

Wichita Audubon



Volume 47 No. 2 September 2012

SEPTEMBER MEETING



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Our first program of the season will be “Breeding Biology and Feeding Ecology of Great Egrets and Snowy Egrets in Wichita, Kansas,” presented by Dr. Alan D. Maccarone, Professor of Biology, Friends University.

Alan and his students have been studying the two breeding colonies in Wichita for about eight years, and have completed several related projects that

are all focused on the larger theme of energetics. They have been intrigued by how energy flows through these birds. To address this question, they have used field observations and radio-telemetry to examine foraging behavior, flight energetic costs, commuting distances to feeding sites, and changes in nest activity patterns throughout the breeding cycle. Alan will present a review of the recent field research, summarize basic activity patterns common to both species, and describe some significant differences between Great Egrets and Snowy Egrets.

The program will be on Tuesday, September 18, 7 p.m. at the Great Plains Nature Center. You can join Alan and other members for dinner at Doc Green’s, 10096 E. 13th, in the Waterfront at 5:30 p.m.

NOTE: PROGRAMS THIS YEAR WILL BEGIN AT 7:00 P.M.

CNC UPCOMING PROGRAMS

September 22, Saturday, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Fall Nature Day and Butterfly Tagging

The spectacular monarch butterfly migration will be moving through Kansas during the center’s annual Nature Day. This is a once-a-year opportunity to learn more about the migration as well as how to capture and tag monarchs.

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October 6, Saturday, 7:30 - 9 p.m.

Astronomy Program

Join us at the Chaplin Nature Center for a night of star gazing. Volunteers from CNC and the Kansas Astronomical Observers will set up telescopes to study the heavens. Bring your own lawnchair or blanket.



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

September 1-2

Morton County field trip - see page 2

September 18

Regular meeting, “Breeding Biology and Feeding Ecology of Great Egrets and Snowy Egrets in Wichita, by Dr. Alan Maccarone, 7:00 p.m. at the Great Plains Nature Center.

September 22

Fall Nature Day at Chaplin Nature Center. See page 2.

September 23

Wichita Area Field Trip. Departs at 8 a.m. from the Village Inn in Derby. Leader: Leon Hicks, 651-7063, chicks12@cox.net

October 6

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



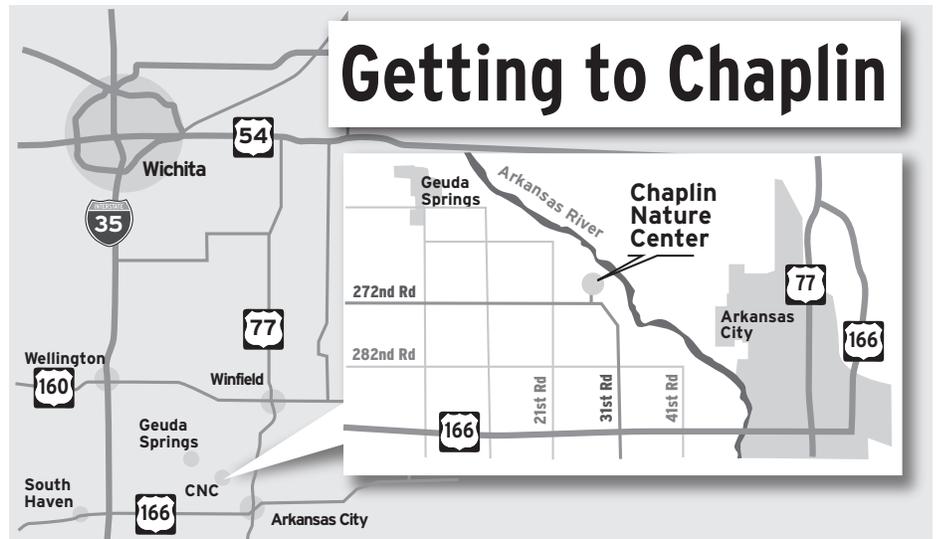
Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel seen on the Washington State extended field trip - see page 2 for the report.

MORTON COUNTY FIELD TRIP

Labor Day weekend in Morton County has become an annual tradition for many Kansas birders. This year we are going to join them for a chance at those western species that occur nowhere else in Kansas. The group will leave both mornings, Saturday and Sunday, September 1 and 2, at 7 a.m. from the parking lot of the El Rancho motel in Elkhart. You can make reservations by calling the El Rancho at (620)697-2117. The leader, Kevin Groeneweg, will help coordinate lodging and carpooling. Call him at 706-9116 or email kgroeneweg@sbcglobal.net.

FALL NATURE DAY, CONTINUED

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. You get to learn how to capture and tag the butterflies safely. A variety of nature hikes will be available, and Audubon leaders will be on hand to identify birds, butterflies and reptiles. The program is free. A lunch of soup, hotdogs and homemade desserts will be available for purchase.



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2013 EXTENDED FIELD TRIP

The extended field trip for the upcoming year takes us to the east coast and pelagic birding out of Cape Hatteras with Seabirding Pelagic Trips. Owner Brian Patteson will post his 2013 schedule soon, and because his trips are popular and may sell out quickly, it is imperative that participants sign up with him as soon as possible. We are planning two pelagic trips, along with visits to several other great birding destinations nearby. Contact the trip leaders to receive information on signing up for one or both of the pelagic trips. Leaders: Kevin Groeneweg, 706-9116, kgroeneweg@sbcglobal.net, Patty Marlett, 942-2164, pmarlett@mac.com

WASHINGTON STATE TRIP

JUNE 25 – 30, 2012

Fourteen members of Wichita Audubon traveled to the Pacific Northwest for a week of birding on our annual extended field trip. There is a great variety of habitat in Washington. Our goal was to sample the bird life in many of them; temperate rain forest, coniferous forest, alpine/parkland, shrub-steppe, coastal waters and pelagic.

Monday, 6/25

Monday morning we all loaded in two 12-passenger vans and started our trip by visiting Discovery Park near downtown Seattle on Puget Sound. We hiked out to the lighthouse on the point, seeing Bushtit, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Chestnut-backed Chickadee and displaying Anna's Hummingbird along the way. We scoped the Sound, getting good views of Caspian Tern, Rhinoceros Auklet and Marbled Murrelet along with Band-tailed Pigeon on the way back. We then headed east to Crystal Springs in the Cascades. We had up-close looks at Red-breasted Sapsucker as it foraged in dead trees. We also had our first look at Vaux's and Black Swifts flying low as it had become cloudy and rainy. At a bridge over the Teanaway River, several Veeries were calling and two Evening Grosbeaks flew in. Ellensburg, on the east (dry) side of the Cascades, was our destination for the night. Before supper some of us made a run east to Vantage to see a Black-throated Sparrow. We were back in time for a great meal at the Yellow Church Café.

Tuesday, 6/26

The morning started out cool and rainy, with a Lazuli Bunting singing in the motel parking lot. We left Ellensburg via Umptanum road, seeing California Quail before we got out of town. In addition to Western Bluebirds, highlights included Red-naped Sapsucker, Lewis's Woodpecker, Cassin's Vireo, MacGillivray's Warbler and Yellow-breasted Chats. Our destination was Wenas Campground and White-headed Woodpeckers. We walked the length and breadth of the campground but we did not find our quarry. Displaying Calliope Hummingbirds, Veeries and Cassin's Finches were seen. We left the

valley and went back over the Cascades. At Hause Creek campground we saw a very cooperative Evening Grosbeak and Western Tanager. We then drove up Bethel Ridge road where we saw Clark's Nutcrackers and Mountain Chickadee at higher elevation. We drove to Packwood, a small town south of Mt. Rainier and our destination for the night.

Wednesday, 6/27

We spent most of the day in Mount Rainier National Park, where we were greeted with perfect weather; clear skies and light wind. On the way in we had a Sooty Grouse on the side of the road. We hiked a trail at the Grove of the Patriarchs. A Pacific Wren served as ambassador and along the trail were some magnificent trees. On the road a little higher Varied Thrushes were singing and we got a clear look at one. At another stop we had killer looks at a Townsend's Warbler. We stopped at the Paradise Visitor Center, where Bill photographed a Sooty Grouse right near the building. The Gray Jays and Clark's Nutcrackers ruled the parking lot. We had a picnic lunch on the way to Longmire, where we saw Stellar's Jay, Red-breasted Sapsucker and an exceptionally friendly Black-tailed deer expecting a hand-out. At Longmire we hiked a trail where a Hammond's Flycatcher allowed careful study. On the way back to Packwood we stopped at the La Wis Wis campground. We heard several Hermit-type Warblers singing. Knowing this is a zone for hybridization with Townsend's Warbler, we needed good looks to sort things out. We got a scope on one that looked good for Hermit.

Thursday, 6/28

Day four would be spent birding our way westward to the coast. Our first stop was a wetland area near Centralia, where we saw our first Cinnamon Teal and great looks at Lazuli Bunting. We drove the back roads to Nisqually NWR. There we walked the boardwalk, seeing many of the birds we are accustomed to in Kansas, including a Marsh Wren on a nest and Virginia Rail. Willow Flycatchers were common. After lunch we drove into Capitol State Forest hoping for more looks at Hermit Warbler. We didn't find the Hermit, but an interesting sighting was a baby Varied Thrush being fed by a parent. We then drove to Westport on the coast. The Chateau Westport hotel

has nice ocean views, and from our rooms we saw thousands of Sooty Shearwaters streaming southward near the shore. After a seafood dinner near the docks, we studied the various gulls, cormorants and alcids from the observation tower, allowing us to be out of the rain.

Friday, 6/29

The rain continued all night with no sign of letting up. We decided to drive up the coast into the Olympic National Park area to check out some of the beaches. We stopped at Kaloloch Lodge, Ruby Beach and a couple of others in the area. Scoping, we saw Surf and White-winged Scoters, Pacific and Red-throated Loons and Western Sandpipers. At Ruby Beach the highlight was a Peregrine Falcon chasing off a Bald Eagle, and we also saw a Sooty Fox Sparrow. Being cold and wet, as well as somewhat exhausted from a week of birding, we decided to head back to the hotel to rest up for the pelagic.

Saturday, 6/30

It was up early and on the boat at 5:15 a.m. We were aboard the Monte Carlo on an outer slope seabird adventure. Our leaders had a wealth of knowledge, and it was interesting to learn of the phenology of many of the seabirds and mammals we encountered. One of our leaders, Ryan Shaw, posted the following summary of our trip on Tweepers, the local birding e-mail list:

“Westport Seabirds had a great trip offshore. Rainy and misty for about the first 3 hours. The weather eventually cleared up and we were left with a beautiful overcast day with excellent sea conditions and visibility.

Heading out, we encountered a very large flock of Sooty Shearwaters at the mouth of the harbor. From the bow I was able to spot a Manx Shearwater take off and fly into the mass of swirling birds. Unfortunately we could not relocate the Manx.

We ended up finding a small fleet of Shrimp Boats (4) about 18 miles offshore. These boats had a plethora of birds behind them including most of the usual suspects – Sooty, Pink-footed Shearwaters, Northern Fulmar, Black-footed Albatross and Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels.

Near the boats we had our first cetaceans – 2 Humpback Whales that were observed well by all. We headed farther offshore towards – the shelf edge. We observed our
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first Cassin's Auklets of the trip at this point.. Once we reached the shelf edge we found our first Leach's Storm-Petrels and put down a chum slick. We were able to attract a lot of Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels to the slick. A few Leach's did come in as well to give everyone good looks and comparisons. We left the chum when we observed some splashing and breaching of marine mammals about 1/2 mile to the west. We quickly raced over to see what they were and found a pod of ~30 Risso's Dolphins (Gray Grampus). Not to be outdone, a short time later we encountered a pod of ~12 Orca, possibly of the Offshore "shark-eating" variety. There were at least 3 big bull males, an immature male, a very young calf and several females in the pod. They let us observe them for quite a while which sometimes Orca offshore do not allow.

We worked our way back inshore to find the shrimp boats again. We started chumming once we found the boats and the birds and had quite the spectacle of Sooty Shearwaters and Pink-footed Shearwaters coming right up behind the boat in such a feeding frenzy that most of us haven't seen very often on a Westport

trip. Later on we encountered a pair of Scripp's (Xantus's) Murrelets. We all got really nice looks at these birds, which is newly split from Xantus's Murrelet, now two species, Scripp's and Guadalupe. Other highlights were 1 Arctic Tern, 2 South Polar Skuas, 1 Sabine's Gull, 4 Northern Fur Seals, 1 Elephant Seal, 1

Salmon Shark, 4 Blue Sharks, 1 Harbor Porpoise and 6 Steller's Sea-Lions near shore.

A great day offshore – Leaders were Scott Mills, Ryan Shaw, and Michael Donahue.”

by Kevin Groeneweg

See all the pictures and video on our website at wichitaudubon.org/



L to R: Patty Marlett, Carol Cumberland, Hal Cumberland, Sharon Dilks, John Dilks, Terry Mannell, Sam Mannell, Sandra Tholen, Texie Randall, Laura Groeneweg, Kevin Groeneweg, Jeff Calhoun, Jim Marlett, Bill Sutton.