



The Horned Lark

Kansas Ornithological Society

December 2025

Vol. 52, No. 4

Mark Your Calendars:

KOS Spring Meeting

May 8-10, 2026 Chanute, KS, Neosho County

Surrounded by Allen, Crawford, Labette, and Wilson Counties.

Details and registration will be listed in the March 2026 Horned Lark and KOS Website:
KSBirds.org

Don't Forget:

Annual Dues Renewal

A renewal form is located on the back page that can be clipped out and mailed in. Or renew online at https://ksbirds.org/kos/kos_member.html. (Be sure to drop Max Thompson an email saying you've paid on line so he can be looking for it.) Dues are reasonable. An individual membership is \$20, family is \$25, and students \$5. A gift membership to young or older alike just might provide that birding spark! A life membership option is also available.

Participate:

Christmas Bird Counts

Check out the listing of Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) around the state on the website: KSBirds.org. Can participate in a CBC close to your home or travel a bit and check out the winter birding in a different part of the state. Contact the listed CBC compilers. They are welcoming!

KOS Merchandise:

2026 KOS Calendars

The 2026 KOS Calendar is filled with beautiful photos of birds seen in Kansas with information about these species, information about closely related species, and the potential for hybridization between those species across the Great Plains. This calendar is available to order at www.ksbirds.org/kos/Merchandise.htm with additional items available both online or at the Kansas Wetlands Education Center near Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area.

From the Keyboard

By the Editor

Attended the Fall meeting hosted at Pittsburg State University (Thank you Dr. Andrew George & Chuck Otte!) Be sure to read the paper abstracts on pgs 4-6. Informative and professionally presented on a wide range of species, technologies, and surveys. Dr. George & his students conducted mist-netting Sunday morning. I'm always amazed how tiny these birds really are. Congratulations to Pete Janzen for being named the 2025 Avian Conservationist and to Mike Rader, the 2025 Boyd Award. The presentations outlining their lengthy and phenomenal service & education to birders and birding organizations are on the KOS FB page. Plan to attend the 2026 Fall KOS Meeting to be held in Winfield and support our student & faculty ornithologists.

Chad & I will be checking our red cedar (yes, invasive) areas on our property for Long-eared Owls. I first recorded them November 28, 1999. Saw them for several years in one draw with numbers of three up to eight or nine. Upon approach, sometimes they would fly down the draw, but many times they would be on the inside near the trunk looking out at us as we looked in on them. Truly priceless. Life gets busy and years go by. As more time became available again, we've started looking. Chad did a most thorough search last year. No Long-eared Owls. Unfortunately, we took this yearly ritual for granted. Not sure if our increased Barred Owl population has anything to do with this (I have seen a Barred Owl in this exact location.), as we haven't had our Eastern Screech Owls for some time as well. The Great Horned Owls are out on the perimeter. I often wonder what kind of "battle" is occurring out there.

Summer June/July Birding Round-Up with commentary by Chuck can be found on pages 10 & 11. From the Fall Meeting Weekend: Annual Membership & Board Meeting Minutes (pg 3 & 4), the Compiled Sightings List from six southeastern counties (pg 10 & 11), and the Annual Top 10 Birds of the Year: 29 September 2024 - 27 September 2025 (pg 8). I know of one I'll be submitting next year. :)

Non-discrimination Statement

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.



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

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

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Kansas Ornithological Society (KOS)
Annual Membership Meeting Minutes (*DRAFT*)
September 27, 2025
Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas

The 76th Annual Meeting of the Kansas Ornithological Society was held September 27, 2025. The meeting was held in the Overman Student Center on the campus of Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas. KOS President Kurtis Meier called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m.

The 2024 Annual Meeting minutes had been previously printed in the Horned Lark newsletter. Eugene Young moved to dispense with the reading of the minutes and approve them as they were printed in the newsletter. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Treasurer Max Thompson reported that the Society was very solvent and reported on totals that were currently in the endowment fund and the checking account. (*Those totals are available upon request to any current member.*) Kurtis accepted the report.

The slate of officers and board members for the 2025-2026 year was reviewed:

- President – Mike Rader
- Vice President – Andrew George
- Corresponding Secretary – Chuck Otte
- Membership Secretary – Jeff Calhoun
- Treasurer – Max Thompson
- Business Manager – Malcolm Gold
- Editor, KOS *Bulletin* – Eugene Young
- Editor, Horned Lark – Trish Remley
- Director – Glenn Caspers
- Director – Jennifer Jones

Kurtis called for any further nominations from the floor. There were none. Chuck Otte moved to cease nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for the presented slate. The motion was seconded and passed.

Chuck asked that as Christmas Bird Count compilers determined dates for their counts to let him know so that he could update the annual web page online.

Business Manager Malcolm Gold announced that 2026 KOS calendars were available in the back of the room for \$10.

Bulletin Editor, Eugene Young requested articles and suggested to student presenters and professors that the papers being presented would make great articles for the *Bulletin*.

Horned Lark Editor, Trish Remley, thanked everyone for welcoming her as the Horned Lark editor and asked folks to send her ideas, short notes of interest or articles of interest to Kansas birders.

Kansas Bird Records Committee (KBRC) Chair and Secretary, Max Thompson and Chuck Otte respectively, gave a brief report. Three new species had been added to the state check-list in 2025: Slaty-backed Gull, Lawrence's Goldfinch, and Tropical Parula.

John Schukman, KOS Research Committee Chair, reported that there'd been no requests for research funds in the past year and encouraged individuals with potential projects to consider requesting support. All the information is on the website.

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It was announced that the KOS 2026 Spring Meeting (Field Trips) would be in the Cross Timbers area of southeast Kansas with more details to be forthcoming after the first of the year. Max Thompson issued an invitation to host the 2026 Fall Meeting at Southwestern College in Winfield.

With no further business to be conducted, the annual business meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

The Banquet was held on Saturday evening, September 27th at the Wilkinson Alumni Center in Pittsburg. The Avian Conservationist of the year award was presented to Pete Janzen. The Ivan Boyd Award was presented to Mike Rader. Outstanding Student Paper awards were presented to Gabe McClain of Pittsburg State University and Ryan Andrews of the University of Kansas. Gene Young then presented the ten best birds for the year. A heartfelt thank-you was given to fall meeting organizer Dr. Andrew George.

Following these presentations, an intriguing and enjoyable program was given by Dr. Tim O'Connell, Oklahoma State University titled, "Teaching ornithology with the wisdom of Merlin at you side."

Chuck Otte
Corresponding Secretary

Kansas Ornithological Society (KOS)
Board Meeting Minutes (*DRAFT*)
September 27, 2025
Overman Student Center, Pittsburg State University
Pittsburg, Kansas

The KOS Board Meeting was called to order at 12:05 by President Kurtis Meier.

Attendance: Glenn Caspers, Lucas DeCicco Andrew George, Malcom Gold, Jennifer Jones, Kurtis Meier, Chuck Otte, Trish Remley, Max Thompson, and Eugene Young.

Gene Young moved to approve the minutes of the April 13, 2025 board meeting held via Zoom. The motion was seconded and it passed unanimously.

Max provided a slightly more detailed breakdown of income and expenses for the year to date. Fortunately, the investment account has been doing well as a small amount needed to be withdrawn to cover expenses. Over 50% of the annual expenses is for printing and mailing of the *Bulletin* and Horned Lark. This is consistent from year to year.

There was a short discussion on the current status of MOTUS in Kansas as well as the Dingus Property. No action was taken.

Chuck moved to accept the Cross Timbers area as the site for the 2026 Spring Meeting. The motion was seconded and carried. Chuck moved to accept Max's invitation for the 2026 Fall Meeting to be at Southwestern College in Winfield. The motion was seconded and passed.

Chuck said he would get together with Mike Rader and work to get a date set for the winter board meeting.

There being no further business, Kurtis declared the meeting adjourned at 12:26 p.m.

Chuck Otte
Corresponding Secretary

End of Year: Have you considered including KOS in your estate?
Contact Treasurer Max Thompson for details.

Presented Paper Abstracts

Presenter denoted by *

Nesting Ecology and Movements of Prothonotary Warblers on Abandoned Mined Lands

Gabe McClain* and Andrew George; Pittsburg State University, Biology Department

The Prothonotary Warbler is a Neotropical migrant songbird that nests in tree cavities in forested wetlands. Despite declines in coastal regions due to habitat loss, Prothonotary Warbler populations may be increasing along the western edge of their geographic range, where woody encroachment, creation of reservoirs, and disturbance from past strip mining have resulted in extensive secondary nesting habitat. The goal of this ongoing study is to compare population demographics, dispersal, and migration patterns of Prothonotary Warblers between historically mined and unmined habitats in a region where they have not been previously studied. We placed 260 nest boxes on 6 mined and 6 unmined sites in SE Kansas and SW Missouri and monitored their occupancy and nest success across the 2025 breeding season. We also color banded adult birds on all 12 sites to monitor site fidelity between breeding seasons. In addition, we are collaborating with several local Audubon chapters to monitor nests outside of our study sites and attach light-level geolocators and Motus tags to a subset of Prothonotary Warblers. Here, we report findings from our first field season, including occupancy rates and initial tagging efforts. Results from our study will 1) help determine the conservation value of abandoned mined lands and other disturbed ecosystems for migratory songbirds, and 2) describe dispersal and migration of routes of western Prothonotary Warblers.

Reassessing Phenotypic Variation in the *Pipilo* Towhee Hybrid Zone of the Great Plains

Andrews, Ryan¹*, DeCicco, Lucas H.¹, DeRaad, Devon A.², Klicka, Lukas B.³, Billerman, Shawn⁴, Rohwer, Vanya⁴, Moyle, Robert G.¹. [1] Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS [2] Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA [3] Department of Natural Science, Peru State College, Peru, Nebraska [4] Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY

Hybrid zones provide powerful natural settings for investigating evolutionary history, diversification, and patterns of trait variation. The hybrid zone between the Spotted Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*) and the Eastern Towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) in the Great Plains of North America offers an excellent system to study how hybridization influences genotype, phenotype, and their association. Here, we revisit a system first described in the 1950s, comparing the phenotypes of contemporary specimens to historical material using the same hybrid index scoring framework. This approach enables a direct comparison of phenotypic variation across a ~75-year timespan. Preliminary assessment suggests a broad turnover in phenotype across the transect and elucidates patterns of phenotypic change and provide context for understanding the temporal dynamics of this hybrid zone.

Avian Diversity in Mature Oak-Hickory and Pecan-Hackberry Habitats on the Fort Leavenworth Military Reservation

Sandra A. Guzman* and William B. Stark; Ft. Hays State University

Ten bird point count surveys were conducted in two forest types on the Fort Leavenworth Military Reservation in Leavenworth, Kansas between May 28 and July 14, 2025. The goal of the research was to record and compare species diversity between these habitats while additionally using automated recording devices (ARDs). Ten count sites were established in the Oak-Hickory upland and the Pecan-Hackberry floodplain. The upland sites consisted mainly of mature oak-hickory and invasive Honeysuckle. The floodplain sites consisted of an old growth pecan forest with an understory of stinging nettle. Detections were recorded as species presence at each site. Overall, 57 species were observed, with 43 observed in the upland and 47 in the floodplain. There were 1,944 overall detections: 922 in the upland and 1,022 in the floodplain. Of the 57 species observed, 5 were listed by Partners in Flight (PIF) as a Priority Species including the Prothonotary Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, and the Chimney Swift.

Seasonal Use of Abandoned Mined Lands by Non-Breeding Birds

*Heather K. Burrow and Andrew D. George, Pittsburg State University

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During winter and migration, birds rely on habitats that provide high-energy food and protection from predators and adverse weather. Abandoned mined lands (AMLs) are disturbed ecosystems that often include a mosaic of successional habitats, some of which may support diverse bird communities. We aim to establish a long-term banding study to investigate bird use of AMLs during the non-breeding season. We established 4 study sites in 2023 in a formerly surface-mined landscape in Crawford County, in southeast Kansas. We used constant-effort mist-netting to survey birds each month, including biweekly during fall and spring migration. Thus far, we have captured 57 species on AMLs, including 12 residents and 45 migrants, of which 24 do not breed in the study region. We did not detect differences in capture rates, species diversity, or body condition between mined and unmined lands. In December 2024, we began attaching Motus tags to Harris's Sparrow to study their regional movements and habitat use during winter. Our project emphasizes the potential conservation value of AMLs for birds during the non-breeding portions of their full annual cycle.

Molecular divergence between North American and Eurasian Gray-headed Chickadee (*Poecile cinctus*) populations based on genome-wide sequence data

Lucas H. DeCicco (*), James A. Johnson, Robert G. Moyle, Travis L. Booms

Many migratory species show a predominantly North American or Eurasian population with a smaller disjunct population in the other hemisphere. This is a particularly common pattern across the Bering Straits. However, there are few non-migratory species that show this pattern. The Gray-headed Chickadee (*Poecile cinctus*) is a notable exception, with a wide distribution across the Boreal Forests of Eurasia and a disjunct distribution in the northern Boreal Forests of the Alaska and western Canada. The conservation status of the North American population has recently been a focus (e.g., there have been very few sightings in the past decade). However, the genetic distinctness of this isolated resident North American population has not previously been assessed. Here we present genome-wide DNA sequence data using a target-capture approach to assess the evolutionary history and population genetic structure of the species, with a focus on the North American population. This genomic perspective will hopefully be an important viewpoint to consider when determining the conservation status of this species in North America.

A Summary of the 2025 Spring KOS point-count surveys

John Schukman*, Sara Shane, and Tom Shane.

*14207 Robin Road, Leavenworth, KS 66048

We conducted 55 point-count surveys in 7 southwestern Kansas counties in conjunction with the 2025 Spring KOS field trips. The point-count surveys were submitted to eBird. We found 60 species and 1017 individuals. Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*) (91 individuals) occurred at the most stops, 40, whereas Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) was the most abundant species, 306, found at just 7 stops. We focused on bridge locations to monitor swallow and phoebe occurrences. Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) was found at 9 locations, Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*) at 7, and Eastern Phoebe (*S. phoebe*) at 5. We confirmed new county breeding records for Cliff Swallow in Grant and Gray, Say's Phoebe in Grant, and Eastern Phoebe in Hodgeman, Meade, Thomas, and Gove. Future surveys could be used to monitor change in numbers, especially if climate and vegetation factors affect shifts in occurrences.

Developing the Kansas Motus network to study grassland bird movements

Andrew D George^{*1}, William E. Jensen², W. Alice Boyle³

¹Pittsburg State University, ²Emporia State University, ³Kansas State University

The Motus Wildlife Tracking System is an international network of automated telemetry receiver stations that offers an effective method to study movements of small animals. Birds tagged with coded radio transmitters are detected as they pass within ~15 km of any station in the network, and all detections across the network are centrally stored and disseminated. The network has rapidly grown from covering regions of the northeastern USA and southeastern Canada to stations in most continents on Earth. Whereas many Motus users are interested in tracking migrant birds over continental scales, we aim to fill an urgent information gap regarding regional movements of many declining, grassland birds in Kansas. This guild of birds appears to exhibit unusual flexibility in where they breed from year to year, and even within years, but we have much yet to learn about these movements. Our goal is to place a receiver station in every county in Eastern Kansas. We are targeting core grasslands, such as the Flint Hills, in addition to surrounding fragmented grasslands to understand how landscape configuration influences movements. In collaboration with many entities, Kansas now has 25 operational receivers, with commitments for several more, and we have deployed more than 100 tags. We share here what new scientific insights this emerging network can provide and public education opportunities that will improve local knowledge of bird movements and our local grasslands.

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Kansas Bird Check-lists; Status 2025

Chuck Otte, Milford, Kansas

Additions to the state and county check-lists continue. An update of what has happened over the past 25 years on both the state check-list as well the County Check-list Project will show some interesting trends.

A Changing World for Kansas Birds

Bob Gress, Wichita, Kansas

A discussion of the ongoing changes and challenges faced by birds in Kansas in general and specifically grassland species.

How I Got Started Birding..... And My Birding Blurb: By directly asking feedback from members, I have indirectly stumbled upon two categories that will be incorporated into the newsletter from time to time. The first, How I Got Started Birding is quite self explanatory. The second, My Birding Blurb, is a chance to hear & learn from our members most exciting (See page 11), interesting, and/or perplexing observations & experiences while birding. **THANK YOU** to John Schukman for the first How I Got Started Birding and Jennifer Jones for the first Birding Blurb. Please send your submissions for future issues at grasslandgardens@gmail.com.

How I Got Started Birding.....John Schukman

After my sophomore year in 1971, I decided to major in Biology at Fort Hayes State University. Dr. Charles Ely's ornithology course was offered that summer, and it attracted me because at 0730 it allowed me to work 40+ hour work week. The three-hour course with a one-hour lecture MWF and a 3-hour lab on Thursdays opened the door. The most memorable lab field trips were to Cheyenne Bottoms.

The class would often meet with others, namely grad students, Marvin Schwilling, and Ed Martinez, to explore the wetlands; we were warned to plan on getting our feet wet. First came ankle deep water to check traps set up by several grad students working on rails in the early 1970s. Notably, Bird Banding Lab data from 1971 shows 23 Sora, 60 Virginia, and 74 King rails were banded at the Bottoms that year. As we walked shin deep into the marsh, we found Yellow-headed Blackbird nests in the cattails. Further in, and now thigh deep, we came across a pile of vegetation that, after removing a few layers, we found the eggs of a Pied-billed Grebe, which conceal their eggs with debris when they leave the nest. Moving on, we came across a nest of Black-crowned Night heron and White-faced Ibis young while being attacked from above by Forster's Terns. On another trip we helped Martinez remove shorebirds from his mist nets. It was a great experience to work with him; of the thousands he banded, reports of those birds came from northern Russia to South America.

More locally around Hays we assisted Ely with banding swallows nesting under bridges. This also involved banding some occasional phoebes. This led to my interest in pursuing the comparative nesting ecology of phoebes for a master's thesis. My continual interest ultimately resulted in surveying phoebe nest sites in the same area nearly 50 years later. Findings showed that vegetation change in woodland expansion has favored Eastern Phoebe at sites that Say's Phoebe occupied previously.

What began as an early morning class allowing me to work a summer job full time, shaped my life-long interest in birding.

KOS Top 10 Birds of the Year: 29 September 2024 – 27 September 2025

The Top 10 Best Birds are an annual, for fun, compilation of the sightings for the previous twelve months. All sightings are tentative until acted upon by the Kansas Bird Records Committee (KBRC). If a sighting has been accepted, then the KBRC report number is indicated. A notation of “KBRC pending” indicates that a record has been received and is waiting for final action by the KBRC.

Acknowledgments: Thanks to Trish and Chad Remley, Chuck Otte, Mark Land, and Carol Morgan for sending in nominations, and to Max Thompson for helping in the selection process.

Honorable Mention (no particular order): Black Rail (QNWR, Stafford Co.), Curve-billed Thrasher (McPherson Co.), Purple Gallinule (Pracht Wetlands, Sedgwick Co.), Whooping Crane (Waconda CBC), Wood Stork (Marais Des Cygnes), and Short-billed Gull (Reno Co.).

TOP 10

10. Fulvous Whistling-Duck, (*Dendrocygna bicolor*), KBRC #2025-24 Quivira NWR, Stafford County, 6 July 2025 (first confirmed record since 2007), observed by Andrew Miller. (A second Fulvous Whistling-Duck was seen 31 July by Mark Nolen at Cheyenne Bottoms, KBRC pending.)

9. Limpkin, (*Aramus guarauna*), KBRC #2025-25, Neosho Wildlife Area, Neosho County, 9-27 July 2025 (23rd state record), observed by Andrew Burnett.

8. Pacific Wren, (*Troglodytes pacificus*), Riverside Golf Course, St. Francis, Cheyenne County, 3 December 2024, observed by Trish and Chad Remley (1st observed by Kevin Groeneweg 22 November 2024)

7. Scott’s Oriole, (*Icterus parisorum*), private residence in Overland Park, Johnson County, November 2024 – May 2025, third year in a row present, observed by Steven Case. Two years ago, it was the #4 ranked species, and last year it was also #7.

6. Brambling, (*Fringilla montifringilla*), KBRC #2024-17, private residence in Lawrence, Douglas County, 29-31 October 2024 (3rd state record), many observers.

5. Ross’s Gull, (*Rhodostethia rosea*), KBRC #2025-03, Ford County playa, 31 January – 1 February 2025 (2nd state record), first observed by the McMillan’s and identified by Jeff Calhoun, subsequently found dead on the playa and preserved.

4. Slaty-backed Gull, (*Larus schistisagus*), KBRC #2025-04, Cheney State Park, Reno County, 3 February 2025 (1st state record), observed by Mark Nolen.

3. Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, (*Calidris acuminata*), KBRC #2024-23, Quivira NWR, Stafford County, 1 November 2024 (1st state record), observed by Valentina Roumi.

2. Lawrence’s Goldfinch, (*Spinus lawrencei*), KBRC #2025-13, Garden City, Finney County, 25 March - 2 April 2025 (1st state record), observed by Sarah Shane.

1. Tropical Parula, (*Setophaga pitiayumi*), KBRC #2025-21, Dillon Nature Center, Hutchinson, Reno County, 6 - 13 May 2025 (1st state record), first observed by Mark Nolen. The male was breeding with a female Northern Parula, but no details have been provided on the success of the nest.

Gene Young, 27 September 2025, KOS Fall Meeting Banquet, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas

KOS Fall Meeting 2025 Compiled Sightings List

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck
Canada Goose
Wood Duck
Mallard
Wild Turkey
Pied-billed Grebe
Mourning Dove
Eurasian Collared-Dove
Rock Pigeon
Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Common Nighthawk
Chimney Swift
Killdeer
Spotted Sandpiper
Lesser Yellowlegs
Forster's Tern
Double-crested Cormorant
Green Heron
Great Egret
Great Blue Heron
Black Vulture
Turkey Vulture
Osprey
Cooper's Hawk
Bald Eagle
Mississippi Kite
Red-shouldered Hawk
Broad-winged Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Great Horned Owl
Barred Owl
Belted Kingfisher
Red-headed Woodpecker
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
Pileated Woodpecker
American Kestrel
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher
Eastern Wood-Pewee
Acadian Flycatcher
Eastern Phoebe
White-eyed Vireo
Philadelphia Vireo
Eastern Warbling Vireo
Blue Jay
American Crow
Carolina Chickadee
Black-capped Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse
Horned Lark
Bank Swallow
Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Ruby-crowned Kinglet

Cedar Waxwing
White-breasted Nuthatch
Red-breasted Nuthatch
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Carolina Wren
Gray Catbird
Brown Thrasher
Northern Mockingbird
European Starling
Eastern Bluebird
American Robin
House Sparrow
House Finch
American Goldfinch
Chipping Sparrow
Field Sparrow
Eastern Towhee
Eastern Meadowlark
Red-winged Blackbird
Nashville Warbler
Common Yellowthroat
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Black-throated Green Warbler
Summer Tanager
Northern Cardinal
Indigo Bunting

81 species

These were the combined species reported from Anderson, Bourbon, Cherokee, Crawford, Labette, or Neosho County, September 26 through 28, 2025. Thank you to all who reported their sightings and tagged KOS or reported their sightings directly to me, and to Malcolm Gold for helping with this compilation. - *Chuck Otte*

In Memoriam:

Rick Tucker, a long time KOS member and former KOS Board member passed away on August 21, 2025. He was an active birder in southeast Kansas and also served on the Audubon of Kansas Board of trustees. He was a good source of information for southeast Kansas birders and will be missed.

Kansas Birding Roundup

Summer 2025 (June & July 2025)

Chuck Otte, compiler

This is the report of the summer birding season in Kansas, June and July. The summer season is always a confusing mixed bag. It's brings the tail end of northbound migration, the early beginnings of southbound migration, individual birds that decided that they'd had enough of migration and went no further and of course, the traditional breeding species. Statewide, the weather provided average to slightly above average temperatures and average to significantly above average precipitation. South central and southeast Kansas were extremely wet through the period. With good rainfall many waterfowl and shorebird species lingered through the season.

In 2007 a Fulvous Whistling-Duck was reported and confirmed from Quivira National Wildlife Refuge (QNWR). That was the only record for this species since 1968, until this July. One was reported from QNWR early in July and then one from Cheyenne Bottoms at the end of the month. Both records were documented with photos and submitted to the Kansas Bird Records Committee. While we'll likely never know if it was the same bird, both reports are quite noteworthy!

Recent additions to the boardwalk at Pracht Wetlands in Wichita have been exciting for birders and possibly created a bit of a Patagonia Picnic Table effect (Google it if you aren't familiar). Up to three normally reclusive Least Bitterns were well seen by many birders during the season at this location. With so many eyes and binoculars in the area, the location also turned up a Purple Gallinule, the first one confirmed in the state since 2003!

Forster's Terns and Franklin's Gulls are common migrants through the state with only a month or two separating their northbound and southbound migrations. In early July good numbers of both started being reported, returning a bit earlier than we might expect.

Many traditional riparian woodland species continue moving west. Red-shouldered and Broad-winged Hawks are among them. Fish Crows also continue to move west. Breeding has been reported in several more counties this year and numbers seem to be growing rapidly. I confirmed breeding Fish Crows in Geary county this year and they were confirmed breeding by other birders in Butler, Leavenworth and possibly Saline counties.

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 on private pond east of Princeton	<u>Franklin</u>	6/23	MWh
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	1 at SCW	Sumner	7/16	EY
Fulvous Whistling-Duck	1 at QNWR, KBRC	Stafford	7/06	AdM
Fulvous Whistling-Duck	1 at CBWMA, KBRC	Barton	7/31	MN
Limpkin	1 at Neosho WA, KBRC	Neosho	7/13	ABu, m.ob.
	Still present 7/27			
Purple Gallinule	1 at Pracht Wetlands	Sedgwick	6/25	DF, m.ob.
	Seen again on 6/27			
Black-necked Stilt	14 at Gurley Salt Marsh	Lincoln	7/04	LH
Marbled Godwit	8 at Liberal WTP, late	Seward	6/24	HT
Willet	1 at Yoder Cove, Cheney WA, late	Reno	6/01	AdM
Red-necked Phalarope	2 at Clinton Lake, Bloomington East	Douglas	7/31	ML
Common Loon	1 slightly late at Scott SP	Scott	6/08	RR
Neotropic Cormorant	1 at Yoder Cove, Cheney WA	Reno	6/01	AdM, PJ, TE
Neotropic Cormorant	1 at Concannon SFL	<u>Finney</u>	6/08	MH
Neotropic Cormorant	1 at Anthony Municipal Lake	<u>Harper</u>	7/12	CE
Brown Pelican	1 at Clark SFL	<u>Clark</u>	6/12	GF, EF
Tricolored Heron	1 continuing at QNWR	Stafford	6/15	JJ
	Still present 6/19, reported again 7/31 – likely present all season			
Yellow-crowned Night Heron	1 along Dry Creek south of Cedar	<u>Smith</u>	7/31	JOs
White Ibis	1 at Sedgwick Co. Zoo, free flying			
	Still present 7/02			
White Ibis	1 at 119 th St Wetlands near Maize	Sedgwick	7/06	ALC
Osprey	1 at Woodson SFL	Woodson	6/24	CM, SN
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1 at Perry SP	Jefferson	7/03	JA
Red-shouldered Hawk	1, immature, Fellsburg Sandhills	<u>Edwards</u>	6/04	MH

- continue next page

Prairie Falcon	1 at Antelope Lake	Graham	7/02	CC
Prairie Falcon	1 along County Road EE, Grinell	Gove	7/31	CF
Vermilion Flycatcher	Adult male east of Syracuse	<u>Hamilton</u>	6/17	JB
Fish Crow	1 near Lakewood Park	<u>Saline</u>	6/05	KKr
Chihuahuan Raven	1 near Colorado border on K-96 highway	Greeley	6/18	AA, EA
Bewick's Wren	1 along US 36 south of Almena	<u>Norton</u>	6/08	AyM
Sedge Wren	2 at Tallgrass Prairie NPRES, late?	Chase	6/01	LA
	Still present 6/11			
Pine Siskin	1 at feeders in Hays	Ellis	7/30	HA
Lesser Goldfinch	1 at Cheney WA	Reno	6/01	AdM
Lesser Goldfinch	1 at feeders in Ellsworth	Ellsworth	7/02	RSz
Vesper Sparrow	3 at Mt. Sunflower, lingering	Wallace	6/05	TW
Vesper Sparrow	3 at Sherman SFL, lingering	Sherman	6/05	TW
Canyon Towhee	1 at Point of Rocks, CNG, reliable location	Morton	6/21	JJ
Yellow-headed Blackbird	2 males, 1 female at Stranger Creek Bottoms	Leavenworth	7/25	JS
Western Meadowlark	1 easterly at Ft Leavenworth airport	Leavenworth	6/25	JS
MacGillivray's Warbler	1 at Fall River SP, quite easterly, KBRC	<u>Greenwood</u>	6/01	MGo
Prairie Warbler	1 male at Cheney WA, westerly	Reno	6/01	AdM, m.ob.
	Still present 6/04			
Lazuli Bunting	1 Adult male, CNG	Morton	6/22	MF, TF
Lazuli Bunting	1 at McPherson Valley Wetlands	McPherson	7/18	DZ
Indigo Bunting	1 male at CNG, westerly summer record	Morton	6/15	BG

Locations and notes: CBWMA – Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Management Area, CNG – Cimarron National Grasslands, KBRC – Kansas Bird Records Committee report filed, NPRES – National Preserve, QNWR – Quivira National Wildlife Refuge, SFL – State Fishing Lake, SCW – Slate Creek Wetlands, SP – State Park, WTP - Water Treatment Plant, WA – Wildlife Area

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: Logan Anderson, Henry Armknecht, Jackie Augustine, Andy Avram, Erin Avram, Jeremy Birket (JBk), Josh Blackmon, Andrew Burnett (ABu), AiLeng Chan (ALC), Carson Cope, Corey Entriiken, Tom Ewert, Dennis Farris, Mollie Flicker, Tyler Flicker, Christopher Frick, Eric Friesen, Gregg Friesen, Brian Genge, Malcolm Gold (MGo), Matt Hofeditz, Lisa Hoffman, Pete Janzen, Jennifer Jones, Chris Krafft (CKf), Kaleb Kroeker (KKr), Micky Louis, Andrew Miller (AdM), Anthony Miller (AyM), Carol Morgan, Sue Newland, Mark Nolen, Jeff Ostmeyer (JOs), Robert Riggs, John Schukman, Roger Schultz (RSz), Hank Taliaferro, Misty Wheeler (MWh), Ted Wolff, Eugene Young, Dick Zerger **Groups:** m.ob. – many observers

Birding Blurb: I asked Jennifer Jones for what I am calling a Birding Blurb to let us in on one of her favorite birding moments in 2025. Here's Jennifer:

One of my favorite birding moments this year happened right after my first KOS Spring Meeting. I'd spent the weekend finally meeting so many Kansas birders I'd had only known online, and I left inspired. Instead of heading home, I pointed my car west in search of some Common Ravens.

I did find my ravens, but then I noticed an extremely large bird on the ground nearby. I remember thinking, "That bird makes that raven look positively tiny." I whipped my car around, rolled down the window, and started getting pretty excited that this could be my lifer Golden Eagle. Of course, the bird flew before I could get a decent photo.

What followed was a *very responsible* high-speed pursuit down some dirt roads, camera held out the window, firing shots like I was documenting a UFO. The chase ended when my GPS politely announced, "Welcome to Colorado". The photos were...um... let's call them "interpretive." But thankfully they were good enough that Pete Janzen confirmed I had in fact seen a Golden Eagle and not just risked my life for a juvie Bald Eagle.

As I headed back east, Steve texted to say that on Life360 it looked like I might be driving on the wrong side of the road. I told him I had absolutely no idea what he was talking about.

All in all, 10/10. Would bird again.



KOS Fall Meeting Pittsburg, KS:

Left, Pete Janzen with Avian Conservationist Award.

Right, Dr. Tim O'Connell, Oklahoma State University: Banquet Speaker

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) |



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Address	City	State	Zip Code
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