

Wichita Audubon

Volume 43 No. 2 September 2008



SEPTEMBER MEETING

Join us September 16 for our first program of the season: "Wildlife of Uganda," by Max Thompson. Dr. Thompson is an ornithologist, retired from teaching at Southwestern College, a writer, and also an orchid grower. He spent three weeks in Uganda in 2007, and will share his picture of birds, mammals and the rest of the wildlife he saw. The meeting will be on Tuesday, Sept. 16, 7:30 p.m. at the Great Plains Nature Center, 29th and Woodlawn. You can also join the speakers for dinner at Jason's Deli, in Bradley Fair at 21st and Rock Rd, at 5:45 p.m.

CNC UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Fall Nature Day

September 23, Saturday, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Join us for a day long celebration of nature at the Chaplin Nature Center. There are bird walks, a herp walk, a live herp demonstration and crafts for kids. We will also be tagging Monarch butterflies. Monarchs are our only migratory butterfly, traveling each fall to wintering grounds in the mountains of Mexico. By attaching a tiny tag to their wing, we can help scientists track them and learn more about this unique phenomenon.

The Visitor's Center at CNC has all new educational exhibits. If you missed the open house in June, be sure and take this opportunity to see how nice they are.

As always there will be a country store featuring homemade baked goods, homegrown produce, and similar goodies. Lunch will be available to purchase, and will feature homemade desserts. Or you are welcome to bring your own picnic lunch. Fall Nature Day is free and open to all. If you haven't been to Chaplin Nature Center, this is the time to get acquainted. Please come!



New exhibits in the Visitor's Center

COMING EVENTS

September 13-14

Morton County field trip.
See page 2. Leader: Kevin Groeneweg, 687-4268, kgroeneweg@sbcglobal.net

September 16

Regular program. "Birds of Africa: Uganda," by Max Thompson, 7:30 p.m. at the Great Plains Nature Center

September 20

Fall Nature Day & Butterfly tagging at Chaplin Nature Center, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

September 28

Chisholm Creek Park cleanup. Meet at the Great Plains Nature Center parking lot at 9 a.m. Bring gloves - trash bags provided. Leader: Patty Marlett, 942-2164, pmarlett@mac.com

October 11, 18, 25

Beginning Bird Walks in Chisholm Creek Park. See page 2 for more information



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.

MORTON COUNTY FIELD TRIP

Join us in Elkhart on September 13 and 14 (Saturday and Sunday) for a field trip to a most interesting part of the state. Fall migration in the Cimarron Grasslands means Western species and birds that are not found in other parts of Kansas. There will also be visits to Black Mesa in Oklahoma and possibly Baca County, Colorado. Meet in the parking lot of the El Rancho Motel in Elkhart, Kansas at 7:00 each morning. You can make reservations at the El Rancho by calling (620-697-2117). Leaders are Kevin Groeneweg, 316- 687-4268, kgroeneweg@sbcglobal.net & Pete Janzen, 316-832-1082, pete.janzen@sbcglobal.net

BEGINNING BIRD WALKS

If you are a backyard birdwatcher who would like to expand and learn some of the techniques and tips for finding and identifying birds, these walks are for you. We will stroll around Chisholm Creek Park, concentrating on the basics. Don't stay away if it rains - we can learn indoors at the Great Plains Nature Center. These will be held on three Saturdays - Oct. 11, 18, 25 - start at 8 a.m. and end by 11 a.m. Bring binoculars if you have them, or we can loan you a pair. We'll discuss optics and field guides as well as birds. Meet in the lobby of the Great Plains Nature Center.

Leader: Patty Marlett, 942-2164, pmarlett@mac.com

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E-mail any officer: was@wichitaudubon.org

Send address changes to Sister Patricia Stanley, 6739 Perryton, Wichita, KS 67226

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CALENDARS

The 2009 bird calendars are here. They will sell for \$5 apiece. You can purchase them at meetings, or contact Patty Marlett, pmarlett@mac.com, 942-2164

CHISHOLM CREEK PARK

CLEANUP

Chisholm Creek is one of two parks we have adopted. Each fall we pick up trash to make the park a better environment for birds and birders. Meet in the parking lot of the Great Plains Nature Center, 29th and Woodlawn, on Saturday, September 28, 9 a.m. Bring gloves - trash bags and tools will be provided. For more info call Patty Marlett, 942-2164, pmarlett@mac.com.

2009 EXTENDED FIELD TRIP

This year's longer field trip is going to the Rio Grande Valley in Texas. The "Valley" is always a hot spot for rarities and tropical species that don't occur anywhere else in the U.S. This year there is extra motivation to go, as construction of the border fence threatens to destroy some of the most popular birding spots. Pete Janzen and Kevin Groeneweg are planning the birding itinerary and will find all the birds for us. Patty Marlett will be handling accommodations and transportation. We are considering the possibility of renting vans for transportation. If you would be interested in sharing a van, please indicate that when you sign up. There will be a sign up sheet at meetings, so let us know if you are interested and we'll keep you up to date on plans.

2008 EXTENDED TRIP TO THE BOREAL FOREST

Sixteen birders gathered in Duluth on the evening of June 9 for the beginning of the Wichita Audubon extended field trip to the boreal forest. The gang quickly became aware that this was going to be no leisurely trip when I announced my intention to leave at 5:30 am for our first full day of birding. The weather wasn't going to be in our favor. We weren't seeing the flooding occurring in Wisconsin and Iowa, but rain and cool temperatures were expected for the next several days.

Day 1:

An early departure found us driving west for a full day of birding in Aitkin County. We had good looks at Golden-winged Warbler, Alder Flycatcher and Sedge Wren. Bobolinks were common in the open, grassy areas. At Rice Lake NWR we had to dodge off-and-on rain showers, but we accumulated quite a species list in the varied wooded and wetland habitat there. In the wooded areas we found Chestnut-sided Warbler, American Redstart, Veery, Scarlet Tanager and Yellow-throated Vireo. We stopped at Mandy Lake for lunch and saw a couple of Common Loons in the distance, Black Terns and had a flyover of a Bald Eagle. On the wildlife loop drive we saw American Bittern among other things. We drove back to Duluth and stopped at Park Point to see

sandpipers and terns. We did a lot of driving, but we ended the day with 100 species.

Day 2:

We left at 6:15 am and headed to Sax-Zim bog in St. Louis County. On Owl Avenue we flushed a Great Gray Owl from the ditch. Everyone got great looks. We turned onto Arkola Road, where we had another Great Gray! Farther down we had a very cooperative Blackburnian Warbler. A Boreal Chickadee that gave everyone killer looks as it sang out in the open along the road. The weather



Hall Cumberland, Elsie Fisher, Janet Krack, John & Sharon Dilks, Bill & Nancy Beard, Sandra Tholen, Mary & Karl Herold, Cheryl Miller, Jay Newton, Patty Marlett, Carol Cumberland, Kevin Groeneweg, with Jim Marlett taking the picture.

was breezy and cold (it never got out of the 40's that day) and it was overcast with periods of rain. That may have helped us get the owls, but singing passerines were hard to come by. In Lake County our best sighting there wasn't a bird, but rather a River Otter. As the rain moved in, we headed back to Duluth with 68 species seen.

Day 3:

We left Duluth for the Brule River area of northern Wisconsin. Our first stop was Stone's Bridge, where we had a singing Golden-winged Warbler, Northern Parula, Winter Wren and strained to get good looks at a Mourning Warbler. We drove up the road to an area containing stands of Jack Pines and heard several Connecticut Warblers singing. The sun finally emerged, so we parked and walked a trail, adding Pine and Canada Warblers and a Blue-headed Vireo. We pressed on into upper Michigan to our destination

of Baraga. The weather was improving, and our total this day was 68 species.

Day 4:

Sunny skies and breezy weather greeted us as we headed into the Baraga Plains in search of Black-backed Woodpeckers. I had directions into a burned area containing 25 to 30 pairs of black-backs. We could see much evidence of woodpecker activity, with the bark chiseled off the blackened trees. Soon the black-backs

appeared and we had close-up looks at several. We stopped and hiked into the McCormick Wilderness Area, hoping for Cape May Warbler in the spruce forest, but the wind was working against us, leaving us to be satisfied with 56 species for the day.

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BOREAL FOREST EXTENDED FIELD TRIP, CONTINUED

Day 5:

We bid farewell to three of our group as we departed for nearby Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. At the headquarters a Mourning Warbler was singing. We stopped along the road for a Black-throated Blue Warbler, but also saw another while walking the trail. The Beards found a pair of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers feeding young. We enjoyed scenic views of the falls and Miners Castle. At Seney NWR nesting Trumpeter Swans are the attraction, and on one impoundment we counted at least 27. Several pairs had cygnets. As we drove around the loop road we had close-up looks at Common Loons, Common and Caspian Terns. We counted 68 species.

Day 6:

Seven birders remained for the extension to see the Kirtland's Warbler, so we worked our way down to Grayling. Our first stop was Tahquamenon Falls State Park. The falls were very scenic. We saw several American Redstarts, but birds in general were far outnumbered by the mosquitoes. The next stop was Whitefish Point. At the bird observatory feeders there was a flock of Evening Grosbeaks and Pine Siskins. We got directions to a Spruce Grouse spot, so off we went. We decided to spread out and walk the spruce forest in search of the grouse, but quickly realized how easy it is to get disoriented and lost. Sandra found her way back and honked her car horn to guide us

back to the road. No grouse were found. 59 species were tallied.

Day 7:

Our guide from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service led us to the breeding area of young Jack Pine stands. We got great looks at several Kirtland's Warblers in the morning sun.

We logged quite a few miles overall on this trip, but everyone came away with lifers and the friendly nature of all involved made for a very enjoyable trip. The final tally came to 145 species, with 19 species of warblers. We missed a few of the specialties, but that gives us a good reason to return to this wonderful birding habitat.

by Kevin Groeneweg