopher Frick reported after the census that a young kite was observed in Dighton the previous summer.

The total number of kites in the 12 counties where breeding was located included 143 adults and 57 fledglings giving a grand total of 200 birds. These data will provide a simple relative abundance for a region of Kansas to potentially be duplicated in the decades to come to determine the status of the kite population at the edge of their range. Out of the 32 counties we included in our western Kansas boundaries, there had been 18 of those with previous confirmed breeding records. We confirmed an additional 12 counties with only two northern counties remaining with some sort of possible breeding status since sight records do exist for each. With the quick drives through some very small towns along the route, it appears that a certain sized town is needed to provide enough space and tree density for the Mississippi Kites to establish a colony in the central and northern counties. In all cases the large towns surveyed were the county seats except Quinter in Gove County where the very small town of Gove still holds onto the county seat. We observed no kites between cities while traveling. That appears to be quite different from the southern tier of counties in the western Kansas area that we studied. This can readily be seen in the recent book, *Kansas Breeding Bird Atlas*, published in 2001, where it is obvious that participants found rural nesting kites in Seward, Meade, Clark, and Comanche counties. Many Mississippi Kite references can be obtained in the recent book, *Birds of Kansas*, published in 2011.

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Double-crested Cormorant
American White Pelican
American Bittern
Great Blue Heron
Great Egret
Snowy Egret
White-faced Ibis
Turkey Vulture
Osprey
Northern Harrier
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Cooper's Hawk
Bald Eagle
Red-shouldered Hawk
Swainson's Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Ferruginous Hawk
Barn Owl
Eastern Screech-Owl
Great Horned Owl
Burrowing Owl
Barred Owl
Belted Kingfisher
Red-headed Woodpecker
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
Pileated Woodpecker
American Kestrel
Merlin
Peregrine Falcon
Prairie Falcon
Western Kingbird
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher
Eastern Wood-Pewee

Eastern Phoebe
Loggerhead Shrike
Blue Jay
Black-billed Magpie
American Crow
Fish Crow
Horned Lark
Tree Swallow
Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Barn Swallow
Cliff Swallow
Carolina Chickadee
Black-capped Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse
Red-breasted Nuthatch
White-breasted Nuthatch
Rock Wren
House Wren
Sedge Wren
Marsh Wren
Carolina Wren
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Eastern Bluebird
Mountain Bluebird
Townsend's Solitaire
Hermit Thrush
American Robin
Gray Catbird
Brown Thrasher
Northern Mockingbird
European Starling
Cedar Waxwing
House Sparrow
American Pipit
Sprague's Pipit
House Finch
Pine Siskin
American Goldfinch

Lapland Longspur
Chipping Sparrow
Clay-colored Sparrow
Field Sparrow
Fox Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
White-crowned Sparrow
Harris's Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
Vesper Sparrow
Nelson's Sparrow
Savannah Sparrow
Song Sparrow
Lincoln's Sparrow
Swamp Sparrow
Spotted Towhee
Eastern Towhee
Yellow-headed Blackbird
Eastern Meadowlark
Western Meadowlark
Red-winged Blackbird
Brown-headed Cowbird
Brewer's Blackbird
Common Grackle
Great-tailed Grackle
Orange-crowned Warbler
Nashville Warbler
Bay-breasted Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Wilson's Warbler
Summer Tanager
Northern Cardinal
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Indigo Bunting

A total of 170 species was recorded in the 2 1/2 day period. Thank you to everyone who participated!

Christmas Bird Counts, 2020

What hasn't the pandemic impacted this year? Well, birds for one thing! It's impacted how we may watch them, but they continue on in their endless cycle of life and migration. Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) will continue this year but we are leaving it up to each CBC compiler to decide how they handle their individual count or if they even have a count this year. The KOS count period will be December 12 through January 12 which is different than Audubon's count period. If you submit your count to National Audubon you need to follow their dates. Chuck Otte will be sending out the forms and information shortly before Thanksgiving. Chuck will be posting CBC dates and compiler information on the web starting in mid November so please send him your information (cotte@twinvalley.net or cotte@ksu.edu) if you haven't already!

KOS Membership

New Member Renewal

Please clearly mark your choice of membership category below.

- Student \$5
- Individual \$20
- Family \$25
- Sustaining Individual \$30
- Sustaining Family \$35
- Contributing \$45 or more
- Life Member \$300 (or two consecutive annual payments of \$150)



Please remit check or money order, payable to KOS, and mail this form and your dues payment to:

Max C. Thompson
1729 E. 11th Ave.
Winfield, KS 67156

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KOS is a non-profit organization committed to providing an environment that is inclusive and free from discrimination in our membership community and associated KOS activities because of race, religion, creed, national origin, ancestry, disability, gender, sexual orientation or age.

Upcoming KOS Meetings!

Spring Meeting, 2021

The KOS Board tries to move the spring meeting around to different parts of the state. Spring of 2017 we were in Pittsburg in southeast Kansas. Spring of 2018 we were in Dodge City in southwest Kansas. Spring of 2019 we were in Ft. Scott in east central Kansas. Spring 2020 we were scheduled to be in Concordia in north-central Kansas and of course that plan was scuttled by COVID-19. We hope that we will be able to try that again next spring. But beyond that, the plate is open as is the likelihood of having a meeting in the pandemic era. Feel free to make a suggestion to the KOS Board but be ready to help out on a local committee when you do!