

WINTER BOARD MEETING 1971

The Board of Director's of the Kansas Ornithological Society met on December 5, 1971 at the home of the President Celia White. The Board conducted the following business:

1. Corrected and approved the minutes of the spring and fall meetings [1971].
2. Deferred choice of date for spring meeting 1972 until Kansas Academy of Science schedules their meeting [April 13-14]. (The spring meeting is to be held at the Fort Hays State College [KOS] on April 29-30).
3. Discussed and passed a motion to deposit \$100 in the student bank at Southwestern College to provide funds for postage and cost of publishing the newsletter.
4. Approved printing of small envelopes
5. The Board discussed and agreed that deaths of charter members and officers should be carried in the Bulletin. Other personal news will appear in the Newsletter.
6. The Board approved making the University of Kansas Libraries the depository for all exchange publications [see further information in Newsletter].
7. An amendment to the by-laws of the Society was discussed in reference to the deposition of the publications as they presently move with the Editor. It was agreed to place the amendment before the membership at the spring meeting.
8. The regional meeting of the National Audubon Society at Grand Island, Nebraska was discussed. The meeting is on March 18-19 with emphasis on efforts to save the Sand Hill Crane staging area.
9. A report was given on a predator killing contest sponsored by the FFA of Colby High School. The matter was referred to the conservation chairman for further action.
10. The Board discussed and approved the sending of sample bulletins to the small colleges and junior colleges in Kansas.

The meeting was adjourned at 4 p.m.

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SOCIETY ESTABLISHES OFFICIAL LIBRARY

As stated above the Society at last has a permanent repository for all of its exchange publications. Since the Museum of Natural History had bound and kept many of the KOS publications, it was put on an official basis. It is hoped that members will use this new service. The University has agreed to send on loan, publications of the Society and those exchanged with the Society, to any member of the Society so requesting such a loan. All inquires should be directed to the Dyche Reading Room, Mrs. Ruth Faulh, Museum of Natural History, The University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas 66044. The Society will also accept gifts of books and publication for the Society library. Such gifts are tax deductible.

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AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION

To be amended: Article VII, section 6 from: ...The library and all scientific papers belonging to the Society shall be in his care for preservation and reference.....
 amended to read:...The library and all scientific papers belonging to the Society shall be deposited in the Dyche Reading Room, Museum of Natural History, The University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas. Said publications will be available on loan to Society members.....
 The above is notice to the membership as required by the constitution Article XII:2

The records and observations of birds kept by Edna L. Ruth, Alma Ruth, and Ruth Rose at Halstead, Kansas, since the early 1950's have been deposited in the Southcentral Kansas Environmental Education Center Library at Bethel College. Anyone wishing to examine these records should contact: Dwight R. Platt, SKEEC, Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas 67117. Dwight Platt

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Membership News--For the first time this year, membership payments are running a little behind last year. Up to January 17, only about two-thirds (212) had paid up for 1972.

Please send in your dues at once--either \$1.00 for grade and high school students, \$3 for regular, or \$6 for sustaining membership. Be sure to send it to Eugene R. Lewis, 1285 McVicar, Topeka, Kansas 66604.

Life Memberships are also available at \$100, payable in one sum or four yearly payments of \$25. The Society needs both more lifers and sustainers. Amelia J. Betts

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The Regional Audubon Conference will be held at the Yancey Hotel, Grand Island, Neb. on March 17-20. The meeting is concerned with "Saving Our Scenic Rivers and Vanishing Prairie". The following is the scheduled program:

Friday, March 17:

12:00 p.m. Registration opens

3:30-7 p.m. Late Afternoon field trip (no. 1) to Platte River for Sandhill Cranes

8:00 p.m. Films of Audubon Interest

Saturday, March 18:

7:30 to 11 a.m. Early Morning Field Trip (no. 2) to Platte River for Sandhill Cranes.

9:00 a.m. Registration

1 to 5 p.m. Opening General Session, Charles H. Callison, presiding.

Papers: "The Ecological Significance of the Platte--A River Threatened by the Mid-State Reclamation Project"--Ron Klutaske

"Adverse Aspects of Mid-State on the Farming Community"--Mark Bolin.

"An Economic Analysis of the Mid-State Project"--Steven Hanke

Crisis on the Niobrara

"An Environmental Impact For Nebraska's Wild River"--Larry Holcomb

7:00 p.m. Convention Banquet

Dinner Address by Nathaniel Reed, Assistant Secretary of Interior for Parks and Wildlife

Sunday, March 19:

9:30 to 10:30 Workshop Sessions

10:30 to 11:30 State Audubon Council Meetings (Kansas and Nebraska)

1:00 to 3:00 General Session:

"Audubon Action Priorities and the National Outlook"--Charles H. Callison

"Prospects for A Prairie National Park"--E. Raymond Hall

"Success in Prairie Preservation"--Don Christisen

3:30 to 7 p.m. Late Afternoon Field Trip (No. 3) to Platte River Staging Areas.

8:00 p.m. Films of Audubon Interest

Monday, March 20:

7:30 to 11 Early Morning Field Trip (no. 4) to Staging areas.

## CHANGES FOR THE GAME COMMISSION???????

Recent activities of the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission apparently have been noticed by members of the Legislature. Two bills have been introduced into the house to alter the setup of the commission. HB 1658 introduced by Rep. Duane McGill, R-Winfield, calls for the abolishment of the game commission and transfer of the powers, duties and functions of the five-man commission to the director of forestry, fish and game. HB 1742, introduced by Reps. Walter Graber, D-Pretty Prairie; Milton Nitsch, R-Oberlin, and George White, R-Valley Center, would abolish the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission and the State Park and Resources Authority, combining the two into a state commission on recreation.

KOS membership should obtain copies of these bills and look them over. Of the two bills, HB 1658 is the most desirable but could use some modifications. HB 1742 looks like a legalized raid on the coffers of the Game Commission. The Commission has a \$5 million dollar reserve [which the legislature refuses to allow the Commission to use for land and refuge purposes] and under the HB 1742, these funds would go to the combined agencies. Hunters and Fisherman are not going to like the legislature giving their funds to the parks group to build parks and resorts. HB 1742 should be defeated if at all possible. Write your legislature and let them know your views. Max C. Thompson, Editor, Newsletter.

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Junction City Notes--Last fall's migration at Milford lake was marked by the absence of many shore bird species and numbers, and by the presence of eastern waterfowl. Two scoters were taken by hunters during the season. One, a female Common Scoter, was saved and will be in the Fort Hays State Museum. The other, a large male of unknown species, was not recovered for identification.

Black Ducks were on the lake during the fall and early winter. One remained for the midwinter count period. A Woodcock was taken by hunters late in October. This species is not regularly recorded here. Bob LaShelle

Lawrence Notes--On October 14, many Ring-billed Gulls at Perry Lake, northwest of Lawrence, Hundreds of them wintered at the lake last year. On November 11, 4 Horned Grebes, 4 Common Loons, and Golden-eyes were at Perry Lake. Five Whistling Swans were seen on November 25, one mile east of Hutchinson on hiway 50. They were feeding in a wheat field. Last year (1970) we saw Whistling Swans south of Zenith, Kansas, 40 miles SW of Hutchinson. An Orange-crowned Warbler was at the suet cage on December 6. Also on December 6, a flock of 12 Bonaparte's Gulls were seen at Perry Lake. They were in a flock of Ring-billed and Herring Gulls and were seen with 20 power scope, in sunlight, at a distance of 500 feet. Also seen on the lake were several Common Loons, 15 Golden-eyes, Mallards, scaup, and Am. Mergansers. Helen Chewing & Ann Ericson.

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## CONSERVATION GROUPS SUE SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE TO ENJOIN STREAM CHANNELIZATION PROJECT

The Natural Resources Defense Council, the National Wildlife Federation and Friends of the Earth announced on December 2, 1971, the filing of a major lawsuit against the Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service (SCS) to halt the "channelization" of Chicod Creek in eastern North Carolina.

"This project makes no sense in terms of ecology or economics," a spokesman for the three groups said. "The Chicod Project exemplifies the environmental threat posed by the SCS's extensive channelization program." The groups said that this lawsuit represents the first time environmentalists have challenged SCS channelization practices in court.

"Stream Channelization," an engineering technique designed to increase the carrying capacity of a stream or river by straightening and enlargin the streambed, has recently come under intense criticism from environmentalists because of its effects on wetlands and fish and wildlife resources. Last June a proposal by Congressman Henry Reuss and others to impose a one-year moratorium on SCS channelization projects failed in the House by a 278-129 vote.

Chicod Creek is described by the groups as "a lovely blackwater stream-swamp complex in the Carolina low country." "Ecologically speaking, the stream together with its tributaries and swamps are extremely productive, providing excellent wetland habitat for fish and wildlife."

By the channelization process, the Soil Conservation Service proposes to ditch and dredge over sixty-six miles of this natural watercourse, "transforming the Chicod into a straight, sterile and artificial channel," the three conservation groups claim. "As part of the channelization procedure, vegetation along the banks of the Chicod would be cleared away, often up to 100 feet from the channel, to make room for the heavy construction machinery and provide a place to deposit the dredged spoil."

"The result is ecological mayhem," said Dr. Richard Anderson, biologist at the American University, Washington, D.C., and an expert on the channelization problem. This conclusion is documented in the evaluations of the Chicod Project by the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife in 1966 and 1971. These Reports conclude that:

- The destruction of the natural streambed and overhanging shade trees will eliminate what is now excellent fish habitat;
- the drainage of nearby wetlands and the reduction of periodic flooding will remove valuable acres now used by waterfowl for feeding and roosting; and
- the clearing of the streambanks will destroy what is now prime habitat for small furbearers and other wildlife species.

The 1971 Report of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife recommends against the Chicod project as presently being carried out by the SCS.

The complaint filed by the groups raises primarily two issues. First is the SCS's failure, despite repeated requests, to prepare the environmental impact statement which the plaintiffs believe is required for the project by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). "This refusal is symbolic of the SCS's more general refusal to implement NEPA's mandate to protect natural ecosystems," a spokesman said.

Second, the suit disputes the SCS's economic justification for the project. Under the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act, the SCS can only proceed with a project if the benefits exceed the costs. The groups contend that in the case of Chicod Creek the SCS has ignored project costs and exaggerated project benefits. "In calculating the costs of the Chicod Project the SCS has totally neglected the value of the lost fish and wildlife resources, the value of stream ecosystem as a scientific and educational resource for nearby East Carolina University and others, and the cumulative injury that these projects cause to the commercial fishery in the Tar-Pamlico estuary. On the benefit side, the SCS systematically overstates project benefits by valuing the increased agricultural output--the principal benefit--at federally supported commodity prices. "As a result of calculations like these," a spokesman for the groups said, "the SCS has justified a project that is a waste of the taxpayers money."

Since the SCS is proceeding with the bidding for construction of the project despite requests that this be halted, plaintiffs are filing along with their complaint a motion for preliminary injunction asking that all construction be enjoined until the case can be tried on the merits.

Tom Barlow of the Natural Resources Defense Council emphasized that the Chicod Creek Project was not an isolated instance of SCS insensitivity. "Across the nation there are over 400 SCS projects approved and awaiting funding, and hundreds more in the planning stages, particularly in the South and Midwest. Additionally, the Corps of Engineers is carrying out its own extensive channelization program. The Corps' program is perhaps more notorious, but the SCS's is just as destructive of the environment. The Corps takes the larger streams; the SCS takes the smaller."

Widespread channelization has only recently come to be recognized as a major environmental problem.