The Meadowlark

The Audubon Society of Omaha is dedicated to the active promotion of environmental awareness to our community through education, conservation and enjoyment of our natural heritage, especially birds.

January/February, 2016 Volume 45, Issue 1



ASO is a chapter of the National Audubon Society, serving eastern Nebraska and western Iowa.

A Journey to South Africa, subject of the January 14th General Meeting Program

By Jerry Toll

Our January speaker will be Elliott Bedows, who will present a talk entitled "The REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA: KALAHARI to the CAPE and the EAST." Elliott will describe his five-week journey to South Africa with an emphasis on the birds seen and photographed. He will also include photos and stories about the big game animals, flowers and insects he saw and about aspects of South African culture.

Elliott is a past president of ASO and was an active board member for many years until his recent retirement from the board. He enjoys birding less commonly visited birding hotspots such as

South Africa and New Guinea.

Please plan to attend the January 14th general meeting at 7 pm. The meeting will take place on the UNO campus at the Weitz Community Engagement Center, Room 209. If you have not visited this wonderful new facility, there is ample free parking adjacent to the building in Lot E along the Dodge Street frontage road (map, p. 6).

There will be a short welcome and meeting with the program following. Please stay and visit afterwards and enjoy the refreshments. Non-members are welcome.

Change of Date for March Meeting

The March General Meeting will be moved back a week to Thursday March 17th at Fontenelle Forest to hear the special internationally recognized speaker, Denver Holt. He is known world-wide for his research of Snowy Owls in Alaska. There will be more information about the speaker and his work in the next edition of the Meadowlark.

Professor Tom Bragg Will Be February 11th Speaker — See Page 3 For Details —

JANUARY AND FEBRUARY FIELD TRIPS

by Clem Klaphake

JANUARY FIELD TRIP

On Saturday January 30th we will be checking out a couple of local backyards and bird feeders. We will meet at Fontenelle Forest Nature Center on Bellevue Boulevard at 8:30 a.m. We will check the feeders there and then caravan to Bob and Kathleen Rose's house (always a treat for a good variety of winter feeder birds here and good coffee and cider). From there we will drive to Duane and Kathy Schwery's house just across the Platte River

in Cass County. The Schwery's always have great up-close birds on their back deck and great munchies and drinks. From there we may go to the Schilling WMA (depends on weather and road conditions). Come join us for a few hours of winter bird watching and social camaraderie. Everyone is welcome.

FEBRUARY FIELD TRIP

The February field trip will on Saturday February 20th. We will meet on the north side of Carter Lake next to the Omaha Airport on Carter Drive at 8:30 a.m. There is a place to park just to the north of where there usually is open water. From there we will check out a few cemeteries and/or the flood plain at Neale Woods. We may also check out Boyer Chute also. February can be very unpredictable in terms of what birds may be present or what the weather will be like on this day. Watch for the second mailing from the Audubon Society of Omaha for activities in February.

Field Notes from the President: By Tad Leeper

Season's Greetings ASO members! As I write this article, the annual hustle and bustle of the holidays is in full swing. As we all know, the holidays are a time when families seem to make extra efforts to spend time together. So in this President's column, I'll share ten specific actions suggested by nature writer Richard Louv to engage families in nature activities. I will also suggest a few nature books recommended for kids and families. Both the activities and books are effective tools for combating Nature-Deficit Disorder in children (and their parents).

The following list of nature activities for kids and children is largely excerpted verbatim from the book Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder by author Richard Louv.

- 1) Invite flora and fauna into your life. Maintain a birdbath. Replace part of your lawn with native plants. Build a bat house. (Editor's note: check out the National Audubon Society's new audubon.org website, click on the 'Get Outside' link.)
- 2) Make your yard a National Wildlife Federation (NWF) Certified Wildlife Habitat: see nwf. org/backyard.
- 3) View nature as an antidote to stress. All the health benefits that come to a child come to the adult who takes that child into nature. Children and parents feel better after spending time in the natural world even if it's in their own backyard.
- 4) Engage grandparents. They often have more free time, or at least more flexibility, than parents do. And most grand-

- parents can remember when playing outside in nature was considered normal and expected of children. They'll want to pass that heritage on to their descendants.
- 5) Take a hike. With younger children, choose easier, shorter routes and prepare to stop often. Or be a stroller explorer. "If you have an infant or toddler, consider organizing a neighborhood stroller group that meets for weekly nature walks," suggests the National Audubon Society. The American Hiking Society offers good tips on how to hike with teenagers. Involve your teen in planning hikes; prepare yourselves physically for hikes, and stay within your limits (start with short day hikes); keep pack weight down. For more information, consult the American Hiking Society (www. americanhiking.org) or a good hiking guide such as John McKinney's Joy of Hiking.
- 6) Go digital. Try wildlife photography appropriate for small children, teenagers, and adults. Digital cameras are portable, decreasingly inexpensive, and save money on film. True, wildlife photography can become costly, but in the beginning, using a small digital camera to take photos through one eyepiece of your binoculars can work well.
- 7) Adopt a tree. (Go ahead, hug it.) Pick an existing tree or plant a special one to help make important family occasions a birth, death, or marriage. The Take a Child Outside campaign (takeachildoutside. org/activities) suggests taking pictures of the tree in its first snow or after a big windstorm. Make bark rubbings using cray-

- ons and paper; record what animals use the tree. Plant its seeds. If the tree dies, save some leaves or branches as remembrances. Antioch University New England professor David Sobel reports research that suggests a fascinating gender difference: boys tend to enjoy a generalized appreciation of the woods; girls are more likely to build a relationship with a favorite tree.
- 8) Make the "green hour" a new family tradition. NWF recommends that parents give their kids a daily green hour (www.greenhour.org), a time for unstructured play and interaction with the natural world. Even fifteen minutes is a good start. "Imagine a map with your home in the center. Draw ever-widening circles around it, each representing a successively older child's realm of experience," NWF suggests. "Whenever possible, encourage some independent exploration as your child develops new skills and greater confidence."
- 9) Go for a family walk when the moon is full. "There's a whole new set of animals, sights and sounds out there," counsels the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (www.tpwd.state. tx.us/kids). "What you need: flashlight. Directions: Listen to animals calling. Owls and bats are looking for prey. Watch for things glowing, like works and fungus on trees." And look up at the stars.
- 10) Keep a nature journal. Good guides on nature-journaling are available to help children, teenagers, and families record their outdoor dis-

continued on page 6

Bird Seed Sale Volunteers – THANKS!!



John & Betty Fullerton

Our 35th annual bird seed sale is over and it was truly a group effort from start to finish. When all the bills are paid and the checks counted, we should clear approximately \$4,500.00. Thanks go out to all the volunteers and customers who make this sale a success each year.

Special thanks to Betty and John Fullerton who have shared their garage this year as a distribution site. If you live in the north west part of Omaha or farther west, you may want to consider picking up your seed at their garage next fall.

We apologize if we miss anyone but we would really like to recoanize the workers who made this sale a success. Head-ofit-all: Neal Ratzlaff: Chief assistants: Carole and Dick Rasmussen, Jerry Toll, Kathleen Crawford-Rose: Computer Backup & Labels: Duane Schwery; Web Master: Jim McLochlin: Mailing: Jo Bartikowski, Kathleen Crawford-Rose, Nelli Falzgraff, Sue Gentes, Eunice Levisay, Carole & Dick Rasmussen, Kathy Schwery and Don Westing; Garages: Neal and Deb Ratzlaff, and Bob and Kathleen

Rose, John and Betty Fullerton; Distribution crew (Loading the seed): Jerry Toll, Crew Chief. Crew; Elliott Bedows, Dolan Collins, Kathleen Crawford-Rose, Betty and John Fullerton, Tim Kautzman, Clem Klaphake, Tad Leeper, Chris Olson, Loren & Babs Padelford, John Pollock, Neal and Deb Ratzlaff, Justin Rink, Bob Rose, Al Reyer, Duane Schwery, Eric Scholar, Larry Sekyra, and Bob Wells.



Larry Sekyra & Betty Fullerton

Professor Tom Bragg Will Be February 11th Speaker

Dr. Tom Bragg, Professor of Biology at UNO, and Director of Glacier Creek Preserve, will be speaking at our February 11th general meeting. His specialties are ecology, fire, and ecosystems. The topic for his talk will be announced in ASO's February postcard mailing.

Come join us on Thursday, February 11 at 7 p.m. at the Weitz Community Engagement Center on the UNO campus. Visitors are welcome.

Youth Birding Group Field Trips

By Tisha Johnson

Our December field trip took us to Fontenelle Forest where we participated in the Sarpy County Christmas Bird Count. We are actively recruiting Youth for 2016, so please continue to mention us whenever you can. The Omaha Youth Birding Group will be meeting January 16th, Saturday morning at 9:30, at DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge. At this time of year there are usually lots of Bald Eagles, and if the temperature is against us, there is the indoor viewing area that overlooks the lake. Yesterday we received confirmation that in February, one of our bird banding experts in the Omaha area is going to show us by example the banding process, allowing many of us the unique opportunity of an extra close-up view. We look forward to seeing you out on a FIELD TRIP!

WE ARE SEEKING A
MEMBER WHO WOULD
BE INTERESTED
IN COMPLETING
ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES
ON A VERY PART TIME
BASIS, SOME TASKS
MONTHLY, SOME NOT.
PLEASE CONTACT ASO AT
402-451-3647 ABOUT
THE DUTIES INVOLVED
IN THIS PAID
ADMINISTRATIVE
POSITION AND YOUR
INTEREST IN IT.

Audubon Society of Omaha Student Art Fair and Show

The Audubon Society of Omaha will again sponsor a Greater Omaha Student Art Contest and Show in 2016.

Information about the contest and rules for submission of artwork will be posted on the www.audubon-omaha.org in January of 2016.

Entries must be submitted on Feb. 26 or Feb. 27.

All entries will be on display Saturday, April 9 from noon until 3:30pm at the Bellevue University Lozier Center in Bellevue.

An awards ceremony will occur at 2:00pm on that same day.

If you would like to volunteer in putting on this event please contact Jackie Scholar at jbscholar@cox.net or 402-551-5045.

MIDWINTER BIRD SEED SALE

If you are getting low on bird seed, here is your chance to stock up again. Audubon will have an Email Bird Seed Sale with pickup delivery date on February 27th, 2016. The pickup site will be Neal Ratzlaff's garage on 84th and Brentwood.

If we don't have your Email address already, you can send us a message at katcr@cox.net or download the order form from the Audubon-Omaha.org website after February 1st. We will Email an order form in early February to all of our previous customers who have given us an Email address.

Boy Scout Resource Roundup

The November 7th event of the Mid America Council of the Boy Scouts had new energy when it was moved from Boystown's gymnasium to Bellevue University's new conference area. This annual event provided resources for over 400 Scout leaders and brought together representatives from Nebraska, lowa, and South Dakota.

For Boy Scouts we brought information about their bird study badge. For younger scouts we

Bird Identification Class 2016

8:00a.m. - 12:00p.m.

\$25.00 for all 3 classes must be paid before the start of the first class

Part 1 MARCH 12th

Fontenelle Forest Nature Center

Part 2 APRIL 16th

Wetland Learning Center

Part 3 MAY 7th

Fontenelle Forest Nature Center

With over 50 million 'birders' in the U.S., bird watching is the fastest growing outdoor activity today. Led by Clem Klaphake and Justin Rink, past presidents of the Audubon Society of Omaha, this class includes local field trips/walks designed to teach you how to identify the birds in your backyard or any other location you might encounter them, use of field guides and use of binoculars. No prior knowledge of bird identification is needed.

If you are interested contact Clem Klaphake at 402-292-2276 or ckavian@cox.net; mailto: ckavian@cox.net to register. For ages 12 and up. The class is limited to 15 people. brought coloring pages of National Audubon and Audubon Adventures that teach about critters from monarchs to birds.

by Nelli Falzgraf

Our booth showcased a new wider screen DVD player that featured videos of birds singing, feeding, and loafing. We had information of our next Art Contest and the Christmas Bird Counts, encouraged local troops to join the newly formed Youth Birding group, and provided bird feeding information to group leaders.

Other nature groups included Fontenelle Forest Raptor Recovery, Gifford Farms, Strategic Air Museum, National Weather Service, Backwoods, and Canfields.

ASO staffers were Jackie Scholar, Laurine Blankenau, and Nelli Falzgraf.

Two books you might want to read while waiting for spring and its bird life: On the Wing: Insects, Pterosaurs, Birds, Bees, and the Evolution of Animal Flight, by David E. Alexander

The author ponders these questions: How did wings originate? How did the ability to fly occur? His conclusions are drawn from the science of aeronautics, paleontology, and physiology. More than hard science; the book is also fascinating and entertaining.

Endemic Birds of Cuba: A Comprehensive Field Guide Including West Indian Endemics Residing in Cuba, by Nils Navarro.

Now that Cuba is accessible to travelers, you may want to search out the island's bird life, which has profited from undeveloped and undisturbed lands. You could find 26 endemic species to Cuba and 22 endemic to the West Indies. Read this book before you go, which also introduces you to birding sites and Cuba's biodiversity.

The above information is found in the latest issue of Bird Watcher's Digest.

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT FEBRUARY 12-15, 2016

- 1. Register for the count or use your existing login name and password. If you have never participated in the Great Backyard Bird Count or any other Cornell Lab citizen-science project, you'll need to create a new account. If you already created an account for last year's GBBC, or if you're already registered with eBird or another Cornell Lab citizen-science project, you can use your existing login information.
- 2. Count birds for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the GBBC. You can count for longer than that if you wish! Count birds in as many places and on as many days as you like—one day, two days, or all four days. Submit a separate checklist for each new day, for each new location, or for the same location if you counted at a different time of day. Estimate the number of individuals of each species you saw during your count period.
- 3. Enter your results on the GBBC website by clicking "Submit Observations" on the home page. Or download the free eBird Mobile app to enter data on a mobile device. If you already participate in the eBird citizen-science project, please use eBird to submit your sightings during the GBBC. Your checklists will count toward the GBBC.

All ages are invited to participate, whatever your level of expertise. Go to the web site to access their beautiful photos and instructions.

Not confident in your skill? Go to Bird ID Help, Online Bird Guide, Tricky Bird ID's, and Birding Apps. Help with this citizen science, enjoyable project!



Chickadee

Phil Swanson



Jay

Phil Swanson



Cardinal

Phil Swanson

Good News: Conservation Efforts and the State Legislature

By Marian Langan, Executive Director, Audubon Nebraska

Our legislative efforts continue to grow through a partnership supported by the Omaha and Lincoln chapters, between Audubon and Ducks Unlimited. The lobbyist, Zulkoski Weber LLC, believes that the current makeup of the Natural Resourc-

Field Notes

from page 2

coveries in words, drawing, and photographs - among them My Nature Journal by Adrienne Olmsted and Keeping a Nature Journal by Clare Walker Leslie and Charles E. Roth. Check with your bookseller. An instant nature journal is free to download from www.greenour.org/content/activity/detail/1525.

Also, here are a few good nature books for children and families. These books might make good holiday gifts for some of your family members.

Take a Backyard Bird Walk by Jane Kirkland; Young Birders' Guide to Birds of Eastern North America by Bill Thompson Ill; Coyote's Guide for Connecting Kids to Nature by Jon Young Ellen Haas, Evan McGowan; Go Outside: Over 130 Activities for Outdoor Adventures by Nancy Blakey; Sharing Nature with Children by Joseph Cornell

Finally, I wish you and yours a most joyous holiday season and happy new year filled with good health, rewarding relationships, and of course great birding. As always, I welcome your ideas, suggestions and questions with the goal of continuing to move ASO's conservation mission forward in the coming year.

Blessings!

es Committee is positive, and that the senators are good to work with.

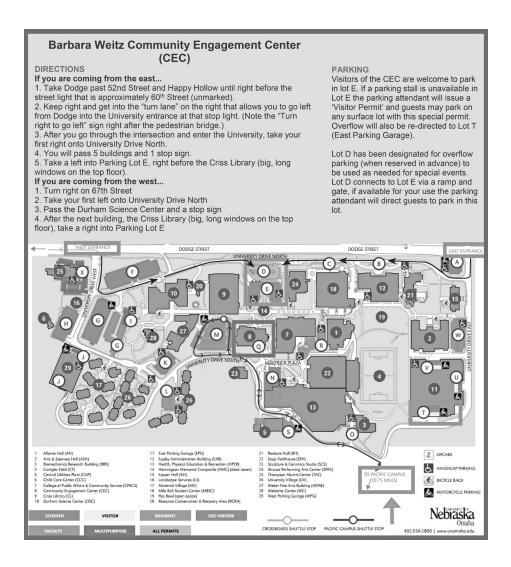
The good news: there is no current legislation that threatens any conservation goals, though that could change at any time. Additionally, what is taking place on a more consistent basis is coalition building on every conservation bill. For example, when Audubon partners with Ducks Unlimited and/or the Sportsman's Council, it helps mitigate any stereotyping about conservation bills and brings more people together.

This is a very positive step and a reason why our coordinated

effort is worthwhile. It has been noted that no bills threatening conservation are up at this time, and this is no accident.

Because when organizations have representation in the Legislature, it is known that there will be a response to legislation that negatively impacts our interests.

One area that needs more work is to dispel the myth that conservation easements are taking land off the property tax rolls. This is simply not true. A conservation easement is a private property right that plays an important role in conservation, and deserves protection.



Addresses to Remember

President Barack Obama, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington DC 20500-0001, Comments: 202-456-1111

Senator Deb Fischer, U.S. Senate, Washington DC 20510; Phone: 202-224-6551; Fax: 202-228-1325; Lincoln Phone: 402-441-4600; Omaha Phone: 402-391-3411; Omaha Address: 11819 Miracle Drive 68154

Senator Ben Sasse, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510; Phone: 202-224-4224; Lincoln Phone: 402-476-1400

Representative Brad Ashford, U. S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515; Phone: 202-225-4155

Representative Jeff Fortenberry, House of Representatives, Washington DC 20515, Phone: 202-225-4806; Lincoln Phone: 402-438-1598

Governor Pete Ricketts, Capitol Bldg, Lincoln, NE 68509; Phone: 402-471-2244

Mayor Jean Stothert, Omaha/Douglas Civic Center1819 Farnam St., Omaha NE 68183, Phone: 402-444-5000 Hot

Line: 402-444-5555

Lincoln Capitol Switchboard: 402-471-2311

Washington Capitol Switchboard

Senate: 202-224-3121; House: 202-225-3121

Bequests

A bequest to Audubon is a gift to those who will succeed us; a gift to secure our natural heritage.

Memorials

The Audubon Society of Omaha greatly appreciates the memorials it receives. When sending a gift, please identify the person you wish to memorialize, and the name and address of the person to be notified. Mail to Audubon Society of Omaha, P.O. Box 3542, Omaha NE

Memberships

We offer two choices of membership:

- **1.** Includes membership in National Audubon as well as in our local chapter. It includes receiving the *Audubon* Magazine and our newsletter, *The Meadowlark*. A portion of your dues is returned to our local chapter.
- **2.** Is a local membership that includes receiving *The Meadowlark* and participation in all of our local activities. All dues go to our chapter.

| Membership | in | the | National | Audubon | Society | and | in |
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| Street | | | |
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| E-mail | | | |

Introductory Membership (1st & 2 year) \$20 Make check payable to: National Audubon Society. Mail to: National Audubon Society, Inc., 225 Varick Street, 7th Floor, New York, New York 10014

| Membership in Audubon Society of Omaha only | | | | |
|---|-------|--|--|--|
| Name | | | | |
| Street | | | | |
| City | State | | | |
| Zip | Phone | | | |

Make check for \$20 payable to: Audubon Society of Omaha. Mail to: Audubon Society of Omaha, 19612 Ridgeway Road, Plattsmouth, NE 68048



E-mail

If you find an injured bird of prey, please contact a Raptor Recovery volunteer at 402-731-9869.

Audubon Society of Omaha P.O. Box 3542 Omaha NE 68103-3542 Non-Profit Organization U.S. Postage Paid Omaha, Nebraska PERMIT NO. 79

Audubon Society of Omaha, Mailing Address: P. O. Box 3542, Omaha 68103-3542 Phone: 451-3647 - http://audubon-omaha.org Office: 1941 S. 42nd St., Omaha NE 68105

Elected Officers:

President Tad Leeper – 670-5919
1st Vice President Eric Scholar – 551-5045
2nd Vice President Tisha Johnson – 885-0990
Past President Laurine Blankenau – 451-3647
Treasurer Betty Fullerton – 493-4362
Recording Sec'y Linda Dennis – 733-6548
Corres. Sec'y Kathleen Rose – 292-8912

Elected Directors:

Jonas Grundman – 216-5413 Bob Wells – 393-4683 Bob Fuchs – 553-8242 Helen Bartee – 657-3845 Matt Miller – 681-4625 Sarah Miller – 908-9678

Standing Committee Chairpersons:

Conservation Bob Fuchs – 553-8242
Education Clem Klaphake – 292-2276
Field Trip Clem Klaphake – 292-2276
Finance Nelli Falzgraf – 292-9687
Membership Kathy Schwery – 296-4788
Natural Areas Management Glenn Pollock – 571-6230

Program Jerry Toll – 453-9239
Publication Helen Bartee – 657-3845
Publicity Jackie Scholar – 551-5045

Other Activities:
Bird Seed Sale Chairs
Kathleen Rose – 292-8912
Carol Rasmussen – 731-3939
Speakers Bureau – Eunice Levisay – 393-0545
Historian – Eric Scholar – 551-5045
Exec. Dir., Audubon Nebr. – Marian Langan – 402-797-2301
NAS Board Member – Michele Crist – 208-863-1918
Pan-Flyway Director – Karim al-Khafaji

Six issues of *The Meadowlark* are published annually: January - February, March - April, May - June, July -August, September - October, November - December. The newsletter may be accessed on our website, http://audubon-omaha.org

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