

Wichita Audubon



Volume 37 No. 4 November/December 2002

CNC Upcoming Programs

**November 2, Saturday,
7:30 pm - 8:30 pm
Star Gazing**

The cool air of fall makes for the best time to view the planets and stars. Locate the North Star, the Big Dipper, and other constellations. With the use of telescopes we'll locate the planet Saturn and search for deep sky objects. Bring a lawn chair or blanket for the best viewing.

**January 25, Saturday,
10 am - noon
February 2, Sunday,
1:30 - 3:30 pm
Eagle Days**

Take a hike down to the river to search for Bald Eagles and enjoy Chaplin Nature Center in the winter. Bring binoculars and we'll provide spotting scopes.

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



November Program

For November we will learn about habitat management, and how it is being used successfully at Fort Hood, Texas, for the benefit of two critically endangered songbirds - the Black-capped Vireo and the Golden-Cheeked Warbler. Fort Hood is the largest single landowner/manager in the nation for these two species. Techniques being used include luring Black-capped Vireos to suitable but unoccupied breeding habitat with a method called "conspecific attraction." Our speaker is Gil Eckrich, outreach coordinator for the Natural Resources Management Branch at Fort Hood. He will speak on Tuesday, November 19, 7:30 pm at the Great Plains Nature Center.

You can also join members and Gil for dinner at 5:45 pm at Jason's Deli in Bradbury Fair, 21st and Rock Road.

Protect the Flint Hills

A new threat is emerging that could endanger the beauty of the Flint Hills as well as destroy habitat for Greater Prairie Chickens and other grassland birds that rely on these last remnants of tall grass prairie. The threat is wind farms, with 350 foot tall turbines, strobe lights at night, and associated access and maintenance roads.

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Coming Events

November 2

Star gazing at Chaplin Nature Center, 7:30pm - 8:30 pm.

November 17

Cheney Reservoir field trip. Meet at the boat ramp at the west end of the dam, 8 am.

Leader: Pete Janzen, 832-0182, prarybrd@southwind.net

November 19

Regular meeting, "Success in Local Recovery of an Endangered Songbird, the Black-capped Vireo," by Gil Eckrich, 7:30 pm Great Plains Nature Center.

December 14

Wichita Christmas Bird Count.

See page 3.

December 21

Arkansas City Christmas Bird Count. See page 3.

December 28

El Dorado Christmas Bird Count. See page 3.

January 4

Barber County Christmas Bird Count. See page 3.

January 25

Eagle Days at Chaplin Nature Center, 10 am to noon.

February 2

Eagle Days at Chaplin Nature Center, 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm. Missed the first one? Then join us for the second Eagle Watch.

No meeting in December

Christmas Bird Counts

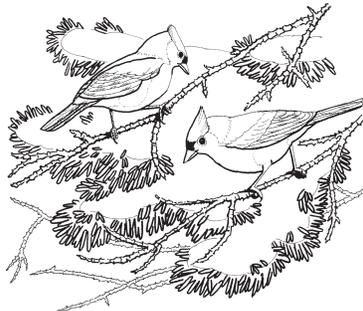
More than 50,000 observers participate each year in this all-day census of early-winter bird populations. The results of their efforts are compiled into the longest running database in ornithology, representing over a century of unbroken data on trends of early-winter bird populations across the Americas. Simply put, the Christmas Bird Count, or "CBC", is citizen science in action.

Up until the turn of the century, people commonly engaged in a holiday tradition known as the Christmas "Side Hunt": They would choose sides and go afield with their guns; whoever brought in the biggest pile of feathered quarry won. Conservation was in its beginning stages at the turn of the century, and many observers were becoming concerned about the indiscriminate slaughter of wildlife, and concurrent declines in bird populations. On Christmas Day 1900, ornithologist Frank Chapman, an early officer in the then budding Audubon Society, called for an end to the slaughter. He suggested that, rather than shooting birds, people count them instead. So began the Christmas Bird Count.

Thanks to the inspiration of Frank M. Chapman and the enthusiasm of twenty-seven dedicated birders, twenty-five Christmas Bird Counts were held that day. The locations ranged from Toronto, Ontario to Pacific Grove, California with most counts in or near the population centers of northeastern North America. Those original Christmas Bird Counters tallied a total of 90 species on all the counts combined.

The primary objective of the Christmas Bird Count is to monitor the status and distribution of bird populations across the Western Hemisphere. The count period, which is from December 14th to January 5th, in North America is referred to as "early winter," because many birds at this time are still in the late stages of their southward migration, so it is not "true" winter. When we combine these data with other surveys such as the Breeding Bird Survey, we begin to see a clearer picture of how the continent's bird populations have changed in time and space over the past hundred years.

The information is also vital for conservation. For example, local



trends in bird populations can indicate habitat fragmentation or signal an immediate environmental threat, such as groundwater contamination or poisoning from improper use of pesticides.

From feeder-watchers and field observers to count compilers and regional editors, everyone who takes part in the Christmas Bird Count does it for love of birds and the excitement of friendly competition - and with the knowledge that their efforts are making a difference for science and bird conservation. You can find the

results from any past counts or print a checklist for a specific count at the following website: <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/ho.html>

This year will be the 103rd Christmas Bird Count. You can join counters from the arctic at Prudhoe Bay to Tierra del Fuego and be a citizen scientist yourself. Wichita Audubon sponsors four counts: Wichita, Arkansas City, El Dorado, and Barber County.

The Wichita Christmas Bird Count will meet at the Lawrence-Dumont Stadium at 7 am on Saturday, December 14, with compilation at the Great Plains Nature Center at 5:30pm. The compiler is Pete Janzen 832-0182, prarybrd@southwind.net

The Arkansas City Christmas Bird Count will be on Saturday, December 21. Meet at 8 am at Newman Park on Hwy 77 just north of the Arkansas River. The compiler is Gene Young, 620-446-1901, youngg6264@yahoo.com. Compilation will be at Chaplin Nature Center, with a soup supper provided.

The El Dorado count will be held Saturday, December 28, beginning at 7:30 am at the McDonald's in El Dorado. The compiler is Bill Langley, 316-321-3495, blangley@butler.buccc.cc.ks.us.

The final count is Barber County on Saturday, January 4. The compiler is Pete Janzen, 832-0182, *continued on page 4*

Wichita  *Audubon Society*
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Christmas Bird Counts, cont. from page 3

prarybrd@southwind.net. Because of potential weather problems causing last minute changes, Pete would like all participants to contact him in advance for meeting location and time.

Note that these four counts require a \$5 per person fee, which entitles you to receive a copy of the continent wide report.

There are several other counts in which Wichita area birders participate, including Quivira NWR, Winfield, Slate Creek Marsh/Oxford, Kenton OK, Marion Reservoir, and many others. Details are not complete for these

counts at this early date, but you can check the website at www.wichitaaudubon.org for more information as it becomes available. As long as there are birds to be counted, the Christmas Bird Count will go on being the most popular, fun, and rewarding bird census the world over!

