

Wichita Audubon



Volume 35 No. 1 July 2000

CNC Upcoming Programs

Saturday, July 22,

10 am - noon

Natural Tie-Dye

Use common plants found in and around your yard to tie dye the natural way. Participants will learn about simple dyeing techniques and try their hand at making their own creation. Bring your own T-shirt for this class. Preregistration is required. Call the Nature Center at 316-442-4133.

Saturday, August 12

10 am to 11:30 am

Edible Wild Plants

Take a walk on the wild side and discover some of nature's natural bounty. Participants will hike along the trails and identify edible and poisonous plants. Registration for this program is required.

Saturday, September 30

10 am - noon

Butterfly Tagging

Monarch butterflies migrate through Kansas on the way to their winter homes in Mexico. Participants will learn about the tagging program and methods of capturing and tagging Monarchs, then help capture and tag them.



July Picnic

Come one, come all, invite your family and friends. The annual picnic will be held on Tuesday, July 18, 6:30 pm at the large picnic shelter at Chisholm Creek Park (Oliver street entrance). Bring your own service and a covered dish or dessert to pass. Iced Tea will be served to help cool off the summer evening, or bring your own beverage.

If we are very lucky, we may get a sneak preview of the Great Plains Nature Center exhibit hall given by Bob Gress. After years of setbacks, the hall is nearly ready, with the grand opening scheduled for Labor Day weekend. Whether we get to see it or not will depend on construction and progress by July 18. That can't be predicted exactly, so our tour remains tentative.

Dan Kilby Honored

The 2000 Meritorious Service Award was presented to Dan Kilby at the May meeting. Dan is one of two remaining founding members of Wichita Audubon (the other is Walker Butin), and has been an active part of the chapter since that beginning in 1954. He served as president and as a member of numerous committees. He is probably best known as one of our favorite and most enthusiastic field trip leaders, having led hundreds over the years. Congratulations to Dan, and thanks for all your hard work and support.

Coming Events

July 18

Annual picnic at 6:30 pm in Chisholm Creek Park. Bring food to share, and your own service.

July 22

Natural Tie-Dye workshop at Chaplin Nature Center, 10 am - noon. Pre-register at 316-442-4133.

August 12

Edible Wild Plants walk at Chaplin Nature Center, 10 am - 11:30 am. Pre-register at 316-442-4133.

September 30

Butterfly tagging at Chaplin Nature Center, 10 am to noon.

Attention Teachers

Audubon Adventures is the National Audubon Society's in-class environmental education program for grades 3-6. Here's how you can participate in Audubon Adventures next year:

1. Any class grade 3-6 can enroll. Wichita Audubon will pay \$20 of the \$40 cost.
2. Each class receives 30 student newspapers for each of six issues and a Leader's Guide for each issue.
3. For more information and an enrollment form, call Carol Cumberland at 685-4867. The deadline is September 15.

New Officers

New directors and officers were elected at the May meeting. They are:

Vice-president: Kevin Groeneweg

Treasurer: Sandra Tholen

Secretary: Julia Hoppes

Director (3 year term): Gary Straley

Director (3 year term): Cheryl Miller

Director (1 year term to replace Kevin Groeneweg): Patty Marlett

Carol Cumberland will continue as President (a two year term of office). Harry Gregory, Duane Delong, and Jay Newton will continue their terms as directors.

Gary Straley is assuming the job of chair of the Chaplin Nature Center Committee, replacing Rex Herndon. After ten years as chair of that committee Rex is finally getting a rest.

The list of phone numbers has been revised in the box below, and e-mail addresses have been added. Note that several people have changed e-mail addresses since they were last published.

2000-2001 WAS Officers

		HomePhone	E-mail
President	Carol Cumberland	685-4867	ccumb@swbell.net
Vice-president	Kevin Groeneweg	687-4268	kgroeneweg@feist.com
Secretary	Julia Hoppes	682-2623	jhoppes@kscable.com
Treasurer	Sandra Tholen	634-0049	stholen@feist.com
Directors			
	Duane Delong	684-7456	delongd@netzero.net
	Harry Gregory	263-7608	birdfan@wichita.infi.net
	Patty Marlett	942-2164	jmarlett@kscable.com
	Cheryl Miller	684-8357	cmiller@twsvvm.uc.twsu.edu
	Jay Newton	316-322-9090	
	Gary Straley	316-221-3664	garrob@hit.net
Committee Chairs			
Newsletter	Patty Marlett	942-2164	jmarlett@kscable.com
CNC	Gary Straley	316-321-3664	garrob@hit.net
Programs	Kevin Groeneweg	687-4268	kgroeneweg@feist.com
Conservation	Patty Marlett	942-2164	jmarlett@kscable.com
Development	Jay Newton	316-322-9090	
Membership	Kevin Groeneweg	687-4268	kgroeneweg@feist.com
Hospitality	Laura Groeneweg	687-4268	kgroeneweg@feist.com
Education	Marsha Ebaugh	682-4782	43042@prodigy.net
Field Trips	Harry Gregory	263-7608	birdfan@wichita.infi.net
Finance	Duane Delong	684-7456	delongd@netzero.net
Naturalist	Shawn Silliman	316-442-4133	silliman@hit.net
Chapter Information Line 681-2266			
Send address changes to Kevin Groeneweg, 2603 Capri Ln, Wichita KS 67210, or by phone (316) 687-4268, or e-mail kgroeneweg@feist.com			

Twilight Dinner Success

The first ever Twilight dinner, held May 6 at Chaplin Nature Center, was a big success. The weather threatened all day, but by evening the sun broke through and the temperature was perfect. Over one hundred people enjoyed grilled burgers while lounging on the sandbar. The children had a great time building sandcastles, and they all got to pick prizes from a big pile provided by Shawn. Thanks to all the people who worked hard to make this such a wonderful evening:

Carol and Hal Cumberland

Dave Farber

Kevin and Laura Groeneweg

Rex Herndon

Patty and Jim Marlett

Dwight Shoup

Leonard and Barbara Silliman

Shawn and Susan Silliman

Jeff Silliman

Gary Straley

Eddie Stegall

Gene Young

The CNC Committee

and especially Leonard Laws, our story teller, who entertained everyone after dinner.

We plan to make this an annual event, so keep the first weekend in May open for Camp Horizon and the Twilight Dinner.

Birdathon!

Two teams worked hard this year to raise just over \$2400 for WAS and Chaplin Nature Center. Congratulations to the CNC team of Shawn Silliman, Rex Herndon, and Dwight Shoup, and to the Painted Bunting team of Carol Cumberland, Marsha Ebaugh, and Patty Marlett. There is a little friendly competition going here. The CNC team raised more money by about one hundred dollars, but the Painted Buntings saw more species with a total of 122.

A big thank you to all the supporters who pledged and cheered the teams on.

July/August Birdwatching in Kansas

"The tallgrass prairie stirs our imagination not because it is empty but because it is vast. It challenges any Ptolemaic misconception that humans are the center of the universe. A rancher mending fences in the Flint Hills is a dot against the sky, like the man depicted in a Chinese landscape painting is a diminutive part within the whole panorama of mountains and streams. The unspeakable scale of distance — as far as the eye can see and then farther still — challenges the utmost abilities of the mind. Kansas is a zone beyond the peopled horizon and beyond all time where only the best part of the human spirit walks, touching both earth and sky at once."

*Denise Low, Touching the Sky, (1994)
Penthe Publishing, Lawrence KS.*

We who live in the Flint Hills, truly one of the "Last Great Places on Earth," often take this place for granted. So much prairie, so much sky; the commonplace becomes the unseen and unappreciated. It takes a poet's touch to remind us of the beauty that surrounds us, or a walk through the tall grass, or a vista from a roadway somewhere south of Alma. Take the time this month to get out, and breathe in the richness that comes from a climax ecosystem in its prime season.

July and August in Kansas are relatively slow birding times, but some interesting birds still manage to wander through. Early to mid-July is usually very slow, very hot, and is best reserved for eating watermelon, drinking iced tea, watching thunderheads, and taking it easy. That is usually what the birds are doing too. Most species that have only one brood per season will have fledged those

babies by mid-July, and will now be occupied with molting, fattening up for the return migration in the fall, and generally trying to stay cool.

Molting birds, along with the transient and often unique plumages of juvenile birds, can account for some interesting identification problems this month. If you see some puzzling bird, you may not be able to identify it, because that plumage isn't in any of your standard field guides. So watch its behavior, concentrate on the non-feathered parts (what is the shape of the beak, what color is the eye, etc.) and see if you can learn something new about what is most likely a very common bird. But if you can't figure it out, don't worry about it. Even the professional birders know that there are some birds that they will never identify for sure.

Uncommon birds also can come to Kansas in the mid-late summer period. Hurricanes in the Gulf can blow some very interesting things to Kansas, and post-breeding dispersal of young and old birds will often bring some vagrants to the state. The only records of Magnificent Frigatebird in the state are from July and August; undoubtedly these dagger-winged coastal marauders (once I heard them described as "barn swallows on steroids"), blown off course by hurricane winds, are extremely confused by corn fields and wheat stubble. White Ibis can appear here as well, and July or August seem to be the best time to find one in Kansas. Another Gulf Coast specialty, the Wood Stork, can also wander up to Kansas in summer. One was seen at Marais des Cygnes in July of 1975.

Other birds have even more regular and interesting habits. Sedge Wrens,

which commonly breed in wet meadows earlier in the season north and east of Kansas, come back to the state from July to September. The males build dummy nests, and sing incessantly, in the cordgrass swales of the northern Flint Hills prairies. However, no late-summer eggs or nestlings have been observed in the Flint Hills (although there are late-season breeding records from Nebraska). This peculiar phenology remains unexplained, but it is reproducible, so look and listen for Sedge Wrens along prairie streams this year, and see if you can find late-summer eggs or nestlings in Kansas. It will be a good excuse to get out for a walk in one of the Last Great Places on Earth.

Later in July, and throughout August, shorebirds will be passing through Kansas. The earliest migrants are generally adults who failed to reproduce this year, and will often still be in bright breeding plumage. Later migrants will be adults who have "abandoned" their young in the Arctic in order to get a head start on migration. Later in the year, and even into September, the duller-plumaged juveniles will pass through, navigating over vast distances with only their instincts to guide them. Hopefully this realization will help you respect these little "bird-brains" a bit more, and wish them Godspeed on their maiden voyage across the earth and sky.

--Dave Rintoul

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CARA Update

Right now, the U.S. Senate has a unique opportunity to reinvest more than \$2.8 billion from offshore oil and gas revenues for parks, wildlife, coastlines, and a variety of other conservation programs. The bipartisan Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA) is the major legislative vehicle this year to provide states and municipalities a permanent source of matching funds for conservation and recreation programs. In May, the House of Representatives passed CARA by an overwhelming margin, 315 to 102, and the bill is now before the U.S. Senate.

What CARA Means to America

CARA would annually support full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), at its \$900 million authorization, half of which goes to states and local communities; \$125 million for the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program (UPARR); \$350 million for wildlife conservation, recreation, and education under the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Fund; \$100 million for resource protection through

the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF); \$200 million for restoration of Federal and Indian Lands; \$150 million for Conservation Easements and Species Recovery; and \$200 million for Payment in Lieu of taxes (PILT) to help communities offset the loss of revenue when open space is placed in community stewardship; and \$1 billion for coastal/marine conservation efforts.

Why the Senate Must Act Now!

More than 50 Senators currently have cosponsored one of the several

CARA-related proposals now before the Senate. With less than 30 legislative days left, the clock is ticking down on this unique opportunity to pass landmark bipartisan conservation and reinvestment legislation, which would protect our nation's natural heritage for years to come.

A Few Facts About CARA

CARA reinvests \$2.8 billion annually from depleting resources – offshore oil and gas revenues – into conservation programs including programs that protect our coastlines,

parks, wildlife, and historic resources. This \$2.8 billion annual investment in natural heritage protection represents less than .02 percent of annual federal spending. CARA has been endorsed by more than 4,700 organizations and elected officials nationwide, including all fifty governors, U.S. Conference of Mayors, National Association of Counties, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the nation's major conservation organizations, land trusts, sportsman's organizations, as well as countless others.

Senator Roberts has signed on as a cosponsor of the bill. Senator Brownback has still not committed his support. You can help by letting him know that you favor the bill. You can call his office in Wichita at 264-8066, or write him at U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510. You can e-mail or fax your message from the Teaming With Wildlife website at www.teaming.com. Please help today.