



The Official Newsletter  
of the  
Kansas Ornithological Society

## The Horned Lark

613 Tamerisk, Junction City, KS 66441-3359

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### From The Keyboard -

Hays was fun! I'd missed the 1998 fall meeting in Lawrence (talk about a meeting to miss!) so really felt out of the loop. It was good to get back together with KOS members and have some fun! The spring meeting will be a little later than normal because of our collaborating with the Oklahoma Ornithological Society. Pete Janzen is in charge of this and it should be a lot of fun. Look for information in the March 2000 *Horned Lark*.

Don't miss Mike's Musings on page 5. It may be a little departure from his usual writings, but take the time to read it twice. I think you'll find that it touches all of us.

One of my goals with the newsletter has always been to help you, or make you, stretch yourself a little bit. I'm not a big fan of complacency so I want to try to keep all of you striving to better tomorrow than you were today. The KDWP Forum may stretch you a little bit or maybe a lot. Birds are all part of a bigger picture known as the global ecosystem. This is a complex issue and we can't extract any part of it and expect it to exist on its own. We may not like the other parts, but we have to understand how it all fits together.

The world population is growing. Many "wild areas" are being converted to land to grow food or into urban housing. Every change impacts the global ecosystem and the ripples are like a stone tossed into a pond - they spread out, they reflect back and in the end, everyone is influenced. We must keep striving to understand this complex web of life which we are a part of also. Just some deep Chuck philosophy to launch you into the holiday season!

It's Christmas Bird Count season again. Find one close to you (or two or three) and get involved. If there aren't any close to

you, start one. We have lot's of gaps across the state that we could fill in with more count circles.

Finally, the holidays are filled with lots of travel. Travel to see family, travel to see birds. Regardless of where you're going, travel safely, alertly and sober. Happy Holidays to one and all!

*chuck*

### Who's Who in KOS - 2000

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# ANNOUNCEMENTS!

## **KOS Spring Meeting**

**Dates somewhat tentative but mark down**

**May 19 - 21, 2000**

**Morton County, KS / Black Mesa, OK**  
in conjunction with the Oklahoma Ornith Soc (OOS)

Look for more details in the March 2000 issue

## **Do You Have A Desire To Serve?**

You would think that with over 400 members in KOS there'd be no shortage of people to fill the many roles that it takes to keep the organization running. And while there probably are many members out there willing and capable to serve..... no one knows unless you speak up! Every year there's a couple of board positions to fill, plus special projects and activities and occasionally officers, business manager and spring or fall meeting committees. If you have a desire to become more involved let Chuck, or one of the other board members know of your willingness to serve.

## **Dues are Due!!**

You will probably be receiving information in the mail in the near future but why not help KOS save the postage and send in your 2000 dues now! Family membership is \$20, individual \$15, sustaining individual \$25, sustaining family \$30. Send those dues to: **Edwin J. Miller, KOS Treasurer, 218 Bermuda Drive, Independence, KS 67301.** Make checks payable to the Kansas Ornithological Society.

## **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 [barn\\_owl@mindspring.com](mailto:barn_owl@mindspring.com)

New checklists are also available from the Business Manager. They are \$0.15 each for members, \$0.20 each for non-members.

New checklists will be available at the fall meeting. You'll also be able to pay your year 2000 dues at that time and save postage!

## **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 19 - 21, 2000 (tentative) - Morton County/Black Mesa in conjunction with OK Ornithological Society**

**Fall 2000 - Johnson County**

**Spring 2001 - Chataqua/Elk County area (aka the Crossed Timbers area)**

**Fall 2001 - Pittsburg (need local committee!)**

**Spring 2002 - Junction City/Geary County**

**Fall 2002 - Wichita, Great Plains Nature Center**

**Check it out and keep checking back**

**<http://KSbirds.org>**

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## Feeding Birds

*by John Rakestraw*

The vast majority of birders put food out for wild birds. In fact, there are millions of people in this country whose only birding experience is watching birds at their feeders. But there is growing concern about the ramifications of this activity. Some of these concerns are legitimate. Some are not. In this column we will explore the pros and cons of bird feeding. Afterwards, if you decide to do so, I will offer suggestions for safely and effectively feeding the birds in your yard.

The first question you should ask about bird feeding is why do it at all? Some believe that the birds in their neighborhood NEED the food that is put out for them. But birds existed for approximately 150 million years before the first Wild Birds Unlimited store opened. They are well adapted to finding the food they need. The only time when bird feeding may actually contribute to bird survival is during times of heavy snow cover. The true purpose of bird feeding is to attract birds for easy viewing. In hunting circles this is known as baiting. While it is usually illegal for hunters to put food out to attract game, it is still legal for back yard bird watchers.

So what's the harm in putting food out to attract birds to your yard? Several concerns were raised during a session at the recent Midwest Birding Symposium in Lakeside, Ohio. The first concern is the spread of disease. Birds are opportunists. If a source of easily obtained food becomes available, birds will congregate in that area to take advantage of that resource. Whenever birds are concentrated in a small area, the risk of transmitting diseases and parasites greatly increases. Two common conditions seen at feeding stations are an eye disease similar to pink-eye that afflicts House Finches and baldness in Cardinals, a condition caused by feather parasites. Other health problems can result from food that has spoiled or from feeders that are not kept clean.

In addition to obvious health concerns, some birders have suggested that bird feeding could have broader impacts. While these concerns have not been extensively studied, they are certainly worth considering. For example: Baltimore orioles normally eat fruit on their wintering grounds but switch to a diet of insects while nesting. If fruit is offered during the summer and the orioles make it a significant part of their diet, what effect might this have on the health and development of the birds' young?

Some flowering plants rely on hummingbirds for pollination. Every time a hummingbird visits a feeder, a plant fails to become pollinated. While probably not a problem in Kansas, in western states, where hummingbirds and hummingbird feeders are very common, this can change local plant communities. Likewise, seed-eating birds are responsible for

dispersing the seeds of many plants. When a bird visits a feeder, it is not dispersing the seeds of native plants.

One concern that is often voiced about bird feeding, especially the feeding of hummingbirds, is that making food readily available will prevent or delay a bird's migration. This simply isn't so. Birds are genetically programmed to migrate, and they will do so when they are ready. The lure of your bird feeder is not strong enough to cancel countless years of evolution.

Despite these concerns, most birders, myself included, continue to offer food to wild birds. Many rare bird sightings are made at feeders. Even the more common species provide a lot of enjoyment when you can watch them at close range from the comfort of your home. When shopping for wild bird food, you may be overwhelmed by the many choices available. Below is a quick run-down of the more common types of bird food.

**Sunflower** – Black oil sunflower is probably the most popular seed with both birds and birders. In a hanging feeder or on a platform, this seed will attract almost anything. If you care about your lawn, be aware that sunflower hulls will kill grass. If this is a concern, use sunflower hearts or chips, sunflower seeds with the hulls removed. This might seem expensive. But remember, you are not paying for the weight of the hulls, so it works out to be about the same price as whole seeds.

**Safflower** – If grackles and squirrels are dominating your feeder, try offering safflower seeds. Many birds like them, but blackbirds and squirrels do not.

**Millet** – This small inexpensive seed is very popular with sparrows and doves. It is best offered on a platform feeder.

**Suet** – Suet is rendered beef fat. It is a high-energy food that attracts woodpeckers and other birds in winter. A vegetarian alternative is dough made by mixing peanut butter with corn meal.

**Niger** – Commonly called thistle, this small seed is imported from Africa and is popular for feeding finches. The seed is supposed to be sterilized before entering this country, but there has been concern in recent years that this alien seed might be sprouting. Sunflower chips work just as well in finch feeders and cannot sprout.

*Continued on page 5 -*

We regret that photos are not available in  
this electronic newsletter format.

KOS members relax and visit during the “flocking” hour prior to the banquet.  
The Fort Hays State University Student Union hosted the enjoyable evening.  
*photo by David Bryan*

We regret that photos are not available in  
this electronic newsletter format.

KOS members enjoying a delicious Bar-b-que buffett and lots of good  
conversation. The evening program was highlighted by Dr. Eugene Fleharty’s  
enjoyable discussion of the early historical view of wildlife in western Kansas.  
*photo by David Bryan*

## Gifts

*by Mike Rader*

As I write this offering of Mike's Musings, I have a lot on my mind. I just finished helping with the Kansas ECO-Meet State Finals at Rock Springs Ranch, just south of Junction City. It was a beautiful day at a marvelous venue. The ECO-Meet is a competition for high school & some junior high aged kids in outdoor events. They included a wildlife identification event, insect identification event, interpretation event, and a native plant scavenger hunt. This program is aimed at getting youth more involved in learning about the wonderful things the outdoors of Kansas has to offer.

I have also just recently attended the fall meeting of the Kansas Herpetological Society. It was a great time, with many interesting papers given on various reptiles and amphibians by students of the field. I have been a member of the KHS for some time, but never took the opportunity to attend a meeting (they usually conflicted with bird stuff!). I'm certainly glad I did. It was a fun group of people, sort of like the KOS folks.

A few weeks ago I was lucky enough to have a couple of wildflower experts, Iralee Barnard and Marge Streckfus, visit me at Wilson Lake. They wanted me to take them out and look for some plants around the lake. What a learning experience (for me more than them)! It is exciting to see what a variety of beautiful things I had growing so close to where I work.

All of this is leading me to a point. We are in the time of year that lends itself to the gift of giving, whether it be Thanksgiving, Christmas, or just thinking of others. The

Christmas Bird Count season is near and wouldn't that be a great way of sharing or giving of your expertise in the love of the outdoors of Kansas to someone young? Take a kid on a bird count with you - let them share in your enthusiasm. Most of us have some knowledge of the world around us and the variety of things that make Kansas great. Let them in on it!

Maybe someone close to you has an interest in nature, but has yet to explore it. This is a great time to help. Instead of buying another video game or the latest fad toy, buy them a field guide. Any way we can get young people out to experience the natural world around them, we should pursue it. Watching the joy and excitement of kids competing at the ECO-Meet was as good for me as it was for them. Seeing people at the Herp Society meeting be excited about things that other have contempt for as, "just slimy creatures that crawl on the ground" was satisfying, as well. Learning something about the tremendous variety of plant life we have in Kansas (and being able to remember some of it) was a great experience.

Looking at the night sky with my kids and having them tell me about constellations has been very satisfying to me. Things like these show me that maybe I'm doing a pretty good job in passing on my love for natural things to my kids and maybe the children of others also. Really, isn't that the job of all of us?

*Mike can be reached at [mike\\_rader@hotmail.com](mailto:mike_rader@hotmail.com)*

### ***Winged Tips continued -***

**Peanuts** – Peanuts are rather expensive. Many birds love them, but so do squirrels and deer.

**Mixed Seed** – I don't recommend seed mixes. The birds pick out their favorites and scatter the rest on the ground.

Whether you offer food or not, the best way to attract birds to your yard is to provide good habitat. Chuck Otte has offered great advice on what to plant to provide food and shelter to birds. If you do feed birds, do so in moderation. If you are feeding fifty pounds of seed each week, you should probably reevaluate your motives. In my little yard, I offer one hanging feeder with sunflower chips, a platform feeder

with millet, and a hummingbird feeder. Don't forget to offer water. Water is just as attractive to birds as food, especially in the arid regions of the state. Feeders and birdbaths should be thoroughly cleaned on a regular basis to reduce the risk of disease. For the same reason, don't allow hulls to accumulate under your feeders. Either rake them up or move your feeders around.

Bird feeding is a great method for viewing birds up close. Imagine how few vagrant hummingbirds would be seen in Kansas without the use of feeders. But in order to protect the birds that we seek, we must feed responsibly and in moderation.

*John can be contacted at [rakestraw@dayton.net](mailto:rakestraw@dayton.net)*

# SUMMER SEASON ROUND-UP

June 1, 1999 through July 31, 1999

by Pete Janzen

You never can tell what the birding is going to be like in Kansas. This summer brought us a few outstanding finds in terms of rarities, some lingering migrants, and some birds that just shouldn't have been where they were.

In Oklahoma and Texas, there was a major northward movement of coastal wading species, especially White Ibis, Roseate Spoonbill, and Tri-colored Heron. At least a few of these birds made it as far north as Kansas, with two sightings of White Ibis, and one of Tri-colored Heron. Another class of southern invaders, the southwestern doves, (Inca and White-winged Doves) made a token showing as well, although these species are raising the eyebrows of birders much less than they once did.

Two eastern warbler species, Prairie and Blue-winged Warbler, caused considerable excitement in northeast Kansas. Both had males holding territory throughout June and into early July. The Blue-winged Warbler was observed with two fledglings on July 2, but only one birder was lucky enough to witness this.

In Kearny County, west of Garden City, Art Nonhof documented a significant

colonial nesting of Eared Grebes at Lake McKinney. This also came relatively late in the season. Perhaps these birds were responding to unfavorable nesting conditions elsewhere. Also present at Lake McKinney was a pair of Clark's Grebes, always of interest in Kansas.

Another perennial summer birding phenomenon is lingering migrants that should be farther north than they are. This group is typically most well represented by shorebirds, and even more than usual seemed to hang around this June. This summer was also marked by a significant number of late waterfowl records. Mergansers, Goldeneye, and Scaup were among the most significant of these. A Dark-eyed Junco and a Harris's Sparrow both turned up in Sedgwick County this summer.

And then there are bird records that defy explanation. Riley County was the winner in this category this summer. The Institute for Bird Populations conducted some mist-netting and banding at Ft. Riley this summer, and banded a Virginia's Warbler on July 17. What this bird, of the Rocky Mountain foothills, was doing in the Flint Hills in July is hard to understand.

Other interesting birds banded at Ft. Riley that day included Ovenbird, Kentucky Warbler, and Scarlet Tanager. Another very surprising find was a Rufous-crowned Sparrow found by some visiting birders from Nebraska on May 29, as reported by Rick Schmid. This bird was seen again one time, but then vanished. This species is not expected anywhere in Kansas except for the Red Hills and Morton County.

My file of records for the fall season is already pretty voluminous, but if you didn't report any good bird sightings to KSBIRD or the hotline, I'd appreciate receiving your sightings by the end of the year, for the period of August 1 through November 30. Good birding to all!

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</u>	<u>COUNTY</u>
Eared Grebe	20 seen, 13 nests at L. McKinney <u>125 seen, 89 nests at L McKinney</u>	AN AN	7/5 7/14	Kearny Kearny
Western Grebe	2 ad, 4 imm at Cheyenne Bottoms	SP,CH	7/18	Barton
Clark's Grebe	2 at Lake McKinney 1 at Cheyenne Bottoms	AN TC, MR	7/5 6/24	<u>Kearny</u> Barton

Least Bittern	1 at Mt. Hope Marsh	JB, PJ	6/13	<u>Sedgwick</u>
	15 at Quivira	BG	6/24	Stafford
Tri-colored Heron	1 at Quivira	BG	6/24	Stafford
	1 in "late June" at Ft. Leavenworth	?	?	Leavenworth
Yellow-crowned Night Heron	8 at Quivira	MR	6/29	Stafford
<u>White Ibis</u>	1 immature at Quivira	SP, CH	7/18	Stafford
	1 immature at Cheyenne Bottoms	TC, MR	7/29	Barton
Wood Duck	1 female w/10 fledges	SS	6/19	<u>Decatur</u>
American Widgeon	1 male at Cheney Goose Refuge	JB, PJ	<u>6/13</u>	Reno
Lesser Scaup	5 at Quivira	TC, MR,SS	<u>6/10</u>	Stafford
	1 at Quivira	TC, MR	<u>7/29</u>	Stafford
Common Goldeneye	1 female at Cheyenne Bottoms	TC, MR, SS	<u>6/10</u>	Barton
Hooded Merganser	2 at Cheney Goose Refuge	JB, PJ	<u>6/13</u>	Reno
	1 in small pasture pond	SS	<u>7/9</u>	<u>Pawnee</u>
Red-breasted Merganser	1 female at Quivira	CH, SP	<u>7/14</u>	Stafford
Mississippi Kite	nesting pair at Lawrence	m.ob	all summer	<u>Douglas</u>
Osprey	1 at Milford Lake	JK	6/7	Geary
Broad-winged Hawk	1 at Ft. Leavenworth	JS	7/6	Leavenworth
King Railadult w/ 5 young at Quivira		MR	6/29	Stafford
Piping Plover	1 at Quivira	CH, SP	7/17	Stafford
	2 on Smoky Hill R.	C&JO	7/23	Geary
	1 at Kyle Marsh	AS	7/31	Jefferson
Black-bellied Plover	2 at Quivira	TC, MR	7/29	Stafford
Mountain Plover	58 including young	JC	7/1	Morton
	1 at Quivira	TC, MR	7/29	<u>Stafford</u>
Marbled Godwit	3 at Cheney Goose Refuge	JB, PJ	<u>6/13</u>	Reno
	1 at Quivira	MR	<u>6/29</u>	Stafford
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	25 at Lawrence Sod Farm	GP, DW	7/29-30	Douglas

Note: many shorebird species lingered late at Quivira and Cheyenne Bottoms this summer. On June 10, Cable, Rader, and Seltman found numbers of several species, including both yellowleg species, as well as Least, White-rumped, and Stilt Sandpipers. As usual, returning shorebird migrants were apparent by mid-July. Hobbs and Patti found 19 species on July 17-18.

Laughing Gull	2 at Tuttle Creek Res.	TC	6/6	Riley
	1 juvenile/1 <sup>st</sup> winter at Cheney	CG, PJ	7/18	Reno
California Gull	1 adult at Quivira	CH, SP	7/17	Stafford

	1 adult at Quivira	TC, MR	7/29	Stafford
Common Tern	1 at Cheyenne Bottoms	TC, MR, SS	6/10	Barton
Least Tern	1 imm. at Cheney Goose Refuge	CG, PJ	7/18	Reno
	1 at Kyle Marsh, Perry WA	AS	7/31	Jefferson
Eurasian Collared-Dove	pair nesting in Mulvane	TH	6/2	Sedgwick
	1 calling in Wichita	CM	6/1	Sedgwick
	2 in Hugoton	MR	6/3	Stevens
	3 in Mulvane	TH	7/19	Sedgwick
	8 in Hugoton	MR	7/17	Stevens
Inca Dove	1 in Wichita	PJ	7/23	Sedgwick
White-winged Dove	1 east of Dodge City	MR	6/3	Ford
Black-billed Cuckoo	1 at Quivira	MR	6/29	Stafford
Long-eared Owl	1 at Junction City Cemetery	TC, MR	7/29	Geary
Common Poorwill	Adult with fledgling near Wilson	DK, MR	7/12	Russell
	1 found dead near Mulvane	TH	7/30	Sedgwick
<u>Broad-tail. Hummingbird</u>	1 at Dodge City feeder	JD	6/5-7	Ford
Rufous/Allens Humm.	1 at Elkhart feeder	CH, SP	7/16	Morton
Olive-sided Flycatcher	1 at Harvey Co. West Park	DRz, CSw	6/2	Harvey
	1 near Junction City	CO	<u>7/10</u>	Geary
Traill's Flycatcher	1 banded at Ft. Leavenworth	IBP staff	7/6	Leavenworth
Ash-throated Flycatcher	1 at CNG Work Station	MR	6/4	Morton
	Nest with 4 eggs at W. Crossing	MR	6/4	Morton
	1 near Garden City	DL	6/5	<u>Finney</u>
	Ad. Feeding young in nest box at Middle Sp.	CH, SP	7/17	Morton
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	pair 2 miles n. of Elkhart	JC	7/14	Morton
Tree Swallow	fledged young at Cheney Goose Refuge	CG, PJ	7/18	Reno
Red-eyed Vireo	1 singing male on Solomon River	SS	6/19	<u>Sheridan</u>
White-eyed Vireo	1 at Quivira	MR, SS	<u>6/11</u>	<u>Stafford</u>
	1 near Pittsburg	E&RM	6/19	Crawford
Yellow-throated Vireo	active nest near Valley Falls	JBr	6/24	Jefferson
Red-breasted Nuthatch	2 at Junction City cemetery	TC, MR, SS	<u>6/10</u>	Geary
	2 at Junction City cemetery	TC, MR	<u>7/29</u>	Geary
Sedge Wren	4 at Ft. Leavenworth Bottomlands	JS	7/11	Leavenworth
	1 at Mined Land Area	MM, GP	7/11	Linn
<u>Blue-winged Warbler</u>	1 at Bonner Springs	m. ob.	6/1 - 7/7	Wyandotte
	1 adult with 2 fledged young	DH	7/2	Wyandotte

Note: The two young were seen by a single observer, and only on the 2d of July. This represents the only reported nesting confirmation of Blue-winged Warbler in Kansas.

<u>Prairie Warbler</u>	1 singing male near Kanopolis Res.	CS	6/5	Ellsworth
	1 male on territory through 7/7	m.ob	6/5	Douglas
<u>Virginia's Warbler</u>	1 banded at Ft. Riley	IBP	7/8	Riley
Black-and-White Warbler	1 in Pittsburg	EM	6/16	Crawford
Kentucky Warbler	1 banded at Ft. Riley	IBP	7/17	Riley
Ovenbird	1 banded at Ft. Riley	IBP	7/17	Riley
Yellow-breasted Chat	nesting pair at Upper Ferguson Marsh	DG	6/12	Jefferson
	1 on Osage Nature Trail	BD	6/20	Harvey
<u>Rufous-crowned Sparrow</u>	1 at Tuttle Creek Res. Dam overlook	RS, m.ob	5/29	Riley
	1 at Tuttle Creek Res. Dam overlook	LJ	6/6	Riley
Lark Bunting	numbers reported very low in NW Ks.	SS	6/21	Gove, Hodgeman
	Ditto	MT	6/13	Logan, Cheyenne
Chipping Sparrow	probable nesting pair at Wilson Res	MR	7/7	Russell
Henslow's Sparrow	1 singing male	E&MR	6/16	<u>Osborne</u>
Song Sparrow	adults feeding 2 young near Mulvane	TH	7/13	<u>Sedgwick</u>
Harris's Sparrow	1 apparently healthy bird at Boeing complex	KG	<u>6/25</u>	Sedgwick
Dark-eyed Junco	1 injured bird in Mulvane	TH	<u>6/10</u>	Sedgwick
Scarlet Tanager	1 banded at Ft. Riley	IBP	<u>7/17</u>	Riley
Northern Cardinal	2 in Elkhart	MR	6/4	Morton
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	2 territorial males at Kanopolis	BW	6/27	Ellsworth
	Adults with fledge at Cheney	CG, PJ	7/18	Reno
Black-headed Grosbeak	1 singing male N. Fork Solomon R.	SS	6/19	Sheridan
	1	SS	6/19	Gove
	1	SS	6/19	Hodgeman
Lazuli Bunting	1 singing male west of Syracuse	DL	6/5	Hamilton
Lesser Goldfinch	1 female identified by call	CH, SP	7/17	Morton
Bobolink	2 singing males near Valley Falls	DG	6/11	Jefferson

**OBSERVERS:** James Barnes, Joanne Brier (JBr), Ted Cable, Jeff Chynoweth, Joyce Davis, Bob Dester, Dan Gish, Bob Gress, Chet Gresham, Kevin Groeneweg, Chris Hobbs, Tyler Hicks, Pete Janzen, Jeff Keating, Dave Klema, Dan Larson, Bob & Elizabeth Mangile, Cheryl Miller, Lloyd Moore, Art Nonhof, Chuck & Jaye Otte, Sebastian Patti, Mike & Ellen Rader, Donna Ratzlaff, Mark Robbins (MRb), Rick Schmid, John Schukman, Carolyn Schwab(CSw), Chris Smith, Scott Seltman, Art Swalwell, Dan Thalman, Max Thompson, Dave Williams, Brad Williamson, Phil Wedge, Institute for Bird Populations (IBP).

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** or, join the Kansas Bird Internet Discussion List (KSBIRD-L) and report it there. To join this list, send an e-mail message to listowner Chuck Otte at [otte@jc.net](mailto:otte@jc.net).

Did you see a **REALLY** good bird?? Take the time to complete a KBRC Official Report form and send it to Dave Rintoul, 1124 Woodland, Manhattan, KS 66502. 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. From this point you can also find a link and fill out an online rare bird report. The report will be automatically filed with the KBRC and you can request an electronic copy of your report be sent to your e-mail address. It can't get much simpler than that!

## Cyberbirding Update

It seems that computers, the Internet and the World Wide Web have made a major impact on birdwatching, just as it has on many facets of today's life. If you need some information about any bird or any birdwatching location, you can probably find it on the Internet,

### KSBIRD-L

I've mentioned before the Kansas Bird Discussion List, officially known as KSBIRD-L but often referred to as the Kansas Bird List or KSBirds. However, there is another group of KOS members who may be getting their first computer this Christmas and will finally be able to hook up to the Internet. So for those who have heard this before, please be patient as there may be a little new information in here for you!

Internet discussion groups are like an old fashioned party line. You send a message and it gets sent out to everyone on "the list". There is no charge to "subscribe" to KSBirds. Once you have a connection to the Internet, you can join. You can join the list two different ways. You can send an e-mail message to the computer. The message is simply: sub KSBIRD-L Your Name You send this message to the address: [listserv@listserv.ksu.edu](mailto:listserv@listserv.ksu.edu)

What is new, as of a few months ago, is that you can also do all this via the World Wide Web. Using your web browser (for most of you that will be Netscape or Internet Explorer) go to the address: <http://listserv.ksu.edu/archives/KSBIRD-L.htm> The KSBIRD-L does not have to be capitalized. I write it that way so that you don't confuse a lowercase letter L (l) with the number one (1). See how confusing that might be! Once you get to that web page it should say Archives of KSBIRD-L@LISTSERV.KSU.EDU. From this point you can do a lot. You can join the list or change your

subscription settings. If you are a member of KSBirds you can post a message from here.

Regardless of whether you are a member of KSBirds or not, you can also read all the messages that have been posted since KSBirds was started in March 1996. You can even search the archives looking for a word anywhere in the message. The beauty of this interface is that if you don't have a computer you can still go to a local library or anyplace that provides Internet access and catch up on the discussions of KSBirds.

### Other Lists

It has gotten to the point that just about every state has an Internet discussion list. Colorado, Nebraska, Missouri and Oklahoma all have discussion lists. If you need information on them, drop me an e-mail message ([otte@jc.net](mailto:otte@jc.net)).

There are also discussion lists that run nationwide and international in scope. BirdChat is probably the best known of these. You can contact me for information on it or visit <http://listserv.arizona.edu/lsv/www/birdchat.html> Once again you can join the list, read the archives, etc. just like you can at the KSBirds archive site.

Of course, let's not forget the KOS web site. We are in the process of moving this to a new site, but it's not quite there yet. That address is <http://www.ksbirds.org/> For now you can start there and then click on a link to take you to the full pages. Once you get there, Dave Rintoul has several good birding links to take you to many different web pages brimming with more information. But beware! Once you go to one site you find a link to another site, and one thing leads to another, and then all of a sudden it's 1 a.m. and you're still on the Internet. But that's what makes it fun out there in cyberbirding land!

## KOS Fall Meeting Bird List

The birding at the fall meeting in Hays, October 8 - 10, 1999, was a reflection of the birding across Kansas during the late summer and fall of 1999; not a total flop, but there has been more exciting birding in years past. This is probably what we would refer to as "paying our dues"! Most of the birds on the following list were seen on the Sunday morning field trips that ventured to Cedar Bluffs Reservoir (Trego County), areas around Hays (Ellis County), and Webster Reservoir (Rooks County). Thanks to Scott Seltman, Jim Strine and Mike Rader, respectively, for leading these field trips! A total of 105 species were seen as well as a couple of subspecies.

Common Loon	American Avocet	European Starling
Pied-billed Grebe	Lesser Yellowlegs	American Pipit
Horned Grebe	Spotted Sandpiper	Sprague's Pipit
Eared Grebe	Wilson' Phalarope	Cedar Waxwing
Western Grebe	Franklin's Gull	Orange-crowned Warbler
Clark's Grebe	Ring-billed Gull	Nashville Warbler
Double-crested Cormorant	Rock Dove	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Mourning Dove	Black-throated Green Warbler
Great Egret	Great Horned Owl	Spotted Towhee
Cattle Egret	Common Nighthawk	Chipping Sparrow
Turkey Vulture	Chimney Swift	Clay-colored Sparrow
Canada Goose	Belted Kingfisher	Field Sparrow
Wood Duck	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Vesper Sparrow
Gadwall	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Lark Sparrow
American Wigeon	Downy Woodpecker	Savannah Sparrow
Mallard	Hairy Woodpecker	Grasshopper Sparrow
Blue-winged Teal	Northern Flicker	Song Sparrow
Northern Pintail	Yellow-shafted race	Lincoln's Sparrow
Green-winged Teal	Red-shafted race	Swamp Sparrow
Redhead	Eastern Phoebe	White-throated Sparrow
Ruddy Duck	Loggerhead Shrike	Harris's Sparrow
Osprey	Blue-headed Vireo	White-crowned Sparrow
Northern Harrier	Blue Jay	Dark-eyed Junco
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Black-billed Magpie	Northern Cardinal
Cooper's Hawk	American Crow	Indigo Bunting
Swainson's Hawk	Horned Lark	Red-winged Blackbird
Red-tailed Hawk	Barn Swallow	Western Meadowlark
Harlan's Hawk	Black-capped Chickadee	Common Grackle
Ferruginous Hawk	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Great-tailed Grackle
American Kestrel	White-breasted Nuthatch	Brown-headed Cowbird
Merlin	Rock Wren	House Finch
Prairie Falcon	House Wren	Pine Siskin
Ring-necked Pheasant	Marsh Wren	American Goldfinch
Greater Prairie-Chicken	Golden-crowned Kinglet	House Sparrow
Northern Bobwhite	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	
American Coot	Eastern Bluebird	
Killdeer	American Robin	

**Deadline for submissions for the  
March, 2000 Horned Lark is  
February 10, 2000.**

## Why Hunting at Cheyenne Bottoms?

*by Helen Hands*

Quite often birders and other visitors are surprised to learn that hunting is allowed at Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area (CBWA). It seems that many people assume that the Bottoms, as a world renowned hot spot for birds, would be off-limits to hunters. Similarly, perhaps, those who call the marsh Cheyenne Bottoms "Refuge" presume that hunting is not permitted.

However, as many know, CBWA is equally famous among hunters. In this article, I'd like to explain why hunting is allowed at CBWA.

Hunting has long been an important activity at Cheyenne Bottoms. Around 1825, two Indian tribes, the Cheyenne and Pawnee had such a fierce battle over hunting rights to the Bottoms that one creek that flows into the Bottoms was later named Blood Creek. Apparently, the Cheyenne won the battle and thus the Bottoms was named for them. Undoubtedly, Indians had hunted at the Bottoms for centuries before white man finally wrote about it.

After the Indians had been driven off their ancestral lands and forcibly settled on reservations, people continued to hunt at the Bottoms. Many of these early hunters took more than they needed for themselves and their families and sold the rest. Market hunting ended in 1916 when the U.S. and Canada signed the Migratory Bird Treaty.

In 1930, Congress passed a bill to provide \$250,000 to purchase Cheyenne Bottoms with the intention of making it a National Wildlife Refuge. However, only \$50,000 was allocated, so the project stalled. Sufficient money became available for the Kansas Forestry, Fish, and Game Commission to undertake the project in 1942. The Commission's objectives for purchasing the Bottoms were to protect habitats for migratory birds and to provide a place to hunt them.

Funding to purchase CBWA came from the Pittman-Robinson Act of 1937, which levied an 11% tax on the purchase of sporting arms and ammunition. The federal government collects this tax and allocates the revenues to the states based on number of license buyers and land area. States receive this money as reimbursement for money they spend on wildlife management and research. In other words, for every

dollar a state spends on wildlife they can be reimbursed 75¢. Most states raise matching money from the sale of hunting licenses and permits. Only a few states, such as Missouri and Arkansas, supplement hunter dollars with taxes on the general public.

Acquisition of wetlands by state conservation agencies and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is also supplemented by state and federal duck stamp monies. Thus, in Kansas, wildlife management is funded primarily by hunters. Without hunters, places like CBWA might never have been protected. Hunters also contribute voluntarily to wildlife management at CBWA through donations to organizations, such as Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, and Quail Unlimited. (Nonhunters have started to contribute to wildlife management in the past 20 years or so. At CBWA, we have been fortunate to receive contributions from Chickadee Checkoff and the Kansas Audubon Council.)

Hunting at the CBWA is justified for more than because it is a major source of revenue. Hunting is a highly regulated activity, which no longer contributes to the decline of wildlife populations as market hunting did a hundred years ago. If you've never duck hunted at a place like Cheyenne Bottoms, you've missed a wonderful experience. Sitting quietly in the marsh for a few hours listening to the ducks quack, watching the teal whiz by and the ibis and yellowlegs feeding near the decoys, trying to stay still while the mosquitoes suck your blood, sinking 6 inches into the mud with every step you take, enjoying a beautiful sunrise or sunset. These experiences are similar, but perhaps more intense, than we get from driving along the dikes looking at birds. To be successful, hunters need to learn which portions of the marsh ducks prefer, flight patterns, and marsh bird identification. As they learn, hunters come to appreciate the marsh as more than just a place to shoot ducks. Because hunters are

*KDWP Forum continued next page -*

## Winter Cover

by *Chuck Otte*

Most birders know that if you want to find birds in the middle of winter head for cover. Most gardening books and bulletins tell you that once the growing season has ended in the fall you should clean up all off the year's growth, put the debris in the compost pile and then mulch your tender plants. Does anyone else see a conflict here?

I may drive my neighbors crazy, but I like to leave as much of the past summer's plants in place until spring. Why? Because if you want to find birds in the middle of winter, head for cover.

We try to create habitats in our yards that are inviting to wildlife so that we can more easily view them. Cover, or shelter, is one of the critical factors that can make birds feel welcome.

Many of our flowers and vegetable plants will contain seeds as they die in the cold autumn weather. While some of these seeds may hold little interest or value to the birds, others are of vital interest. They may also hold some over wintering insects that will be of special interest to those insectivores trying to make it through a tough Kansas winter.

Many of us have a real Christmas tree in our houses during the holidays. Then sometime after January 1st, we reluctantly remove the decorations and move the tree (often minus about half of it's needles) out of the house. The worst fate that this wonderful tree can have is for you to place it on the curb where the sanitation crews will pick it up and haul it away.

Evergreens make wonderful "bird trees". Their thick foliage and fine stemming create a lot of cover. Cover to protect birds from winter winds. Cover to protect birds from predators, both land and air based.

You can lay the tree down near a ground or low feeder to help break the wind and have cover close by. Or, you can tie the tree up with some strong twine to a deciduous tree. If you tie it upright it creates another opportunity of putting small suet bird feeders in it.

This is something you can do with youngsters in the house over the holidays. Gather up some pine cones before the holidays. Austrian pine cones are great because they are a good size to work with and are a fairly open cone. This is important.

Mix up some peanut butter, bird seed and perhaps a little suet along with some corn meal. The exact proportions aren't critical, just get a mixture that's thick enough to work with. You're going to tie a sturdy string on to one end of the pine cone and then pack it full of the peanut butter mix. Put some cones on the tree and keep the rest of the cones cool until they are needed.

*Chuck can be reached at 613 Tamerisk, Junction City, KS 66441 or [otte@jc.net](mailto:otte@jc.net)*

### *KDWP Forum continued -*

supporters of CBWA through their monetary contributions and their love of its wildlife, they should be viewed by others in the conservation community as allies, desiring and working for many of the same objectives.

As many of you know, we monitor numbers of migrating shorebirds and waterfowl; duck pairs; and broods of ducks, pied-billed and western grebes, and coots as a way to evaluate marsh management. Because there are approximately 3,000 acres of grassland at

CBWA and we have little data on its birds except ducks, we would like to initiate an annual survey of breeding birds in the grasslands at CBWA. These surveys will involve walking transects in the grassland portions of Pools 2, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, and 5 during June. This is a lot of ground to cover and because calm mornings are few and far between in Kansas, we need help. If you would like to volunteer, contact me at 316-793-3066 or [helenh@wp.state.ks.us](mailto:helenh@wp.state.ks.us).

*Helen is a Wildlife Biologist for the Kansas Dept of Wildlife and Parks*

# KOS Fall Board Meeting

Ft Hays State University, Stroup Hall  
Hays, Kansas  
October 9, 1999

Attendance: Greg Farley, chm  
Roy Beckemeyer  
Suzanne Fellows  
Carolyn Schwaab  
Karen Ganoung  
Chuck Otte

Max Thompson  
Dave Seibel  
Ed Miller  
John Schukman  
Gene Young

After a lunch of sandwiches, chips and sodas, the meeting was called to order at 12:15. The minutes were read and approved.

Treasurer Ed Miller presented a brief financial report, he reported a recent \$1,000 donation to KOS from Hazel Moore of Dodge City.

There was discussion on advisability of having a liability release form at future meetings, perhaps one that names both KOS and the site college. Chuck Otte moved to consult legal counsel to formulate a "hold harmless" release form for persons registering for KOS activities, and to investigate, and obtain if necessary, general liability insurance for the KOS board. This motion was seconded and carried.

Max Thompson reported on content plans for *The Bulletin* in December and March. It was suggested to include the report on Lesser Prairie-Chickens, that Randy Rogers had presented earlier in the day, and other reports from the fall meeting, as the editor chose. All presenters were to receive free registration for the meeting, and free tickets to the banquet.

Chuck Otte reported on the status of *The Horned Lark* newsletter; Mark Land is continuing with Kids Page. Roy Beckemeyer was asked to contribute the Nighthawk report that he had presented earlier at the general meeting. Chuck stated that the web page, KSBirds.org, was nearly ready to function.

Gene Young said the Hot Line was receiving only 5-7 calls per week; the phone number is in the Wichita daily papers.

Since Galen Pittman has retired from KBRC after 8 years service, and since \$200 has been collected to purchase a thank-you award, Greg moved that KOS donate \$50 to use for framing this appreciation gift. This motion was seconded and carried.

Tyler Hicks, a 17-year-old student at Newton, plans to visit Costa Rica with a Bethel College interterm group in January 2000; he asked KOS for financial help toward the estimated \$2,000 expenses. Chuck Otte moved that KOS contribute \$200 from the general fund, to ask Tyler for two newsletter articles, to ask that Tyler meet beforehand with Dwight Platt for structured preparation planning, and that Tyler make a presentation at a future KOS session, telling of the birds that he saw. This motion was seconded and carried. Another board member, Carolyn Schwaab will also be going on this trip to Costa Rica.

The next board meeting will be at the Great Plains Nature Center in Wichita, 26 Feb. 2000. The meeting adjourned at 1:20.

Karen Ganoung, Secretary

## KOS General Meeting

9 October 99

Albertson Hall, FHSU

3:45 John Schukman, presiding

Chuck Otte, editor of the Horned Lark newsletter, explained CARA, the Conservation And Reinvestment Act of 1999, and urged that KOS members become informed. He asked that the planned dates of all CBC (Christmas Bird Counts) be sent to him so that they can be printed in a future newsletter.

The general KOS body made an affirmative vote on the existing slate of new officers for the coming year. (*Editor's note:* President - Greg Farley, Vice-president - John Schukman, Corresponding Secretary - Karen Ganoung, Membership Development Coordinator - Susan Barnes, Treasurer - Edwin Miller, Business Manager - James Barnes, *Bulletin* Editor - Max Thompson, *Horned Lark* Editor - Chuck Otte, Board Members Jan Boyd and David Rintoul. All officers will serve one year terms. Board Members serve two year terms. Board Members Suzanne Fellows and Carolyn Schwab will be serving the second year of their terms )

The silent auction closed at 4:10; top bidders were asked to pay for and collect their items.

Greg Farley expressed appreciation for the helpers and workers during the day; John Schukman thanked Greg for serving as host for this meeting. Roger Boyd announced he had several boxes of black walnuts from a bumper crop in Eastern Kansas.

Karen Ganoung, Secretary

### Thank You Hays!

The 90+ KOS members who attended the 51st Annual Meeting in Hays were treated to a great time. The Friday evening reception at the Sternberg Museum was outstanding. The Saturday meetings and paper sessions were interesting and held in a wonderful lecture hall, the banquet was great fun and Dr. Fleharty's address quite entertaining. And of course, the Sunday field trips are always a jovial time! The local committee, under the leadership of Dr. Greg Farley did a great job, had fun and helped all of us have fun as well. Thank you Greg, the city of Hays and especially the following members of the local committee: Connie Chen, Mark Eberle, Karen Hickman, Nicole Lambrecht, Deanne Newland, Scott Newland, Richard Packauskas, Mark Roberts, Brandy Spresser, Bill Stark, and Jim Strine.

Check out page two for locations of upcoming meetings and if you see one close to your home volunteer to help. You'll be glad you did!

### Annual Meeting Odds and Ends / Wrap Up

Abstracts of papers that were submitted for presentation follow in this newsletter. These were great presentations - contact the authors for more information.

Spring and Fall Meeting schedule for the next few years was outlined at the Fall Board Meeting. Check page 2 for the listing. These are being moved around to some new locations. I hope to see you at some of them. If a meeting isn't planned for your region, get a local committee formed and put in a bid for 2003 or 2004!

**Ten Best Birds list is missing!** Chuck didn't write it down and Max can't find his list. If you did write them down, or have the list, please contact Chuck or Max!

## Christmas Bird Count Season December 1999 - January 2000

Here are all the dates and whatever else information I have collected. It is often best to contact the compiler ahead of time for any last minute changes or meeting information. Check your KOS directory if you are not sure how to get in touch with the compiler. But most importantly, dress warm, get out and have fun!

### TBA (Contact compiler if you are interested)

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

### Thursday, December 16

**Cedar Bluff Reservoir** - Scott Seltman, 785-372-5411, sselt@ruraltel.net

### Friday, December 17

**Quivira NWR** - Gary Meggars, 316-486-2393

### Saturday, December 18

**Dodge City** - Joleen Fromm, 316-227-6342

**Halstead/Newton** - Dwight Platt, 316-283-6708, platword@southwind.net, please contact if you are planning to attend.

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

**John Redmond** - Bob Culbertson, 316-364-2522

**Lakin** - Leonard Rich

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

**Manhattan** - Dave Rintoul, 785-532-6663, drintoul@ksu.edu

**Olathe** - Don Weiss, dweiss@step1inc.com, Meet at 7 a.m. at Ernie Miller Nature Park, Hiway 7 and 127th St, Olathe

**Parsons** - Paul Milks

**Salina** - Harold Lear

**Sawyer** - Ken Brunson

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

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

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

### Sunday, December 19

**Emporia** - Jean Schulenberg

**Oskaloosa/Perry Lake** - Richard Rucker

**Syracuse** - Art Nonhof

**Wakefield/Upper Milford Lake** - Chuck Otte, 785-238-4161, otte@jc.net, Meet at Lakeview Restaurant at 7 a.m.

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

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

### Monday, December 20

**Cheyenne Bottoms** - Helen Hands, 316-793-3066, helenh@wp.state.ks.us, Meet at the office at 8 a.m.

**Olsburg** - Gary Jeffrey, 785-468-3587 Meet at the Randolph Cafe between 6:30 and 7:00 a.m. Lunch will be served at the Jeffrey residence.

**Sandhills** - Debra Bolton

### Tuesday, December 21

**El Dorado** - Bill Langley, Meet at McDonalds in El Dorado at 7:30 a.m.

### Wednesday, December 22

**Canyonlands (SE Logan County)** - Tom Shane  
**Slate Creek Wetlands** - Gene Young, 316-221-8380, youngg@jinx.sckans.edu

### Sunday, December 26

**Arkansas City** - Gene Young, 316-221-8380, youngg@jinx.sckans.edu, Meet at Newman Park by the US77 bridge in Arkansas City at 8 a.m.

### Monday, December 27

**Baldwin** - Roger Boyd, 785-594-3172, boyd@harvey.bakeru.edu, Meet at 7:20 a.m. at the Santa Fe Depot on the west end of High Street in Baldwin.

**Junction City** - Chuck Otte, 785-238-4161, otte@jc.net, Meet at Sapp Bros. Truck Stop, I-70/US77 Exit 295 at 7 a.m.

### Wednesday, December 29

**Linn County** - Roger Boyd, 785-594-3172, boyd@harvey.bakeru.edu, Meet at 7:15 a.m. at the Texaco station just south of the LaCygne interchange on Highway 69.

**Old Garfield County** - Barbara Campbell

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*Christmas Bird Counts, continued*

**Friday, December 31**

**Cimarron National Grasslands (Morton County)**

- Sebastian Patti

**Leavenworth** - John Schukman, 913-727-5141,  
schuksaya@aol.com, Contact John for details.

**Saturday, January 1**

**Black Mesa, OK** - Sebastian Patti

**Kirwin NWR** - Bill Schaff

**Southeast KS Mined Land**

**Sunday, January 2**

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

**Liberal** - Sebastian Patti

**Red Hills** - Barber County - Pete Janzen,  
316-832-0182, prarybrd@southwind.net Please  
contact Pete ahead of time in case they need to  
reschedule due to weather.

**Scott Lake** - Tom Shane

**Saturday, January 8**

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

**Garden City** - Marie Osterbuhr, 316-276-8145,  
moster@midusa.net

**Sunday, January 9**

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

**Ulysses** - Dan LaShelle

We regret that photos are not available in  
this electronic newsletter format.

An interested KOS audience listens to Roy Beckemeyer discuss Common Nighthawk  
casualties. I'm sure many a professor has hope for such an attentive audience!

*photo by David Bryan*

## Abstracts of Papers Presented at the 1999 Fall KOS Meetings in Hays, Kansas

**Patterns of Development in Passerine Birds** *Scott Newland, Dept of Biological Sciences, Fort Hays St Univ., Hays, KS*

In passerine birds the rate of development from time of hatching to fledging is surprisingly rapid; many species fledge in as few as 9 to 14 days. My thesis research addresses the question of what factors affect this rapid development rate. Current hypotheses suggest diet, parental behavior and phylogeny are all important factors. During the summer of 1999 I quantified how development rate was affected by these factors at nests of six passerine species at Quivira National Wildlife Refuge. These data include measurements and changes in chick morphology such as: mass, length of tarsus, color of feather tracts and feather development over time; food availability and provisioning by parents; and descriptions of parental foraging behavior. Combinations of these factors contribute to the complex pattern of development observed in these passerine species.

**Reassessing Population Trends of Neotropical Migrants: Considering Influences of Weather** *Constance Y. Chen, Dept of Biological Sciences, Fort Hays St Univ., Hays, KS*

Mist-netting has been a common method of monitoring bird populations. According to many of these studies, populations of Neotropical migrants have been declining in recent decades. However, the accuracy of these data remains uncertain. Traditional studies interpret mist-net data as true representations of population fluctuations but may not consider other factors that affect the number of individuals captured at a given time. One of these factors, weather, was analyzed in conjunction with several years of historical mist-netting data from the Fort Hays State University bird-banding station in order to determine if there was a relationship between weather variables and capture rates during the fall season. Weather variables measured included temperature, wind speed and direction, and barometric pressure. Historical weather data were taken from the KSU Experimental Station in Hays, and weather variables for the 1999

fall season were measured and recorded on the bird-banding site at FHSU. Preliminary observations and data suggest that there may be a relationship between weather variables associated with cold front systems and high capture rates of birds.

**Mortality and Injury in Common Nighthawks During Fall Migration - A Request for Help in Gathering Specimens** *Suzanne Fellows, Roy Beckemeyer, and Bob Gress, USFWS and Great Plains Nature Center, Wichita, KS*

A seemingly disproportionate number of injured or dead common nighthawks are found by the public and brought to the attention of naturalists and other wildlife professionals in the fall. Many of the victims have broken wings. This may simply be the result of the aerobic foraging flight habits of the birds coupled with the increased numbers passing through during the fall. There is also some anecdotal data indicating that most recovered birds are young of the year. However, not enough is known currently to determine with any certainty what is happening. We are attempting to collect enough specimens to gather meaningful data on types of injuries sustained, age, class and sex of birds, weight and size, and perhaps pertinent physiological data as well (e.g., bone density or even bone strength measurements if they appear warranted). This is a request for any interested parties to help in gathering specimens. Handling procedures for specimens, data that would be helpful, and contacts for depositing specimens will be reviewed (Specimens will be held under the following collecting permits: USFWS Special Purpose Salvage #PRT-752063 and State Permit # SC-012-99).

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**A Successful Eared Grebe Colony in Kearny County, Kansas** *Arthur G. Nonhof, Thomas G. Shane, Sara J. Shane, and Marie B. Osterbuhr, Garden City, KS*

On 17 June 1999 over sixty Eared Grebes were observed on Lake McKinney in eastern Kearny County, Kansas. Two nests were present about 100 meters out from the southern shore of the lake. Over 130 grebes were present on 23 June with only two nests present. The first egg was observed on 26 June. The first sign of major nest construction was observed on 5 July with 13 nests present and by 9 July the colony held 91 nests and on 14 July, 92 nests were observed. All-out nest construction appeared to be delayed until sufficient submergent vegetation was present. No emergent vegetation was present in this colony. Nest numbers declined until none were found on 4 August. The first chick was observed on the back of an incubating female on 24 July. Seven pairs were observed to be carrying chicks on 1 August. This Eared Grebe colony appears to have made the first successful fledging of young in the state.

**The Limited Role of Food Availability on Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*) Reproduction** *Douglas A. Robinson, Jr. and Elmer J. Finck, Division of Biological Sciences, Emporia St Univ, Emporia, KS*

Life history traits have hypothetically evolved to maximize lifetime reproductive success. Food availability, predation, and breeding experience interact with life history traits and impose limitations on avian reproduction. Of the three variables listed, food availability is the most accepted limiting factor associated with the timing and success of avian breeding attempts. We investigated how food supplements affect eastern bluebird (*Sialia sialis*) reproduction by comparing morphological characteristics, fledging success, and age at fledging between supplemented and unsupplemented nestlings. Food supplements did not consistently aid eastern bluebird breeding attempts, and might not act as the sole resource limiting eastern bluebird reproduction. Further experimentation with food supplementation in conjunction with other potentially limiting factors might help to elucidate current reproductive strategies and characteristics.

**Programs Underway for Lesser Prairie Chicken Populations in Kansas** *Randy Rogers, Kansas Dept of Wildlife and Parks, Hays, KS*

Lesser prairie chickens throughout their 5-state range began a sharp population decline in the early 1990s. Concern over this decline and a petition to list the species as "threatened" under the Endangered Species Act has prompted greater attention to this species. A recent expansion of lesser prairie chicken populations in Kansas, apparently associated with the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), has been documented and populations on more-traditional range appear to be rebounding. Steps have been and are being taken to benefit this species through the CRP. Additional research and population monitoring efforts are being conducted and increased extension efforts are in the planning stages.

**Hawai'i Bird Conservation and the A'lala (Hawaiian Crow)** *Mary Schmidt, Dept of Biological Sciences, Fort Hays St Univ, Hays, KS*

Hawai'i contains one-third of endangered bird species in United States, and it also has the highest current rate of avian extinction. Endemic birds on the island have drastically reduced in numbers due to habitat destruction, introduced species, and disease. The Hawai'i Bird Conservation program was initiated to increase the number of individuals in some endemic species. One of the main species in dire straits is the A'lala (Hawaiian Crow), which has population of less than thirty individuals. The only place in the world to find wild A'lala is on a 260 sq. km ranch on the island of Hawai'i. The A'lala is a critically endangered species whose numbers have declined to the point where less than ten remain in the wild, and those may soon be removed and placed in captivity to preserve the species' gene pool.

**Forest Birds from the Missouri Ozarks to the Kansas Tallgrass Prairie** *John M. Schukman, 14207 Robin Rd., Leavenworth, KS*

Using breeding bird atlas data from Missouri and Kansas, spatial occurrence relationships of 23 forest birds are compared along a forest to prairie/farmland gradient. Studies from Missouri provide evidence for area sensitivity for many of these birds; however,

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little data is available from Kansas. In this study, where the western part of the study area in Kansas is dominated by tall grass prairie with only ribbons or islands of forest, the way these birds adapt to a near naturally-fragmented landscape could add to knowledge of species' tolerances. A Habitat Based Model (HBM) shows clusters of species at distinct levels; conservation plans for those sharing similar ecological, life history and distribution features could be formulated even without detailed autecological studies. Results from this study are compared with conservation recommendations from Illinois.

**Notes from an Initial Study of Cassin's Sparrow**

*Thomas G. Shane, Sara J. Shane, and Marie B. Osterbuhr, Garden City, KS*

Two 14 stop mini Breeding Bird Survey routes were run in lightly grazed Sandsage Prairie and in prairie where sagebrush control methods had been taken in southwestern Finney County, Kansas. Cassin's Sparrow populations were found to be 5.75 times less where sagebrush had been removed. Mid-sized grasshoppers with hind legs removed accounted for 90% of the food brought to four day old nestlings. Males normally land on the same or another perch after skylarking. During a high wind the male makes his flight-song then returns to the sagebrush canopy between plants then flies against the wind horizontally to a perch in a sage plant.

**The Response of a Kansas Winter Bird Community to Weather, Photoperiod, and Year**

*Christopher C. Smith, Martin A. Stapanian, Elmer J. Finck, Div of Biology, Kansas St Univ., Manhattan, KS*

Using data from weekly censuses of 16 stops over 14 years and comparing the average number of terrestrial bird species detected per stop and the total number of species detected per census, we measure the effect of year, photoperiod, time in the winter, and weather variables to determine what influences the ability of observers to detect birds during the period between November 1 and February 28. Year, photoperiod, day after November 1, wind speed, and temperature all had significant effects on our ability to detect the presence of bird species in varied upland Flint Hills habitats.

**Mist-Netting of Bird Species During Fall Migration at Fort Hays State University**

*Jamie E. Timson,*

*Dept of Biological Sciences, Fort Hays St Univ., Hays, KS*

Mist net studies have been conducted at Fort Hays State University since 1961 on Neotropical migrants as well as residents birds. During the past four years we have collected data in order to assess population trends of these species. Dr. Greg Farley and a team of students use a standard array of twelve mist nets set up on a small wildlife sanctuary. The study site is located along Big Creek in Ellis County, Kansas. This area contains a combination of mature hardwood trees, mixed-grass prairie, and agricultural fields. Bird banding begins the last week of August and continues through the end of October. We operate mist-nets six days a week from sunrise to approximately noon. Each captured individual is banded, identified to species, inspected for molt, fat, and various morphological measurements are also taken. What makes our study so unique is that our data are comparable to the historical data collected by Dr. Charles Ely. I will summarize the results of these various activities.

**The Importance of the Presented Papers**

It never ceases to amaze me as I listen to the paper presentations each fall. There is some really neat ornithological research being done around the state each year, some of it very formal, some of it very informal. The ornithological knowledge database has been greatly enriched over the years by this research and these papers.

During the coming months, think about this, review the preceding abstracts and consider presenting a paper yourself. You don't have to be a college student, you don't have to be a college professor or employee, just decide on a topic and dive in. (But don't be afraid to ask some of these folks for some guidance or direction.)

As an encouragement to paper presenters, the KOS board several years ago agreed to waive registration fees for paper presenters. A committee also selects the best student paper each year and awards the winner a one year membership in the professional ornithological society of their choice. This year's winner was **Scott Newland** who will receive a membership to the Wilson Ornithological Society. Congratulations Scott!

## Silent Auction Results

For the past several years, a silent auction of bird related items (books, gear, art, etc.) has been held with the proceeds going to the Student Research Fund. This year, over \$375 was raised from the auction.

While this is pretty good, there are always more student research projects to fund than we have funds. Several of the fine papers presented in Hays were the results studies funded, in part, by the Student Research Fund. This money goes to very good uses!

Start planning now for donations to next fall's meeting and silent auction. But don't feel that this is your only opportunity to support the student research fund. The fund is made up of numerous "sub-funds" based on where students are going to school, so you can target your giving if you like. Consider making a tax deductible donation to the Student Research Fund. For more information contact Tom Shane, 1706 Belmont, Garden City, KS 67846, 316-275-4616.

## But Don't Stop There!

KOS is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Donations to it's activities carry certain tax advantages. We have made good strides to the KOS Endowment Fund and it is helping support some of the activities of the society. But you can never have too much money in an endowment fund. As you wrap up the tax year (something everyone wants to think about right now!) consider making a donation to the KOS Endowment Fund or the KOS General Fund. If you need more information on either, please contact treasurer Ed Miller or Max Thompson. Contact information is on the front page of the *Horned Lark*.

## Need A Gift Idea?

With the holidays upon us everyone is busy gift shopping. If you have a relative or friend that is interested in birds, why not give them a gift subscription to KOS. This is a great idea for that youngster who has shown an interest in birds!

## Great Backyard Bird Count

I know that many of you participate every year in different backyard feeder watches. They're fun, it helps break up the regular winter routine and you help gather some valuable data while you are at it.

For the third year, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Audubon are conducting the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC). The dates for this are February 18 - 21, 2000. This is a web based count. All your data is entered via your computer over the World Wide Web. There is no registration, no fees, just count birds, go to the web site and fill out the checklist. (What do you think Ken?) The directions and guidelines are pretty much like other feeder count type activities. If you don't have a computer you might be able to find one at your local library or through a friend.

The web site is very helpful and tells you all you need to know. Go to: <http://www.birdsource.org> and start looking around. You'll find the information you need, plus a whole lot more. It looks like fun and I know I'll participate!

## CARA Update

Those of you who attended the fall meeting heard me talk about the Conservation and Reinvestment Act, CARA. Briefly, this pending federal legislation would take income from offshore oil drilling proceeds and funnel it into conservation activities around the country. In short, it could provide several million dollars annually to Kansas for use in areas, like non-game wildlife, that have had little funding historically.

Just before the House or Representatives adjourned in November, the CARA legislation was "marked up" and came out of committee. The bill looks pretty good right now and could sure use some support. It won't be acted on now until the House reconvenes after the first of the year. At that time we will need to rally some support and get Kansas legislators to back it. If you need more information and are interested in helping, drop me a note!

*Chuck Otte*

We regret that photos are not available in  
this electronic newsletter format.

You're never too young to start birdwatching! Diane Seltman helps son Steve  
look for birds.

*photo by David Bryan*

We regret that photos are not available in  
this electronic newsletter format.

A scene that is recreated annually. A group of KOS members and their  
vehicles, pulled off to the side of the road, while the group intently scans for  
birds of interest.

*photo by David Bryan*