

Wichita Audubon



Volume 38 No. 5 January/February 2004

CNC Upcoming Programs

January 31, Saturday & February 7, Saturday 10 am - Noon Eagle Watch

Mid-winter is a great time to view Bald Eagles in Kansas. Searching for open water, many eagles migrate down to Kansas to find open water with the fish they love to eat. The group will take a 1.5 mile hike down to the Arkansas River. If you have binoculars, bring them; if not, the Nature Center can loan you a pair.

March 5, Friday 7 - 8 pm Owl Prowl

Why have owls traditionally been seen as bad omens? Find out the truth about owls and the many adaptations that have made them one of the most successful and mysterious nocturnal animals. A short indoor presentation will be followed by an outdoor night hike to listen for their calls.

For more information about any Chaplin Nature Center programs call Shawn Silliman at 620-442-4133, or e-mail cnc@wichitaudubon.org.



January Meeting

Join us as Paul Griffin, an amateur videographer and member of Wichita Audubon, shows us a video of Oak Park. This adventure shows the best of the 90 species Paul captured on video from April 2002 through June 2003. Walk with Paul month to month to see and hear the warblers, vireos, thrushes, sparrows, and owls that visit and inhabit the park.

The program will be January 20, 7:30 pm in the auditorium at the Great Plains Nature Center, 29th and Woodlawn.

You can also join Paul and other members for dinner at Jason's Deli, in Bradley Fair at 21st and Rock Road, at 5:45 pm before the meeting.

February Meeting

Dr. Roger Boyd, Professor of Biology at Baker University, will take us on another journey, this time to Great Britain. On a teaching assignment in England for four months, Roger and his wife, Jan, traveled throughout England every weekend, experiencing the history, culture, and bird life across the famous hillsides. Come and learn about adventures in Jolly Ol' England from a birder's point of view.

The program will be on Tuesday, February 17, 7:30 pm at the Great Plains Nature Center, 29th and Woodlawn.

Join Roger and other members for dinner at Jason's Deli, in Bradley Fair at 21st and Rock Road, at 5:45 pm before the meeting.

Coming Events

January 20

Regular meeting, "The Birds of Oak Park," by Paul Griffin, 7:30 pm at the Great Plains Nature Center.

January 31 February 7

Eagle Watch at Chaplin Nature Center, 10 am to noon. Leader: Shawn Silliman, 620-442-4133, cnc@wichitaudubon.org

February 13-16

Great Backyard Bird Count. See page 3

February 7

Sedgwick County Zoo Jungle Building field trip. Meet in the lobby of the jungle building at 10:15. (Zoo opens at 10.) Bring money for admission fee. Leader: Patty Marlett, 942-2164, pmarlett@mac.com

February 17

Regular meeting, "Birding in England," by Dr. Roger Boyd, 7:30 pm at the Great Plains Nature Center.

February 21

Field Trip - K.U. Museum of Natural History tour, 9 am - 5 pm. Meet at the Great Plains Nature Center parking lot at 7 am to carpool, or meet at the museum at 9 am. Get a behind-the-scenes tour of exhibits and the bird study skin collection. Leader: Pete Janzen, 832-0182, prarybrd@southwind.net

Big Brother Big Sisters Programs

Our two programs for Big Brothers Big Sisters this fall were successes. On October 18 we took four kids to Chaplin Nature Center for a hike to the river, a cookout, and building bird houses. November 22 we took thirteen kids to Quivira National Wildlife Refuge to see the thousands of geese and sandhill cranes that stop there each fall. It was cold, but Laura's hot chocolate and brownies helped stave off the chill. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped: Cindy and Mike McWilliams, Kevin and Laura Groeneweg, Jim and Patty Marlett, Sharon Bolin, Paul Hobelman, Anne Tarver, Bill and Cheryl Baumeister, Milan Gordon, and Carol Cumberland. And thanks to Shawn Silliman for hosting us at CNC and providing binoculars for the Quivira trip.

50th Anniversary

The 50th anniversary Committee invites you to contribute your memories to the newsletter. You can write an article, or just reminisce about the good ole days of Wichita Audubon and we'll put it together for you. Contact Kevin Groeneweg, 687-4268, kgroeneweg@cox.net, or Patty Marlett, 942-2164, pmarlett@mac.com.

Correction

The names of Dr. Joseph and Helen Brewer were inadvertently omitted from the list of Cardinal donors in the 2002-2003 Annual Report distributed with the November newsletter. Our apologies, and our thanks to them for their generosity.

Bird Seed Sale

Buy your bird seed from Wichita Audubon and support your chapter. We sell and deliver bird seed. The next delivery date will be January 24. To place your order call Carol at 685-4867 or email ccumb@swbell.net by January 20. You may also mail your order to WAS, PO Box 47607, Wichita, KS 67201. Include your name, address, and phone number. There will be another sale in March, with delivery on March 20. Orders will need to be placed by March 16.

Order for January 24 delivery:
___25 lb Black Oil Sunflower@\$10
___25 lb Audubon Mix @\$8

Order for March 20 delivery:
___25 lb Black Oil Sunflower@\$10
___25 lb Audubon Mix @\$8

A big thank you to the people who helped deliver in November: DuaneDeLong, Kevin Groeneweg, Hal Cumberland, Dodge and Mary Kemmer

Thanks

On Saturday, October 25, four Audubon Society members cleaned up portions of Chisholm Creek Park. Tom Gray and Becky Aldridge picked up trash along the entrance way from Oliver to the west parking lot, and cleaned up the parking lot as well. Sandra Tholen and Paul Hobelman cleaned around the bridge at the northeast corner of the walking trail, where high water had brought in and deposited trash from Woodlawn. In addition, Duane DeLong spent an hour Thursday evening removing trash from the southeast corner of the park along Woodlawn, 29th Street, and the parking lot drive.

Paul Hobelman, Greenways chair

2003-2004 WAS Officers

President	Kevin Groeneweg	687-4268	kgroeneweg@cox.net
Vice-president	Carol Cumberland	685-4867	ccumb@swbell.net
Secretary	Sharon Bolin	620-584-2314	jbolin@sktc.net
Treasurer	Duane DeLong	684-7456	dwdelong@earthlink.net

Directors

Bill Beard	722-3081	wbeard@cox.net
Mary Englemen-Kemmer	688-5322	rockchalk123@aol.com
Barbara Millar	838-8542	bmi3931874@aol.com
Gary Straley	620-221-3664	garrob@hit.net
Don Dewitt	722-0742	ddewitt@omnibizcenter.com

Committee Chairs

Newsletter	Patty Marlett	942-2164	pmarlett@mac.com
CNC	Gary Straley	620-221-3664	garrob@hit.net
Programs	Carol Cumberland	685-4867	ccumb@swbell.net
Conservation	Barbara Millar	838-8542	bmi3931874@aol.com
Membership	Sister Patricia Stanley		pstanley@csjwichita.org
Hospitality	Laura Groeneweg	687-4268	lauranng@cox.net
Field Trips	Cheryl Miller	978-6659 (wk)	avian67226@hotmail.com
Finance	Don Dewitt	722-0742	ddewitt@omnibizcenter.com
Naturalist	Shawn Silliman	620-442-4133	cnc@wichitaudubon.org

www.wichitaudubon.org

email any officer: was@wichitaudubon.org

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

Great Backyard Bird Count Feb 13-16

From February 13-16, 2004, bird enthusiasts are invited to take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), a project developed and managed by the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, with sponsorship from Wild Birds Unlimited storeowners and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

All who enjoy birds will be able to submit their observations through BirdSource www.birdsource.org. Whether they spend a few minutes or several hours counting birds, GBBC participants will help determine the status of birds continent-wide. At the same time, the project will teach participants how to turn their backyards into real, useful habitat for birds.

"Improving backyards is an important way to create greenways for birds between parks and wild areas," said Frank Gill, Audubon's Director of Science. "Yards allow for the cultivation of native plants and provide essential sanctuary to migratory and resident birds. Participating in the Great Backyard Bird Count gives people a first-hand view of how important bird-friendly backyards are to many bird species."

GBBC will highlight the newly expanded "Audubon At Home" website where visitors will learn the best ways to improve the health and diversity of their backyards with native plants, water, and other wildlife-friendly elements. By promoting the basic messages: reduce pesticide use; conserve water; protect water quality; plant native species; and remove exotic pests, "Audubon At Home" seeks to

involve everyone in creating healthier habitat for birds, other wildlife, and people, too.

An important step in creating healthy habitats is to become a "bird-friendly family." Going on a family bird-watching outing and keeping a yearly list of the birds that visit the yard are examples of ways families can become birdfriendly. Keeping a pair of binoculars and a field guide handy are particularly good for encouraging children to learn more about birds and the habitat right around their home. Please visit the website for more suggestions.

Hand in hand with participating in projects like The Great Backyard Bird Count, it's important to remember that when we invite birds and wildlife into our yards, we are responsible for keeping these guests safe from man-made hazards. More than 100 million and perhaps as many as a billion birds are killed each year when they collide with windows. Instructions about minimizing window kills, proper placement of birdhouses and feeders, keeping house cats indoors, and removing other threats to the health and safety of wild creatures will be available to participants and anyone who visits the Great Backyard Bird Count web site.

In addition to offering birdfriendly tips, this year's GBBC will again help participants across the continent identify puzzling backyard species, especially those that are easily confused with other species like the American Tree Sparrow, which to the uninitiated can look much like the more southerly wintering Chipping Sparrow.

The site will also explain why

some familiar bird names have been changed. For example: the much-loved Rufous-sided Towhee is now considered to be two species by the scientific community, the Eastern Towhee (in the East) and the Spotted Towhee (in the West). As always, the GBBC web site also includes a vocabulary section, birdwatching and bird-feeding tips, bird vocalizations, and more. Educators will find the bibliography and geography sections especially handy, and there are even suggestions on how to conduct the count with groups of children. Instructions for participating can be found at www.birdsource.org/gbbc.

There's no fee or registration. Those who would like to participate but aren't online can try their local library or Wild Birds Unlimited store, many of which can help enter GBBC sightings.

FOR MORE INFO: Contact us at citizenscience@audubon.org or 215/355-9588, Ext. 16, Audubon Science Office, 545 Almshouse Road, Ivyland, PA 18974.

A Snapshot of Last Year's GBBC Findings

Last winter, as part of the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), bird enthusiasts across North America submitted almost 50,000 checklists totaling more than four million birds of 512 species during the February count.

The event, one of the largest citizen-science projects in the world, documented regional declines of the American Crow that may be the result of West Nile virus in those regions. These crows were reported

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Snapshot, continued

in alarmingly fewer numbers in Illinois and Ohio, where West Nile virus has had a strong presence, backing findings from the Christmas Bird Count and Project Feeder Watch. This decrease may or may not be related to West Nile, but the situation is certainly something we need to pay attention to. Crows are particularly vulnerable to the virus.

Other species showed increases last year during the GBBC. Participants in the eastern United States counted more Dark-eyed Juncos than they had since GBBC 2000, perhaps because of the massive snowstorm that hit the eastern seaboard during the weekend of the count, driving birds to feeders in high numbers. That same snowstorm apparently held early

migrants like Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, and American Woodcock farther south, compared to previous years.

In the West, Mountain Bluebirds were reported farther south than the year before, and all of the rosy-finches (Black, Gray-crowned, Brown-capped) were documented farther north. In previous years, GBBC maps of Eurasian Collared-

Doves, introduced in the Bahamas before reaching Florida in the 1980s, showed the species spreading quickly northwest. Last year's maps show no change, suggesting a slowdown in the rate at which the bird's range is spreading.

How will this winter compare to the last six? What will it reflect about our bird populations? The participation of novice and expert bird watchers alike will help us answer these questions. We need every birder to participate with us.

The Great Backyard Bird Count has become an important means of gathering data to help birds, but it can't happen unless people take part. Whether you're a novice or an expert, we need you to help us help birds.

