

KANSAS ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

713 W. 8th
Junction City, Kansas 66441

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K.O.S., O.O.S. JOINT FALL FIELD TRIP TO CHEYENNE BOTTOMS

The K.O.S. and O.O.S. joint Fall Field Trip will be to The Cheyenne Bottoms Waterfowl Management Area in central Kansas, near Great Bend.

Date of Meeting: September 21&22, 1974

Meeting Grounds: Meet at the Cheyenne Bottoms W.M.A. Headquarters Building (5 mi. north and 2 mi. east of Great Bend)

Time of Assembly: Saturday, September 21 at 6:00 P.M.

Sunday, September 22 at 7:15 A.M. and late comers at 8:00 A.M.

Motels: Highland Manor Motel, 30017 10th St. - Ph. 792-2431

Holiday Inn Motel, 5220 10th St. Ph. - 793-8486

Airliner Motel 4200 10th St.- Ph. 793-5448

Sands Motel, 1015 10th St. - Ph. 792-4307

Baltzell Motel, 805 E.10th St. - Ph. 792 4395

Zarah Hotel, Lakin & Main - Ph. 793-7847

*the newer, more plush motels are listed first..

Cafes and Restaurants: Great Bend and Hoisington have sufficient restaurant facilities; make your own choice.

Saturday and Sunday field trips plans are for the groups to assemble at the prescribed times; maps of tour routes will be furnished to each car and to tour leaders on hand. All COFFEE BREAK hounds should return to the HQ at 10:00 A.M. Sunday morning for coffee and doughnuts, here you can regroup and return to the field to locate what others saw and you missed.....

Final assembly will be at the HQ at 1:30 P.M. Sunday to compile the final list.

If there is interest in a wooded stream habitat trip, a section of the Arkansas River and Wet Walnut Creek is part of the area and a field trip leader can be provided.

Marvin D. Schwillling

Fall Meeting -- K.O.S. - O.O.S. - Ks. Chap. Wildlife Society

That uncontrollable, unpredictable element known as weather surely will be the determining factor concerning the fate of the KOS - OOS fall field trip at Cheyenne Bottoms WMA, September 21 & 22.

The Kansas Chapter of the Wildlife Society too has scheduled their fall meeting and afternoon paper session to be at the Barton County Junior College, just three miles south of the Cheyenne Bottoms HQ. Members of KOS - OOS are invited to attend the meeting and we in turn have invited members of Kansas Wildlife Society Chapter to participate in the KOS - OOS activities. Meeting place for the Kansas Chapter paper session is in the Science Hall Room S-118. With all these top outdoor-wildlife people afield we should be able to pin down most of the many species of birdlife in the area.

We have arranged for an informal get acquainted period at the student union BCJC at 8:00 the evening of September 21. We will have two Carousel slide projectors set up and encourage everyone with bird slides to bring them for showing. Hopefully we will have sufficient slides to fill trays and permit the projectors to run automatically without narrative. Perhaps series of slides of various species would be a good approach.

Ed Martinez plans to again demonstrate his expertise at mist netting shorebirds. President Dwight Platt has appointed an excellent planning and hosting committee for the expanded activities. We hope for a record attendance.

Marvin D. Schwilling

Admire Summer Report--Birds on the McKinney Marsh, Jake Miller found a Least Bittern nest and was later found destroyed on July 15, the Wood Ducks were apparently successful this summer several broods were seen in the area. Green Heron nest with one young found on July 15, also several Little Blue Herons were visiting the marsh on the same date. Black Terns were observed on July 28, a Solitary Sandpiper and Spotted Sandpipers were also present this summer.

Jean Schulenberg

Junction City Spring and Summer Notes--The first confirmed sighting of a Cattle Egret in Geary County was made May 5 by Kathy and Steve Hickok, Tennesseans who are KOS members and temporary, Army residents of Junction City. The bird was an adult in breeding plumage, and was seen again the same day by Celia White. The place was an old riverbottom marsh, near I-70 and the Army air field. Robert LaShelle saw a cattle egret in the same marsh the next day. Jane Dundon, a 4-H member, saw a Cattle Egret at her home near the town of Milford during the same week. The marsh is the same one where the Hickoks found a family of at least five Common Gallinules last summer. Green Herons and Wood Ducks are quite plentiful in the county this year. They are present at the two lakes and several of the old river channel marshes, which have been full of water the last two springs. Immature Little Blue Herons were reported in the Smoky Hill River valley July 4, and five were confirmed the next day and three days later. The heron colony on Davis Creek was inspected July 7 by Hickok and LaShelle. Nests, roughly estimated to number 60, were in a dozen large sycamore trees, two cottonwoods and an ash. The nests appeared to be made of cottonwood twigs. Vultures were flying through and perching in the colony during the inspection at midday. House Sparrows were numerous in the colony. Hundreds of black feathers, 8--12 inches long, littered the ground below the trees. A nearby farmer said about 300 "buzzards" roost there every night. Many young birds remained in the nests.

Robert LaShelle

KONZA--Students working on Konza this summer located three Henslow Sparrow nests, two of which were successful. Bill Eddleman censused 24-40 Henslow Sparrows / 100 acres on unburned ungrazed prairie and found no birds on the burned sections. Where present the Henslow was twice as dense as the Grasshopper Sparrow. On July 15 Steve Fretwell and I walked about 250 acres of Konza including all habitats and counted 12 territorial Henslow males. Four territorial Short-billed Marsh Wrens were also present that day in the ravines near the entrance gate.

Tom Shane

CAMP TOWANYAK IN JOHNSON COUNTY, KANSAS - 1974 Spring Migration Report

(reported by Mary Louise Myers)

On April Fool's Day the first blue-tailed skink ventured forth, sunning himself on the stone wall. April, herself, blew in on a tailwind left over from the month of March and these gusty winds stayed with us through the 12th. On the second our first and only Hermit Thrush put in a brief appearance. Many Purple Finch, Goldfinch and Pine Siskins were feeding amiably together from all feeders. The flock of Cowbirds had increased to six and five of these were males. Two pair of Chickadees were carrying hair clippings from the nest-material holder. On the 4th, amidst a light snow flurry, the Carolina Wrens in the bar-b-q grill hatched. We saw our first Purple Martin on April 9th (by the 23rd, two pair were carrying nesting material into the Trio-Musselman house by the swimming pool). April 10th brought a little wave of Ruby-crowned Kinglets plus a couple of Brown Creepers. The next few days brought Field Sparrows, Chipping and Lincoln's. The first warblers of the season were Parula and Myrtle on the 15th. On this same day we also watched three coyotes hunting along the meadow ridge. They spotted us and stood rigidly, looking and wondering a few seconds before loping off to the back meadow and out of our field of vision. On April 18 the Broad-winged Hawk returned and I heard his loud cry before he sailed into sight, circling the open area above the flagpole. At 5:30 a.m. on the 19th, we were wakened by the Whippoorwill, announcing for the world to hear that he was "home" once again. Although usually there just a few days between their arrivals, Chuck-will-s-widow was trailing by eleven days this year.

Waxwings had been completely missing from the picture until April 20 when a small flock appeared...the first we had seen since early fall. Orange-tip butterflies were on the wing, an uncommon specie and quite local in area distribution, and appearing for only about two weeks in each spring season. Three Woodducks flew low over the trees and the first Summer Tanager sang to let us know that he had returned. Soon he had taken up his old familiar place at the feeder and I was glad I had remembered to stock it with his favorite treat--donuts! Slate-colored Juncos lingered until April 19th, and although male Purple Finches had gone, a few females lingered behind. Pine Siskins and Goldfinch were still fairly abundant, seemed reluctant to leave the thistle-seed feeder. Half a dozen each of White-throats and Lincoln Sparrows fed under the shrubs.

The loud "wheep-wheep" of the Great Crested Flycatcher on the 25th announced his arrival, and the next day brought House Wren, Kentucky Warbler, Wood Thrush and Red-headed Woodpecker. Red-heads did not stay over last winter, although sometimes they do. They seem to be ill-fated this spring. We have found the remains of four, dead of undetermined causes.

There was a surge of new arrivals on April 28th--White-crowns, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Gray-cheeked Thrushes (the Swainson's had come in on the 22nd), Indigo Buntings, Baltimore Oriole, Rufous-sided Towhee, Red-eyed Vireo and a Barred Owl, plus the following warblers: Blackpoll, Tennessee, Yellowthroat, Nashville, and Northern Waterthrush. On the 30th, a hike up over the hill onto Quivira property along the horse pasture yielded good numbers of six species of sparrow--White-throats. Harris's, Chipping, Field, Lincoln and Clay-colored.

As April drew to a close, early reports of a few "good" warblers began drifting in. On the 28th and 29th, Harry Gregory had a Goldenwing at Swope Park; Sandra Yeskie had a Bay-breasted and a Magnolia at her home on the 30th; Mich McHugh got a Hooded

and a Goldenwing along Indian Creek on State Line and Kay Wahl had a Canada in her yard! Towanyak had only the commoner ones, and even very few of these. On May 1st I decided to try my luck along State Line where Mick McHugh birds. I got his Goldenwing, but it was certainly singing a different song from the ones I have learned. Instead of the three or four distinct buzzes of the typical song, it was softer and the buzzes all ran together, descending downward. I thought surely it would turn out to be one of the Goldenwing-Bluewing hybrids, but after extensive searching of the treetops it turned out to be just a plain (but very lovely) Goldenwing. One picture for the memory bank--along the creek--was that of two brilliant male Indigo Buntings in full plumage, perched on a twig low amidst a clump of lavender wood phlox. Spectacular!

Our first Hummingbird arrived on May 2nd, the same day the Painted Bunting returned to his favorite haunt at Shawnee Mission Park. His welcoming song greeted us as soon as we stepped from the car. May 3rd through the 10th was unexciting, with few new arrivals and, in fact, few birds. We were becoming concerned. Were the warblers going to pass us by this year? Then cooler temperatures and rain for a couple of days preceding May 11th, brought our first WAVE of birds. The following day, the 12th, brought another WAVE and the best day with 74 species--17 of them warblers.

On May 10th we saw four does in the meadow across the road, and since then have seen singles and pairs several times in our own woods and open areas. It is amazing how they can manage to survive with so much surrounding population and growth.

Another wave of birds came on May 14th; thrushes were very numerous, both Swainson's and Gray-cheeked, and we also got one Willow Thrush on this date, PLUS FIVE Golden-winged Warblers. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were quite common. Black-billed Cuckoos were seen, as well as heard, on several occasions and certainly seemed more numerous than last year when had only one sighting.

With the help and encouragement of Sebastian Patti, we set up 100 feet of mist nets on Mother's Day (May 12) and for the next nine days spent more hours than I care to admit watching the nets and banding the migrants that moved through the particular little section of wooded area that we had chosen. We had the nets in place each morning by 5:30 a.m. and it was with great anticipation and excitement that we awaited our first catch of the day. We banded twelve different species of warbler, 31 total species of birds, and a grand total of 84 species. I figured that we averaged 2.29 birds per hour spent banding. It was really exciting to hold these elusive little birds in my hand and to see their colorful plumage at such close range. Even the drabber ones were beautiful. The bands are very small and practically weightless, and no hindrance to the bird at all. Each bird banded was photographed with expertise by either Sebastian or Mick McHugh and sometimes by both. Bird-watching over the rest of the camp area was somewhat curtailed by these activities as we were more or less confined to the area we had chosen for a banding site. Perhaps we missed a few that we might have added to our list otherwise...but we were well satisfied with our efforts. Although Jim and I have been banding at feeder traps for 18+ years, this was our first experience netting such exciting migrants and it opened up a whole new world in banding.

We had a single Worm-eating Warbler on the 16th and again on the 17th. On the 18th there was quite a wave of Blackpolls and Redstarts. We got our first Philadelphia Vireo on the 19th of May, and the next day a pair entertained us with prenuptial display and courtship. They were low in the understory, not far away, giving us ample opportunity to observe them closely.

A flock of 15 Cedar Waxwings appeared on May 24th, and the day also brought us another Cerulean, a late Nashville, and the first Parula we had heard in days. Two pair of Summer Tanagers were coming to the coconut and suet feeders and a pair of House Wrens had moved into the box hanging in the sycamore in our yard. A lone Canada Warbler stayed 2 days (25 and 26) singing almost constantly down by the garage. On the morning of the 28th I took a hike around the camp, but there was little activity and little or no birdsong. Apparently the migrants had moved on out, the residents were busy with nesting and had little time to sing. My work at camp was catching up with me at an alarming rate. A pair of Goldfinch were still coming to the Thistleseed feeder and the spring season ended on May 30th with a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher sitting in a dead tree-top, singing his farewell as the day drew slowly to a close.

So another spring migration ends...it wasn't fantastic, but it was good...and, as always, exciting.

CHEYENNE BOTTOMS W.M.A.

The spring and summer season has produced its usual fascinating variety of unusual bird occurrences in this area. And surely we must miss or overlook other oddities. Of special interest this year: 1) A single Black-necked Stilt was in Pool 3 on April 20 and Bob Bartels reported two stilts that appeared to be a mated pair on April 26 in Pool 4 near the pumping station. They remained in this vicinity several days. Probably this same pair were later observed near the mallard gun club marsh, northwest of Pool 2, and recorded numerous times in June. On August 10 two adults and three full grown juveniles appeared on the Claflin dike in Pool 4. Sebastian Patti and a carload of Mission Kansas birders saw this family group on August 11. Not definite proof that they nested here but it appears that way. 2) On 22 June I located what must have been the primary heronry in the marsh this summer.

The heronry covers large area of scattered clumps of tall dense cattails generally about one half mile long in the southeast corner of section 23 (beyond blind numbers 18-C-3 and 19-C-1). Nesting density high, many nests less than two feet apart. Cattail growth good, water under nests almost knee deep. Total nests, excluding Boattails and Yellowheads, estimated at 600+.

Seen in the heronry were Black-crowned Night Herons (500+ pairs), Yellow-crowned Night Herons (6-8 individuals), Little Blue Heron (14+), Snowy Egret (12+), Cattle Egret (20+), Louisiana Heron (2), Foresters Tern (5+), Boat-tailed Grackles (12+) and Yellow-headed Blackbirds (hundreds).

Nests were found for Black-crowned Night Herons, all stages of construction, egg laying and young to 10 days of age; Yellow-crowned Night Heron, two nests definitely known to be this species, 1 with eggs, 1 with young; Little Blue Heron, 8-10 nests with eggs; Snowy Egret, 8-10 nests with eggs; Cattle Egret, 12-13 nests with eggs, one with 4, one with 2, all others with 3; Louisiana Heron, 1 nest, 3 eggs; Boat-tailed Grackles, scattered throughout large area, some young out of nests, some nests with eggs, other nests under construction; Yellow-headed Blackbirds, same as Boattails. Most Black-crowned nests deep down in cattails from 4" to a foot above the water. Little Blue and Snowy Egret nests down about a foot from top of cattails, just under chest high. Cattle Egret nests average about six inches higher in cattails than Snowy and Little Blue. Louisiana Heron nest was highest and well built for a heron.

Photographed Louisiana Heron and Cattle Egret nests. Also took many flight pictures.

23 June 74, 6:45 - 8:30 a.m., returned to heronry with Edmund Martinez, photographed Cattle Egret and Louisiana Heron nests.

Observed immature White Ibis and photographed same--not seen previous day. No White-faced Ibis seen.

Ed Martinez later banded several hundred nestlings and reported that the Cattle Egret nested very successfully as did Black and Yellow-crowned Night Herons. However Snowy Egrets, Little Blues and the Louisiana were unsuccessful.

3) An additional nesting area in 1973 for Boattailed Grackles is in Stafford County near the southeast edge of Macksville.

4) Bob Bartels and Gene Bahr reported a second heron nesting area in Pool 2; however no visits were made to record numbers and species. Bob too reported two adult White Ibis seen along the northwest edge of Pool 2 on June 14. Keith Baird also observed an adult White Ibis in the Pool 4 heronry on June 28.

5) Double-crested Cormorants must have nested on a hunter blind island in Pool 3 as Ed Martinez reported adults with flightless young on July 27. It's been some 22 years since they are known to have nested here.

6) A pair of White-breasted Nuthatches must have nested near the Walnut Creek diversion dam as they remained and were territorial all summer. I just neglected to search out the nesting cavity. I have no previous summer records here although we are within their summer range.

7) We had another confusing western hummingbird at our trumpet vine on 21 July, 1974. And although I observed it at less than six feet, I am not sure whether it was a Rufus or Broad-tailed.

8) Edmund Martinez took a full plumaged male Scarlet Tanager in his mist nets here at the house on 23 May 1974. It was the first record of that species here, although Dr. Ely has taken a few at Hays.

9) Sebastian Patti and others from Mission observed a group (4 or 5) Short-billed Marsh Wrens just northwest of Pool 2 on 11 August 1974. Could very well be a nesting area.

Marvin D. Schwilling

NOTE: The next newsletter is tentatively coming out the last week in September. If you have any other summer notes, please send them prior to that week to me at this address - 713 West Eighth, Junction City, Kansas 66441.

Tom Shane

From the President's Desk ---

KOS is hosting a joint field trip this fall with the Oklahoma Ornithological Society on September 21 & 22 at Cheyenne Bottoms. A committee under the chairmanship of Marvin Schwilling is planning the activities. Further details are given elsewhere in this Newsletter. Particularly note the informal get acquainted time on the evening of Saturday, September 21 in the Student Union of Barton County Junior College. Please come and welcome and fellowship with our neighbors from the south. (Flash: Marv Schwilling will not be moving to Pratt but will be staying at Cheyenne Bottoms indefinitely.)

The Kansas Chapter of the Wildlife Society, members of which are interested in or engaged in wildlife conservation and management, will be holding its annual meeting at Barton County Junior College on September 21. Steve Capel, President of the Kansas Chapter of the Wildlife Society and KOS member, has issued a special invitation for all KOS members to attend the afternoon paper session. The paper session will begin at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, September 21 in Room S-118 in the Science Hall on the campus of the Barton County Junior College. The program will consist of:

Panel Discussion: "Endangered Species"

Bill Hlavachick, Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Comm.
Ray Ashton, K.U. Museum of Natural History
Jack Walstrom, U.S. Soil Conservation Service
Ronald McGregor, State Biological Survey of Kansas
Frank Cross, K.U. Museum of Natural History

Paper: Rail Studies at Cheyenne Bottoms.
Keith Baird

Paper: Kansas' First Turkey Season.
Kent Montei

This meeting was planned to immediately precede our fall field trip so that persons could take advantage of both. I hope many KOS members will take the opportunity to attend this interesting meeting and to meet members of the Wildlife Society.

KOS has made great strides since I last served as President in 1969-1970. However there are many persons in Kansas with an interest in bird life who are not members of KOS; in fact, some probably never heard of KOS. KOS can help them and they can help KOS. Don't you know some persons who would benefit by membership in KOS? I would like to challenge each KOS member to find one new member for KOS between now and the beginning of 1975. Have them send 1975 dues (regular \$3, sustaining \$6 or student \$1) to our Treasurer, Eugene Lewis, 1285 MacVicar, Topeka 66604. Or send the name of a prospective member to our Membership Secretary, Amelia J. Betts, Baldwin City 66006, and she will send the a copy of our publications and an invitation to join. Dwight Platt, Newton.

From the Membership Secretary --

September is a good month to interest potential new members in KOS, because new members joining during the last four months of the year are credited for those months plus all the next year. KOS membership reached the highest total ever with 365 by mid-August. Of these, 15 are life members, 96 sustaining, and 38 are new for the year. Amelia J. Betts (Membership Sec.)
Baldwin City, Ks. 66006