

# Wichita Audubon



Volume 44 No. 7 April 2010

## APRIL MEETING



Do you ever find those little brown birds confusing? We've got some help for you. Barry Jones will present our April program and enlighten us on the subject of sparrow identification. Barry is a visitor services specialist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at Quivira National Wildlife Refuge. He is an avid birder and

posts many helpful notes on the KS Bird listserve about birds and road conditions at Quivira. He'll share his sparrow knowledge and experience with us.

Join us on Tuesday, April 20, 7:30 p.m. at the Great Plains Nature Center. You can also join Barry and other members for dinner at Doc Green's, 10096 E. 13th, in the Waterfront at 5:45 p.m.

## BIRDATHON

Birdathon is a fund-raising activity that is also a lot of fun. It is open to any member that likes to bird and wants to help. A Birdathon team solicits pledges from friends, neighbors and coworkers for the number of bird species they can find in a 24 hour period. Teams choose a date in late April or early May when migration is at its peak. We would really like to have your help. To join a team talk to Mike Heaney, Carol Cumberland, Patty Marlett, Kevin Groeneweg or Shawn Silliman. If you can't join a team, consider soliciting pledges for one of the teams, or contribute yourself. Any and all assistance is appreciated

## CNC UPCOMING PROGRAMS

**April 5, Saturday, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.**  
**Spring Cleanup**

Volunteer to help get Chaplin Nature Center in shape with building cleanup or trail maintenance. Light workloads or heavy, your choice.



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

### **April 3**

Spring Cleanup at Chaplin Nature Center, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

### **April 10**

Lesser Prairie Chickens & Swartz Canyon. See page 2 for more info.

### **April 20**

Regular meeting, "Sparrow Identification" by Barry Jones. 7:30 p.m. at the Great Plains Nature Center.

### **April 25 - May 1**

Extended field trip to south Florida. Leaders: Patty Marlett, Pete Janzen, Kevin Groeneweg, Mike Heaney

### **May 1 - May 30**

Vote online for WAS for the Pepsi Challenge Grant! See page 4.

### **May 7 - 9**

America's Birdiest County competition. Birders are encouraged to get out and find as many species as possible in Sedgwick County. Coordinators: Jeff Calhoun, 737-1307, [jcalhoun@wichita.edu](mailto:jcalhoun@wichita.edu), & Nathan Ofsthun, 617-7171, [anseriformes@gmail.com](mailto:anseriformes@gmail.com).

## **MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD**

The award committee is accepting nominations for the annual Meritorious Service Award. The criteria for selection include outstanding or sustained leadership as a member, officer, committee chair, or special project leader.

Please include a brief description of the nominee's accomplishments and why you think they should receive this award. The presentation will be made at the May 18 meeting.

Send your nomination to Dan Kilby, 1220 N. Gow, Wichita 67203, or email [ddkilby@prodigy.net](mailto:ddkilby@prodigy.net)

Previous recipients of this award:

1994 John Wherry	2002 Wallace Champeny
1995 Ralph Wiley & Geula McDonald	2003 Patty Marlett
1996 Nathan McDonald	2004 Carol Cumberland
1997 Louise Wherry	2005 Sandra Tholen
1998 Don Vannoy	2006 Kevin Groeneweg
1999 Bob Gress	2007 Laura Groeneweg
2000 Dan Kilby	2008 Duane DeLong
2001 Rex Herndon	2009 Pete Janzen

## **FIELD TRIPS**

On Saturday, April 10, Pete Janzen and Ken Brunson will lead a trip to the Red Hills area to see Lesser Prairie Chickens booming, followed by a visit to Swartz Canyon on the Merrill Ranch. The group will depart before 5 a.m. for the booming grounds, so overnight lodging in Pratt is suggested. The Swartz Canyon portion of the trip will involve fording the Salt Fork River and hiking for several miles. You must preregister with Pete Janzen at 838-0182, [pete.janzen@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pete.janzen@sbcglobal.net). He will give details of meeting places and suggestions for places to stay in Pratt.

## **HEARTLAND'S BIRDIEST COUNTY**

Jeff Calhoun and Nathan Ofsthun have announced a new birding competition. The Heartland's Birdiest County Competition will take place between the dates 1 April and 31 May. Counties from Kansas, Oklahoma, Missouri and Nebraska are eligible to enter.

So, how does this work? Basically, it's this simple: find as many species as possible within your county borders in a period of 72 hours. Your chosen window can be anytime between 1 April and 31 May. Birders may form teams or bird as individuals. Teams can be as large or small as you desire, and do not have to be the same from Day 1 to Day 2 to Day 3.

More details can be found on the blog:  
<http://heartlandbirding.blogspot.com/>

This blog will be used to post updates and announcements.

### **2009-2010 WAS Officers**

President	Sandra Tholen	634-0049	<a href="mailto:stholen@cox.net">stholen@cox.net</a>
Vice-president	Nathan Ofsthun	617-7171	<a href="mailto:anseriformes@gmail.com">anseriformes@gmail.com</a>
Secretary	Patty Marlett	942-2164	<a href="mailto:pmarlett@mac.com">pmarlett@mac.com</a>
Treasurer	Carol Cumberland	685-4867	<a href="mailto:carol.cumberland@swbell.net">carol.cumberland@swbell.net</a>
Directors	Kevin Groeneweg	687-4268	<a href="mailto:kgroeneweg@sbcglobal.net">kgroeneweg@sbcglobal.net</a>
	Curt VanBoening	644-1986	<a href="mailto:curtvb@earthlink.net">curtvb@earthlink.net</a>
	Jeff Calhoun	737-1307	<a href="mailto:jecalhoun@wichita.edu">jecalhoun@wichita.edu</a>
	Catherine Lewis	681-3362	<a href="mailto:thexchange@cox.net">thexchange@cox.net</a>
	Mike Heaney	733-6459	<a href="mailto:jeager@southwind.net">jeager@southwind.net</a>
	Bob Gress	838-4130	<a href="mailto:bobgress@cox.net">bobgress@cox.net</a>

### **Committee Chairs**

Newsletter	Patty Marlett	942-2164	<a href="mailto:pmarlett@mac.com">pmarlett@mac.com</a>
CNC	Kevin Groeneweg	687-4268	<a href="mailto:kgroeneweg@sbcglobal.net">kgroeneweg@sbcglobal.net</a>
Programs	Nathan Ofsthun	617-7171	<a href="mailto:anseriformes@gmail.com">anseriformes@gmail.com</a>
Conservation	Curt VanBoening	644-1986	<a href="mailto:curtvb@earthlink.net">curtvb@earthlink.net</a>
Development	Patty Marlett	942-2164	<a href="mailto:pmarlett@mac.com">pmarlett@mac.com</a>
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Hospitality	Laura Groeneweg	687-4268	<a href="mailto:lgroeneweg@sbcglobal.net">lgroeneweg@sbcglobal.net</a>
Field Trips	Pete Janzen	832-0182	<a href="mailto:pete.janzen@sbcglobal.net">pete.janzen@sbcglobal.net</a>
Finance	Duane DeLong	684-7456	<a href="mailto:duane.delong669@gmail.com">duane.delong669@gmail.com</a>
Naturalist	Shawn Silliman	620-442-4133	<a href="mailto:cnc@wichitaudubon.org">cnc@wichitaudubon.org</a>

### **WWW.WICHITAAUDUBON.ORG**

E-mail any officer: [was@wichitaudubon.org](mailto:was@wichitaudubon.org)

Send address changes to Sister Patricia Stanley, 3700 E Lincoln Apt 123, Wichita, KS 67218 [pstanley@csjoseph.org](mailto:pstanley@csjoseph.org)

## **NEWS FROM AUDUBON OF KANSAS**

### **Roadside Mowing**

We all want the State of Kansas to have sufficient funds to support education and fulfill other important obligations. Thus, many of the budget cuts are troubling. However, there may be one small sliver of silver lining surrounding the revenue shortfall clouds. Maybe, just maybe, we can use this occasion to impress Governor Parkinson, Kansas Dept. of Transportation (KDOT) and Kansas Turnpike Authority (KTA) staff, and members of the Kansas Legislature that this is a great time to eliminate excessive -- often ecologically destructive -- mowing along state highways and the Kansas Turnpike, and to adopt the limited mowing practices recommended by a broad base of conservation organizations.

Audubon has been actively promoting improved highway right-of-way management in this state since the early 1970s. Substantial progress has been made at times, and then the policies are ignored by some district engineers who build budgets and expand their work force based on demands they create to more frequently and completely mow out ROW vegetation.

Please send an e-mail to Governor Parkinson ([governor@ks.gov](mailto:governor@ks.gov)) and your state representative and state senator urging them to save approximately \$3 to \$4 million annually in state revenue by cutting that amount from the KDOT budget of more than \$6.6 million that is spent excessively mowing vegetation in the outer parts of the right-of-way (ROW) along state highways.

KDOT Secretary Deb Miller has made great progress advancing the idea that vegetated roadsides can be a positive resource. In response to requests from Audubon of Kansas (AOK), Secretary Miller established an Aesthetics Task Force (ATF) in February 2008 to develop recommendations for enhancement of roadsides. The task force met monthly in 2008. It included representatives of state and federal agencies, Audubon of Kansas, Kansas Native Plant Society, Kansas Wildlife Federation and individuals with special expertise. The ATF report finalized in October 2008 can be viewed on the AOK website.

Audubon of Kansas presented Deb Miller with an award recognizing her leadership on this subject at the organization's February 5, 2010 board of trustees meeting in Lawrence.

During the summer of 2008 fuel prices were extraordinarily high and that was an added motivation for reduction of mowing. Most KDOT maintenance units limited mowing to approximately 15 feet out from the shoulder, and as a result native grasses and wildflowers were incredibly showy along state highways that fall. However, far more extensive mowing, and mowing out to the fencerows in

many places while native grasses and wildflowers were still in full bloom was commonplace in the fall of 2009. It appears mowing recommendations of the ATF are already being ignored.

One of the best ways for citizens to help make state highway roadsides more attractive in Kansas is to urge KDOT to fully adopt the ATF recommendations and adhere to a limited mowing protocol. One can contact Secretary Deb Miller by sending an e-mail to her administrative assistant at [PeggyH@ksdot.org](mailto:PeggyH@ksdot.org).

The state highway system includes approximately 10,000 miles of roadway (20,000 miles of ROW) with more than 150,000 acres of vegetation. That is more than 13 times the acreage of the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, and this roadside grassland is viewed by hundreds of thousands of residents and visiting travelers every day. Our rich prairie heritage of native grasses and wildflowers should be projected in the most positive way possible at every season of the year. It can be done in a manner that reduces the use of fossil fuels, saves taxpayer dollars, and improves the ecological and environmental benefits of this public land. Yes, it is public land.



  
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**HELP THE WICHITA AUDUBON SOCIETY**  
**WIN A \$25,000 GRANT**

The Wichita Audubon Society has submitted a grant to the Pepsi Company in the amount of \$25,000. Our project title is “Help Kids Understand Nature Through Birds.” We will be competing with approximately 250 other groups and that is why we need your help.

Starting **May 1**, we need you to visit their website at <http://www.refresheverything.com/> and vote for this project. **Vote early and often;** you can vote every day for next 30 days. The top ten projects win the \$25,000. The WAS grant can be found in the “Education” category or change the Vote For heading from “current leaders” to “near you.”

Funds from this project will be used to support outreach programs, equipment and supplies, speakers for program meetings, and Chaplin Nature Center.