

Wichita Audubon



Volume 46 No. 6 March 2012

MARCH MEETING



Our March program will be “Burrowing Owls in California - An Abundant Endangered Species?” Jack Barclay, senior wildlife biologist for Albion Environmental, Inc., will share his study of Burrowing Owls. The colony at Mineta San Jose International Airport in San Jose, California, has been studied since 1990. Management techniques such as artificial burrows were used to reduce the occurrence of owls along runways. Despite intensive efforts, the population has declined in the last several years.

Learn about the interesting management techniques and study methods used as well as the results of the study.

Join us on Tuesday, March 20, 7:30 p.m. at the Great Plains Nature Center. We will also have dinner with Jack before the program at Ryan's, 3323 N. Rock Road, at 5:45 p.m.

CNC UPCOMING PROGRAMS

March 9, Friday, 7 - 8 p.m.

Night Hike

We'll hike the trails without flashlights to learn to use our senses. We'll listen and learn about nocturnal animals. Dress for the outdoors and wear sturdy shoes.

April 7, Saturday, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Spring Cleanup

Volunteer to get CNC in shape with outdoor projects to get the trails and facilities ready for visitors and school groups.

April 14, Saturday, 7:30 - 9 p.m.

Astronomy

Join the Kansas Astronomical Observers for a night out with the stars. Find the North Star, Big Dipper and other constellations. Using telescopes, participants can view some deep sky objects such nebula, double stars and galaxies. You are welcome to bring your own telescopes.



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.

COMING EVENTS

March 9

Night Hike at Chaplin Nature Center, 7 - 8 p.m.

March 17

Oak Park Cleanup - see page 2 for information.

March 20

Regular meeting, “Burrowing Owls in California - An Abundant Endangered Species?” by Jack Barclay, 7:30 p.m. at the Great Plains Nature Center

March 30 - April 1

Exploring Western Kansas field trip. Contact leader Pete Janzen, pete.janzen@sbcglobal.net for information.

April 7

Spring Cleanup at Chaplin Nature Center, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

April 14

Astronomy Program at Chaplin Nature Center, 7:30 - 9 p.m.

April 14

Chautauqua County back roads. Meet at the Dillon's parking lot at Andover Rd and US 400. Bring a lunch. Leader: Kevin Groeneweg, 706-9116, kgroeneweg@sbcglobal.net

WSU BIOLOGY SEMINARS

The WSU Biology department offers seminars on a variety of topics that are open to the public. All are held on Mondays at 4 p.m. in Room 418, Hubbard Hall. Below is a list of some that might be of interest:

March 5

Kyra Krakos (Maryville University)

“The Ecology and Evolution of *Oenothera*...is it really all just about hawkmoth love?”

http://www.botany.org/students_corner/profiles/kyra_krakos/

March 12

Mark Fishbein (Oklahoma State University)

“Phylogenetics of milkweeds (*Asclepias*, Apocynaceae), a framework for studying the evolution of plant defenses”

http://botany.okstate.edu/people_research/Fishbein/index.html

April 2

Karen Hickman (Oklahoma State University)

“Invasive Old World Bluestems (*Bothriochloa* sp): Threatening the Central and Southern Great Plains.”

<http://nrem.okstate.edu/faculty/hickman.htm>

April 23

Jim Nechols (Kansas State University)

“Plant-mediated interactions among musk thistle herbivores: considerations for biological control and conservation biology”

http://www.entomology.ksu.edu/p.aspx?tabid=13&ItemID=740&mid=74&staff_category=Faculty

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E-mail any officer: was@wichitaaudubon.org

Send address changes to Sister Patricia Stanley, 3700 E Lincoln Apt 123, Wichita, KS 67218, pstanley@csjoseph.org

OAK PARK CLEANUP

Join in our annual effort to keep this priceless birding spot litter-free. On Saturday, March 17, we'll meet at 9 a.m. by the north lily pond. Wear your Audubon hat or shirt or name tag to help advertise our presence. Gloves are also recommended. We'll provide trash bags and pick up sticks.

As always, feel free to put in some time at your convenience if you can't join the group. Just let us know so we can document the hours contributed. The leaders are Rob & Rosa McHenry, 263-4042, rmchenryphoto@sbcglobal.net.

BIRD-FEEDING TIPS

Follow these tips to attract the most feathered friends to your feeders.

1) Locate bird feeders at different levels

To avoid crowding and to attract the greatest variety of species, provide table-like feeders for ground-feeding birds, hopper or tube feeders for shrub and treetop feeders, and suet feeders well off the ground.

2) Offer a variety of seeds in separate feeders

A diverse mix of seeds will attract the greatest variety of birds. To avoid waste, offer different seeds in different feeders. Black oil sunflower seed appeals to the greatest number of birds. When using blends, choose mixtures containing sunflower seeds, millet, and cracked corn—the three most popular types of birdseed.

3) Provide suet during cool weather only

Suet (beef fat) attracts insect-eating birds such as woodpeckers, wrens, chickadees, nuthatches, and titmice. Place the suet in special feeders or net onion bags at least five feet from the ground to keep it out of the reach of dogs. Do not put out suet during hot weather as it can turn rancid; also, dripping fat can damage natural waterproofing on bird feathers.

4) Mix peanut butter and corn meal

Peanut butter is a good substitute for suet in the summer. Mix one part peanut butter with five parts corn meal and stuff the mixture into holes drilled in a hanging log or into the crevices of a large pinecone. This all-season mixture attracts woodpeckers, chickadees, titmice, and occasionally warblers.

5) Provide fruit for berry-eating birds

Fruit specialists such as robins, waxwings, bluebirds, and mockingbirds rarely eat birdseed. To attract these birds, soak raisins and currants in water overnight, then place them on a table feeder, or purchase blends with a dried fruit mixture. To attract orioles and tanagers, skewer halved oranges onto a spike, or supply nectar feeders.

6) Provide nectar for hummingbirds

Make a sugar solution of one part white sugar to four parts water. Boil briefly to sterilize and dis-

solve sugar crystals. Feeders must be washed every few days with very hot water and kept scrupulously clean to prevent the growth of mold.

7) Store seed in secure metal containers

Store seed in metal garbage cans with secure lids to protect it from squirrels and mice. Keep the cans in a cool, dry location; avoid storing in the heat. Damp seeds may grow mold that can be fatal to birds. Overheating can destroy the nutrition and taste of sunflower seeds. For these reasons, it's best not to keep seed from one winter to the next.

8) Discourage squirrels from consuming feeder foods

Squirrels are best excluded by placing feeders on a pole in an open area. Pole-mounted feeders should be about five feet off the ground and protected by a cone-shaped baffle (at least 17 inches diameter) or similar obstacle below the feeder. Locate pole-mounted feeders at least 10 feet from the nearest shrub, tree, or other tall structure. Squirrel feeders stocked with blends that are especially attractive to squirrels can reduce competition at bird feeders. Place squirrel feeders far from bird feeders to further reduce competition.

9) Locate feeders to reduce window collisions

In the United States, approximately one billion birds die each year from flying into windows. Protect birds from collisions by placing feeders within three feet of windows, if possible. Mobiles and opaque decorations hanging outside windows also help to prevent bird strikes. Or attach fruit tree netting outside windows to deflect birds from the glass.

10) Keep cats indoors

Cats kill hundreds of millions of birds annually in the United States, often pouncing on ground-feeding birds and those dazed by window collisions. Outdoor cats are especially dangerous to birds in the spring when fledglings are on the ground. Bells on cat collars are usually ineffective.

11) Clean feeders and rake up spilled grain and hulls

Uneaten seed can become soggy and grow deadly mold. Empty and clean feeders twice a year (spring and fall). In early spring, rake up spilled grain and sunflower hulls.

By Steve Kress, National Audubon Society vice-president for bird conservation.

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IT S IN THE AIR

The Environmental Protection Agency is poised to take a bite out of carbon pollution through proposed standards for new coal-fired power plants. With the unlovely name of New Source Performance Standards (NSPS), this draft rule is nevertheless our next best shot at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and slowing climate change.

Leading scientists warn that climate change poses a grave threat to the world's biodiversity. With legislative climate solutions mired in bipartisan gridlock in Congress, this new draft standard offers a way to make progress on one of the biggest polluters of carbon pollution - coal-fired power plants. If this rule goes well, dirty, older plants are next in line for pollution reductions.

Getting comments in to EPA to support this standard is a top priority for Audubon. You can help by sending in the postcard you'll find in the March/April of Audubon Magazine. Look for the snowy owl - one of many birds whose habitat is being impacted by our warming climate. We'll also be sending chapters a supply of cards. Let's get an avalanche of support into EPA to reduce carbon pollution!

