

# The Horned Lark

613 Tamerisk, Junction City, KS 66441-3359

December 1997

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## From The Keyboard -

I made the mistake of asking my wife for some suggestions recently. Besides being a bird watcher my wife is a florist. She has an artists eye and an artists mind. I, on the other hand, am a scientist. I see things as formulas, as descriptions, as facts printed on a page. I was feeling particularly good about a recent issue of *The Horned Lark*. My wife looked at the newsletter, looked at me and said something like, "You like it don't you?" I answered in the affirmative and my wife so delicately struck a blow for reality. "Well," she responded, "you're not normal. These are birdwatchers you are sending this to. These are visually oriented people and you're sending them a newsletter full of WORDS."

I love my wife, but I hate it when she's right. Well, the reality is that we can't turn this newsletter into a slick full color bird photo magazine (there's enough of those out there already.) But we can start to break up the columns of print a little bit more. As always I'm very thankful when Tom Shane sends some photos. They help to document some of the activities in KOS. You'll also find a wonderful drawing by our own James Barnes, KOS Business Manager. We hope to be including more drawings by James and other artists in future issues. We hope you like the changes.

The 1997 KOS Annual Meeting in Wichita was well attended, well put together, well run and a lot of fun. The paper sessions were outstanding and the banquet speaker was very entertaining. If you have not been able to attend a fall meeting recently plan to attend the 50th Anniversary gala celebration in Lawrence October 9, 10 & 11, 1998. We've got committees working on this, trying to bring in a lot of folks that have had major impacts on Kansas Ornithology over the years. Note that this is the second weekend of October, not the first. The KOS Board felt that it was better to move to the second weekend rather than try to compete with a home KU football game! Plan to attend, you'll be sorry if you miss this one.

There's notice of other changes inside. The KOS Rare Bird Alert has a new phone number, compiler and location. It has served the membership well and will continue to do so!

I have to give you my annual plug to go out and get involved in those Christmas Bird Counts. I compile two counts myself and we all depend on all of you to help out with those. Not only is it an excuse to go birding, it's a chance to meet new birdwatching friends and discover new birding locations.

Finally, I have to wish everyone a very happy holiday season. Holidays are for family and friends. Let's keep them as the focus and enjoy every day we're given! Happy Holidays...

chuck

## Who's Who in KOS - 1997

**President**, Roy Beckemeyer, 957 Perry, Wichita, KS 67203

**Vice-president**, Greg Farley, FHSU, Dept of Biological Science, Albertson Hall, 600 Park St, Hays, KS 67601-4099

**Corresponding Secretary**, Karen Ganoung, Box 96, Hoisington, KS 67544

**Membership Secretary**, Susan Barnes, 1425 S Wichita, Wichita, KS 67213

**Treasurer**, Edwin J. Miller, 218 Bermuda Dr, Independence, KS

### **Board Members:**

Pete Janzen, 3137 N Mascot, Wichita, KS 67204

Dr. Richard F. Johnston, 602 Dyche Hall, Univ of Kansas, Lawrence, KS 66045-2454

Gene Young, Dept of Biology, Southwestern College, 100 College St., Winfield, KS 67156

Jim Mayhew, 1909 Judson, Manhattan, KS 66502

**Business Manager**, James Barnes, 1425 S Wichita, Wichita, KS 67213, 316-265-4059

**Editor, The Bulletin**, Max Thompson, 1729 East 11th St, Winfield, KS 67156

**Editor, The Horned Lark**, Chuck Otte, 613 Tamerisk, Junction City, KS 66441, 785-238-8800, OTTE@JC.NET

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS!**

### **New Hotline Number!!!!**

Thanks to the generosity of Southwestern College the KOS Rare Bird Alert has a new home and a new number. Starting November 1st, Scott Seltman turned the reins of the Rare Bird Alert over to Gene Young. Gene is a staff member at Southwestern College in Winfield. The College was generous enough to allow the hotline to take up residence there at a substantial savings. Additionally we'll have access to additional features found in larger phone systems.

The new number for the Kansas Rare Bird Alert is:

**316-229-2777**

I'm sure that you will find that Gene gives the same outstanding service that was the hallmark of the hotline for the seven years that Scott was in charge. Please call in with your sightings because without your information the hotline is nothing. Gene can also be reached via e-mail at youngg@jinx.sckans.edu

Thank you for all your service Scott and hello Gene!

### **Upcoming Meeting Locations**

Please note the upcoming tentative spring and fall meeting locations. Mark your calendars, look for more information in coming issues and plan to attend!

**May 1998 - Red Hills/Barber County**

**Fall 1998 - 50th Anniversary Meeting, Lawrence**

**Spring 1999 - Winfield**

**Fall 1999 - Hays**

**Spring 2000 - Southeast Kansas (maybe with Okla)**

### **Welcome New Members!**

Membership Secretary, Margaret Wedge "retired" at this year's Annual Meeting. One of the last items of business she took care of, though, before passing the books to Susan, was to dutifully hand me a list of the new members that had joined KOS prior to the Annual Meeting. Thank you Margaret for your fine work the past several years and welcome to the following new KOS members:

Esther Rieschl - Olathe, Cecil Kersting - Metairie, LA, Charles Green - El Dorado, Stephen Barnett - Chanute, Jim Bergin - Ames, IA, John Manry - Topeka, E. Cliffory Manry - Larned, Alexis Powell, Megan Miller - Lawrence, Dennis and Janine Brawning - Wichita, Daniel Thalmann - Lawrence, Jack Hilsabeck - St. Joseph, MO.

We hope to see all of you at as spring or fall meeting soon! For all you current members, it's time to send in your 1998 dues!!!!

### **Colorado's Spring Meeting**

**May 9, 10 & 11, 1998**

**Lamar, Colorado**

Kansas birders have been invited to join the Colorado Field Ornithologists for their spring 1998 meeting. The CFO group is headed for Southeastern Colorado looking for those wandering eastern migrants. It's a busy weekend with migration count and all, but their banquet speaker will be Jon Dunn, author of the recently released *Field Guide to Warblers of North America*. Look for more information in the March *Horned Lark*.

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## LATE FALL BIRDING

by Pete Janzen

In my last article, I talked about some of the aspects of birding in Kansas during the early fall migration in August and September. This time, as promised, I thought I would do the same for the other half of the fall migration, the months of October and November.

This time of the year is exciting for birders who get out in the field. While almost all of the flycatchers, vireos, warblers, and orioles have departed for warmer climes, a whole new set of birds now appears. I always think of October as the best month for finding a variety of sparrows, while November is most productive for loons, grebes, and waterfowl.

Kansas is an excellent place to look for sparrows. We have 37 species of them on our checklist, if you include the towhees and longspurs. At least 10 of these are extremely rare or very local, but that still leaves 25 species that are reasonably common in some part of Kansas, and the vast majority of them can be found in the latter half of the fall. I make note of the progression of the season by the sparrow migration. The earliest migrant sparrows are Vespers, Savannahs, and Clay-coloreds. Beginning in late September, many thousands of these species can be found in grassy habitats statewide. Soon the next wave begins to mingle with the first, as Lincoln's, White-crowned, Field and Chipping Sparrows begin to filter in. Middle and late October are very good times to seek LeConte's and Swamp Sparrows in wet prairies and marshes, and lucky birders might find Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows in the same habitats at this time of the year as well. This fall, surprising numbers of Sharp-tails were found at the Slate Creek Wetlands near Oxford. It's hard to say whether this was an unusual concentration, or whether they have just been overlooked there over the years. Often found with LeConte's on many occasions are Sedge and Marsh Wrens, also perhaps more common at this time of the year than at any other time, at least in Kansas. You know the winter season is nearly upon us when the last group of sparrows shows up, which is made up mostly of Harris and American Tree Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos. Of course, these are broad generalizations, and the range of overlap is very great among all of these species, but it's fun to watch the proportionate mix of species change. This is one of the things that long-time birders enjoy the most, I think.

Nature sends many subtle signals about the seasons and the weather, to those who know how to interpret them.

Later in October, as the first serious cold fronts reach Kansas, many migratory hawks start to appear, especially accipiters and buteos from the north. The first Rough-legged Hawks arrive now, and the local Red-tailed Hawk population is swelled by immigrants from the north who will spend the winter. Also in the latter part of October, large flocks of waterfowl arrive at the marshes and lakes, especially the diving ducks such as Redheads, Canvasbacks, and Ring-necks. Another dramatic bird event in October is the huge flocks of Franklin's Gulls that appear on the large reservoirs. These flocks typically start to build up in early October, and by the end of the month, they can number in the tens of thousands of birds. But then one day they are suddenly gone, leaving only a few lost stragglers behind. On October 24 of this year, at Cheney Reservoir, I saw what I estimated to be 500,000 Franklin's. Less than 10 days later, only 5 of them seemingly remained on the lake. Gone to coastal Peru, where the majority of them winter.

"November is the cruellest month...." said the poet, but for me, November is one of the most exciting birding months of the year. I visit my friendly local lakes and reservoirs just as often as I can, because this is when chances are the best for seeing some of the rarest waterbirds that are found in Kansas. These include all four species of loons, all six species of grebes, all three species of scoter, Oldsquaws, and an excellent variety of gulls, including vagrants such as Little Gull or Black-legged Kittiwake. Of course, no one can predict when and where any of these will show up, but the most likely scenario is to find them on reservoirs in November. A lot of persistence is required to find these birds. I have had pretty good success at November lake birding, but this is probably because I am willing to drive out to Cheney Reservoir a couple of times a week, often in less than ideal conditions. In fact, bad weather seems to often act as a catalyst for these birds to appear. I remember the day last year when Gresham, Northrup, and I found the Yellow-billed Loon at Cheney. The wind just howled out of the south for hours that day, with lots of clouds and precipitation. As we arrived at the lake, conditions suddenly calmed, and we got outstanding looks at a lot of birds, probably because they were a bit fatigued from the weather. An hour after we left, the

*-- Pete's Perspective, continued*

wind turned to the north and blew very hard for over a day, and many of the birds that we saw that day were not seen again. The point being that we went birding on a day when many would not have, and were rewarded for our trouble. So visit your local reservoir as often as possible in November, stay home when the weather is nice, and you too may find exciting waterbirds.

These are just a few random observations on late fall birding, a topic which could occupy many pages of text. I hope that these columns I have been writing for the

Horned Lark have entertained some of you. I enjoyed writing them. Starting in the June, '98 issue, Chuck "Coach" Otte is switching me to the Seasonal Reports page, and I hope I can fill Chris Hobb's capable shoes. Seems like he went a job too far on birding stuff, and something had to go. Hats off to Chris for his fine job! And while I'm at it, ditto to Scott Seltman for his many years of fine service as KOS Hotline operator. I have always felt that Kansas had one of the best hotlines in the country, and it's all because of Scott's diligence. Looks like Gene Young is going to pick up right where Scott left off, based on the great reports so far. Happy holidays to all, and don't forget to participate in your local CBC!

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## Checklist from the Fall KOS Meeting, October 5, 1997 Wichita, Kansas

Registration for the fall KOS meeting was somewhere around, or slightly over, 80. Unfortunately we were still waiting for a cold front to really start moving birds in from the north so birding was slow and only about 25 stayed around for the Sunday morning field trips. Three groups birded in and around Wichita including Cheney Reservoir, Chisholm Creek Park, etc. There was a total of 83 species found. Not great, but it was one of those warm windy days in early fall just before things get exciting. Nothing too extraordinary or unexpected. The group I was with at Cheney had a few exciting moments when a small real white gull got a lot of us excited. It was a real treat to watch three members of the Kansas Bird Record Committee work this bird over. It was a real workshop in bird identification when you are dealing with something you just aren't sure about. By process of elimination, it was determined that the bird was, as Pete Janzen put it, "...a very odd Franklin's Gull, masquerading as one of those all-white rare gulls." It was fun just the same! Thanks to Pete for compiling the following list.

Pied-billed Grebe, American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Little Blue Heron, Cattle Egret, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Turkey Vulture, Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Osprey, Northern

Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Ring-necked Pheasant, Northern Bobwhite, American Coot, Killdeer, Greater Yellowlegs, Least Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Franklin's Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Common Nighthawk, Chimney Swift, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, Eastern Kingbird, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Loggerhead Shrike, Blue-headed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Horned Lark, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Bewick's Wren, House Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird, Brown Thrasher, European Starling, Orange-crowned Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Spotted Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Clay-colored Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Indigo Bunting, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Western Meadowlark, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, House Finch, American Goldfinch.

**Remember KOS....** If you would like to help the Kansas Ornithological Society's future growth consider leaving a memorial trust for the Society or including the KOS in your will. If you would like more information feel free to contact any of the Board Members.

## **Bluebird Trail??**

Did you know that Kansas has a coordinator for bluebird nesting information? We have had for the past four years! Jim Piland would like to hear about your bluebird nesting success regardless if you have one box or one hundred boxes. In 1996 Jim received 51 responses from 23 counties, 1,030 nesting boxes and 2,271 bluebirds fledged. Jim can provide you with a standardized report form that is fairly simple to fill it and he would love to hear from you about the success of your nesting boxes. Jim can be reached at:

Kansas Bluebirds  
Jim Piland  
516 US Hwy. 281  
Waldo, KS 67673

This project is funded by the Chickadee Check-off and is operated in conjunction with the Kansas Dept. of Wildlife and Parks and the American Bluebird Society.

## **KBBAT Withdrawal?**

Suffering from Kansas Breeding Bird Atlas Project withdrawal symptoms? Not sure what you're going to do with all your free time?? Afraid that Christmas Counts, Migration Counts and just plain old mundane listing won't cut it anymore?? There may be help in the form of the Oklahoma Breeding Bird Atlas project. It got started in the spring of 1997 so there's still four more years that you can help with! There's 700 blocks across the state. Contact Chuck Otte or Pete Janzen for information on how to get involved!

## **KOS Items Available**

If you would like to purchase KOS T-shirts, sweatshirts, window stickers, etc. then you need to contact the KOS Business Manager, James Barnes, at 1425 S Wichita, Wichita, KS 67213, 316-265-4059, or via e-mail at [barnowls@juno.com](mailto:barnowls@juno.com)

If you are also having problems getting your newsletter or bulletin let James know. And if you want to purchase back issues he is your contact also.

## **New KOS Board Members**

We will have a fairly stable transition from the 1997 KOS Board to the 1998 Board. Susan Barnes was elected Membership Secretary, and Gene Young and Jim Mayhew were elected to board positions. The rest of the board remained unchanged. Susan will serve a one year term and will be eligible for re-election annually. Our four board members serve staggered two year terms (two board members are elected annually) and are not re-elected, however they can be elected to officer positions and continue to serve there. We are always looking for new board members and even though the annual meeting is just over please let any of the board know if you are interested in serving. The entire board is listed on the front page of every issue of *The Horned Lark*. Feel free to contact us with questions, ideas or concerns that you may have!

## **Thank You Wichita!**

We need to send a real big thank you out to the local committee in Wichita. The facilities were outstanding, the banquet was truly fun and memorable, and while the birding on Sunday wasn't the stuff that books are written about, the company couldn't be beat!

A tip of our hat to Susan and James Barnes, Roy Beckemeyer, Suzanne Fellows, Pete Janzen, Linda Mallonee, Bob Gress, all the staff at the Great Plains Nature Center and to those who led field trips on Sunday. It was a wonderful weekend in October. Thank you very much!

## **Thank You!**

A big thank you goes out to outgoing Membership Secretary Margaret Wedge and board members Bill Busby and John Schuckman. Margaret has been on the board for three years, Bill and John for two years. Thank you for jobs well done!!

**Deadline for submissions for the  
March, 1998 Horned Lark is  
February 1, 1998.**

# Kansas Christmas Bird Counts - 1997

It's time once again to start making plans for those wonderful holiday treats, Christmas Bird Counts. That opportunity to get together with new and old friends, freeze your fingers and toes, fog up your binoculars, have family and friends question your sanity and have loads of fun counting birds!

In the 1996 season there were a record high 54 counts run in Kansas. Five-hundred-ninety-four participants counted a record high 164 species. In all there were 2,812,863 birds seen. The late fall season has been very interesting. What we see in the 1997 Christmas counts just depends on the weather between now and count day. The following list is not all inclusive. The map on the following page shows where counts were held last year

The following list is in chronological order. The compiler or principle contact person is listed with phone number(s) and/or e-mail address, if known.

## Friday, December 19

**Dodge City** - Joleen Fromm, 316-227-6342, meet at the Inn Pancake House, 1610 West Wyatt Earp Blvd., at 7 a.m. for breakfast.

**Quivira NWR** - Gary Meggers, contact refuge office at 316-486-2393 for details.

## Saturday, December 20

**Hays** - Greg Farley, 785-628-5965, bigf@fhsu.edu

**John Redmond** - Bob Culbertson, 316-364-2522, meet at the John Redmond Corps Office near New Strawn or the Flint Hills Refuge Office near Hartford at 7 a.m.

**Lakin** - Leonard Rich, 316-275-5192

**Lawrence** - Galen Pittman, 785-842-7105,  
glpitt@falcon.cc.ukans.edu

**Manhattan** - Dave Rintoul, 785-537-0781 (home),  
drintoul@ksu.edu

**Newton/Harvey County** - Lorna Harder, 316-367-8479,  
lornah@juno.com Meet at the Kauffman Museum in North Newton by 6:30 a.m.

**Parsons** - Paul Milks

**Topeka** - Gary Haden, 785-273-5598

**Wichita** - Pete Janzen, 316-832-0182,  
prarybrd@southwind.net, meet at Lawrence-Dumont Stadium in Wichita at 7:30 a.m.

**Wilson Reservoir** - Mike Rader, 785-658-2595,  
mike\_rader@hotmail.com

and the circle indicates the area included in the count circle. For a complete list of 1996 counts see the March, 1997 *KOS Bulletin*. For last minute changes, additions and updates be sure to check the Kansas Rare Bird Alert (316-229-2777) or the Burroughs Audubon Rare Bird Alert in the Kansas City area (913-342-2473). It is also advisable to check with the compiler of the count if you are going to be new to the count for meeting location, meal plans, etc.

Please note that **some** of these counts are National Audubon Society (NAS) Christmas counts as well and participants in these counts will be charged the mandatory \$5.00 NAS Christmas Bird Count participant fee.

## Sunday, December 21

**Emporia** - Jean Schulenberg, 316-342-2380

**Perry Lake/Oskaloosa** - Richard Rucker, 785-842-3845

**Waconda Lake** - Mike Rader, 785-658-2595,  
mike\_rader@hotmail.com

**Wakefield** - Chuck Otte, 785-238-8800 (*home*),  
otte@jc.net

**Winfield** - Max Thompson, 316-221-1856,  
maxt@jinx.sckans.edu

## Monday, December 22

**Cedar Bluff** - Scott Seltman (date tentative, confirm with Scott 785-372-5411), sselt@ruraltel.net

**Olsburg** - Gary Jeffrey, 785-468-3587

## Tuesday, December 23

**El Dorado** - Bill Langley, 316-320-1255, meet at the McDonald's in El Dorado at 7:30 a.m.

**Slate Creek** - Gene Young, youngg@jinx.sckans.edu, Meet at the Slate Valley Baptist Church, 7 miles south of Oxford on the main blacktop, at 8:00 a.m.

## Friday, December 26

**Linn Co.** - Roger Boyd, 785-594-3172,  
boyd@harvey.bakeru.edu

## Saturday, December 27

**Arkansas City** - Max Thompson, 316-221-1856,  
maxt@jinx.sckans.edu, meet at Newman Park on Hwy. 77 at 8 a.m.

**Baldwin City** - Roger Boyd, 785-594-3172,  
boyd@harvey.bakeru.edu

**Cimarron National Grasslands** - Sebastian Patti

**Sunday, December 28**

**Kenton/Black Mesa, OK** - Sebastian Patti

**Junction City** - Chuck Otte, 785-238-8800 (*home*),  
otte@jc.net

**Monday, December 29**

**Liberal/Seward Co** - Sebastian Patti

**Thursday, January 1**

**Kirwin Reservoir** - Contact refuge headquarters

**Scott Lake** - Tom Shane, 316-275-4616

**Southeast Kansas Mined Land** - Steve Ford

**Friday, January 2**

**Webster Reservoir** - Mike Rader, 785-658-2595,

mike\_rader@hotmail.com

**Saturday, January 3**

**Barber County** - Pete Janzen, 316-832-0182,  
prarybrd@southwind.net, meet at the Indian Grill  
Restaurant on Hwy. 160 in Medicine Lodge at 8 a.m.

**Black Wolf/NW Ellsworth County** - Mike Rader,  
785-658-2595, mike\_rader@hotmail.com

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**Garden City** - Marie Osterbuhr, 316-276-8145,

moster@midusa.net

**Leavenworth/Atchison** - John Schukman, 913-727-5141,  
schuksaya@aol.com

**Pomona** - Jeff Bender, 785-828-4933, meet at the Pomona  
State Park Office near Vassar at 7 a.m.

**Sunday, January 4**

**Bonner Springs/Lansing** - Galen Pittman, 785-842-7105,  
glpitt@falcon.cc.ukans.edu

**Kanopolis Reservoir** - Mike Rader, 785-658-2595,  
mike\_rader@hotmail.com

**Saturday, January 10**

**Syracuse** - Art Nonhof, 316-277-2087

**Old Garfield County** - date not yet set, contact Tom  
Shane, 316-275-4616

Participate, dress warm and have fun!!

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The Kansas Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) of 1996. Circle indicates approximate location and area of inclusion of the count circle. Many, but not all, of these locations will also be having a CBC in 1997. See above article for details.

# SUMMER ROUND-UP

June, 1997 through July, 1997

by Chris Hobbs

Although this report covers only two months, Kansas birders racked up impressive finds in nearly every category - rare visitors, extralimitals, early and late migrants, and breeding successes! Southbound shorebirds were plentiful and varied, with twenty-five species present in central Kansas during July!

Black-billed Cuckoos were uncharacteristically conspicuous, as evidenced by the multiple reports. A

quick scan of the following list will reveal few patterns. Instead, western birds wandered east, southern birds north, and eastern birds west! We had our share of "lazy" or injured individuals that hung around for the summer, and yet others that made efficient use of suitable nesting habitat.

As you peruse this list, you may sense that something isn't quite right - the list is compiled in the yet-to-be-published A. O. U.'s new order. Just a taste to see how well you'll adapt!

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>OBSERVER(S)</u>	<u>DATE(S)</u>	<u>COUNTY</u>
Common Loon	2 basic plumage, Wilson Reservoir	Kluza & Rice	07-09	Russell
Western Grebe	1 at Cheyenne Bottoms	Patti, et al	07-13	Stafford
<b>BROWN PELICAN</b>	1 at Wilson Reservoir 1 still present	McCord & Nichols Kluza & Rice	07-03 07-09	Russell Russell
Greater White-fronted Goose	1 at Quivira NWR	Patti, et al	07-13	Stafford
Snow Goose	1 at Lake McCoid, Liberal	Patti, Seltman, Busby	06-14	Seward
Cinnamon Teal	2 at Lake McCoid, Liberal 4 at Quivira NWR	Patti, Seltman, Busby Patti, et al	06-14 07-13	Seward Stafford
Lesser Scaup	1 at Quivira NWR	Patti, et al	07-13	Stafford
Hooded Merganser	a female at Lake McCoid, Liberal	Patti, Rader	06-15	Seward
Osprey	1 at Glen Elder Reservoir	Kluza & Rice	07-08	Mitchell
Mississippi Kite	1 in Prairie Village	Leo	07-30	Johnson
Northern Harrier	nesting in high densities	Seltman	06-06	Pawnee/ Rush
Black Rail	6 at n. end of Coldwater Rsvr. several at Coldwater Rsvr.	Janzen, et al Gress	06-12 06-28/29	Comanche Coldwater
King Rail	2 at n. end of Coldwater Rsvr. 4 se. of Greenburg	Janzen, et al KBBAT atlassers	06-12 mid-June	Comanche Kiowa
Virginia Rail	several at Coldwater Rsvr.	Janzen, et al	06-12	Comanche
Snowy Plover	1 at Lake McCoid, Liberal	Patti, Seltman, Busby	06-14	Seward
Piping Plover	1 so. of Marion Reservoir 6 at Kyle Marsh, Perry Lake 2 near Lawrence	Powell McHugh McHugh	07-09 07-20 07-20	Marion Franklin Douglas

Mountain Plover	2 pairs near North Fork adult w/ 3 chicks near No. Fork 4 adults / 9 juv. near North Fork	Hicks Seltman Patti, Seltman	06-13 06-21 07-12	Morton Morton Morton
Willet	1 near Marion Reservoir 10 at Quivira NWR / Chey. Btm 8 at Kyle Marsh, Perry Lake	Powell Patti, et al McHugh	07-09 07-13 07-20	Marion Stafford / Barton Franklin
Long-billed Curlew	nesting near North Fork 4 at Cheyenne Bottoms	Seltman Moore, et al	06-21 07-13	Morton Barton
<b>HUDSONIAN GODWIT</b>	2 at Quivira NWR	Hobbs, et al	07-13	Stafford
Marbled Godwit	3 at Quivira NWR / Chey. Btms	Patti, et al	07-13	Stafford / Barton
Red Knot	2 at Quivira NWR	Vannoy, Janzen	07-22	Stafford
Western Sandpiper	2 at Lake McCoid, Liberal	Patti, Seltman, Busby	06-14	Seward
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	1 injured at Lake McCoid, Liberal	Patti, Seltman, Busby	06-14	Seward
Short-billed Dowitcher	1 at Quivira NWR	Vannoy, Janzen	07-22	Stafford
Laughing Gull	adult at Quivira NWR	Vannoy, Janzen	07-22	Stafford
Franklin's Gull	one at Lake McCoid, Liberal	Patti, Rader	06-15	Seward
Common Tern	1 at Cheney Reservoir	Janzen, Vannoy	07-22	Reno
Least Tern	Lake McCoid, Liberal 1 at Coldwater Lake	Patti, Rader Gress	06-15 06-28	Seward Coldwater
<b>EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE</b>	4 in Goodland	Palmquist	thru period	Sherman
Black-billed Cuckoo	6 along BBS route 3 at Coldwater Lake several in Atlas Blocks	Seltman Gress KBBAT atlassers	06-07 06-28 mid-June	Hodgeman Coldwater Kiowa
Long-eared Owl	at Wdson. Co. St. Fishing Lake	Hicks	06-27/29	Woodson
Short-eared Owl	3 adults / 3 fledglings many ca. 35 mi. w. of Great Bend 1 at Cimarron Nat'l Grasslands	Seltman Seltman Forsythe	06-06 06-20 07-17	Rush / Pawnee Pawnee Morton
Rufous Hummingbird	adult male in Garden City adult male at Perry Lake	Campbell Rucker	07-24 07-28/29	Finney Franklin
Say's Phoebe	nesting in sw. Reno Co.	Janzen, Nickel	06-28	Reno
<b>BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE</b>	far, far east - Overland Park	Seibel	07-15	Johnson
Fish Crow	40-50 near Baxter Springs	Swalwell	06-01	Cherokee
White-breasted Nuthatch	fledgling at Indian Creek	Janzen	06-13	Comanche

Cedar Waxwing	juveniles at Lenora Lake	Seltman	06-16	Norton
Chestnut-sided Warbler	male near Haviland	Janzen	06-11	Kiowa
Prairie Warbler	male at Camp Horizon	Hicks	06-01/16	Cowley
Worm-eating Warbler	1 at Schermerhorn Park	Swalwell	06-01	Cherokee
Ovenbird	1 at Junction City	Otte	07-03	Geary
Kentucky Warbler	pair at Fort Riley	Otte	06-21	Geary
Hooded Warbler	imm. at Perry Lake	McHugh	07-20	Franklin
Scarlet Tanager	Wdson. Co. State Fishing Lake	Hicks	06-27/29	Woodson
Spotted Towhee	male along Cimarron River nesting pair at Lenora Lake	Patti, Seltman, Busby Seltman	06-15 06-16	Seward Norton
Rufous-crowned Sparrow in se. Comanche Co.		Busby	early July	Comanche
Henslow's Sparrow	2 pair at Wdson. Co. St. Fish Lk.	Hicks	06-27/29	Woodson
Northern Cardinal	1st nesting pair in Elkhart juvenile at North Fork	Smith Patti	late June 07-12	Morton Morton
Black-headed Grosbeak	at Lenora Lake	Seltman	06-16	Norton
Painted Bunting	1 male along Chikaskia River	Janzen, Nickel	06-28	Kingman
Bullock's Oriole	female at Coldwater Rsvr.	Janzen	06-13	Comanche
Red Crossbill	15-20 in Garden City fledglings at Garden City 2 at Coldwater Reservoir 1 in Fancy Canyon still present in Elkhart	T & S Shane T & S Shane Janzen, et al Patti Smith	06-01 06-07 06-12 06-12 late June	Finney Finney Comanche Comanche Morton
<b>LESSER GOLDFINCH</b>	1 at Lake McCoid, Liberal	Patti	07-14	Seward

**OBSERVERS:** Joanne Brier, Bob Broyles, Ken Brunson, Bill Busby, Barbara Campbell, Dennis & Donna Forsythe, Bob Gress, Tyler Hicks, Chris Hobbs, Pete Janzen, Dan Kluza, Glen Koontz, Nancy Leo, Brad McCord, Mick McHugh, Lloyd Moore, Greg Nichols, Jim Nickel, Chuck & Jaye Otte, John Palmquist, Sebastian Patti, Galen Pittman, Alexi Powell, Eric Preston, Mike Rader, Nate Rice, Richard Rucker, David Seibel, Scott Seltman, Tom & Sara Shane, Lawrence & Ruth Smith, Art Swalwell, Don Vannoy, Tracy Wohl

Remember that all sightings are tentative, pending action of the Kansas Bird Records Committee (KBRC). Did you see a good bird, an unusual bird, a common bird out of season or 'out of location?' Be sure to call the KOS Hotline at **316-229-2777**.

Did you see a **REALLY** good bird?? Take the time to complete a KBRC Official Report form and send it to Galen Pittman, 12042 258th Street, Lawrence, KS 66044. A KBRC report form was in the March, 1997 *Horned Lark* (pg 17) and can also be found on the KOS World Wide Web homepage at <http://www-personal.ksu.edu/~drintoul/kos>. Click on the Rare Bird Record Committee menu option.

## Letter to the Editor

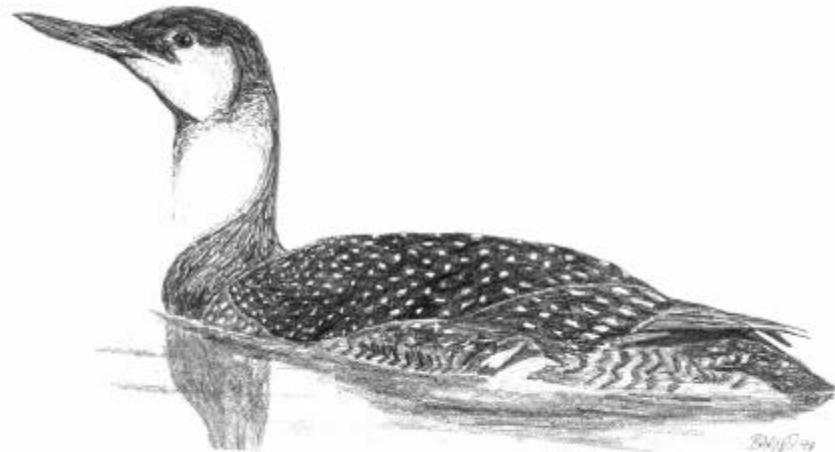
Dear Editor:

The KOS meeting in Wichita was an outstanding success! The Wichita members need to be thanked again for all their highly productive time and effort. Every KOS meeting I have attended in the last thirty-four years has always been great fun and highly informative. I continually hear compliments from our neighbors in surrounding states on KOS and our Kansas ornithologists.

The noticeable loss of change that has occurred was the absence of the call for "Best Bird of the Year" in the

meeting announcements or at the meeting. "Best Bird of the Year" was always one of the fun parts of the KOS Banquet. It wasn't fun this year due to the rigorous constraints. If the KBRC wants to have its ten best birds of the year then it should happen. But I call on the KOS board to give back the KOS "Best Birds of the Year" to the members so it can become once again that fun and exciting part of the KOS Banquet.

Respectfully,  
Tom Shane



**Red-throated Loon**  
*by James Barnes*

## Teaming With Wildlife

What is Teaming With Wildlife? It could very well be the biggest thing to happen to wildlife conservation and habitat protection since National Wildlife Refuges, Duck Stamps and Ding Darling. It would create a funding mechanism that would generate dollars from goods sold for outdoor activities including camping gear, birdwatching supplies, bird feed, even binoculars and film. To us, the end users, it would be invisible. There is a coalition of manufacturers, private citizens and organizations (like KOS) who have endorsed the idea and support it. Ken Brunson and I (Chuck Otte) will be putting together more information for the March *Horned Lark* to detail what Teaming With Wildlife does, and what you can do to help. If you don't want to wait for the March issue contact myself or Ken Brunson and we'll fill you in on the details.

# **Abstracts of Papers Presented at the 1997 Fall KOS Meetings**

## **Wichita, Kansas**

### **EDGE EFFECTS ON THREE GRASSLAND BIRD SPECIES: A PRELIMINARY EVALUATION**

*Authors:* William E. Jensen and Elmer J. Finck, Div. of Biol. Sciences, Emporia State Univ, Emporia, KS

Grassland birds have been shown to experience elevated levels of nest predation and brood parasitism when their nests are located near wooded edges in fragmented tall grass prairie. We examined the effects of wooded edges as well as agricultural edges on daily mortality and brood parasitism of Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*), Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*), and Grass-hopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*) nests in east-central Kansas. Preliminary analyses indicate that daily mortality and brood parasitism may be higher when nests are located within 100 m of edges relative to distances between 100 and 200 m. However, the effects of edges are not consistent among the three species investigated, at distances greater than 200 m from edges, or among edge types. Additional analyses may reveal possible effects at the microhabitat and landscape levels.

### **MIGRATORY BEHAVIOR OF WARBLERS IN WEST CENTRAL KANSAS**

*Author:* Jennifer M. Sevigny, Dept of Biological Sciences, Ft Hays State Univ, Hays, KS

Passerine migration and stopover ecology have been studied more extensively in some regions of North America, resulting in models and perceptions that may not apply elsewhere. Relatively little work has been conducted in the western, interior portions of the continent. The term stopover indicates a stay in a preferred area to replenish fat reserves; in the west this may be an episodic phenomenon controlled by factors other than hyperphagia. I used standard mist-netting procedures to assess the migratory behavior of warblers in west central Kansas, and captured 122 Orange-crowned Warblers (*Vermivora celata*), 50 Nashville Warblers (*V. ruficapilla*), 14 Yellow Warblers (*Dendroica petechia*), and 13 Wilson's Warblers (*Wilsonia pusilla*) between 20 August and 30 October, 1996. Average fat scores for the four warbler species were 2, 4, 4, and 3 respectively. Given the relatively high levels of stored fat, other factors such as weather may stimulate western birds to interrupt migration in a fallout pattern. Of 199 captured, only four were recaptured, suggesting most individuals did not stay in the sample area for more than 24 hours. Differences in migratory behavior between some western and eastern migrating passerines may be due to the current lack of a geographic barrier in the interior of the continent.

### **AVIAN COMMUNITIES OF BLACK-TAILED PRAIRIE DOG COLONIES AND NON-COLONIZED AREAS IN SOUTHWEST KANSAS**

*Authors:* Stephen L. Winter and Jack F. Cully, Jr. Kansas Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, Div. of Biology, Kansas State Univ, Manhattan, KS

Species richness and relative abundance of bird communities were quantified at prairie dog colonies and non-colonized areas in southwest Kansas during May-June in 1996 and 1997. In 1996 six species were recorded at prairie dog colonies and seven species were recorded at non-colonized sites. Relative abundance of all birds was not significantly different between prairie dog colonies and non-colonized areas, but western meadowlarks were significantly more abundant on prairie dog colonies than on non-colonized sites. In 1997 eight species were recorded on prairie dog colonies and nine species were recorded on non-colonized sites. Relative abundance of all birds was significantly higher on non-colonized sites than on prairie dog colonies. Relative abundance of horned larks was significantly higher on prairie dog colonies than on non-colonized sites but the relative abundance of grasshopper sparrows and lark buntings was significantly higher on non-colonized sites than on prairie dog colonies.

### **BENEFIT OF CONSTRUCTED WETLANDS TO WATERFOWL AND SHOREBIRDS**

*Authors:* Chris Frey, Mike Taylor and Bill Langley, Butler County Community College, El Dorado, KS

The Texaco refinery at El Dorado recently constructed a wetlands as part of its tertiary waste water treatment process. Our goal was to determine the use of wetlands by waterfowl and shorebirds. The approach was to compare the birds' use of Texaco wetlands to two other important water habitats in the area, El Dorado lake and a deep pond. During the 1997 spring migration, 26 surveys were conducted. A total of 5093 waterfowl and 3172 shorebirds were observed at Texaco wetlands. The migration was typical of that reported for Kansas. The waterfowl used the lake the most, but the Texaco attracted more surface-feeding waterfowl species and more individuals during late spring. The wetlands proved particularly attractive to shorebirds. Eleven shorebird species were recorded for the first time in Butler County. Clearly, the Texaco wetlands proved beneficial to migrating waterfowl and shorebird species.

**A PRELIMINARY REPORT ON SOME ROADSIDE  
BIRD CENSUSES IN HARVEY COUNTY** *Author:* Dwight R. Platt, Bethel College, North Newton, KS

In the years 1966 to 1969 and 1972, 311 bird censuses were made along 131/2 miles of 36th street while traveling between North Newton and Sand Prairie Reservation for field study on the reservation. These counts were made at different times of the day between April 12 and November 23. Seventy-two species of birds were recorded on these censuses, but only 28 species were recorded with a frequency of 25% or more. Patterns in activity that varies with time of day, season and year will be described for some species that are common along this roadside. Twenty-two censuses made in 1997 along this route provide preliminary indication of some changes in bird populations. Others are encouraged to census birds along routes that are often traveled.

**EVIDENCE OF FORAGING EFFORTS BY  
MIGRATING SPRING WARBLERS** *Author:* Michael S. Sevigny, Dept of Biological Sciences, Ft Hays State Univ, Hays, KS

Neotropical migratory passernines are selected to recognize suitable foraging habitat during periods of stopover or fallout. A migrant's ability to optimize foraging efforts can increase the chance of completing a successful migration. During the spring migration birds that can effectively forage en route will potentially arrive on their breeding grounds earlier and in better physical condition. I collected a total of 90 foraging observations for four migrating warbler species along sample transects on the North Fork of the Solomon River and Bow creek at Kirwin National Wildlife Refuge, Phillips Co. Observations were recorded in seven tree species. Green Ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*) appeared to be the preferred foraging substrate for the Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*) and Orange-crowned Warblers (*Vermivora celata*). Myrtle Warblers (*Dendroica coronata*) were most often observed in hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*), while Yellow Warblers (*D. petechia*) were found in both hackberry and green ash. All warblers appeared to concentrate their foraging efforts along the outside of trees. These data indicate these foraging migrant warblers are distributed unevenly across the landscape, suggesting individuals may be actively selecting sites which contain more prey.

**Kansas Rare Bird Alert**  
**316-229-2777**

**SALPINCTEAN CLIFF NOTES: AN INITIAL  
INVENTORY OF ROCK WREN VOCALIZATIONS**  
*Authors:* Thomas G. Shane, Sara J. Shane and Jennifer J. Matiasek, 1706 Belmont, Garden City, KS and Dept of Biological Sciences, Ft Hays State Univ, Hays, KS

An individual male Rock Wren may have over one hundred songs in its repertoire (Kroodsma, Condor 1975). This study concentrated on identifying vocalizations used during the breeding season other than songs. Courtship, nest hole inspection, and alarm calls along with begging and location calls of fledglings are identified for the species using an eight mm video camera.

**KANSAS BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE I. "NEW"  
KANSAS BIRDS: A KBRC IDENTIFICATION  
MINI-WORKSHOP** *Author:* David E. Seibel, Chairman, Kansas Bird Records Committee

The Forty-first Supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) Check-list of North American Birds has resulted in changes to the Kansas Checklist. The Solitary Vireo (*Vireo solitarius* sensu lato) has been divided into three species: Blue-headed Vireo (*V. solitarius*), Cassin's Vireo (*V. cassini*) and Plumbeous Vireo (*V. plumbeus*). A brief review of the characteristics allowing field identification of these and other "new" Kansas species will be given.

**KANSAS BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE II.  
DOCUMENTING RARE BIRDS IN KANSAS: THE  
KBRC AND YOU** *Author:* Galen L. Pittman, Secretary, Kansas Bird Records Committee

The KBRC performs the function of critical review of rare bird sightings for entry into the scientific record. With careful note-taking and documentation, additions to our personal life lists can become contributions to science. Galen will review the criteria and level of rigor required for documenting rare bird records.

**UPDATE ON PARTNERS IN FLIGHT** *Author:* Bill Busby, Kansas Biological Survey, Lawrence, KS

Partners in Flight is an cooperative program that seeks to reverse the population declines in Western Hemisphere land birds. Recent Partners in Flight efforts in the Great Plains include development of regional conservation plans that identify priority bird species and needed conservation actions. Draft regional plans covering portions of eastern Kansas have been produced. In addition, the Kansas Partners in Flight technical committee has begun work on identification of priority species and habitat management priorities across the state.

**OSPREY RELEASE PROJECT UPDATE - YEAR TWO** *Authors: Katy Jones and Mike Taylor, Butler Co Community College, El Dorado, KS*

Once again four young osprey were hacked at El Dorado Lake and Wolf Creek Nature area in Burlington, Kansas. Procedures were the same. The birds responded similarly with one exception. One bird is being held over the winter because of a injured wing.

**FACTORS INFLUENCING NEST-SITE SELECTION IN ROCK WRENS** *Author: Jennifer J. Matiasek, Dept of Biological Sciences, Ft Hays State Univ, Hays, KS*

A variety of environmental factors appear to influence successful nest-site selection in birds. Rock Wrens (*Salpinctes obsoletus*) breed in areas with cliffs or rocky outcrops where they use existing holes to shelter their nests. Because few studies have involved this species, the strategies it may employ to increase offspring survivorship are not known. I measured the height, orientation, and cavity dimensions of 50 active and 25 old wren nests from a migratory population in the Scott Lake State Park area of Scott County, Kansas, in order to assess which factors might protect nests from predation and Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) parasitism. Successful nests appear to be located at heights approximately equal to the population average and to occupy cavities with openings smaller than the population average. My observations indicate that small openings prevent cowbirds from entering to lay eggs, and that nests of an average height should be both out of the reach of some predators and below a level that cowbird's select. Only 20% of nests were preyed upon, but 48% were parasitized by cowbirds. Predation did not have a significant effect on reproductive success, and parasitism caused reproductive failure only when more than one cowbird chick hatched.

**SONG VARIATION IN THE HERMIT THRUSH**  
*Author: James W. Rivers, Div. of Biology, Kansas State Univ, Manhattan, KS*

Although the singing behavior of many Neotropical migrant bird species is well documented, song variation in the Hermit Thrush (*Catharus guttatus*) remains undescribed. Hermit Thrushes were found to usually cycle through their entire repertoire within 20 consecutive

songs, sing with immediate variety, and have an average repertoire of nine song types. Song characteristics from the Audubon's (*C. g. auduboni*) and Eastern Hermit Thrush (*C. g. faxoni*) races were significantly different in nine measured categories. Although both races had similar repertoire sizes, individuals from the *faxoni* race had less variation in repertoire size and took longer to cycle through their repertoires than individuals from the *auduboni* race.

**BALD EAGLE USE OF THE REPUBLICAN RIVER WATERSHED OF NEBRASKA DURING WINTER**  
*Authors: Douglas A. Robinson, Jr., Elmer J. Finck, John J. Dinan, Katie M. McGrath, and Kristen Mitchell, Div. of Biological Sciences, Emporia State Univ, Emporia, KS and Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Lincoln, NE*

We studied bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) use of the Republican River watershed in Nebraska during the winters of 1995-1997. Our objective was to identify areas of bald eagle use relative to land management decisions. Estuarine bald eagle use areas were located with aerial surveys. We flew a total of 16 aerial surveys (seven in 1995-1996; nine in 1996-1997), and counted 802 bald eagles in 1995-1996, and 2060 bald eagles in 1996-1997. Although large concentrations of bald eagles were found at reservoirs within the watershed, 50-78% of all bald eagles were found at or along river segments east of Harlan County Reservoir. Since a majority of the bald eagles were seen on segments of the Republican River, we recommend land management agencies focus on joint ventures with private landowners to ensure that wintering bald eagle habitat is maintained.

**KBBAT: DATA COLLECTION IS COMPLETED**  
*Authors: Bill Busby and John Zimmerman, Kansas Biological Survey, Lawrence, KS, and Div. of Biology, Kansas State Univ, Manhattan, KS*

The Kansas Breeding Bird Atlas Project conducted its sixth and final year of field work in 1997. Nearly all blocks have been completed. A summary of completed blocks, including geographical patterns in species richness, will be presented. Plans and progress on the next phase of the project, publishing species distribution maps and other information in book format, will be discussed.

**50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Kansas Ornithological Society Annual Meeting**  
**October, 9, 10 & 11, 1998**  
**Lawrence, Kansas**

## Ten Best Birds

as selected by the Kansas Bird Records Committee

1. Tufted Duck (first state record)
2. Northern Wheatear (first state record)
3. Iceland Gull (first state record)
4. Eurasian Collared-Dove (first state record)
5. Lesser Black-backed Gull
6. Yellow-billed Loon
7. Western Screech-Owl
8. Fish Crow
9. Black-headed Gull
10. White-winged Dove

-- *The Plant Connection*

## What, When, Where

As you are out birding in the fall and winter I'm sure many of you keep lists of the birds that you see. But do you keep a list of which birds you saw in association with what plants? If you are looking for finches in December or January, or Yellow-rumped Warblers in November do you have a good idea of where to go to find them?

Birds are inextricably tied to their food and if you can find the right food in the right location, you'll probably find the bird. By birding a location or several locations for a period of years you start to learn what birds frequent what habitats and what food you can find them with.

In the fall I can find many things around any plant that has berries. Poison ivy, hackberry and dogwood are usually good berry producers that don't hold their berries long into the season. Find a dogwood thicket full of berries in October or November and you'll find birds. But by Thanksgiving these buffet lines are usually tapped out. Russian Olives are also very attractive and will hold their fruit much later into the fall and winter. Cedars are good throughout the winter and smooth sumac will be one of the last seeds utilized for food.

Find me a big patch of wild sunflowers, ragweed, hemp and thistle and I can find a host of sparrows, goldfinches, siskins and even an errant redpoll or crossbill. So this winter keep a list of what you found but also keep a list of what time and where the birds were.

-- *Cyberbirding*

## Discussion Lists and Web Sites

Let's just say that you get a new computer for Christmas and you get hooked up to the Internet and you'd really like to find some neat locations about birds. Here you are all revved up with no place to surf.

Well, fortunately you have two choices. You can go looking for information OR let the information come to you! Once you have access to the Internet through a service provider you will normally have several venues of communication. The two most commonly used are electronic mail or e-mail and the World Wide Web (WWW).

E-mail is a system that allows you to send written messages to others that have Internet access. This requires a program designed specifically for that purpose. The major programs that are used for browsing the WWW also have e-mail capability, but I feel that there are separate stand alone e-mail programs that will do a much better job. Once you have an e-mail address you can "subscribe" to discussion groups. Discussion groups have been established for virtually any subject you can imagine. When you are subscribed to a discussion group you, or anyone, can send a message to "the list" and it is automatically re-sent to everyone on the list. You can subscribe (no charge!) to KSBIRD-L, a list that is for discussion of birds in Kansas. Or you can subscribe to BirdChat (with its 1200+ members) and discuss bird topics on a national and international scope. You can also subscribe to one of the regional rare bird alert lists and receive transcribed hotline reports from the east, west or center of the United States. If you are interested in any of these lists just drop me an e-mail at [otte@jc.net](mailto:otte@jc.net).

But what if you are going looking for a very specific bit of bird information? More than likely you can find it somewhere on "the Web." You can find information on most of the Wildlife Refuges. You can find state or regional checklists from all over the country. Most state ornithological societies now have web sites so if you see a rare bird in another state, you can find out where to file a rare bird report form. Of course the Web is a dynamic entity that literally changes daily. So you occasionally wind up on a journey where the road system may have changed from the last time you were there. A good starting place is KOS's home page at <http://www-personal.ksu.edu/~drintoul/kos/> and click on Electronic (Virtual) Birding Links.

## KOS Checklist Update

by Galen L. Pittman, KBRC Secretary

Update of the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of the KOS Checklist of the Birds of Kansas: new species additions and changes precipitated by the publication, in 1997, of the 41<sup>st</sup> supplement to the AOU Check-list of North American Birds.

The current edition (8<sup>th</sup>) of the KOS Checklist of the Birds of Kansas was published in March 1996. The 9<sup>th</sup> edition is on schedule to be published early in 1998. A limited run of the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of the Checklist was printed in anticipation of the need to update the list again, as soon as, the AOU published its long awaited 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Check-list of North American Birds*. The last "full blown" AOU Check-list (6<sup>th</sup>) was published in 1983 and after several years of delays, the new 7<sup>th</sup> edition is finally ready to be published in early 1998. Supplements to the AOU Check-list are published every two years and with the publication of the 41<sup>st</sup> supplement earlier this year, all the very latest taxonomic decisions are "on the table". Since it is the KBRC's policy to use the AOU as its governing authority on matters related to taxonomy and nomenclature, any changes that the AOU makes to the North American Check-list that involves Kansas birds obligates the KBRC to follow suit and update the Kansas Checklist.

The new edition of the KOS Checklist of the Birds of Kansas will have several new species added, as well as, changes to the status of several others. The AOU Check-list Committee has adopted many taxonomic changes that effect species that occur in Kansas. The 9<sup>th</sup> edition of the Kansas Checklist will have numerous changes in the checklist order and a few common name changes. By the way, the common names that appear on the Kansas checklist are the "official" common names that have been designated by the AOU. Most organizations that are the authority for naming biological species only "suggest" a suitable common name since they consider the Latin name to be the only proper "official" name of the species. This is very practical and does away with a lot of confusion when scientists communicate and that is why they usually refer to species by their scientific name. However in North America, since bird names are so widely used by scientists and non-scientists alike; the AOU designates BOTH an "official" scientific name in Latin and an "official" common name in English for all North American bird species. So when you look at the bird names on your KOS Checklist you are getting the "official" common names including their spelling, capitalization, and hyphenation! Also, the boldface "group" names that appear on the Kansas list are not just arbitrary place

holders. Not only do these group labels help the user locate a given species on an otherwise long monotonous list, but they also reflect the taxonomic hierarchy. The checklist is arranged in order from the most "primitive" at the beginning to the most "advanced" at the end. In cases where the last name can be assumed (e.g., wrens or terns) the last name is not repeated. In other cases where the last name can not be assumed (e.g., sandpipers or ducks) the full name is listed to avoid confusion.

Now, for the actual changes that will be included in the 9<sup>th</sup> edition of the KOS Checklist of the Birds of Kansas. This is a preliminary summary and is subject to changes when the Checklist is published next year. Tufted Duck, Mew Gull, Eurasian Collared-Dove, and Northern Wheatear will all be added to the list with an "\*" (less than ten records) and with "hypothetical" status. Iceland Gull, Gray Vireo, Cassin's Vireo, and Plumbeous Vireo will also be added but all have supporting physical evidence so none of them are "hypothetical". Also, Iceland Gull and Gray Vireo are added to the list with an "\*". Solitary Vireo has its name changed to Blue-headed Vireo and four other species get technical name changes: Ross's Goose, Harris's Hawk, Harris's Sparrow, and Western Scrub-Jay (correction from the 8<sup>th</sup> edition!). Clark's Grebe, Lesser Black-backed Gull, and Fish Crow will all lose their hypothetical "bracket". And finally, Clark's Grebe and Barrow's Goldeneye have reached or exceeded the ten record threshold and thus both lose the "\*".

Next, I will describe most of the significant changes to the order in which the species appear. Remember the order is a reflection of the taxonomic hierarchy so there is supposed to be a taxonomic reason behind any reshuffling of the order! Referring to the current edition of the Checklist is probably the best way to make any sense of these new order changes. One of the most drastic moves is one that has been considered for quite some time. The new world vultures are now considered to be related to herons, ibises, and storks so will follow the Wood Stork on the Kansas list! The waterfowl have undergone considerable reshuffling with swans now following the geese and the ducks in a word, jumbled. Tundra and Trumpeter Swans trade places as do Canada Goose and Brant. Mottled Duck and Mallard trade places as do Gadwall and the wigeons with Green-winged Teal.

- - KBRC Korner, continued

Northern Pintail and Garganey now follow Northern Shoveler, Oldsquaw follows the scoters, and both goldeneyes now come after Bufflehead. That is really about it for the non-passerines.

The order Passeriformes (perching birds) that makes up half of the Kansas list has several families rearranged. Inserted between the flycatchers and Horned Lark are now three families. The shrikes follow flycatchers and then come the vireos. Jays and crows move up a couple of spots and follow vireos. Cliff and Barn Swallows trade places as do Black-capped and Carolina Chickadees and Great-tailed and Common Grackles. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher will now precede the kinglets and European

Starling is inserted between thrashers and pipits. Finally, the grosbeak/bunting family trades places with the entire sparrow family. One last note: all of the new species that will be added to the Kansas list are inserted in places that you would probably expect, but if you didn't know before.... Northern Wheatear is in the thrush family and will be inserted right before Eastern Bluebird.

Wellthat is most of the changes to the Kansas Checklist and just when you were getting used to the 8<sup>th</sup> edition. At least there won't be a new edition of the AOU Check-list for probably at least ten more years..... but don't forget the 42<sup>nd</sup> supplement is due in 1999!

Michael Sevigny received an \$800 research scholarship for his work on *Evidence of Foraging Efforts by Migrating Spring Warblers*. Jennifer Sevigny received a \$100 research scholarship for her work on *Migratory Behavior of Warblers in West Central Kansas*. Both scholarships were made available through the L. D. Wooster Fund which is part of the KOS Student Research Fund for students at Fort Hays State University. L. D. Wooster was a professor at Fort Hays State College and was a charter member and president of KOS in 1953. The Wooster Fund and the KOS Student Research Fund need your support. Contributions can be sent to Tom Shane, PO Box 876, Garden City, KS 67846. Please mark checks for the KOS Wooster Fund or KOS Student Research Fund.

*photo by Tom Shane*

## "Chasing" Rarities

by Chuck Otte

Several situations which have occurred over the past months brings up some very pertinent and important questions regarding the pursuit of birds that you haven't seen before or haven't seen very often. This is a situation that some of us call, "chasing rarities". I've done it, a lot of you have done it, and there is nothing wrong with it. But as the Dickens's classic starts, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times."

In mid-November a Brown-chested Martin showed up at Cape May, New Jersey. (No, I didn't fly out to find it!) Daily and at times hourly updates were put on bird hotline machines as well as posted to the Internet. This bird was probably seen and photographed by hundreds if not thousands of bird watchers. Then one weekend, with many birders present and watching one photographer walked right up to where the bird was perched and intentionally flushed the bird into flight just so THEY could get a picture of it in flight. The bird was many hundred miles from where it should have been, the tropical Western Hemisphere, in weather it really wasn't prepared for and many observers felt that it was in very poor health. This one photographer put their own desires above and beyond others trying to watch the bird, but more importantly above and beyond the health of the bird. Not a situation that I would have been proud to have been involved with!

Now let's shift closer to home. How many times in the past three years have you heard about an uncommon or rare bird showing up somewhere in Kansas, and a homeowner literally opens up his/her property to birding public? I can think of no less than a half dozen. And glad to say I feel that Kansas birders have been very gracious visitors. They came, they saw the bird, they visited, they left gifts. Perhaps a bag of bird feed, a KOS membership, or a book. Outstanding ambassadors of the birding world. The way that many of us feel it should be.

In early November, Debarah Arnett of Olathe had an uncommon bird show up at her backyard feeder. It was a White-winged Crossbill. Debarah is a photographer and took a lot of pictures of the crossbill. But she went above and beyond that. She opened up her property and her

house to those who wanted to see the crossbill. She posted regular updates to the Kansas Birds Internet discussion list. She told people which side of the house to go on to approach the feeders without scaring the crossbill in case she wasn't home. She encouraged people to call her before coming to make sure the bird was still present. Debarah made a lot of friends and even found out that another birder lived just a few houses away. I remember one birder who posted a message on the discussion list who related his horror as he was driving up to her house when it struck him that he was arriving empty handed. This is the example of the mindset that I hope exists throughout the KOS. We should all be ambassadors concerned with promoting the interest and protection of birds and the respect for the owners of the property where they are found.

Many of the birds that are reported on the Kansas Rare Bird Alert and other hotlines around the country are birds that are on private property. The mention of that bird and its location does not give any birdwatcher permission to trespass to view the bird. If we are to expect this kind of continued cooperation from landowners we must place the respect of private property and the protection of the bird ABOVE our own desire to see the bird, to photograph the bird, to add one more "tick" on our life, state or county list!

Perhaps here in Kansas, being a state that is about 98% privately owned, we have a stronger sense of respect for private property than in other areas. Perhaps we still just have that "mid-west" respect ethic more firmly implanted than in other areas. Whatever the reason we just need to remember that every time we are out involved in birdwatching we are in the public's eye. The public's perception of bird watchers may rest entirely on how they see YOU act. If they see us acting disrespectful to the wildlife and to private property then what kind of cooperation can we expect in the future. But if they see us as respectful, thoughtful, pleasant individuals willing to take the time to answer their questions, we've just made a lasting impression that will aid the next birder down the road. Let's make sure that we all go out of our way to be good KOS Ambassadors!

***Make plans now to attend the 1998 Fall Meeting in Lawrence, October 9, 10 & 11, 1998***