

Audubon

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March 2018

March 10

Second Saturday Bird Walk in Chisholm Creek Park. Meet in the Great Plains Nature Center parking lot at 8 a.m. Questions?: Kevin Groeneweg, kgroeneweg@sbcglobal.net, 706-9116

March 10

Chisholm Creek Park Cleanup. Meet in the parking lot after the second Saturday bird walk, about 9:30 a.m. Bring gloves - we'll provide trash bags. Leader: Sandra Tholen, 634-0049, stholen@cox.net

March 17

*Bald Eagle Nest Visit at Chaplin Nature Center, 10 a.m. - noon
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**March 20**

*Monthly program, "A Decade of Discovering Secrets of the Scissor-tails," by Dr. Mike Husak, 7 p.m. at the Great Plains Nature Center. Join us for dinner with Mike before the program at Panera Bread, 1605 N Rock Road, at 5:30 p.m.
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March 31

*Oak Park Invasive Plant Removal, 9 a.m.
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**April 7**

*Chaplin Nature Center Spring Clean-up, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
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March Meeting

Our March program will be "A Decade of Discovering Secrets of the Scissor-tails," by Dr. Mike Husak. He is a Professor of Biology in the Department of Agriculture, Biology, and Health Sciences at Cameron University in Lawton Oklahoma.

In his presentation, Mike will share some of the data highlights he and collaborators have discovered during a 10-year study of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers in the Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge, Fort Sill Military Reservation, and the city of Lawton, Oklahoma. Using technology ranging from DNA to geospatial locators, and tracking more than 1200 nesting pairs of birds, they have discovered an amazing array of details regarding their life history that no previous study has accomplished. Who knew such a familiar prairie bird held so many secrets!



Mike Husak

Mike has been at Cameron University since 2003, where he teaches courses in Zoology, Ecology, Ornithology, Mammalogy, Natural History, and History of Science. Additionally, he serves as the curator for the Cameron University Museum of Zoology, the Campus Manager for the Oklahoma Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (OK-LSAMP), and chair of the Institutional Assessment Committee. While his research with students has included geckos, collared lizards, rodents, and fish, his primary interest continues to be that of the ecology of birds. Mike has been focusing his personal research time on a local population of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers since 2008.

The presentation will be on Tuesday, March 20, 7 p.m. at the Great Plains Nature Center. You can also join us for dinner at Panera Bread, 1605 N Rock Rd, at 5:30 p.m.

Wichita Christmas Bird Count

The Wichita Christmas Bird Count was held on Saturday, December 16. The weather was much better than last year, with the low temperature 11 degrees higher than the high temperature last year, reaching 61 degrees by afternoon, albeit fairly breezy. With the continued mild weather we were on the lookout for lingering migrants. Pete Janzen's group found a Brown Thrasher and a Chipping Sparrow. Also lingering



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker by Kevin Groeneweg

were eight Black-crowned Night-Herons along the Little Arkansas near the Keeper of the Plains, a good place to look for them in winter lately. Two Common

Loons was a nice surprise for Tom Ewert's group. Patty Marlett's group had a big flock of White-winged Doves, resulting in a record total of 18. However, even with these unusual species, the overall species tally of 92 was unremarkable. Misses were many, including any unusual gulls or waterfowl (save the loons) and a few blackbirds and sparrows normally associated with open country that are becoming increasingly difficult as development in our urban circle continues to remove habitat variety. An exception was a covey of Northern Bobwhite in Chisholm Creek Park, a species we haven't had on count day since 2006. A big thanks to the 18 participants we had in the field and the 5 who watched feeders. It was great to see a few new faces on the count!



Black-crowned Night Heron by Jeremy Birket

*Kevin Groeneweg
Compiler*

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Send address changes to Carol Cumberland, 1106 Gretchen, Wichita, KS 67206

Oak Park Invasive Plant Removal

Asian bush honeysuckle is an invasive plant that is causing serious habitat damage in many Wichita parks. Join us on Saturday, March 31, at 9 a.m. in Oak Park. We'll spend 3 - 4 hours removing these plants, directed by the Wichita Parks Department staff. Tools, gloves and bottled water will be provided. This is good exercise and a positive contribution to preserving habitat quality at one of our best local birding spots. Meet by the stone arch at the southwest corner of the park.

For information: Pete Janzen ,
519-1970, pete.janzen@sbcglobal.net

Audubon of Kansas and Quivira Water Rights

Audubon of Kansas isn't standing idly by and watching as the state avoids taking action to restore senior water rights held by the internationally important Quivira National Wildlife Refuge in Stafford County. Instead, AOK made its sentiment clear to Division of Water Resources Chief Engineer David Barfield, who already has determined irrigators in the Rattlesnake Creek basin upstream of Quivira are impairing the refuge's water right, which is senior to 95 percent of the other water rights in the basin.



Quivira has a water right granting it 14,632 acre-feet of water annually. Barfield's analysis found that 3,000 to 5,000 acre-feet annually would be needed to make Quivira whole again. He also found water-use reductions of 30,000 to 60,000 acre-feet a year might be needed to naturally replenish the Rattlesnake so Quivira could get the water it needs. An acre-foot of water contains about 326,000 gallons.

With the aid of a team of well-versed environmentally conscious lawyers, Audubon of Kansas forwarded a 14-page document to Barfield, detailing how important the refuge is to the environment and wildlife, including a number of threatened and endangered species, such as the whooping crane. The document also served as something of a legal treatise on state and federal protections afforded Quivira—protections which could serve as the basis for legal action, if needed.

The letter listed a series of just three options acceptable to Audubon of Kansas as a resolution. Those options include: administration and reductions in use by junior water rights upstream of the refuge; initiation of proceedings to form an intensive groundwater use control area in the basin; and establishment of a local enhanced management area.



Chief Engineer Barfield, in his response, sought to brush off concerns voiced by AOK, suggesting instead that intervention is premature. Although he suggested the groundwater management district is working on the idea of creating a LEMA (local enhanced management area), he didn't offer any details. He also said the groundwater management district is exploring the idea of augmenting water supply, essentially drilling additional wells and pumping water into the creek to help meet Quivira's needs.

While, it's true Audubon of Kansas didn't receive the response it had hoped for, AOK continues to closely monitor the situation and will pursue remedies until Quivira's water rights have been restored. Audubon of Kansas also is closely watching proceedings

in northwest Kansas, where the groundwater management district there is asking for the creation of a local enhanced management area, the same idea that might be produced in the Quivira area.

In the northwest Kansas area, however, objections have been voiced by some of the irrigators. The state is only able to approve or disapprove a LEMA proposal, so the effect of opposition from irrigators is uncertain. Irrigators opposing the LEMA have hired one of the state's pre-eminent water lawyers to represent them. The voices of grassroots advocates for wildlife may well be needed to counter the political influence of irrigators. Audubon of Kansas is keeping a close watch on that effort to see what effect it might have if a LEMA is proposed along Rattlesnake Creek.

by Mike Corn, Audubon of Kansas Trustee and member of the Committee for Quivira

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Chaplin Nature Center Programs

Saturday, March 17, 10 a.m. - Noon Bald Eagle Nest Visit

The Bald Eagle nesting season is well underway in Kansas. We will set up spotting scopes at a safe distance from the nest to give participants a chance to see an eaglet or two. We will meet at the Chaplin Nature Center parking lot and then take a 15-minute drive to a local park.

Saturday, April 7, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Spring Clean-up

Volunteer to help get the Chaplin Nature Center spruced up for the upcoming year. Help is needed in all areas, from building clean-up to trail maintenance. Light duty or heavy duty work available. Soft leaf rakes and/or tree pruners needed.



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