

Wichita Audubon



Volume 43 No. 4 November/December 2008

NOVEMBER MEETING

In February of 2008 Jim & Patty Marlett took their first trip to Africa with ten days in Kenya. The birds were amazing. They saw 225 species - 220 of them lifers - plus other wildlife like lions, elephants, cheetahs, herds of antelope and much more.

Jim's photography will take you along on Safari. The program will be on Tuesday, November 18, 7:30 p.m. at the Great Plains Nature Center.

You can join Jim & Patty for dinner before the program at Jason's Deli, in Bradley Fair at 21st and Rock Road, at 5:45 p.m.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

This year will be the 54th Wichita Christmas Bird Count. All are welcome regardless of experience. See page 3 for more information about Christmas Counts.

December 14

*Winfield-Udall Christmas Bird Count. Meet at the Beech Science Center, Southwestern College at 7:30 a.m. Compiler: Max Thompson, 620-229-6304, maxt@cox.net

December 17

Slate Creek Christmas Bird Count. Meet at the Slate Valley Baptist Church at 8 a.m. Compiler: Gene Young, 620-442-4165, youngg6264@yahoo.com

December 20

*Wichita Christmas Bird Count. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at Lawrence-Dumont stadium parking lot. Compilation 5:30 p.m. at the Great Plains Nature Center, with chili & beverages provided. Compiler: Kevin Groeneweg, 687-4268, kgroeneweg@sbcglobal.net

December 20

*El Dorado Christmas Bird Count. Meet at the McDonald's in El Dorado, 2004 W. Central, 7:30 a.m. Compiler: Bill Langley, 316-321-3495, blangley@butlercc.edu

December 20

*Halstead/Newton Christmas Bird Count. Meet at the Kaufman Museum in North Newton at 6:45 a.m. Compiler: Dwight Platt, 316-283-6708, platword@southwind.net

December 21

*Arkansas City Christmas Bird Count. Meet at 8 a.m. at Newman Park, on U.S. Highway 77 just north of the Arkansas River. Compiler: Gene Young, 620-442-4165, youngg6264@yahoo.com

January 3

*Red Hills Christmas Bird Count. Meet at 7:00 a.m. at the Indian Grill Restaurant on U.S. Highway 160 in Medicine Lodge. Groups will depart at 7:30 a.m. Compiler: Pete Janzen, 832-0182, pete.janzen@sbcglobal.net

*These counts have a \$5 per person fee for National Audubon.

COMING EVENTS

November 15

Wichita Area Mystery Trip. Trip will depart the Kings-X at 21st and Amidon at 7:30 a.m. Leader: Pete Janzen, 828-1082, pete.janzen@sbcglobal.net

November 18

Regular meeting, "Kenya: Wildlife Adventure," by Jim Marlett, 7:30 p.m. at the Great Plains Nature Center

NO MEETING IN DECEMBER

January 31 &

February 3

Eagle Watches at Chaplin Nature Center. Hike to the Ark River and look for wintering Bald Eagles. 10 a.m. to noon.



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.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT FACTS

The Christmas Bird Count is a long-standing program of the National Audubon Society. It is an early-winter bird census, where volunteers follow specified routes through a designated 15 mile diameter circle, counting every bird they see or hear all day. It's not just a species tally—all birds are counted all day, giving an indication of the total number of birds in the circle that day. All individual CBC's are conducted in the period from 14 December to 5 January, and each count is conducted in one calendar day.

CBC participants are organized into groups—or field parties—by the compiler of each Count. Each field party covers a specific area of the 15 mile diameter circle. And anyone is welcome to participate, since compilers arrange field parties so that inexperienced observers are out with seasoned CBC veterans.

As long as you live within a designated CBC circle, you are welcome to count the birds at your feeder. All you'll need to do is contact your local compiler so that you may report your results on the Count Day.

The data collected by observers over the past century allow researchers, conservation biologists, and interested individuals to study the long-term health and status of bird populations across North America. There is no other wildlife population study in the world with such a long history. Researchers have found that population trends reflected in CBC data tend to correlate well with those from censuses taken by more stringent means.

CALENDARS

The 2009 bird calendars are here, with excellent bird photos gracing each month. These make great Christmas presents. Proceeds go to support Chaplin Nature Center. They cost \$5 apiece. You can purchase them at meetings, or contact Patty Marlett, pmarlett@mac.com, 942-2164

THANKS FOR PARK CLEANUP

Thanks to Sandra Tholen, John & Sharon Dilks, Kevin Groeneweg and Patty Marlett for their help with the Chisholm Creek Park cleanup on September 27.

THANKS FOR CNC CLEANUP

Thanks to the crew that came out Oct. 11 to help Shawn clean up after the September flooding at Chaplin Nature Center. They wielded chain saws, moved trees and branches and rebuilt bridges to get the trails to the river open again. Thanks to Rex Herndon, Dwight Shoup, Kevin Groeneweg, Mike Heaney, Curt VanBoening, Jeff Calhoun, Cheryl Miller, Austin Daray, Christian Daray, Leonard Silliman, Jacob Silliman and, of course, Shawn Silliman.

CARPPOOLING

We want to urge carpooling for field trips this year, to conserve both gas and money. If you plan on driving for a field trip, please notify the trip leader, and let others know if you have room for riders through the KSbird listserv.

2008-2009 WAS Officers

President	Kevin Groeneweg	687-4268	kgroeneweg@sbcglobal.net
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Naturalist	Shawn Silliman	620-442-4133	cnc@wichitaudubon.org

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E-mail any officer: was@wichitaudubon.org

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

Project FeederWatch Benefits Birds and People

Connection with nature promotes wellness

More than 100 studies have shown that getting closer to nature reduces stress and promotes a feeling of well-being in children and adults. So, filling feeders and counting the birds that visit may be just what the doctor ordered! For more than 20 years, that's what participants in the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Project FeederWatch have been doing—benefitting themselves and the birds.

The 2008-09 season of Project FeederWatch gets underway November 8 and runs through April 3. Participants count the numbers and kinds of birds at their feeders each week and send the information to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Participants submitted more than 115,000 checklists during the 2007-08 FeederWatch season, documenting unusual bird sightings, winter movements, and shifting ranges—a treasure-trove of information that scientists use to monitor the health of the birds and of the environment.

“Being a FeederWatcher is easy and fun, and at the same time helps generate the world's largest database on feeder-bird populations,” says project leader David Bonter. “We are grateful for the contributions our participants have made for the birds and are proud of the joy they say it brings to their busy lives. Since we started in 1987, more than 40,000 people have submitted observations, engaging with the wildlife beyond their windows.”

Scientists learn something new from the data each year, too, whether it's about the movements of common backyard birds or unusual sightings of rarely-seen species. Highlights of the most recent season include the largest southward movement of Red-breasted Nuthatches in the history of the project—part of an expected influx of northern birds that fly farther south when their food supplies run short. Other northern species showing up in record numbers included Common Redpolls and Pine Siskins. Among the rare birds reported was a Streak-backed Oriole in Loveland, Colorado—the state's first report of this bird, native to Mexico. A December nor'easter deposited a Dovekie in Newton, Massachusetts, the first time this North Atlantic seabird has ever been reported to Project FeederWatch.

Long-term data show some species increasing in number, such as the Lesser Goldfinch in the Southwest. Other populations continue a downward trend, such as the Evening Grosbeak throughout their range. Once one of the most common species seen at feeders in the northern half of the continent, the grosbeaks are declining for unknown reasons.

Beyond the benefits to birds and science, however, is the benefit to participants. “Nature is not

merely an amenity; it is critical to healthy human development and functioning,” says Nancy Wells, Cornell University assistant professor of design and environmental analysis. Her studies find that a view of nature through the window or access to the environment in any way improves a child's cognitive functioning and reduces the negative effects of stress on the child's psychological well-being. Wells also notes that when children spent time with nature early in life it carries over to their adult attitudes and behavior toward the environment.

Project FeederWatch welcomes participants of all ages and skill levels, from scout troops and retirees to classrooms and nature center visitors. To learn more and to sign up, visit www.feederwatch.org or call the Lab toll-free at (800) 843-2473. In return for the \$15 fee (\$12 for Lab members) participants receive the FeederWatcher's Handbook, an identification poster of the most common feeder birds in their area, a calendar, complete instructions, and the FeederWatch annual report, Winter Bird Highlights.


Wichita Audubon Society
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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.

BIRD SEED SALE

Help support Wichita Audubon and Chaplin Nature Center by buying your bird seed from us. We offer high quality seed, **delivered to your home** (within Wichita City limits.)

Please submit your order by **Thursday, November 13.**

The seed will be delivered on **Saturday, November 22**

25 lbs Black Oil Sunflower - \$15

25 lbs Audubon Mix - \$12

Order by phone, mail or E-mail. Call Carol Cumberland at 685-4867 or carol.cumberland@swbell.net Mail:

Wichita Audubon Society, PO Box 47607, Wichita, KS 67201