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*"finding cooperative conservation solutions for birds and
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SUTTON

NEWSLETTER

Volume 31, Winter 2008



Winter Bird Atlas Update

Cover: Oklahoma Winter Bird Atlas survey map (See Page 2 for details). Pine Siskin, Northern Cardinal. Photography by Bill Horn. Mallard, Harris's Sparrow. Photography by Eyal Shochat

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The White-crowned Sparrow (above) is often seen wintering in Oklahoma.

Winter Bird Atlas Surveys Successfully Completed

by Dan L. Reinking
Photography by Eyal Shochat

The five years of statewide bird surveys comprising the Oklahoma Winter Bird Atlas Project have flown by. What was once just an idea has turned into a comprehensive inventory of birds wintering in Oklahoma thanks to the dedication of dozens of volunteers. The importance of volunteers to this project cannot be overstated. Surveying the 583 blocks of land throughout the state (see cover map) for a minimum of eight hours required over 4,600 hours of effort, not even including substantial travel time to and from the blocks. In reality, many volunteers spent more than the minimum time required for surveys, so that over five years, volunteers and project staff actually spent 5,360 hours actively patrolling atlas blocks in search of birds. A project of this size and scope simply cannot be done without a large donation of time from skilled birders.

Many birders who helped with the Breeding Bird Atlas Project from 1997 through 2001 signed up again, but new participants were recruited as well. Each was provided with an instruction handbook, data forms, and detailed maps of the areas to be surveyed. At least two visits to each block were required, one in early winter and one in late winter. All birds seen or heard within each block were tallied on the data form. When all was said and done, 577 of the 583 blocks (99%) were surveyed, and 186 species were recorded within atlas blocks.

This number is a bit lower than the 212 species that were found in these same atlas blocks during the breeding bird atlas, although the total number of regularly occurring species found in Oklahoma is roughly the same in the summer and winter. The difference lies in the types of species found here in the different seasons. During the summer, Oklahoma is home to many migratory landbird species which breed here but winter to the south. During the winter, Oklahoma is home to many aquatic species such as ducks, gulls, loons, and grebes coming here from the north; they can be found on large reservoirs but are less often seen in the randomly selected atlas blocks which seldom contain large, open-water habitats. Because these aquatic species are an important component of Oklahoma's winter bird life and are not very well surveyed by concentrating on atlas blocks, project participants were asked to visit reservoirs throughout the state and report the numbers and kinds of birds present at each. Survey data were submitted for 114 lakes statewide, providing valuable information on aquatic bird distribution.



Lesser Scaup (above) and Northern Pintails (below) are often found on Oklahoma's lakes during the winter.



Waterfowl are a large component of the species that winter in Oklahoma. Canada Geese (top) and Ring-necked Ducks (bottom) are both common winter residents.

Generally, bird atlas projects do a relatively good job measuring distributions of common and widespread species, but are not as effective for rare or local species. For this reason, a list of so-called "special interest species" was developed, and project participants were asked to report any sightings of these species from anywhere in the state during the winter months. This request resulted in 995 reports being submitted as well as additional distribution information for poorly understood species.

Much analysis remains to be done on the large amount of data collected by this project. Distribution maps will be created, and a book will be prepared summarizing in detail the results of this first-ever Oklahoma Winter Bird Atlas Project. This new book describing winter birds will complement the existing *Oklahoma Breeding Bird Atlas* available now from the University of Oklahoma Press or your favorite bookseller. Atlas project participants have already expressed to me how much they have enjoyed working on this project, and seem wistful that field work is now completed. For continued involvement in important projects, I encourage everyone to take part in one or more Christmas Bird Counts this winter (www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/) and to consider helping with Breeding Bird Surveys in the summer (www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBS/). Annual winter bird feeder counts are also coordinated by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (www.wildlifedepartment.com/amateurbiologists.htm) and Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology (www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/).

Knee in Marsh Birds Deep and Mud!

by Eric J. Beck

In 2007 the major limiting factor for the marsh bird project was flooding; in 2008 it was just the opposite. This year, western Oklahoma, particularly the northwest and panhandle regions, experienced one of the worst droughts in many years, spurring some to make statements like “the driest they’ve seen since the dustbowl.” It was extremely dry, and the monitoring season certainly suffered for it, at least in the number of detections I encountered.

This year the project extended to southeastern Oklahoma, as far east as the Red Slough Wildlife Management Area in McCurtain County. Any further and I would have ended up in Arkansas. New survey routes were added, and I finally reached a point of having entirely too much work for one person. That said, I still encountered interesting things and found myself in many and sometimes unpleasant predicaments.

In a similar manner to last year, a handful of surprises made themselves known. These surprises were mainly in the form of distributional records. For instance, I encountered a Least Bittern in Beaver County well into the breeding season. To this day I have not found a single record for this species in the panhandle. Another interesting record was locating two associating adult Virginia Rails in McCurtain County. Even though a nest search produced no nest, the fact that the birds were there and associating provides us with a fairly reliable record for breeding in the county, which also happens to be a first. Some other important observations were also made that didn’t involve marsh birds.

As I mentioned previously, new locations were surveyed for potential routes, and it was during these times that a couple of new county breeding records for other “waterbirds” were made. Two new county breeding records for the American Avocet were made, as well as new Kiowa County breeding records for the endangered Least Tern, Snowy Plover, and Black-necked Stilt. Although these were not target species for this project, they remain important records.

Every field season I usually find myself in some kind of predicament that ends up making an amusing story or two. This season was no exception to that rule. The Least Bittern in Beaver County presented me with the most comical, in my opinion. After finishing my survey route, I returned to the spot where I had heard the bittern and relocated it. I took a few documentation photos, and then I made the decision to look for a nest, which in a very short time I regretted! The marsh surrounds a small pond, and this was where the bittern was foraging. Knowing that these birds usually nest relatively close to open water I decided to skirt the edges of the pond in hopes of finding a nest. I soon realized I had ventured too close to the pond and found myself knee deep in mud and nearly chest deep in water! That’s where I remained for approximately five very long, somewhat panicked, and completely mired minutes. With my binoculars completely submerged and my camera held high over my head, I used my one good arm to pry my legs out of the mud and slowly but surely made my way out of a very funny but serious situation (with photos for proof!). Needless to say I never located a nest!

Funny stories aside, the 2008 season was successful, and in 2009 we hope to build on that success. The main goal for this project is to have three consecutive seasons of statewide surveys. Up to this point, we have two preliminary seasons of regional data. We would like for these statewide surveys to begin in April of 2009, but there is still a great deal of work to be done before we see that goal become reality. We are also hoping to find one or two dedicated (and somewhat crazy) surveyors for the next few seasons; Oklahoma is far too large to be covered by a single researcher. Let’s face it; there aren’t too many people out there willing to get up at 3:30 am to go slogging through mosquito infested marshes, all the while picking out and separating the weird grunts, croaks, and calls that seem to come from nowhere! Upon reviewing the findings of the past two years, however, it is obvious that there is far more going on in the state with marsh birds than is being reported from birders and researchers alike. Statewide surveys should provide us with a more complete understanding of the range and status for these species in Oklahoma, and will likely fill many gaps in published accounts as well.



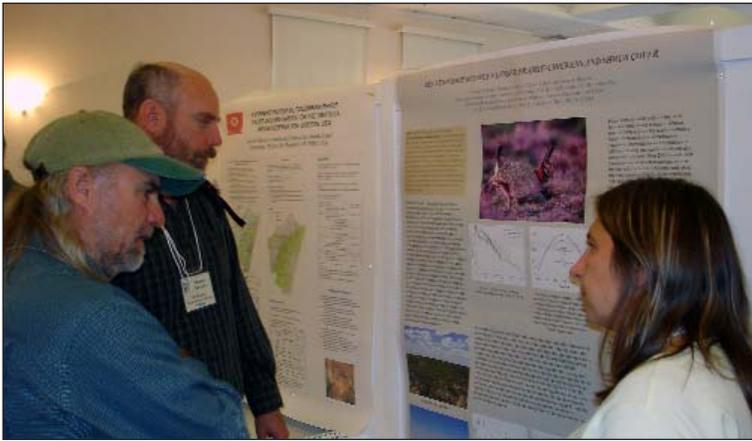
Common Moorhens (above) nest in only a few locations in Oklahoma. This nest (below left) was found at Red Slough in the southeastern corner of the state. Photography by Eric Beck.

Help Wanted...

One or two dedicated (and somewhat crazy) surveyors for the next few seasons.

International Grouse Symposium Whitehorse 2008

by Don H. Wolfe



Mike Schroeder (Washington) and Michele Loneux (Belgium) discussing Lesser Prairie-Chicken poster with Don Wolfe. Photography by Steve Sherrod.

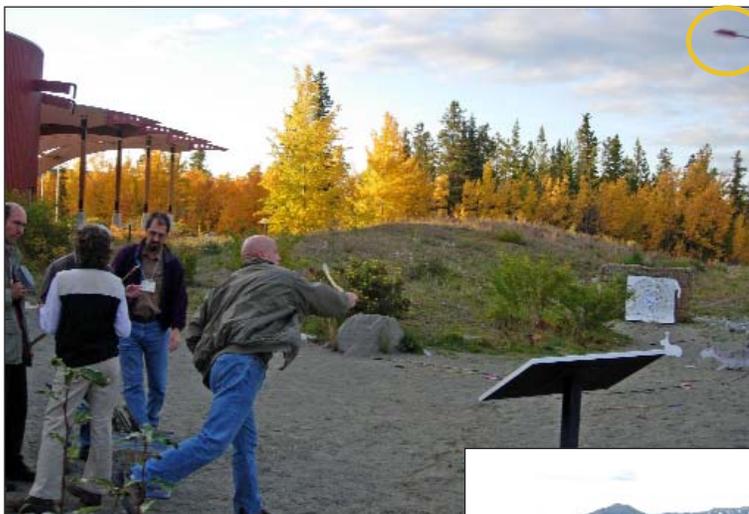
for a few days in September, was also the latter. In September 2008, Whitehorse, the capital city of the Yukon, was host to the 11th International Grouse Symposium, with about 120 grouse biologists representing nearly 20 countries. Located on a level river shelf of land on the west bank of the Yukon River, Whitehorse is in the midst of endless mountains, lakes, and thick boreal forest, and may at first seem a surprising location for a grouse conference. However, there were several good reasons for hosting such a conference in Whitehorse. First and foremost was the willingness and excellent planning of the organizer of the conference, Dr. Kathy Martin. The Yukon is also home to no fewer than SEVEN species of grouse, a diversity of grouse shared only with Alaska and British Columbia. The Sutton Center was represented by Steve Sherrod, Michael Patten, and Don Wolfe who jointly presented 3 posters and 2 oral papers on our research on Greater and Lesser Prairie-Chickens and White-tailed Ptarmigan.

In addition to four days of scientific papers on grouse biology and conservation, there were also field trips to a nearby wildlife preserve that maintains a number of large mammals such as Dall sheep, muskoxen, mountain goats, wood bison, and caribou. The opening reception was held at the Beringia Interpretive Center, just a few clicks outside of Whitehorse, where Steve showed unexpected skill in the use of an atlatl (should I ever have a mammoth charging me, I hope Steve and his atlatl are nearby!). On

the final day of the symposium, there was also a field trip to some lakes and mountains north of Whitehorse, where Spruce Grouse, Dusky Grouse, Willow Ptarmigan, Rock Ptarmigan, and White-tailed Ptarmigan are supposedly all common. As you can probably guess, all 5 grouse species apparently did not receive the memo that we were coming (at least one of us has yet to see a live Rock Ptarmigan, despite searching for them in 5 countries now). Still, the climbing and hiking in the brisk autumn air was a welcome change from interesting but long days of sitting indoors for presentations.

Three years ago, it was proposed that the next (2011) International Grouse Symposium would be held in the Republic of Georgia. Due to current political unrest in that country,

it was decided this year that the 12th International Grouse Symposium would instead be hosted by Japan (where you can supposedly walk right up to Rock Ptarmigan in the wild). It was also decided that Georgia would have the honor of the meeting in 2014, assuming the country regains political stability in the coming years.



Above: Sutton Center Director Steve Sherrod demonstrating proper atlatl throwing technique. Atlatls were used in hunting to provide leverage to increase the throwing power of a spear or dart (See circled dart). Right: Tomas Willebrand of Norway and Olafur Nielsen of Iceland searching for ptarmigan near Whitehorse. Photography by Don Wolfe.



Wildlife Expo 2008

by Ryan A. VanZant and Margie T. Nolan

It's All About Birds! continued to educate the public about the importance of birds and the environment at the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation's Wildlife Expo in Guthrie, Oklahoma, this past September 26-28. The Expo celebrates the state's natural diversity and opportunities for outdoor activity. For three days Ryan VanZant, Jennifer Charles, and Josh Smith of the Sutton Center Education Staff produced an abbreviated version of our full program on the main stage of the arena twice per day, where over 35,000 Oklahomans had the chance to learn a little

more about how birds play a major role in many aspects of our lives. The combination of photos, videos, live camera shots, and our new show opening narrated by Channel 6 news anchor and Sutton Board member Scott Thompson on the giant 20'x30' screen above the stage really drew in a crowd. Coupled with the facts that we had Ellie, our African Grey Parrot, showing off her amazing mimicry ability, and Zephyr, one of our Harris's Hawks, flying down from the rafters of the Lazy-E Arena, the attraction of the live birds was too much for passers-by to ignore, and we had some of the biggest crowds of the event.

Most of the attendees at the Expo had little if any idea regarding the extensive conservation efforts for Bald Eagles or other birds including the Greater and Lesser Prairie-Chickens. We were able to educate many of those present regarding how, as a result of pesticides, our national symbol disappeared, as well as how it has recovered in the Sooner State from zero to 66 nesting pairs. This success, of course, has been a result of the complicated recovery program led by the Sutton Research Center in cooperation with ODWC and the USFWS. In addition, the crowd was very interested to find out the predicaments of the declining Greater and Lesser Prairie-Chickens as well as how so many of the latter are disappearing as a result of collisions with fences.

At the end of each program many people took the opportunity to see Fiona, one of our education Bald Eagles, up close at the edge of the stage, or they made it over to the Sutton Center's booth hosted by Margie Nolan to learn a little more about the Sutton Center. We want to thank Elizabeth Maupin and her mom, Marje, who answered a request for volunteers to help in the booth. Elizabeth was an intern with the Center this summer and is a great advocate for our work. And Marje was perfect with all the children who wanted to learn about hand feeding baby eagles!

All in all, our experience at the 4th Annual Wildlife Expo was a great success! We had a chance to entertain, and, more importantly, educate thousands of people about the importance of birds to "human life and existence."

Sutton Center/NatureWorks: 2009 Scholarships

by Margie T. Nolan

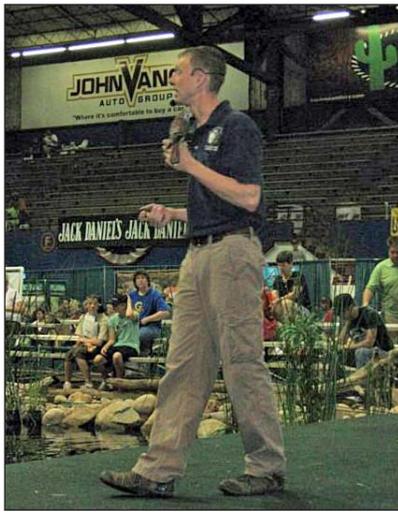
We, at the Sutton Center, are excited to again partner with our friends at NatureWorks and The F&M Bank & Trust Company to offer the Sutton Awards for conservation communicators! With up to \$15,000 in scholarships to provide, we are looking forward to even more entries from our talented 10th, 11th and 12th grade students here in Oklahoma!

The competition consists of two parts: the first, a presentation piece (fine arts, video, photo essay, advertisement) that tells a compelling story about a current conservation issue. This piece will count as 2/3 of the scoring. The second, a short (no more than two pages), but detailed essay that describes the project, explains how the project impacts conservation efforts, and tells why the entrant chose it. This essay will count as 1/3 of the scoring.

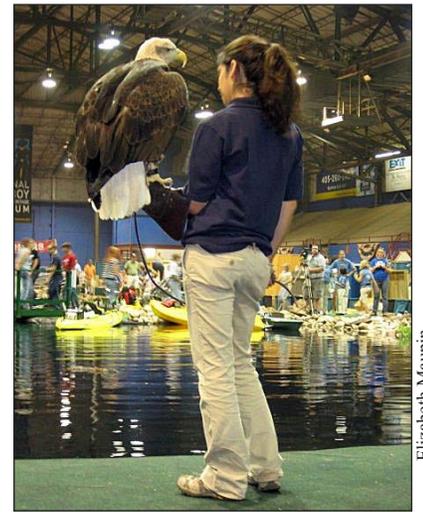
And, of course, once again, the winning entries will be displayed among the works of professional artists from around the country at the 2009 NatureWorks Art Show and Sale! This show takes place Friday, February 27 through Sunday, March 1. Winners, their parents, and teachers will also be invited to the opening gala on Friday evening and for the NatureWorks breakfast on Sunday morning where they will receive their awards.

Applications and flyers can be obtained by contacting Margie Nolan at 918-595-0005 or mnolan@riggsabney.com. You can also visit our website at www.suttoncenter.org for more information or to download the application.

The Sutton Newsletter 5



Elizabeth Maupin



Elizabeth Maupin



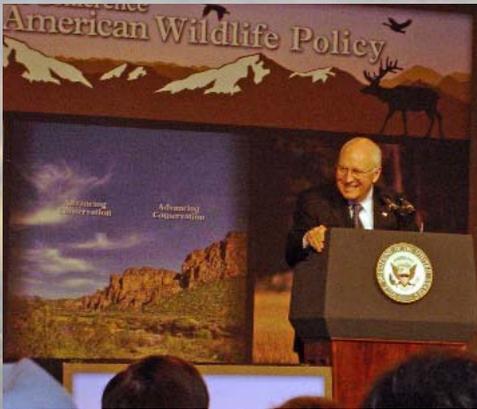
Dan Reinking

John Powell with the Contraris Art Institute, 2008 First Place Winner with his pastel drawings entitled "Backyard Butterfly Conservation."

The White House Con



Above: At the White House Conference on North American Wildlife Policy, October 1-3, 2008, Reno, NV, Left to Right: Dan Cecchini, President, North American Falconers' Association; Frank Bond, President, International Falconers' Association, Board Member, North American Grouse Partnership; Terry Riley, Teddy Roosevelt Conservation Partners, Board Member, North American Grouse Partnership; Secretary of the Interior, Dirk Kempthorne; Steve Sherrod, Board Member, North American Grouse Partnership and Executive Director, Sutton Avian Research Center; Ralph Rogers, Executive Director, North American Grouse Partnership. **Below:** Vice-President Dick Cheney. **Background Photo:** Fall countryside, Whitehorse, Canada. **Photography by Steve Sherrod.**



2008 marks the 100th anniversary of Teddy Roosevelt's Governor's Conference on Conservation from which federal policies emanated that guided conservation practices in the U.S. throughout the 20th century. These included halting the decline of fish and game and restoring depleted populations through use of harvest regulations, law enforcement, and artificial propagation and stocking. Wildlife conservation funding through dedicated revenue from hunting and fishing licenses was initiated in 1937 through the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act, and in 1950, The Dingell-Johnson Fishery Restoration Act made additional user-pay-user-benefit funding available to help finance fisheries. With this dedicated funding stream, states were able to retain adequate staffs of well trained employees, and in addition to law enforcement and fish stocking, state-level programs for public access and habitat management developed all across the country. This user-pay-user-benefit funding system has been a primary engine for implementing the North American Model of Fish and Wildlife Conservation in the United States for the last 75 years. However, demands for expanded services in this arena are ever increasing as

new pressures on the landscape are rapidly changing the outlook for North America's fish and wildlife. These increased demands coupled with decreasing hunter and angler numbers are leading to a shortfall in license revenues to adequately address the needs of wildlife management. Furthermore, the state/federal/sportsman/industry partnership that has driven the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs for over half a century is aging and showing signs that it may well not meet future needs.

On August 17, 2007, President Bush signed Executive Order # 13443: Facilitation of Hunting Heritage and Wildlife Conservation. This order directs federal agencies "to facilitate the expansion and enhancement of hunting opportunities and the management of game species and their habitat." While this order specifically names "game species and their habitat(s)", it is important to realize that many, many other non-game species fall under this umbrella and stand to benefit or lose according to

what results from this order. Even as stated, this order is important with respect to all prairie and shrub-steppe inhabiting grouse (game) species such as Greater and Lesser Prairie-Chickens, Greater and Gunnison Sage-Grouse, Sharp-tailed Grouse, and, of course, with respect to the woodland grouse as well. Both prairie-chicken species tend to inhabit mostly private lands, both sage-grouse mostly public (but some private) lands, and sharptails are also found on lands of both ownerships. Because of direct threats due to extensive development for energy, the futures of all the above listed grouse are of immediate concern.

The meeting that ensued as a result of Executive Order # 13443 was attended by an estimated 500 invited guests, October 1-3, in Reno, Nevada. While I was initially informed that both presidential candidates McCain and Obama were scheduled to attend as well as President Bush and Secretary of the Interior, Dirk Kempthorne, and that we would be able to have an audience with them regarding future wildlife management in the U.S., the worldwide financial meltdown trumped the conference. We were addressed by President Bush via teleconference first, but Vice-President Cheney showed up in person to make the presentation.

Cheney admitted that he had taken a lot of grief over his hunting accident in Texas, mostly from Bush. The President had said, "Dick, here I am at 30% in the polls, and you shot the only trial lawyer in Texas who supports me!"

But, the most meaningful exchange at the conference took place in the four individual discussion groups. I was fortunate enough to have been assigned to the first one with Secretary Kempthorne and then later got to talk (about prairie-chickens) with Director of the USFWS, Dale Hall, in another discussion group. I was quite impressed with Secretary Kempthorne who seemed genuine and listened very closely to questions posed to him, asking as well, very meaningful questions in response. In his introductory remarks to our group, he stated that "our emotional and spiritual health is linked to wildlife with which we co-exist." This parallels closely my own philosophy, and his ensuing comments related to what we leave for "our children and grandchildren

Continued on page 7

ference on North American Wildlife Policy

October 1-3, Reno, Nevada

by Steve K. Sherrod

Continued from page 6

to inherit” are not new but are indeed important. He also quoted Teddy Roosevelt in saying, “we have the right to use the welfare of the land, but not to waste it.” This is something that really hit home with me as I have been continually disappointed in the philosophy of our country’s recent leadership and energy policy; that is, rather than combining a campaign that teaches U.S. citizens about frugal use of energy and our resources in combination with an orderly and conservative approach to developing additional energy sources, approaches that ought to be reasonable with regard to conserving our wildlife heritage, this current, blatant, unorganized exploitation of resources to include wide scale destruction of habitat, in no way follows Teddy Roosevelt’s statement above with regard to waste. But, I did hear recently, for the first time from one of the presidential candidates, finally, that we are all going to have to sacrifice in order to meet the energy crisis, and, in order to leave this country as something for our grandchildren to inherit. While in Reno, I could not help but look around at the hundreds of thousands of flashing lights that adorn all the gambling casinos, shows, restaurants, and billboards, and think to myself, “We are giving up our fascinating, natural world with prairie-chickens and sage-grouse for this?” How very, very hollow!

Also, Secretary Kempthorne addressed another point that is very dear to my heart—the fact that our kids are being raised in a culture that is no longer tied to the land. I later shared privately with him my thoughts regarding how we are actually training kids from infancy to “not be associated with the outdoors, with the environment.” There is a movement now in some grade schools to eliminate outdoor recess—simple, but still a removal of the outdoor experience from the very beginning. Also, the elimination of physical education classes is related to a lack of enough fitness to function in the outdoors. Substituted is a continual tie with television or computers, a virtual experience that can be very educational indeed, but that can in no way, substitute for the real thing. I shared with Secretary Kempthorne my recent discussion at the International Grouse Symposium in Yukon Territory with Dr. Dominik Thiel of the Swiss Ornithological Institute and University of Zurich regarding my concern for the fact that Americans are now so divorced from the natural environment. Dominik told me that Swiss children are taught from the beginning in school about Man’s (as a species) Place in the Environment. This course includes the interaction of humans and their impact in relation to wildlife to include wildlife management, outdoor recreation such as canoeing, birdwatching, hiking, hunting, fishing, energy and other types of mining, and other non-consumptive and consumptive interactions. I think American children need better exposure to this type of education, and Secretary Kempthorne fully agrees. The Secretary asked me if I could gain access to the Swiss curriculum that includes that subject, and Dominik and I are in the process of obtaining that material to be relayed to Kempthorne.

Cooperating with my colleagues (see photo), I did manage to get the newly developed (by the North American Grouse Partnership) Prairie Grouse Management Plan (11 ½ x 17 x 1 inch thick, ring bound document) directly into the hands of Secretary Kempthorne who promised me he would review it. This plan is the equivalent for grasslands to what the North American Waterfowl Management Plan was for wetlands, and is a very valuable management tool for the immediate future.

Unless cancelled by the next president, Executive Order #13443 should produce results that will help in the conservation of both game and non-game species as well as in increasing the availability and quality of the outdoor experience for Americans. These will include the identification and development of new sources for dedicated, long-term funding for federal, state, and tribal fish and wildlife agencies to support conservation and hunting. And, they will also provide additional incentives to private landowners for voluntary programs to enhance wildlife habitat and hunter access. I am hoping that this will be the case...while we continue to work on wildlife conservation in the field and on the research and educational fronts, we will wait and see.



A bighorn ram in the high north central Sangre de Cristo Mountains of New Mexico. Photography by Don Wolfe.



A caribou in the wilderness of the Yukon territory. Photography by Steve Sherrod.



WILD BREW'S 10th Anniversary!



by Margie T. Nolan
Photography by Dan Reinking

Ten years ago, in a swelteringly hot airplane hanger at Tulsa International Airport, Wild Brew was born. And on August 2 of this year, over 2000 of you, our friends, went out to Central Park Hall at the Expo Center to help celebrate Wild Brew's 10th anniversary, making this the most successful Wild Brew ever!

Our incredible team of volunteers was led by Event Chair, Toni Garrison, of the Chapman Foundation, and tirelessly supported by Karen Kilbourne of the Sutton Center. Faced with the challenge of moving into a new space may have been daunting, but the team pulled it all together to make this year's Wild Brew "the best party ever hatched!"

Doors opened at 4:00 p.m. for Patron's-only hour. Our generous supporters were treated to the music of Shelby Eicher and Mark Bruner and got an early taste of all the exotic beers and fine food. They also got a chance to see some of our education birds do what they to best...fly! By the time the doors opened for general admission at 5:00 p.m., the party was in full swing. Then the Mid Life Crisis Band took the stage and, of course, got everyone up and dancing.

New to Wild Brew this year was the Marshall Brewery, the first and only brewery from right here in Tulsa! Eric Marshall and his crew served up some of their finest product. The quality was obvious by the long lines of people who kept returning to sample more. And Marshall served till the doors closed at 8:00 p.m.!

Special thanks and recognition to all of our sponsors and patrons, but most especially to the Osage Million Dollar Elm Casino who stepped in at the last minute with generous support when we unexpectedly lost one of our major sponsors. Their truly charitable gift will go to help all of the great research, conservation and education projects of the Sutton Center.

Other major patrons included the H.A. & Mary K. Chapman Charitable Trust; the John Steele Zink Foundation; Adams Hall Asset Management, LLC; H.M.T., Inc.; Gentner F. Drummond, Braden Manufacturing, LLC; The Oxley Foundation, Bank of Oklahoma, and IdeaStudio.

Thanks go to all of our restaurants and beer vendors for once again donating their time and products to our cause. But most of all we owe a huge THANK YOU to all the volunteers!

See you all next year on August 1, 2009!





When he's not busy with schoolwork, 4-H, or volunteering at Sutton, you can find Noah reading, playing guitar, fishing, practicing archery, working at Kiddie Park during the summers, and watching Oklahoma State football. Rhonda enjoys gardening, reading, refinishing furniture, working part time for American Greetings, and crafting.

A Close Up on Sutton Volunteers

by Jennifer N. Charles

If you have been up to visit us recently, you may have seen a Sutton rarity...live plants in many of our flower beds – live being the key word. As much as we would like to say that our thumbs are as “green” as our conservation efforts, the credit goes to a few of our loyal volunteers.

Rhonda Cannady and her 15 year old son Noah have been our very hard-working volunteers since the summer of 2007. For the past 6 years Noah has been a member of 4-H, and his project areas are Wildlife and Fisheries and Horticulture. Being from here in Bartlesville, the Cannadys were already somewhat familiar with the Sutton Center's work. They saw volunteering here as a great educational experience as well as a great community service opportunity for his Wildlife and Fisheries project.

Since one of his project areas for 4H is Horticulture, and since Rhonda loves gardening, when they saw our flower beds in desperate need of attention prior to our annual picnic, they jumped at the chance. Noah researched perennial native Oklahoma plants that are able to withstand the intense summer heat and that are also drought resistant. They decided on *Salvia*, *Coreopsis*, *Echinacea* (also known as Purple Coneflower), and our state wildflower, Indian Blanket. Once we purchased the plants, they went right to work, and although they took the summer off from volunteering with us, they continued to drive up here when rainfall was scarce to water and tend to their plants.

Since Noah is homeschooled, he and Rhonda, and often Dad (Mark), are able to come up during the week to volunteer. They have also helped out with the education program in just about every way, and it is greatly appreciated. Thank you!



Ryan Vanzant



Noppodal Paothong

Wildlife as Canon sees it

by Don H. Wolfe

In every issue of *National Geographic* magazine, Canon has a full page advertisement that highlights a rare or little-known wildlife species. The October 2008 issue features the Lesser Prairie-Chicken (*Page 7*). Due to the long-lasting relationship between the Sutton Center and National Geographic photographer Joel Sartore, we were asked to provide comments on the conservation issues, text, and range map that accompanied this featured species. The superb photography and brevity of the information on these featured species may help make the issues concerning Lesser Prairie-Chickens and other rare species better known than if full length articles appeared that might not be read in their entirety.



Noppodal Paothong



Sutton Center's 2008 Publications



- Beck EJ** (2008) New nest records for the Virginia Rail (*Rallus limicola*) in Oklahoma. *Bulletin of the Oklahoma Ornithological Society* 41:5-8.
- Beck EJ, Reinking DL, Husak M** (2008) Oklahoma's first winter bird atlas project produces two new Mew Gull records. *Bulletin of the Oklahoma Ornithological Society* 41:10-11.
- Patten MA** (2008) The intersection of specialization and speciation. *Journal of Biogeography* 35:193-194.
- Patten MA, Smith-Patten BD** (2008) Biogeographical boundaries and Monmonier's algorithm: A case study in the northern Neotropics. *Journal of Biogeography* 35:407-716.
- Pruett CL, Arcese P, Chan YL, Wilson AG, Patten MA, Keller LF, Winker K** (2008) Concordant and discordant signals between genetic data and described subspecies of Pacific Coast Song Sparrows. *The Condor* 110:359-364.
- Pruett CL, Arcese P, Chan YL, Wilson AG, Patten MA, Keller LF, Winker K** (2008) The effects of contemporary processes in maintaining the genetic structure of western song sparrows (*Melospiza melodia*). *Heredity* 101:67-74. doi:10.1038/hdy.2008.31.
- Pruett CL, Winker K** (2008) Evidence for cryptic northern refugia among high-and temperate-latitude species in Beringia. *Climatic Change* 86:23-27. doi:10.1007/s10584-007-9332-6.
- Pruett CL, Winker K** (2008) The effects of sample size on population genetic diversity estimates in Song Sparrows. *Journal of Avian Biology* 39:252-256. <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.0908-8857.2008.04094.x>.
- Smith-Patten BD, Patten MA** (2008) Diversity, seasonality, and context of mammalian roadkills in the southern Great Plains. *Environmental Management* 41:844-852.
- Wilson A, Arcese P, Keller LF, Pruet CL, Winker K, Patten MA, Chan Y** (2008) The contribution of island populations to in situ genetic conservation. *Conservation Genetics* doi:10.1007/s10592-008-9612-3.

Sutton Center's 2008 Presentations

- Beck EJ, Husak M, Patten MA** (2008) Marsh birds in Oklahoma: A review of distributions and records of secretive marsh birds in Oklahoma. Waterbird Society, South Padre Island, Texas, 06 Nov.
- Beck EJ, Husak M, Patten MA** (2008) Oklahoma marshbird monitoring project. Assoc. of Field Ornithologists, Mobile, Alabama, 18 Apr.
- Burger JC, Patten MA, Redak RA** (2008) Arthropod diversity on *Eriogonum fasciculatum* remains stable across weed control regimes in grass-invaded California coastal sage scrub. Society for Conservation Biology, Chattanooga, 14 Jul.
- Patten MA** (2008) Conflicting evolutionary history of a Song Sparrow ring in western North America. American Ornithologists' Union/Cooper Ornithological Society, Portland, Oregon, 06 Aug.
- Patten MA** (2008) Paradigms and null expectations in subspecies diagnosis. American Ornithologists' Union/Cooper Ornithological Society, Portland, Oregon, 08 Aug.
- Patten MA** (2008) The potential impacts of wind energy development on populations of prairie-chickens in Oklahoma. Oklahoma Conference on Wind Energy, Oklahoma City, 02 Dec.
- Patten MA, Marantz CA, Smith-Patten BD** (2008) Geographic variation in song of a widespread neotropical bird: Implications for biogeography and conservation. Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation, Paramaribo, Suriname, 17 Jun.
- Patten MA, Pruet CL, Johnson JA, Wolfe DH** (2008) Low effective population size constrains rapid demographic evolution in a grassland grouse. Oral presentation. International Grouse Symposium, Whitehorse, Yukon, 12 Sep.
- Pruett CL, Patten MA, Arcese P, Wilson A, Chan Y, Keller L, Winker K** (2008) The roles of distributional patterns and seasonal movement in the evolution of geographic variation in Song Sparrows. American Ornithologist's Union Meeting, Portland, Oregon, 06 Aug.
- Pruett CL, Patten MA, Wolfe DH, Sherrod SK** (2008) Avoidance and movement behavior by prairie grouse: implications for wind power development. Poster. International Grouse Symposium, Whitehorse, Yukon, 13 Sep.
- Pruett CL, Patten MA, Wolfe DH, Sherrod SK** (2008) Avoidance and movement behavior by prairie grouse: implications for wind power development. Poster. Lesser Prairie-Chicken Ranch Conversation, Buffalo, Oklahoma, 23 Sep.
- Reinking DL** (2008) Birds of Iceland. Wichita Audubon Society. Wichita, Kansas, 18 Mar.
- Reinking DL** (2008) Oklahoma Bird Atlas Projects. Oklahoma and Missouri Master Naturalists. Bartlesville, Oklahoma, 16 Oct.
- Reinking DL** (2008) Oklahoma Winter Bird Atlas. Poster. American Ornithologists' Union, Cooper Ornithological Society, Society of Canadian Ornithologists joint meeting. Portland, Oregon, 04-08 Aug.
- Reinking DL** (2008) Oklahoma Winter Bird Atlas. North American Ornithological Atlas Committee workshop. Portland, Oregon, 04 Aug.
- Smith-Patten BD, Patten MA** (2008) Endemism, β diversity, and complementarity of the montane avifauna of East Africa. Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation, Paramaribo, Suriname, 16 Jun.
- Wolfe DH** (2008) Oklahoma prairie-chicken research: 1997-2008. Oral presentation. The Nature Conservancy, grassland information exchange with colleagues from Colombia. Pawhuska, Oklahoma, 02 Oct.
- Wolfe DH** (2008) Prairie fragmentation and Oklahoma's Lesser Prairie-Chickens. Oral presentation. Local 4-H club meeting, Bartlesville, Oklahoma, 09 Oct.
- Wolfe DH** (2008) White-tailed Ptarmigan in New Mexico. Oral presentation. GMSARC Board of Directors, Bartlesville, Oklahoma, 29 Sep.
- Wolfe DH, Patten MA** (2008) Sustainability of White-tailed Ptarmigan populations at the southern extent of their range. Poster. International Grouse Symposium, Whitehorse, Yukon, 13 Sep.

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A painting given in memory of his parents Edward P. & Mildred E. Sussell: Aaron L. Sussell. In honor of Dan Reinking for the Winter Bird Atlas: Carl & Nan Reinking.

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Wolfe DH, Patten MA, Bell LA, Sherrod SK (2008) Relationship between Lesser Prairie-Chickens and shrub cover. Poster. International Grouse Symposium, Whitehorse, Yukon, 13 Sep.

Wolfe DH, Patten MA, Bell LA, Sherrod SK (2008) Relationship between Lesser Prairie-Chickens and shrub cover. Poster. Lesser Prairie-Chicken Ranch Conversation, Buffalo, Oklahoma, 23 Sep.

Wolfe DH, Patten MA, Sherrod SK (2008) Mitigating fence collision risks for Lesser Prairie-Chickens. Oral presentation. International Grouse Symposium, Whitehorse, Yukon, 14 Sep.

Wolfe DH, Patten MA, and Sherrod SK (2008) Mitigating fence collision risks for Lesser Prairie-Chickens. Oral presentation. The Wildlife Society Annual Conference, Miami, Florida, 11 Nov.

Wolfe DH, Patten MA, Sherrod SK (2008) Oklahoma Lesser Prairie-Chicken research: first 10 years. Oral presentation. Lesser Prairie-Chicken Ranch Conversation, Buffalo, Oklahoma, 23 Sep.

Wolfe DH, Pruett CP, Patten MA (2008) It's not easy being green; wind energy and Lesser Prairie-Chickens. GMSARC Board of Directors, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 19 May.

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