



The Official Newsletter
of the
Kansas Ornithological Society

The Horned Lark

613 Tamerisk, Junction City, KS 66441-3359

June, 1999

Vol. 26, No. 2

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From The Keyboard -

Another spring migration season is winding down and many of us are gearing up to do Breeding Bird Survey routes or maybe travel to Oklahoma to assist them in their Breeding Bird Atlas project. Perhaps some of you are taking a few weeks off just to get ready for the start of fall migration in a couple more months.

Whatever the case summer will pass by quickly and before we know it another fall KOS meeting will be upon us. Start making plans to travel to Hays the second weekend in October. It looks like Greg is preparing a great meeting! Also start to think about the spring 2000 meeting (assuming we all survive the Y2K situation!) A joint meeting with OOS (Oklahoma Ornithological Society) is being planned by Pete Janzen with a target area of Morton County/Black Mesa. I think Pete could use a little more help so get in touch with him if you are interested. That meeting is still very nebulous so get involved early! AND, looking even further down the road, there is interest in going to north central Kansas in the fall of 2000. Anyone from that area or with ties to that area should get in touch with one of the officers (or me) so this meeting can be planned. Spring and fall meetings are a great way to meet other KOS members, see different parts of the state and see new birds. I know I'm very disappointed when I can't attend a spring or fall meeting!

Don't skip the short article on birding ethics. It describes a recent situation that turned out okay, but could have been very ugly, very unfortunate and some very bad press for bird watchers. State and federal lands have certain restrictions and we need to be aware of these and obey them. Just like we need to respect private land and work with the landowners, respecting their requests, we need to be just as respectful of public lands. Refuges are often set aside as, well, refuges for wildlife. There are bound to be certain areas that must be protected at different times or else why bother?! The better

citizens and stewards we become, the better we will represent KOS and birdwatching in general.

If you're traveling around the state or country this summer on vacation, gather some information ahead of time. It's amazing how much birdwatching information is now on the Internet and how much birding you can do on the go with the family!!

It's time to send this issue to the proofreaders and the printers. Once that's done I can get my breeding bird survey's ready to run, then county fair, then another issue of the *Lark* to pull together. My goodness where did the summer go?

- chuck

Who's Who in KOS - 1999

President, Greg Farley, FHSU, Dept of Biological Science,
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ANNOUNCEMENTS!

KOS Fall Meeting

**October 8 - 10, 1999
Ft. Hays State University**

Full details will be in the September *Horned Lark*, but be sure to mark this date down on your calendar now! Greg Farley is busy getting details together, but there's going to be a lot of new things for everyone to see since our last visit to Ft. Hays several years ago. And of course, the fall birding in Hays can be exciting! See you there!

Address Update

I just about fell out of my chair the other day when I received an e-mail from none other than John Zimmerman! John wanted me to pass on his "new" address and send you all greetings from his new home, Virginia.

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Errata

In Mike's Musings in the March *Horned Lark* a typographical error occurred by the editor. In referring to Richard Rucker the column reads "good fiend." I know Richard and I know Mike and neither one deserves to be called a fiend. It obviously should have read "good friend" and the editor apologizes for that *fiendish* error!

Chuck

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

New checklists are also available from the Business Manager. They are \$0.15 each for members, \$0.20 each for non-members. Shipping for 50 or less is \$3.00, \$4 for 75, \$5 for 99, \$7 for 100 - 199, \$10 for 200 - 500.

Have you paid your 1999 Dues yet?? Please mail them to Ed Miller, today.

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!

October 8 - 10, 1999 - Hays NEW DATE!!!!!!

**Spring 2000 - Morton County/Black Mesa in
conjunction with Oklahoma
Ornithological Society**

**Fall 2000 - Northcentral Kansas, location to be
announced.**

Check it out and keep checking back

<http://KSbirds.org>

KDWP Forum 12

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The Sparrows of Summer

by John Rakestraw

Most beginning birders consider the sparrows to be among the most challenging groups of birds to learn. In the field guides, the sparrows appear as page after page of nearly identical little brown birds. Kansas is blessed, or cursed, depending on your point of view, with over thirty of these little birds on its checklist. The trick to learning any group of birds is to start with a few species, learning as much as you can about their appearances, habits, and vocalizations. Then as new species are encountered, you can compare them to the birds you know well. After the frantic pace of spring migration, summer provides an excellent opportunity to learn a manageable number of sparrows. The birds are in breeding plumage and are singing their little hearts out. As the season progresses, you get a chance to see the young birds in their sometimes confusing plumages. So go out early in the morning, before the temperature and the wind speed get too high, and get to know these summer sparrows. Then you will have a solid foundation from which to build your sparrow repertoire.

CHIPPING SPARROW - This small sparrow, most common in the eastern part of the state, can be found in yards, parks, golf courses, and open woodlands. In breeding plumage, the Chipping Sparrow is instantly recognized by its rusty cap, white supercilium, black eye line, and clear gray breast. In flight, this bird shows a gray rump, which can be an important field mark in the fall, when the Chipping Sparrow's pattern is less distinct. The song is a rapid repetition of chip notes, all on one pitch.

HENSLOW'S SPARROW - Henslow's Sparrows are limited to mature stands of tallgrass prairie, that is, grassland that has not been mowed or burned within the past couple of years. This bird is recognized by its large, flat head which has an olive green cast. The breast is buffy with dark streaks, and the wings are chestnut colored. The Henslow's Sparrow, like many grassland species, is most easily located by its song, a rather feeble, two-syllabled "ka-CHIP."

FIELD SPARROW - Field Sparrows are found in eastern, central, and southwestern Kansas. Field marks for this species includes a pinkish bill, rusty cap and post-ocular stripe over a grayish face, and two white wingbars. A thin white eye ring gives the Field Sparrow a wide-eyed look. Southwestern birds may lack the rusty tones. Field Sparrows inhabit open areas with brush or small trees. The song is a series of whistles which accelerate into a rapid

trill. Compare the song with a ping pong ball bouncing on a table.

LARK SPARROW - Found throughout the state in prairies, farmlands, and open woods, the large Lark Sparrow is instantly recognized by its bold face pattern of chestnut, black, and white. The clear breast sports a dark central spot, and the tail is edged in white. The song of the Lark Sparrow is variable, but usually consists of two clear notes followed by a combination of whistles, trills, and buzzes.

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW - This short-tailed little bird of the grasslands becomes more common in western Kansas. The Grasshopper Sparrow has a clear buffy breast and a pale central stripe on a dark crown. Like the Henslow's Sparrow, the Grasshopper Sparrow appears flat-headed. The song consists of two high chip notes, followed by an insect-like buzz.

CASSIN'S SPARROW - Limited to the short grass prairies of western Kansas, Cassin's Sparrows are rather nondescript in appearance. The face is mostly gray with a brown crown and post-ocular stripe. The outer tail feathers are tipped in white, a field mark visible on flying birds. While the Cassin's Sparrow may be somewhat lacking in field marks, its singing is fairly exuberant. Like other species of the treeless plains, the Cassin's Sparrow often sings in flight, making singing males easier to locate. The song begins with two faint whistles, followed by a trill, and ends with two more clear notes.

There are other sparrow species known to nest in Kansas, but these six can be found with regularity in appropriate habitats. Listen to recordings of their songs. Then get out in field and find these birds. Make a morning of it and study them at length. Notice not only their obvious field marks, but their shapes and mannerisms. Commit their songs and chip notes to memory. Once you are comfortable with these nesting sparrows, you will find it easier to notice and identify migrants and winter residents. If you are looking for a book to help you with your study of sparrows, I strongly recommend *A Guide To The Identification And Natural History Of The Sparrows Of The United States And Canada*, by former Kansas City resident James D. Rising. With a little homework and some time in the field, you can transform the sparrows from a confusing group of "little brown jobs" to a challenging, subtly beautiful group of birds that are well worth your time and effort.

Summer Flowers for the Birds

by *Chuck Otte*

There isn't a home owner out there that doesn't like flowers in their yard. The double advantage for bird watchers is that they can have flowers for beauty AND have flowers that will help attract birds!

The first thing that most of us think about are flowers for hummingbirds. We all know that hummers like red flowers so plan your flower garden with that end of the color spectrum in mind. When trying to decide which red flowers to plant, look for those that have a trumpet style of blossom.

Trumpet vine always comes to mind and its reddish orange blossom is very attractive to hummingbirds as well as orioles. But be forewarned about trumpet vine, this is a rambunctious, rank perennial vine that needs a lot of space. Not only does it grow aggressively, it also develops lots of root shoots and volunteers readily from seed. Give it a windmill tower or the corner of an old barn and lots of room to ramble. Don't try to shoe horn this plant into a small lot - you'll regret it!

But there are numerous other reddish, trumpet shaped flowers that are annuals and should still be available for planting. Salvia, petunia, snapdragon and nicotiana all are available in red shades. In the perennial category there's also penstemon, columbine, gladiolus and daylily. Not only will these help attract hummingbirds, butterflies will also find them attractive.

One often overlooked secret to making a flower bed or flower box look attractive to you and the birds is a technique known as massing. Don't buy your flowers a handful at a time. Buy them by the dozens! When you plant a lot of something you create a large splash of color, a mass that is hard to overlook.

Once you have a lot of flowers to plant, don't get them too lonely. I like to plant annual flowers in a grid with seven to nine inches of spacing between the plants. This tight spacing may require a little more fertilizer and water from you, but it will help you achieve the massing effect much quicker.

In flower pots or flower boxes use a good soilless potting mix. You should never use garden or field soil in any container. Soil simply does not have the right physical properties to work well in containers. When you plant into containers, pack the flowers in even tighter than in a flower bed. Two to three inches between plants is a great plenty. Just remember to water daily. It's also important to "dead head" or remove spent and dying blossoms as they fade. This will stimulate production of more flowers.

I feel that you need to fertilize all flowers every three to four weeks during the growing season. You need to use a "balanced" garden fertilizer or one specifically for blooming plants. What we mean by balanced is where there is as much, or more, phosphorus (the nutrient that makes blossoms) as there is nitrogen (the nutrient that creates green growth.) Every fertilizer has three numbers, i.e., 13-13-13 or 16-20-0, on the container. The first number is the percent nitrogen, the second number the percent phosphorus and the third number is potassium. Stick with garden fertilizers and avoid the fifty pound bags of agricultural grade fertilizer. Follow the label directions and apply as directed to not burn the plant with too much nitrogen.

But there are other flowers that will attract birds other than hummingbirds and orioles. Seed producing plants like sunflower and safflower can serve double duty. You have the pleasure of the flowering plant and then you let it go ahead and make seed. There are many very attractive sunflower varieties out there today that produce rapid growth, lovely flowers and good seed production. Just remember not to dead head these seed producers - in this case you need the seed crop. There are a few sunflower hybrids that have been developed for the cut flower industry. While these produce attractive blooms they are also sterile and will produce no pollen, or seed! Avoid these if you want to attract birds. You can also take some of the safflower from your feeder and plant it. It is another short season plant with an attractive little flower that is also a good draw for birds. Have some fun this summer and let part of your garden go to the birds!

**Deadline for submissions for the
September, 1999 Horned Lark is
July 20, 1999.**

Spring Birding

by *Mike Rader*

Spring has got to be my favorite time of year. It is a time of renewal, with longer days, warmer temperatures (usually!), leaves on the trees, and as importantly - the influx of more birds!

Spring brings the promise of migration, with shorebirds, sparrows, and warblers being the focus of birders all over the state. It also means "good-bye" to many of the species that kept us interested in birding in the depths of Winter, like Harris's Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos, and a plethora of waterfowl. It almost makes me wish they wouldn't go - almost! It's time to enjoy the changing of the seasons - Spring is fleeting.

There are many activities geared to get birders out in the field, including the Spring KOS meeting, NAMC (North American Migration Count), various birding festivals, and "Birdathon" Big Day events. They are all great ways to interact with friends, with that common bond of a love of birds.

NAMC in Stafford County was exciting, as usual, with awesome numbers of birds present and a high species count. I would encourage folks to participate in the event next year. Let's get some more counties involved statewide in this project. The importance of getting the 'snapshot' of migration patterns doesn't just lie in the heavily populated or "birded" counties. It would be very interesting to see what is going on in everyone's part of Kansas.

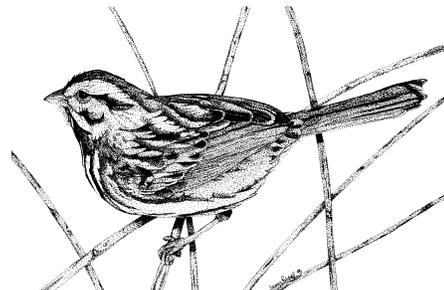
I am assisting with an annual bird festival at Quivira this month (May) and hope that people all over Kansas will take advantage of organized activities where they can. I know that other areas are beginning efforts in providing public participation bird-watching events, such as Kirwin National Wildlife Refuge. Let's get out and support them, whether it is assisting with the programs or as willing participants, eager to learn from the presenters. It also provides a great opportunity to get acquainted with other people interested in birds.

Summer will be here soon enough, with its good and bad aspects. We get to see the temperatures rise (along with the number and size of mosquitoes!). The days are long -

sometimes seemingly too long. It is also the time to observe birds coping with the struggle to reproduce, and raise their families. It is also the time to watch for the return of migrant shorebirds, busily feeding - "tanking-up" and heading to their wintering grounds.

Some think that summer is just the season that gets in the way of seeing birds on fall migration, but I think it is special in its own way. We get to do more fun stuff, such as BBS routes (Breeding Bird Survey), assist with other bird census projects, and have more time in the day to do a "Big Day!"

I hope everyone has a good spring and summer. I also look forward to seeing many of you at the Fall KOS Meeting at Ft. Hays State. Let's see if we can recruit more KOS members before that meeting. We can then share the pleasure of birds and bird-watching with a lot more people. Safe & happy birding!



Fall Meeting Preview

October 8 - 10, 1999

Ft. Hays State University, Hays, Kansas

Friday evening reception at new Sternberg Museum

Paper presentations in renovated Albertson Hall

Banquet/Student Union/Wildlife Art

Dr. Eugene Fleharty

Birding around Hays!!

Interested????

Details/Registration in September Horned Lark!

WINTER ROUND-UP

December 1, 1998 through February 28, 1999

by *Pete Janzen*

This was a very mild winter across Kansas, with a few winter storms to spice things up a bit. The results of this prevalent mild weather are very apparent in this season's birding highlights. Many "half-hardy" species wintered successfully in unprecedented numbers, such as Pied-billed Grebe, Yellow-rumped Warbler, American Coot, Marsh Wren, and many others. Other lingering birds included several reports of Gray Catbird, Blue-winged Teal, House Wren, LeConte's Sparrow, Yellow-headed Blackbird, and many others. A surprising number of shorebird species lingered well into December, and even January, and had already begun returning by late February. Black-throated Green Warbler in December? Black-and White Warbler in mid-January? Yes, this really is the WINTER report for KANSAS, no kidding!!

Gulls provided more of the now expected excitement, although the wild "gull-mania" of last year had subsided somewhat. Of course, that is a relative comparison, since this winter brought additional sightings of Iceland and Mew Gulls, which were only added to the state checklist within the last couple of years. Glaucous Gulls put on a mild invasion in January, but only an echo of last year's explosion. Both

"black-backed" species were seen again, at the Wichita Dump. Whether the continuing spate of rare gull reports is the result of changing distribution or increased scrutiny by birders is open to question. Likely a bit of both, in my opinion.

Rare waterfowl included a Brant at Wichita and a Black Scoter at John Redmond Reservoir, and at least here in Wichita, it is apparent that more and more species of waterfowl are spending the winter. Northern Shoveler, for example, is present through the winter now in flocks of up to 70 birds, which would have been almost unheard of 10 years ago. Garden City birders reported an excellent variety of waterfowl as well, in addition to many other areas of the state.

Townsend's Solitaires pushed east almost to the Missouri line this winter, quite a bit further east than ordinary. A couple of Sage Thrasher sightings in February were interesting, but whether these were over-wintering birds or early migrants is impossible to know.

One thing this was not was a "northern invasion" winter. None of the northern finches that we all hope manage to make it past the "benign Maginot Line of bird feeders in the northern tier of

states" (thanks Kenn Kaufman for the quote) showed up in the area. I guess the food supply was good up north, or more likely the weather just never pushed them south to speak of. Northern Shrikes were widespread in western Kansas, and pushed a bit further east than normal. Toss in a few Bohemian Waxwing and Northern Goshawk reports, and that about does it for "northern" species this winter. Can't get 'em all all of the time.

Looking over the list of records, this really was a rather odd winter for birds in Kansas, not notable for a great number of "rarities" but distinguished instead by its eclectic composition. All part of the changing tapestry we all enjoy observing. Please let me know of any errors or omissions, as always.

Underlined dates, locations or comments indicate exceptionally unusual sightings.

Underlined species indicate especially unusual species sightings for Kansas.

*Pete can be reached at:
prarybrd@southwind.net*

<u>Species</u>	<u>Comments</u>	<u>Observer</u>	<u>Date(s)</u>	<u>County</u>
Common Loon	8 at Hillsdale Lake	Emc, et. al	12/3	Miami
	2 at Wilson Res.	SS, MR	12/5	Russell
	2 at Lake Waconda	CBC	12/19	Mitchell
	1 at Cedar Bluff Res.	CBC	12/27	Trego
	2 at Webster Res	M, E&JR	12/28	Rooks
	1 at Wichita sandpit	PJ, m.ob	1/5	Sedgwick
Pied-billed Grebe	123 at L. Waconda	CBC	12/19	Mitchell
	59 at Cedar Bluff	CBC	12/26	Trego

Note: Pied-billed Grebes lasted all in winter at Cheyenne Bottoms, Quivira, Cedar Bluff, and Wichita, sometimes in significant numbers.

Western Grebe	3 at LaCygne L.	LM	12/5	Linn`
	1 remained at LaCygne L. through the period			
	1 at Quivira	SS, MR	12/5	Stafford
	5 at Tuttle Creek	GS	12/6	Riley
	3 at Cedar Bluff	CBC	12/26	Trego
	1 at Tuttle Creek	TC	12/28	Riley
American White Pelican	63 at Waconda Lake	CBC	12/19	Mitchell
	1 at Cedar Bluff	CBC	12/26	Trego
	2 at Webster	M, E&JR	12/28	Rooks
	6 at Wilson Res.	MR	1/5-6	Russell
Turkey Vulture	1 at Melvern Lake	JB	12/6	Osage
	2 in western Johnson	JL	2/15	Johnson
	1	IH	2/18	Riley
Ross's Goose	50 at Quivira	SS, MR	12/5	Stafford
	135 at Quivira	CBC	12/5	Stafford
	6 at Wilson Res.	MR	1/20	Russell
<u>Brant</u>	1 at Wichita sandpit	JN	12/21	Sedgwick
Trumpeter Swan	1 at Quivira all winter	m.ob		Stafford
	5 at Wyandotte Co. L.	DH, m.ob	12/30-1/17	Wyandotte
	3 at Cedar Lake	GP	1/3	Leavenworth
	1 at Tuttle Pond	GS	1 / 4	Riley/Pott.
	4 at Tuttle Cr. Res.	TC	1/10	Riley
	5 near Chanute	BBr	1/15	Neosho
	3 on small pond	RM	thru Jan.	Crawford
	Note: one of the Crawford Co. birds was killed with a firearm in January.			
Tundra Swan	1-3 all winter		m.ob.	Stafford
	6 at Wilson	BM	12/20	Russell
	1 at Cheyenne Bottoms	AM	2/23-24	Barton
American Black Duck	2 at Marsh of the Swans	Emc	12/3	Osage
Blue-winged Teal	3 at Cheyenne Bottoms	SS, MR	12/5	Barton
Greater Scaup	2 at New Strawn	MM	12/11	Coffey
	4 at John Redmond	ML	12/23	Coffey
<u>Black Scoter</u>	1 female at Redmond	Emc, m.ob	12/3-12	Coffey
Oldsquaw	1 at Quivira	SS, MR	12/5	Stafford
	1 at Kaw Fish Farms	Mrb	12/6	Douglas
	1 at John Redmond	ML	12/23	Coffey
	1 at Clinton Lake	AP	12/22	Douglas
Common Merganser	20,000 at Wilson Res.	MR	1/6	Russell
Red-breasted Merganser	2 at River Pond SP	DR	1/ 2	Riley
	2 at Wichita sandpit	PJ, m.ob	1/5	Sedgwick
	2 at Wilson Res.	MR	1/6	Russell

Northern Goshawk	1 at Wilson Res.	CBC	12/20	Russell
	1 at Milford Lake	C&JO	12/13	Geary
Red-shouldered Hawk	1 near Medicine Lodge	JB, PJ	1/9	<u>Barber</u>
	1 near Mulvane	TH	1/18	<u>Sedgwick</u>
Peregrine Falcon	1 in downtown Wichita	JB	2/9	Sedgwick
Merlin-over 20 reports statewide this winter				
Golden Eagle	1 imm. n. of Kanopolis	MR	2/17	Ellsworth
Virginia Rail	1 at Wilson Res.	CBC	12/6	Russell
	2 near Medicine Lodge	JB, PJ	1/9	Barber
American Coot	<u>1520</u> at Cedar Bluff	CBC	12/26	Trego
Sandhill Crane	100,000 at Quivira	TH, CS	12/6	Stafford
	1 at Wichita	BG, m.ob.	1/5-20	Sedgwick
	667 w. of Med. Lodge	CBC	1/9	Barber
Whooping Crane	4 at Quivira	MR, SS	12/5	Stafford
Note: One of these four was the crippled adult female that eluded all capture attempts by refuge staff. This bird was not seen again after this date, and did not make it to Aransas NWR.				
Killdeer	20 at Kaw Fish Farms	Emc, MG	12/12	Douglas
Greater Yellowlegs	20 at CB	MR, SS	<u>12/5</u>	Barton
	2 at Kaw Fish Farms	Mrb	<u>12/7-19</u>	Douglas
	8 at CB	AM	<u>2/23-24</u>	Barton
Lesser Yellowlegs	7 at CB	MR, SS	<u>12/5</u>	Barton
Spotted Sandpiper	1 in Leawood	JR	<u>12/16</u>	Johnson
Least Sandpiper	8 at Melvern Res.	Emc, m.ob	<u>12/3-11</u>	Osage
	19 at Kaw Fish Farms	MRb	<u>12/7</u>	Douglas
	1 at Sedg. Co. Park	CG, PJ	<u>1/2</u>	Sedgwick
Dunlin	1 at Perry Lake Marsh	MM	<u>12/11</u>	Jefferson
Long-billed Dowitcher	1 at CB	MR, SS	<u>12/5</u>	Barton
Bonaparte's Gull	300 at Paola	LM	12/5	Miami
	700 at Waconda L.	CBC	12/19	Mitchell
<u>Mew Gull</u> 1 1 st yr. Shawnee Lake		SM	12/20	Johnson
	1 adult at Tuttle Res	GS	2/6	Riley
	1 adult at Tuttle	GP, LM	2/7	Riley
Note: The adults reported on Feb. 6 & 7 were <u>different</u> individuals, based on reported field marks.				
California Gull	1 1 st yr at Barton Landfill	TH, CS	12/19	Barton
	2 at Wilson Res.	MR	1/4	Russell

Thayer's Gull - numerous reports statewide

<u>Iceland Gull</u>	1 1 st yr. at Wichita dump	GP, DS	12/24	Sedgwick
<u>Lesser Black-backed Gull</u>	1 adult in Ark R., Wichita	RB, m.ob	1/30	Sedgwick
Glaucous Gull	1 1 st yr. Wichita Dump	JN	12/21	Sedgwick
	1 3 rd yr. Wichita Dump	GP, m.ob	12-24-27	Sedgwick
	1 at Webster Res	M,E&JR	12/28	Rooks
	1 at CB	SS	1/23	Barton
	1 2d yr. at Wilson	MR	1/24	Russell
	1 2d yr. at CB	SS	1/24	Barton
<u>Greater Black-backed Gull</u>	1 2d yr. at Wichita Dump	JN	12/21	Sedgwick
Black-legged Kittiwake	1 1 st yr. at Melvern Res.	B&AK	12/8	Osage
Inca Dove	5 at Garden City Zoo	DB	thru Dec.	Finney
<u>Eurasian Collared Dove</u>	12 at Barhard	LD	12/23	Lincoln
	12 at Scott City	T&SS	12/27	Scott
Greater Roadrunner	1 near Lawrence	m.ob	all winter	Douglas
	1 in Pratt	KB, m.ob	1/20-2/20	Pratt
Long-eared Owl	15 at Lyon St. L	Emc	12/3	Lyon
	15 at Cedar Bluff	CBC	12/26	Trego
	10 near Quivira	PJ, DV	2/10	Stafford
	6 in Wichita	PJ, m.ob	all winter	Sedgwick
	2 near Parsons	M&EG	January	Labette
Eastern Phoebe	1 at Pomona L.	DL	2/27	Osage
	1 near Sedgwick	CM	2/27	Harvey
Northern Shrike	1 near Towanda	BB	12/21	Butler
	1 at Winfield L.	MT, GY	12/15	Cowley
Note: numerous reports of N. Shrikes from the western half of the state.				
Black-billed Magpie	1 at Wichita Dump	JN	12/21	Sedgwick
	3 at Junction City	CBC	12/29	Geary
N. Rough-winged Swallow	1 at Perry Marsh	AP, RR	<u>2/7-9</u>	Jefferson
Carolina Wren	1 at Pratt feeder	MMn	1/1	Pratt
Bewick's Wren	1 at Wilson Res.	MR	All winter	Russell
House Wren	1 at Wilson	MR, SS	12/5-20	Russell
Marsh Wren	multiple birds at Quivira	m.ob	all winter	Stafford
	2 at Webster Res	ME&J R	12/28	Rooks
Mountain Bluebird	100 at Wilson	MR, SS	12/5	Russell
	150 on Gyp Hills Tour	PJ, DV	2/10	Barber

Townsend's Solitaire	1 at Olathe	BW	12/13	Johnson
	1 at Slate Creek	CBC	12/23	Sumner
	1 near Lansing	CBC	1/3	Leavenworth
	1 at Strong City	MP	1/24	Chase
Gray Catbird	1 at Wilson	CBC	12/20	Russell
	1 in KC	LM	12/31	Wyandotte
	1 at Sedg. Co Zoo	PJ, m.ob	1/30	Sedgwick
Sage Thrasher	1 in Pratt	PJ, DV	2/10	Pratt
	2 in Cimm. Grasslands	JC	2/25	Morton
Brown Thrasher	1 in Topeka	JB	12/31	Shawnee
Bohemian Waxwing	1 near Wakefield	CBC	12/20	Clay
	1 near Ft. Riley	TC	12/29	Geary
Yellow-rumped Warbler	180 at Quivira	CBC	12/18	Stafford
	45 at Cedar Bluff	CBC	12/26	Trego
Note: Once considered a rare species across most of Kansas in winter, Yellow-rumps are now almost common in parts of the state during the winter. This year numbers of them successfully over-wintered even in the harsher climates of western Kansas.				
Black-and-White Warbler	1 at Winfield feeder	fide MT	<u>1/4</u>	Cowley
Black-Throated Green Warbler	1 in Mulvane	TH	<u>12/1</u>	Sedgwick
American Pipit	200 at Mined Lands	RM	1/1	Cherokee
Eastern Towhee	1 at Wichita	PJ	1/16	Sedgwick
LeConte's Sparrow	1 at Wichita	ST	1/6	Sedgwick
<u>Golden-crowned Sparrow</u>	1 at Garden City	MO	all winter	Finney
Note: This bird wintered in the same barnyard where several were last winter!				
	1 at Wilson Res.	MR	12/13	Russell
Chestnut-collared Longspur		SS	1/18	Pawnee
Purple Finch	1 at Scott Lake	CBC	12/27	Scott
Yellow-headed Blackbird	1 at Towanda feeder	BB	1/8	Butler

Observers cited: Daniel Baffa, Roger Boyd, Larry Bradstreet, Bill Brecheisen, Joanne Brier, Bob Broyles, Ken Brunson, Ted Cable, Jeff Chynoweth, Leo Dowlin, Matt Gearhardt, Eweleen Good, Max Good, Chet Gresham, David Heness, Tyler Hicks, Irwin Hoogheem, Pete Janzen, Jeff Keating, Bill and Anne Ketterman, Mark Land, Dan Larson, Jane Leo, Milt Martin, Ed McCollough, Mick McHugh, Brad McCord, Stephen McDaniel, Lloyd Moore, Cheryl Miller, Robert Mangile, Aaran Mitchell, John Northrup, Chuck Otte, Jaye Otte, Alexis Powell, Michael Powers, Mike Rader, Ellen Rader, Jennifer Rader, Mark Robbins, Jack Revare, Dave Rintoul, Richard Rucker, David Seibel, Scott Seltman, Tom Shane, Sara Shane, Guy Smith, Carolyn Schwab, Sandra Tholen, Max Thompson, Don Vannoy, Brad Williamson, Dave Williams, Phil Wedge, Gene Young.

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.

Rare Bird Alert Numbers From Neighboring States

It's often fun to keep up on bird sightings from surrounding states, whether in anticipation of migration to come, preparation for an upcoming trip or just because it's fun. Following is a list of the Rare Bird Alert numbers for Kansas and our neighboring states. Most states have one or more hotlines or rare bird alerts (only Mississippi and Hawaii are without). If you need a hotline number give Chuck Otte a call. Many states are also setting up Internet discussion groups about birds, and these hotlines are often posted on those lists. Information on joining the Kansas group or those in neighboring states is found in the column to the right!

Kansas, Statewide - (316) 229-2777
Burroughs Audubon, Kansas City Area
(913) 342-2473
Wichita - (316) 681-2266
Oklahoma, Statewide - (918) 669-6646
Oklahoma City - (405) 373-4531
Missouri, Statewide - (573) 445-9115
St. Louis - (314) 935-8432
Nebraska, Statewide - (402) 292-5325
Colorado, Statewide - (303) 424-2144

A Call for Cooper's Hawk Information

Vic McLeran, KOS member and former editor of the old *Kansas Fish & Game* magazine, is writing a book on the Cooper's Hawk and invites other members to share their observations. He is particularly interested in stories or anecdotes that provide insight into the behavior, ecology and natural history of these accipiters. Please take a moment; if an interesting incident involving this hawk comes to mind, (things like unusual activities or situations, odd nesting sites, spectacular pursuit or capture of prey, interactions with other predators including interpredation, encounters with other birds, or piracy of prey by or from another raptor) he would appreciate hearing from you. Just write, e-mail or call him collect with a brief account of the incident. If it's selected for inclusion, he'll contact you for additional details. Thanks in advance for your help. Contact: Vic McLeran, 434 S. Moore Ave., Dewey, OK 74029; phone, 918/534-3627; e-mail, coops@ionet.net

Send In Those Sightings

As you look at Pete Janzen's seasonal roundup each issue, you always see numerous species that really should have documentation written up and submitted to the Kansas Bird Records Committee. But if you're like me that means finding a copy of the form (or pulling it up in the word processor) and then getting out the notes and transcribing them. Well, I'll do it tomorrow, or next week or the next rainy weekend when I can't go birding.

Instead of putting yourself through all that (and then never getting the documentation written up) why not do it on the web? If you have access to the World Wide Web (and our

sources tell us that over half of you do) then you can use the electronic submittal form and make the job much easier. Simply point your web browser to:

<http://www.ksu.edu/audubon/rarebirdform.html>

and start filling in the blanks. It is very straightforward and self explanatory. More importantly it is then finished, you can go birding with a clear conscience and the ornithological knowledge base for Kansas will be enriched. And you didn't even have to waste any paper!

C.E.O.

Do You Want To Receive the Rare Bird Alert Electronically??

Then send the message: **sub KSBIRD-L Yourfirstname YourLastname** To the e-mail address: **listserv@listserv.ksu.edu** Not only will you receive the Kansas and Kansas City rare bird alerts electronically, but you'll also get to share in the on-line discussions of over 200 other Kansas birders as they discuss bird sightings, bird identification challenges, bird habitat and bird conservation issues and occasional birder silliness!

Cattail Control and Implications for Shorebirds at Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area

by Helen Hands

The shorebird article in the March/April issue of *Kansas Wildlife and Parks* magazine prompted some comments on KSBIRD-L as to how shorebirds can be the number one priority at Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area (CBWA) if issues relating to water availability, cattail, and avian botulism could deter us from providing shorebird habitat during July through September. Perhaps I should have clarified that controlling cattail is the number one management priority and shorebirds the number one wildlife priority at CBWA. Reducing cattail coverage and increasing the availability of unvegetated mudflats is essential to providing habitat for migrating shorebirds. In this article, I will discuss the cattail problem and how we're dealing with it.

Cattail cover is increasing and has become a problem at many freshwater wetlands throughout the U.S. The increase in cattail is partly a natural phenomenon and partly due to man-made changes. Marshes naturally cycle through phases in which vegetation becomes denser and sparser depending on water availability and muskrat consumption. Man has lengthened the more vegetated phase of this cycle in the few remaining wetlands by increasing siltation of wetlands, disrupting natural water flow, and attempting to manage water levels in some wetlands, such as CBWA and Quivira National Wildlife Refuge.

Although cattail probably has occurred in Cheyenne Bottoms for 30,000 years, fluctuations in water levels and fires kept cattail in check until recently. By the 1970s, controlled burning alone became insufficient to prevent the spread of cattail. Consequently, the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks has attempted numerous other methods for controlling cattail. These methods can be grouped into water level, chemical, and mechanical.

Cattail at CBWA can grow in a wide range of water depths from wet mud to 6 feet deep. However, cattail doesn't thrive if completely submerged for a month or two during the growing season. Unfortunately, it's difficult to submerge a mature plant that can grow faster than we can raise water levels in the 1,000 to 2,500 acre pools at CBWA. Thus, water management at CBWA is successful primarily for limiting seed germination and expansion of existing cattail

stands. To minimize seed germination, we avoid manipulating water levels such that wet mud to water less than 6-12 inches deep occur during June through September. This conflicts with shorebird management for southward migration, but is necessary to slow the spread of cattail. Fortunately, spring drawdowns for shorebirds usually don't result in much cattail seed germination and are a necessary preparation for disking and fall burning.

Rodeo is the most cost-effective herbicide that the Environmental Protection Agency has determined is safe for use in wetlands. Rodeo can kill cattail if applied just before pollen is released during late May or early June, or when the plant is transporting carbohydrates to the roots in mid- to late summer. Large-scale use of Rodeo at CBWA is not a preferred treatment because it's expensive (\$70/acre), kills beneficial plants, sprayed areas still are covered with standing dead cattail for several months after spraying, and cattail can recover quickly if water levels allow cattail seeds to germinate. Thus, for Rodeo to be cost-effective, we need to ensure that sprayed areas are flooded with at least 12 inches of water for at least 1-2 years after treatment.

Mechanical methods used at CBWA include disking, digging, and scraping. These methods require that cattail be burned first to remove most of the above-ground portion of the plant. Disking involves chopping and turning the soil to a depth of about 6 inches. This depth is adequate to chop an entire cattail root and move it to the surface where it is subjected to freezing and drying depending on weather conditions. Disking is relatively economical (\$6/acre/disking) and fast (65 acres/day), but its effects are short-term (a few weeks or months) if the disked area is not kept dry during the growing season. It is often necessary to disk an area 2-4 times if cattail is able to resprout due to wet conditions. Disked areas can remain relatively free of cattail for up to 3 ½ years.

Digging and scraping are slower (<1 acre/day) and more expensive (>\$300/acre) than disking. Thus, we use them in limited areas. Digging with the amphibious backhoe is

KDWP Forum continued next page -

KDWP Forum continued -

used to restore borrow ditches that parallel the dike and remove silt that accumulates around water control gates and pump stations. Scraping involves removing about 8-10 inches of silt from approximately 1-acre areas. The advantage of digging and scraping is that they treat the cause of the cattail problem (silt deposition) and remove cattail seeds and roots. Thus, openings last at least 5 years.

Quivira National Wildlife Area also manages cattail. In the next newsletter, I'll discuss why cattail management often is more successful there than at CBWA.

(Helen can be reached at: bottoms@greatbend.com)

Bookmark This, Add it to your Favorites

<http://ksbirds.org>

This site is under heavy construction, so check back

Student Research Funds Need Help!

The KOS Student Research Fund is divided into seven separate funds based on the various colleges and universities that have active faculty members in KOS. Over the past several years, members attending the KOS Fall Meeting have had the privilege of seeing and hearing presentations from the students performing ornithological research assisted by these funds. These funds come primarily from your donations.

The fund for Kansas State University students is called the Gier Fund after Professor Herschel T. Gier, a charter member and past president of KOS. The Gier fund has been depleted and there is a student in need of some modest assistance to complete a research project.

If you can support this, or any of the student research funds, please send your tax deductible donation to: Tom Shane, SRFC Chair, 1706 Belmont, Garden City, KS 67846. KOS is a 501(c)(3) organization and your contribution is 100% tax deductible.

A Review of Life of the Flycatcher

Life of the Flycatcher by Alexander F. Skutch, illustrated by Dana Gardner, University of Oklahoma Press, 1999, 192 pages, 16 color plates, 32 black-and-white illustrations, \$22.95.

This book is full of information gathered over years of observations by Skutch and it provides a wonderful, insightful examination of the life histories of New World flycatchers. Skutch does a nice job describing natural history events based on the literature and his years of field observations. His writing style draws you into the lives of these birds.

Two important components of this book are how Skutch 1) describes interactions of flycatchers with other species of birds along with 2) the amount of natural history described in an easy to understand manner that should be a real joy to amateur bird enthusiasts. For example, in Chapter 11, Flycatchers as Neighbors, Skutch discusses how North American Flycatchers have been known to feed other species of birds at the nest (Eastern Phoebe fed nestling Tree Swallows; Eastern Kingbird fed nestling Baltimore Orioles; Scissor-tailed Flycatcher fed Common Grackles; Least Flycatcher fed Chipping Sparrows; and an Eastern

Wood-Pewee fed Eastern Kingbird nestlings). He even mentions local (Kansas) ornithology as he refers to incidents of a House Sparrow feeding Western Kingbirds and Eastern Kingbirds (two separate occasions). These are examples of the amount of detail that Skutch has included in this book.

Other chapters deal with a general introduction to the New World Flycatchers, food and foraging, daily life, two chapters on songs (a nice elaborate discussion of vocalizations), and four chapters on courtship and nesting. In the bibliography, there are key references of the primary literature for each chapter, which can lead the reader to more specific information.

The illustrations by Gardner are attractive, especially the 16 color plates. Overall, I think this is a book for both the professional and amateur ornithologist. Its most important components will be especially useful for the beginning bird watcher because of the depth of natural history covered along with a solid bibliographical section for each chapter.

Eugene A. Young, Department of Biology, Southwestern College, Winfield, Kansas 67156.

Nocturnal Birding

by *Chuck Otte*

Several weeks ago, several car loads of birders were at one of our state's National Wildlife Refuges after dark looking for, among other species, Black Rails. The group was using lights in an attempt to gain a glimpse of these reclusive little marsh denizens. There was no deliberate intent to harm any species, these were just birders trying to see a bird.

Unfortunately, several federal laws were broken including being present on a National Wildlife Refuge after sundown and using an artificial light. The refuge manager happened to be on patrol that evening and performed an excellent job of making this an educational opportunity not only for those embarrassed birders present, but for many of us the next week on the Kansas Bird Internet Discussion group.

Quite simply, it is illegal to be on a national wildlife refuge after dark and to use an artificial light to view wildlife **without permission**. If there happens to be a "public road" i.e., county or township road, state highway, etc. that also passes through the refuge you may be on that road without permission, BUT you can not go onto refuge roads without permission nor can you use the spotlight from the county road shining it onto the refuge itself.

The state of Kansas has different laws regarding artificial lights, etc. and we'll try to have a follow up column to discuss the use of lights as well as access to state lands after dark.

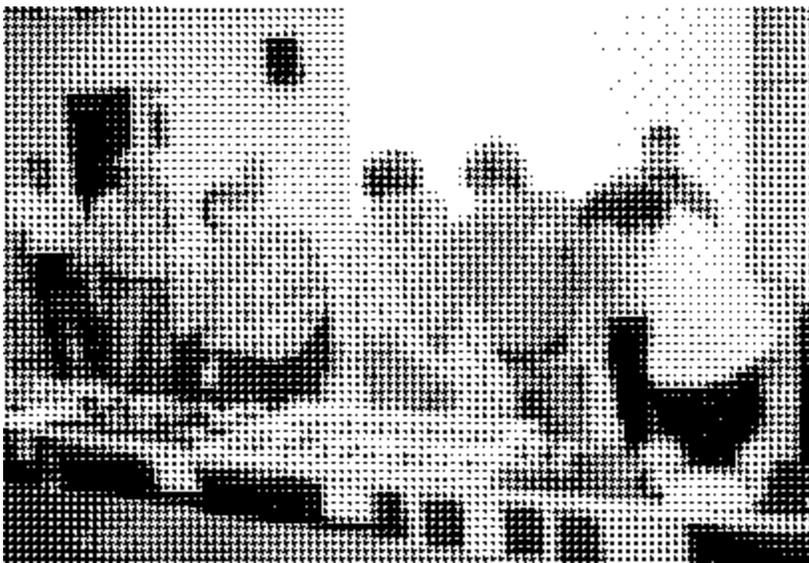
It is very important that we as birdwatchers and member of KOS work with these federal partners. They provide some

fascinating and valuable natural resources that we use on a regular basis. We need to be aware of the rules and follow them. None of us are so special that we should think that the rules don't apply to ME!

If you are going to be doing anything other than daytime driving of the normal roads and trails check in with the refuge headquarters to see what is allowed and if special permission is needed. These refuge managers and employees are great people and want to work with us. By staying in contact with them we will not only prevent future problems, but we'll also help them have a better idea of how many non-game users are accessing the refuge.

And finally, be very very careful about the use of tapes at any time. We sometimes dash into an area and try to immediately find out "what's there" without ever allowing the natural world to settle back down and resume their normal activities after our arrival. With a little patience tapes are often not even needed. Always take a few seconds to ask yourself, what is the potential impact of my activity on the natural world around me?

"Take only pictures and memories, leave only the lightest of tracks," and have a good time birding!



Left - KOS Spring Meeting participants examine some of the shorebird study skins in Southwestern College's collection.

photo by Debarah Arnett

We regret that the KOS kids page, "The Bird's Nest"
is not available in this electronic format.