

Wichita Audubon

Volume 40 No. 4 November/December 2005



NOVEMBER MEETING



Join us for the story of modern falconry. Vanessa Avara will share her birds and her passion on November 15, 7:30 p.m., at the Great Plains Nature Center, 29th and Woodlawn. Vanessa's birds have a very important job keeping wild birds away from the runways at McConnell Air Force Base, protecting the airmen and aircraft from dangerous collisions. Learn about this modern twist on the ancient art of falconry.

Vanessa also works as a naturalist at the Great Plains Nature Center, sharing her knowledge and skills with the public.

You can also join Vanessa for dinner before the meeting at Jason's Deli, 21st and Rock Road, at 5:45 p.m.

CRANES AND GESE AT QUIVIRA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

This field trip, on Saturday November 12, is a two part trip. Our main objective is to watch the spectacle of thousands of geese and Sandhill Cranes coming in to roost at dusk at Quivira. If we are lucky there may be Whooping Cranes there, too. We thought we might as well take advantage of the rest of the afternoon and stop by Cheney Lake on our way, since November is a good month for rarities to show up there. *Continued on page 2*

CNC UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Saturday, November 5, 7 - 9 p.m. Star Program

The cool air of winter makes it the best time to view the night sky. With the Center's telescope and those of the Kansas Astronomical Observers we will be able to see Saturn and some deep sky objects. Constellations will be pointed out and their legends discussed. Bring a lawn chair or blanket or best viewing.



For more information about any Chaplin Nature Center programs call Shawn Silliman at 620-442-4133, or e-mail cnc@wichitaudubon.org. CNC is located 3 miles west of Arkansas City on Hwy 166, north 2 miles on 21st Rd, east 0.6 miles on 272nd Rd.

COMING EVENTS

November 5

Star program at Chaplin Nature Center, 7 - 9 p.m.

November 15

Regular meeting, "Modern Falconry," by Vanessa Avara, 7:30 p.m. at the Great Plains Nature Center.

November 12

Cranes & Geese at Quivira NWR - see article this page.

December 17

Wichita Christmas Bird Count Meet at Lawrence-Dumont Stadium at 7:30 a.m.

December 17

Halstead/Newton Christmas Bird Count. Meet at the Kaufman Museum at 6:30 a.m.

December 18

Winfield/Udall Christmas Bird Count. Meet at the Beech Science Center, Southwestern College, at 7:30 a.m.

December 21

Slate Creek Christmas Bird Count. Meet at the Slate Creek Baptist Church, at 8 a.m.

December 23

Arkansas City Christmas Bird Count. Meet at Newman Park at 8 a.m.

December 31

El Dorado Christmas Bird Count Meet at McDonald's in El Dorado at 7:30 a.m.

December 31

Red Hills Christmas Bird Count Depart from the Indian Grill in Medicine Lodge at 7:30 a.m.

BIRD SEED SALE

Our first bird seed sale of the season is coming up. Formerly, our seed was supplied by Wallace Champeny from the Old Mill in Oxford, but this summer Wally decided to close the mill. Because we had to find a new supplier, we are a little late getting started this season. But we still offer high quality seed, delivered to your home (within Wichita City limits.)

Please submit your order by **Tuesday, November 15**

The seed will be delivered on Saturday, November 19

25 lbs Black Oil Sunflower seed - \$10

25 lbs Audubon Mix - \$8

Order by phone, mail or email.

Call Carol Cumberland at 316-685-4867 or

email carol.cumberland@swbell.net

Mail: Wichita Audubon Society, PO Box 47607, Wichita, KS 67201

**KEEP UP TO DATE AT OUR
NEWLY DESIGNED WEBSITE:
WWW.WICHITAAUDUBON.ORG**

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email any officer: was@wichitaaudubon.org

Send address changes to Sister Patricia Stanley, 6739 Perryton, Wichita, KS 67226
pstanley@csjwichita.org

EXTENDED FIELD TRIP

The extended field trip this year will be to southeast Arizona with an extension into northern Mexico July 31- August 6, 2006. In Arizona we will visit famous hotspots in the Chiricahuas mountains like Portal and Rustler Park, and the Sierra Vista area with attractions like the Ramsey Canyon Preserve and the Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Sanctuary. Following the Arizona birding we plan to rent a van to bird our way to Yecora, Mexico.

This trip is still in the planning stages. Sign up at the meetings or contact one of the trip leaders if you are interested and we will keep you informed as plans progress. Kevin Groeneweg is planning the itinerary. He can be reached at 687-4268, kgroeneweg@sbcglobal.net. Patty Marlett is planning logistics like lodging. She can be reached at 942-2164, pmarlett@mac.com.

CLEANUP THANK YOU

Thank you to the six dedicated volunteers who helped pick up litter at Chisholm Creek Park on October 8: Ben Rogers, Catherine Lewis, Kevin Groeneweg, Walker Butin, and Corie Meyers. Sandra Tholen worked several times during the week, cleaning up on her daily walks around the park.

CRANES & GEESE, CONT.

We will meet at 1 p.m. in the parking lot of the Great Plains Nature Center to carpool to Cheney. Or, if you prefer, you can meet us at the Quivira Headquarters at 3 p.m. Leader: Patty Marlett, 942-2164, pmarlett@mac.com

HISTORY OF THE WICHITA CBC

This year's Wichita Christmas Bird count, conducted on Dec. 17, 2005, will be the 51st annual count which has been conducted in Wichita by the Wichita Audubon Society. This count follows the protocol of the thousands of other counts which are conducted across North America each holiday season. The center of the 7.5 mile radius count circle is located at the confluence of the Little Arkansas and Arkansas Rivers near downtown Wichita, Kansas. One full day is spent counting all birds found within the circle. The first count was conducted on Jan. 5, 1955, by the newly incorporated Wichita Audubon Society. Although Christmas Bird Counts had been conducted somewhere in the Wichita area during many years between 1904 and 1954, they had not all been conducted in the same exact count circle, and information about these early counts is sketchy to varying degrees, although many were published, producing some significant data. Only a few CBCs in Kansas have been conducted without interruption for so many years. We are fortunate that two of our charter members, Walker Butin and Dan Kilby, who participated in that first count fifty years ago, are still with us. Walker has been on 45 of the first 50 counts, and Dan is close behind with 42 counts to his name. Wally Champeny has also been on 42 of our counts, and additionally served as the count compiler for 25 years. Several other current participants deserving of special mention, with their years of participation in

parentheses, are Eddie Stegall (35), Savilla Stegall (35), Don Vannoy (33), Bob Gress (22), and Rick Goodrick (19). Others who were on more than 10 counts in earlier years were Ralph Wiley (34), Mike Lesan (31), Don Ferguson (19), Jean Roark (19), Miriam Roark (19), James Fisher (15), Nathan MacDonald (13), Carl Holmes (12), Phil Butin (12), Rick Butin (11), Durward Tucker (11), Gerald Wiens (11) and Mary Wiley (11). These were dedicated volunteers, who sometimes braved very hostile weather to do these counts.

The count circle originally had a substantial amount of agricultural land in it, but is now almost entirely urbanized to at least some degree. As the developments of the city claim more of the farmland, the birds of open country retreat. However, substantial areas of varying wild habitat remain, so that our count continues to be both enjoyable and productive. Many artificial lakes and ponds have been created, and the count today produces many aquatic bird species which would have been unheard of in the early years of the count. Northern Shoveler is a classic example of this trend. This duck species was once found only at intervals of 3 or 4 years or so, and then only in small numbers. They are now found every year, with a stunning 411 individuals seen on the last count! The gradual warming of our climate has also allowed birds which formerly wintered to the south of our area to sometimes linger into the winter months, which also contributes to our higher species total in recent years. Examples include species such as Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Orange-crowned Warbler. Many of the species in the 50% or lower occurrence categories were extremely rare in the first two decades of the count, but now occur much more regularly. Our count results are an important record of these dynamic changes. The total number of species seen per count has ranged from 48-94 species. Despite the continuing development of land in our area, recent counts have averaged higher than in the early years, primarily because of the habitat and climate changes discussed above.

by Pete Janzen (Edited from the booklet he produced for the 2004 count.)


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There are two ways of being a member of Wichita Audubon: by joining the National Audubon Society, or by joining or making a donation to the Wichita Audubon Society. IF YOU ARE A MEMBER of the NATIONAL Audubon Society, you receive Audubon magazine in the mail, as well as this newsletter. National will send you renewal notices when your membership is about to expire.

IF YOU ARE A MEMBER of the WICHITA Audubon Society ONLY, you do not receive Audubon Magazine. You should check the expiration date above. Use the form below to renew your membership, or go to www.wichitaaudubon.org and click on Membership. If you no longer wish to receive the newsletter, check the appropriate box below.

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Yes, renew my membership in the Wichita Audubon Society at the following level:

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