

Wichita Audubon



Volume 36 No. 8 May 2002

CNC Upcoming Programs

May 4, Saturday 5 pm to 9 pm Twilight Dinner III

Join us for a beach party, a visit from Meriwether Lewis, barbeque, a dig for fossils, and lots of fun. See page 2 for details.

News from CNC

Chaplin Nature Center shows extensive scars from the ice storm and awaits the budding and blooming that will conceal much of the damage. A few warm days and some rain will do the trick. At this writing (March 29) there are beginning signs of the bird migration to come. A mature Bald Eagle was observed over the Visitors' Center and a day later several Turkey Vultures appeared. Bill Langley used to say in his birding classes that eagles move north as the vultures move in and vice versa in the fall. Mourning Cloak and Red Admiral butterflies are around and the bees have been collecting elm pollen.

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



May Meeting

How do you give a shot to an orangutan? Check a bear's teeth? Weigh a giant tortoise? Give medicine to a Kea? At the Sedgwick County Zoo behaviorist Emily Weiss, Ph.D., and many of the keepers train zoo animals for various veterinary and husbandry procedures. They also use training techniques to provide mental stimulation and prevent boredom in the animals. Dr. Weiss will show you various aspects of this fascinating training program at the zoo.

Her presentation will be Tuesday, May 21, 7:30 pm at the Great Plains Nature Center. Join members and Dr. Weiss for dinner at 5:45 pm at Jason's Deli in Bradbury Fair, 21st and Rock Road.

Slate of Officers

The following slate was presented by the nominating committee:

Vice-president: Kevin Groeneweg

Treasurer: Duane DeLong

Secretary: Sharon Bolin

Director (3 yr term): Bill Beard

Director (3 yr term): Mary Engleman Kemmer.

The president is elected for a two year term, so Patty Marlett will continue in office for the next year.

The election will be held at the May meeting, and the term office begins July 1.

June 18

Annual picnic at the Sim Park shelter house, 6:00 pm. See page 4 for details.

Coming Events May 4

Warbler Walk - Oak Park. Meet at the lily pond at the north end of the park at 7 am. Leader: Harry Gregory, 263-7608, birdfan@infi.net

May 4

Twilight dinner at Chaplin Nature Center. See page 3 for details.

May 11

North American Migration Bird count. For details contact Harry Gregory, 263-7608, birdfan@infi.net.

May 19

Quivira/Cheyenne Bottoms field trip. Meet at Quivira headquarters at 9 am. Leader: Bob Dester, 316-283-7070.

May 21

Regular meeting, "Animal Training at the Zoo," by Dr. Emily Weiss, 7:30 pm Great Plains Nature Center.

June 1

Field trip to the Konza Prairie, Manhattan. See page 2.

June 8

Walk With Wildlife at the Great Plains Nature Center, 9 am to 4 pm.

June 15

Chautauqua County field trip. Meet at the Card Creek Campground shelter house on the northwest end of Elk City Lake at 7 am.

Leader: Ed Miller, 620-331-6820, ejm916@yahoo.com

Birdathon

Birdathon is a fund-raising activity that is also a lot of fun, and open to any member that likes to bird and wants to help. A Birdathon team solicits pledges from friends, neighbors, coworkers, even total strangers, for the number of bird species they can find in a 24 hour period. Next, the team picks a date between April 20 and May 27 and goes birding. Then the pledges roll in to help support WAS and Chaplin Nature Center.

We really would like to have your help this year. To join a team talk to Carol Cumberland, Patty Marlett or Shawn Silliman. If you don't want to go birding, consider soliciting pledges for one of the teams, or contribute yourself. Any and all assistance is appreciated.

News From CNC

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Daffodils and Spring Beauties are in bloom. (You'll have to look close because they are tiny.) The resident species of birds are in attendance and can be heard and easily seen in the still unclad trees. If you are lucky, you can get a glimpse of an armadillo uprooting the lawn around the Silliman's house.

Several organizations will be active in the near future at CNC. The Wichita Skywalkers Volkspport Club will be at the Center on April 6 for a walking program with the Girl Scouts. Americorps from Cowley County Community College has been clearing trails, installing trail signs, fertilizing and watering plants about twice a week. This group works on outdoor environmental issues as well as service projects for elementary

children, safe environments for kids, and senior citizen activities. Participants earn a little money while acquiring leadership skills, self-esteem, and comradeship in their group efforts.

We urge WAS members to visit the Center often and take full advantage of this under-utilized jewel. It is rejuvenating to the spirit to get away from the daily clamor and angst of modern life for awhile and walk through the woods or sit on a bench, close your eyes, listen, and smell the aroma of natural things going on around you. The trails are clear, the bluff stairs have been fully restored and there's always a vacant picnic table. The French say "bon voyage." We say "happy trails."

--- Shawn Silliman and Gary Straley

2001-2002 WAS Officers

President	Patty Marlett	942-2164	jmarlett@kscable.com
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Gary Straley	620-221-3664	garrob@hit.net

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Naturalist	Shawn Silliman	620-442-4133	cnc@wichitaaudubon.org

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email any officer: was@wichitaaudubon.org

Send address changes to Sherry Brewer, 3231 SW Farmstead Rd, Benton, KS 67017 (316)778-1648 or e-mail lpbrewer@earthlink.net

Konza Prairie Field Trip

We will travel to the Konza Prairie on June 1 in search of the elusive Henslow's Sparrow and other grassland species, as well as the lovely spring wildflowers. At this writing we still have not established the details of where to meet our guide, so please check our website at www.wichitaaudubon.org, call Harry Gregory at 263-7608, or email him at birdfan@infi.net.



Twilight Dinner at Chaplin Nature Center

This special event on Saturday, May 4, is to honor our members and donors who make Chaplin Nature Center possible. Activities include:

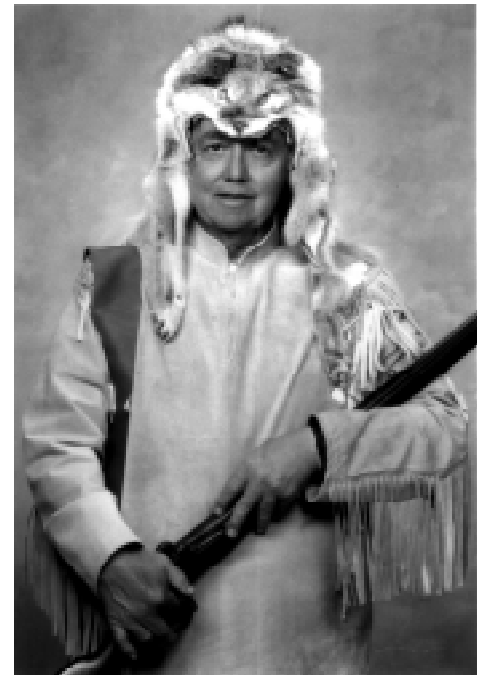
- barbecue dinner on the beach
- a sandbar "dig" for kids - hunt for fossils and buried artifacts
- bird watching
- nature scavenger hunt for kids
- sand castle building contest
- owl calling
- star program
- and a special visit by Meriwether Lewis (as portrayed by Dr. Phillip Thomas.)

The West was unknown when Meriwether Lewis (1774-1808) and Captain William Clark set forth to explore Jefferson's Louisiana Purchase in 1806. Journey with Lewis and his crew as they navigate the Missouri and the Columbia. Learn what it's like to hunt with flintlock guns and to enjoy the hospitality of the Mandan, the Sioux, and the Shoshone.

Dr. Thomas teaches environmental history at WSU, and is a past president of Wichita Audubon.

Festivities begin with a social hour at 5:00 pm, dinner at 6:00 pm, and activities continuing until after dark. There will be transportation provided to the river, so don't worry if you can't walk that far. We want this to be accessible to everyone. Donors who have given one hundred dollars or more will be honored with a free dinner (you will receive a personal invitation in the mail.) All others are invited to join the fun for only \$6.50 for adults and \$3.25 for children 12 and under - and this is all you can eat!

It's not too late to let us know you are coming. Call Carol Cumberland at 685-4867, or email ccumb@swbell.net



Phillip Thomas as Meriwether Lewis

Dr. Thomas's presentation is sponsored by a grant from the Kansas Humanities Council.



Tall Tales from the Chaplin Nature Center

This is a true story. Late one evening I had taken a computer apart in an effort to discover why it was not working. Why I have such a desire to take things apart, or believe that such an endeavor would make things work better, I cannot explain. It could just be the nature of man, or some inherited tinkering gene.

During this process I was approached by my wife, who told me of a strange sound coming from outside our bedroom window. The implication of her tone was that I should go and investigate. Although my curiosity was piqued, I knew that if I left many parts scattered across the living room floor my chances of reassembly would go from slight to none. Two hours later, as I placed the last screw back on the cover, never mind those extra

ones, I prepared to go outdoors. I grabbed my one million candlepower spotlight (more is better) and headed to the back of the house. Not expecting to hear anything, I waited a few minutes in darkness and silence just enjoying the peacefulness of the night. Then I heard it, a faint sound in the distance: a squeaking noise coming from the direction where the old horse barn once stood. I listened more intently, for this indeed was an unusual sound, one that I could not place, even as my mind raced through a catalog of night sounds memorized from experience and recorded tapes. With great expectation I slowly headed in its direction. I crept closer. No lights; I could not take the chance of scaring it off with

the awesome power of one million candles. The squeaking sound grew louder with every step and the expectation of seeing some new or strange creature increased. Could this be the sound of the elusive ringtail, or maybe some other forgotten creature? I was now only 15 feet away and it was time to unmask this mystery. I let loose the full fury of my spotlight and there before me was a small, humble opossum. My disappointment lasted only an instant as I gained a new insight about a wild animal, and the real cause of this mysterious sound. The sound was coming from the opossum, but only because it was chewing on a cat's squeaky toy. I guess wild animals enjoy playing with toys, too.

 *Wichita Audubon Society*
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Wings & Wetlands Weekend

The second Great Bend, KS, birding festival will be held May 3 to 5, 2002. Headquarters are at the Best Western Angus Inn in Great Bend. Activities include field trips to Quivira NWR, Cheyenne Bottoms, and the Nature Conservancy Preserve. There are also workshops on bird photography, waterbird ID, hummingbird habitats, and a live pelican presentation. More information is available at <http://www.greatbend.com/visitor/wingsww2.htm> or by calling (620) 792-2750

Migration Madness at Chisholm Creek Park

If you are eager to find those migrants on early spring mornings, join the staff at the Great Plains Nature Center for a week of morning walks through Chisholm Creek Park. On May 6 through May 10 we'll meet each morning at 7 am by the GPNC sign in the nature center parking lot. There is no fee and no need to register - just show up with binoculars.

June Picnic at Sim Park

The annual WAS picnic will held on Tuesday, June 18, 6:00 pm at the Sim Park Shelter house. The shelter house is located south of the Sim Park Municipal Golf Course. It is on Sim Park Drive, past the Old Cowtown Museum. Bring your own service and a covered dish or dessert to share. Iced tea will be served to help cool off the summer evening, or bring your own beverage.