



In case you missed it: Bills prompt debate and discussion

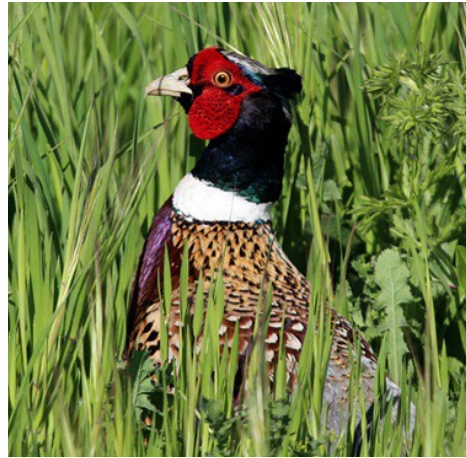
Nebraska’s unicameral considered a range of legislation during its spring session that could directly or indirectly impact issues of concern to Audubon Society of Omaha members.

Legislators eventually amended what Audubon Great Plains Executive Director Kristal Stoner labeled “a misguided attempt” to protect ring-necked pheasants. The bill, introduced by Senator Tom Brewer of Gordon, would have established bounties for nest predators — including badgers, coyotes, opossums, raccoons, red foxes, and striped skunks. Rachel Holt, of Nebraska News Service, reported that the legislation stated that pheasants are important to the state’s ecology and economy, and that hunting is an integral part of its culture.

“We’re not giving our youth the opportunity to become hunters and instill that spirit in them,” Brewer said. Supporters of the bill contended that the \$10 bounty (for each predator, up to a maximum of 50,000 predators each year) would protect and promote healthy pheasant populations.

Wildlife biologists, as well as representatives from Pheasants Forever, Nebraska Game and Parks, and Nebraska Wildlife Rehab, testified against the bill.

“We generally have looked at bounties as highly problematic,” said John Carroll, director of the School of Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and gamebird biologist. Carroll noted that the primary reason behind the decline of pheasant populations is the conversion of native prairie to agricultural uses, which destroy habitats.



THE PRIMARY REASON BEHIND THE DECLINE OF PHEASANT POPULATIONS IS THE CONVERSION OF NATIVE PRAIRIE TO AGRICULTURAL USES, WHICH DESTROY NATURAL HABITATS.

According to Carroll, in the Nebraska News Service story, pheasants require diverse habitats to survive, including trees, tall dense grass and open prairies.

Planting row crops, such as corn and soybeans, destroys native habitats and threatens roosting, nesting and mating behaviors.

Andrew Little, a habitat management specialist at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, testified that “habitat management is really one of the most significant pieces that we need to focus on, particularly restoration for a variety of birds and other wildlife species.”

The committee considering the bill eventually removed bounties for predators of ring-necked pheasants from this legislation.

DID YOU KNOW?

The ring-necked pheasant is native to Asia and parts of Europe, its original range extending from the Balkans, the Black and Caspian Seas to Manchuria, Siberia, Korea, Mainland China, and Taiwan. It was introduced and established in North America during the 1800s as a game bird solely for hunting purposes.

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GREEN CORNER: HOW YOU CAN COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE

Conservation begins at home; each of us can help restore our unique ecosystem.

Remove September

You’ve heard of Reduce, Reuse & Recycle – but what about Remove Refuse & Rally? Keep your neighborhood healthy by removing a piece of trash you see lying on the ground when you’re out on your next walk, run, or hike. Dispose properly, and don’t forget to wash your hands!

Online billing October

When was the last time you thanked a tree for its paper? Reduce your paper waste this season by making the switch to paperless billing. Deforestation for paper harvest and the production of paper both contribute to air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

ON THE HORIZON September

FIELD TRIP

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

What: EZ Does it Urban Birding

New birder? Too busy for an all-day excursion? Virginia Stauffer will lead a birding walk at a leisurely pace. Bring binoculars.

When: 9-11 a.m.

Where: Towl Park

9310 W. Center Rd., Omaha

How: Meet in the parking lot

Who: Members and the public (free)

MEMBERS PROGRAM

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

What: Make your bird feeders the go-to spot in your neighborhood

Bob Wells will present strategies to make your bird feeder irresistible.

When: 6 p.m. social, 7 p.m. program

Where: DJ's Dugout meeting room

777 N. 114th Street, Omaha

How: register at Audubon-Omaha.org

Who: Members and the public (free)

October

FIELD TRIP

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7

What: Birding at Fontenelle

Wetlands Tim Houghton will lead a birding walk to spot fall migrants. Bring binoculars and dress for the wetlands.

When: 8:30 a.m.

Where: Fontenelle Forest Wetlands

695 Camp Gifford Rd., Bellevue, NE

How: Meet in parking lot at 8:30 a.m.

Who: Members and the public (free)

MEMBERS PROGRAM

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12

What: Pollinator Gardens

Jenn Duerr, with Nebraska Monarchs, will share tips for planning and growing a haven for bees, birds and butterflies.

When: 6 p.m. social, 7 p.m. program

Where: DJ's Dugout meeting room

777 N. 114th Street, Omaha

How: register at Audubon-Omaha.org

Who: Members and the public (free)

Embracing leadership and conservation: An ASO journey

By Christine Prescott, President, Audubon Society of Omaha



As president, my heart fills with a deep sense of pride and responsibility. The Audubon Society of Omaha has a rich history of championing bird conservation, environmental advocacy, and community-building initiatives. I am thrilled to contribute to this legacy and work with our passionate members, volunteers, and supporters, who have been the driving force behind our organization's success.

In the coming year, my primary goal is to strengthen the society's engagement with our local community. By raising awareness about the significance of bird conservation and environmental protection, we can inspire a new generation of conservationists and foster a greater appreciation for the natural world. I firmly believe that by collaborating with other like-minded organizations and individuals, we can amplify our efforts and make a more significant impact on the challenges facing our environment.

One event I am particularly excited about is the 2023 Audubon Leadership Conference. This annual conference has always been an opportunity for Audubon Society leaders and members to come together, exchange ideas, and create strategies for promoting bird conservation and environmental protection. By engaging in these sessions and discussions, I hope to gain valuable insights that will enable me to lead the Audubon Society of Omaha with renewed vision and passion.

Like you, I am thrilled about the potential for working with other Audubon chapters committed to safeguarding our natural world. Through collaborative efforts, dedication, and a shared passion for the environment, I am confident we can make a positive impact on bird conservation, advocacy, and building a stronger, more connected community. Together, let us continue to soar to new heights in the pursuit of a greener, healthier planet for future generations.

Bills prompt debate and discussion

(continued from page 1)

IN OTHER ACTION ...

- Bills that were voted out of committee and scheduled for priority in the next legislative session include LB 218, which would invest \$6 million annually to plant native grasses to reduce erosion and flood risks, and LB 566, which directs the Natural Resources Committee to study the viability and reliability of renewable energy.
- Natural resources projects that the body funded include: the next stage in the potential construction of the controversial Perkins County Canal; precision agriculture; the Water Sustainability Fund; and NPPD grants for engineering and modeling work supporting the application for

Department of Energy funding related to a regional clean hydrogen hub and similar projects.

- Bills that were stalled — which Audubon Great Plains supported — included legislation that would: adopt the Riparian and Water Quality Practices Act; prohibit Homeowners Associations (HOAs) from limiting solar and wind capture on private lands; appropriate \$2 million to support the Low-Income Weatherization Assistance Program; limit liability and nuisance related to land-management burning; and appropriate funds to the State Fire Marshall.

These legislative updates were drawn from Audubon Great Plains and Nebraska News Service publications.

FALL BIRDSEED SALE IS ON Birds need seeds? Please place orders by October 6

by Betty Fullerton

Do you feed birds? Would you like to contribute to the financial success of Audubon Society of Omaha? Your orders and donations during the Fall and Winter Bird Seed Sales are Audubon Omaha's main fundraiser for local education and conservation activities. We offer a wide range of birdseed mixes and sizes at reasonable prices.

If you are new to birding or want some expert advice, you will find several articles from National Audubon Society and Cornell Lab of Ornithology with ideas about attracting and feeding birds on ASO's website: audubon-omaha.org, under the Special Events/Semiannual Bird Seed Sale tab.

In early September, ASO will mail an order form to all members and past customers. You can place your order by mail OR you can order and pay by credit card on ASO's website. You must pre-order to purchase birdseed, and **orders must be received by Thursday, October 6**. Pickup dates are Saturday, October 14, and Sunday, October 15. Contactless delivery will be available again this year for an additional donation.

If you have friends or neighbors who would like to be added to the mailing list, contact John and Betty Fullerton at 402-493-4362(h) or 402-957-5901(c) or at efullerton00@gmail.com with their names and addresses. OR you can send your friends or neighbors a link to the birdseed sale page on the ASO website.

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS!

Are you in good shape? Can you lift as much as 50 pounds without hurting yourself? Volunteers are needed for four-hour shifts on three different days. Please contact John Fullerton at 402-493-4362 (h), 402-957-5901 (c) or efullerton00@gmail.com if you can help with this major fundraiser.

Audubon Society of Omaha remains committed to providing you and your feathered winter visitors with the highest quality bird seed, available at competitive prices from our longtime supplier, Des Moines Feed Co. We are proud to offer a wider selection than anywhere else in town. Below you will find a product listing with detailed descriptions for each item we offer. Thank you for your support. We wish you many happy hours of bird feeding and watching.

CARDINAL BRAND MIX - Millet base with added milo, cracked corn, peanut chips and 20% sunflower by volume.

DES MOINES STANDARD MIX - Higher-quality basic mix with millet base, cracked corn, oat groats, peanut pieces and 40% sunflower seeds by volume. No milo.

DES MOINES CLASSIC MIX - Basic ingredients same as Des Moines Standard, except sunflower is a 50/50 mix of seeds and hearts, and it also contains safflower. Attracts the widest variety of seed-eating birds.

DES MOINES DELUXE MIX - Same as Des Moines Classic, except it contains more peanuts and hulled sunflower hearts.

DES MOINES REGAL MIX - A premium blend of sunflower hearts, shelled peanuts, safflower seed, dried cherries, raisins and a protein-vitamin supplement.

SUNFLOWER SEED, BLACK OIL - Smaller, more nutritious seeds preferred by most winter birds.

SUNFLOWER HEARTS - Fine hearts are ground seeds suitable for mixing with nyjer in a thistle feeder. Medium hearts are about 1/3 the size of whole hearts. Coarse hearts are larger pieces.



American Goldfinch, photo by Jane Bauersachs

NYJER & FINE HEARTS - Blended at 50/50 ratio for easy flow through finch feeders. Both seed types are re-cleaned by Des Moines Feed before packaging to enhance the mix's appeal to Finches, Chickadees and Nuthatches.

RICH & TWEET - Nutritious, no-mess mixture with dried raisins and cherries. Contains 50% peanut hearts and pieces. It is designed to attract fruit-eaters such as Robins, Thrushes and other ground feeders.

WOODPECKER GOURMET - A blend that is full of nuts. Contains almonds, other tree nuts, pumpkin seeds and raisins.

BUSHY TAIL TREAT - No squirrel tails in it! A mix of peanuts, sunflower, whole corn, raisins, pumpkin seed and feed pellets that will tempt even an anorexic squirrel's palate!

PEANUT TREAT SUET - A mix of rendered beef suet and roasted, chopped peanuts for Woodpeckers, Nuthatches and Chickadees.

NUTRASAFF - Hulled safflower seed. Higher in protein and oil with less mess.

THANK YOU - From the Bird Seed Sale Committee and all of us at Audubon Society of Omaha.

‘Bird brains’ outwit us, again

Waaay back in 1785, Scottish poet Robert Burns observed that, “The best laid schemes o’ Mice an’ Men Gang aft agley.”

In mid-July of this year, Emily Anthes of the *New York Times* reported that sharp metal pins, arrayed in strips and designed to prevent birds from landing on or nesting among buildings started disappearing from the roof of a hospital in Antwerp, Belgium, in 2021.

Biologist Auke-Florian Hiemstra, working on his Ph.D. at Naturalis Biodiversity Center in the Netherlands, investigated after hearing about a strange bird’s nest near the hospital. “Nestled near the top of a sugar maple tree was a Eurasian Magpie nest that resembled a cyberpunk porcupine, with thin metal rods sticking out in every direction,” Anthes wrote.

“I couldn’t believe my eyes,” Hiemstra told Anthes. “These are birds making a nest with anti-bird spikes.

“They’re outsmarting us,” he said. “We’re trying to get rid of birds, the birds are collecting our metal spikes and actually making more birds in these nests. I think it’s just a brilliant comeback.” Hiemstra and his colleagues have published their findings in the journal *Deinsea*.

In her story, Anthes interviews other avian experts, such as Mark Mainwaring, at Bangor University in Wales. She learned that members of the Corvid family, such as Magpies and Crows, are admired widely for their problem-solving skills. “It shows just how intuitive these birds are, and it shows a certain amount of flexibility to go out and

find these new materials and use them,” Mainwaring said.

American Crow,
photo by
Elizabeth Winter



New board members and officers for Audubon Society of Omaha

At the May board of directors meeting, three new board members, returning board members and officers were elected to serve for the 2023-2024 term.

NEW DIRECTORS:

BENNETT AMDOR - Bennett was introduced to the ASO community by his co-workers at Fontenelle Forest. He grew up birdwatching with his family in Omaha, making trips out to see the Sandhill Cranes. He is currently a student at UNO majoring in Environmental Studies, with a concentration in Life Science to help continue his career in conservation. Bennett is interested in getting younger generations involved with ASO, as well as folks who haven’t traditionally been interested in wildlife habitat and conservation. In his spare time, Bennett enjoys camping, hiking, and building a pollinator-friendly habitat in his own yard. His favorite birds include the Great Horned Owl, Downy Woodpecker, and the Nebraska state bird, the Western Meadowlark.

STEVE GEDDES - Steve’s interest in ASO originated with his passion for ecosystem restoration. Pre-retirement, Steve worked for the Illinois Dept. of Transportation as a real estate appraiser. Before moving to Omaha in 2016, he volunteered with woodland & prairie restoration for the Nature Conservancy and Peoria Park District. Steve’s grandson has participated in ASO’s annual student art show for the past four years. Steve learned more about ASO through the Meadowlark newsletter, and was pleased to find that ASO owns prairie land that is actively being restored. He enjoys prairie hikes, native plants, and collecting seeds to establish his own pollinator garden in his yard. As for his favorite birds, he reluctantly names Black-capped Chickadees, House Wrens, and Pileated Woodpeckers.

MELISSA SITZE - Melissa has been a member of ASO since moving to Omaha seven years ago. She is joining the board after many years of dedicated bird seed sale volunteer experience. Due to her time living in the American southwest, among many other places, she names her favorite bird as the Roadrunner. She also loves all Owls (whooo doesn’t?). Apart from her interest in birds, Melissa also enjoys reading, hiking, and binge-watching British television.

ELECTED OFFICERS

President: Christine Prescott
1st Vice President: Kayla Johnson
2nd Vice President: Anne Maguire
Treasurer: Michelle Foss
Secretary: Katy Simmons

RETURNING DIRECTORS

Amy Campagna
Kyle Finley
Betty Fullerton
Virginia Stauffer

BOARD MEETINGS The ASO board meets September - May, on the first Tuesday at 7 p.m. at the Audubon Society of Omaha office located at 4339 S. 90th Street, Omaha, NE. Board meeting minutes are posted on our website at audubon-omaha.org. Contact officers and the board with any agenda items or concerns by sending an email to audubonomaha@audubonomaha.org

LOOKING FOR BIRD(ERS) We need birders to plan and lead field trips near and far. If interested, please contact us at audubonomaha@audubonomaha.org.

ARE YOU A NUMBERS PERSON? Next year, we will need to fill our Treasurer officer position. There is a currently a director vacancy on the board and we would like to fill it with a numbers person who is willing to step into the Treasurer position in 2024-2025. Experience with Quickbooks is a plus. If this sounds like an opportunity you would enjoy, please email Amaguire@audubonomaha.org.

Board update

NEW VENUE FOR SEPTEMBER 21 MEMBER PROGRAM Make your bird feeders the go-to spot in your neighborhood. Learn the secrets to attracting more birds, including your favorite species, at our September 21 members' meeting. Bob Wells, ASO past president and bird-feeding guru, will entertain and enlighten us on the best strategies to make our feeders irresistible. Join us in the meeting room at DJ's Dugout, 777 N. 114th Street. The program starts at 7 p.m. Doors open at 6 p.m. for those who would like to enjoy food and drinks before the presentation. Attendance is limited, so please register at Audubon-Omaha.org to save your spot.

MAY'S PRAIRIE PROGRAM

It was a beautiful morning for our May hike on the Audubon Society of Omaha Prairie Preserve! We saw a few birds and learned about this special prairie from Glenn Pollock. Glenn was instrumental in its acquisition in 1999 and its expansion in 2020 and has been restoring it with help from ASO member volunteers and generous contributions.



ASO PRAIRIE HAS BEEN RENAMED GLENN POLLOCK PRAIRIE

For more than 20 years, Glenn Pollock has been meticulously caring for Audubon of Omaha's prairie, located in North Omaha. He has spent countless hours performing physical tasks, such as weeding out invasive species, maintaining firebreaks, mowing, managing prescribed burns and working with adjacent land owners toward common conservation goals. Glenn's focus on remnant prairies in particular has made him a leader in the field. Remnant prairies are grasslands that have **never been plowed** – and as a result have significantly more biodiversity than those that have been recreated. Because there are very few remnants left in the Omaha metro area, his attention to their protection has been crucial to the community and to future generations of creatures of all kinds. Thanks, Glenn!

The eyes have it – your photos

We love to see your bird photos! Please email them to photos@audubonomaha.org



Bob-white Quail, photo by Colleen Childers



Red-headed Woodpecker, photo by Duane Schwery

RESOURCES & INFO:

HOW TO JOIN/RENEW/UPDATE

Join or renew your membership online at auduon-omaha.org and select "Get Involved." Save paper and avoid confusion. Your membership with National Audubon automatically makes you a member of Audubon Society of Omaha.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS?

Please call National Audubon toll-free at 1-844-428-3826, or send an email to audubon@emailcustomerservice.com

STAY CONNECTED

Join our email list at Audubon-Omaha.org under "Get Involved."

BEQUESTS & GIFTS

A bequest to Audubon Society of Omaha is a gift to those who will succeed us and secure our natural heritage. Want to honor a loved one and help ASO's local conservation and education efforts? You can make a donation anytime at Audubon-Omaha.org OR you can mail your check along with the name and address of the person to be notified to:

Audubon Society of Omaha
P.O. Box 3542, Omaha, NE 68103

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS!

Can you lift as much as 50 pounds without hurting yourself? The ASO birdseed sale needs volunteers for four-hour shifts on three different days. Please contact John Fullerton at 402-493-4362 (h), 402-957-5901 (c) or efullerton00@gmail.com if you can help with this major fundraiser. We can't do it without help from our members and fellow bird feeders.

TAKE ACTION Big things are happening, so communicate with your elected officials. Go to audubon-omaha.org for links to contact info for each.

INJURED BIRD?

Raptors: Call 866-888-7261 to speak to a Raptor Conservation Alliance volunteer. Non-raptor: Call Nebraska Wildlife Rehab at 402-234-2473.

Audubon
Society of Omaha
P.O. Box 3542
Omaha, NE 68103
audubon-omaha.org

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STEWARDSHIP OF THE EARTH AND ITS CREATURES

the Meadowlark

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Bills update
Big bird seed sale
Board update

Tufted Titmouse, photo by Jennifer Dobej

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.

CONTACT US AT:

P.O. Box 3542
Omaha, NE 68103-3542
402-445-4138
website: audubon-omaha.org
email: audubonomaha@audubonomaha.org

ELECTED OFFICERS



President: Christine Prescott
Past President: Bob Wells
1st Vice President: Michaela Johnson
2nd Vice President: Anne Maguire
Treasurer: Michelle Foss
Secretary: Katy Simmons

ELECTED DIRECTORS

Bennett Amdor
Amy Campagna
Kyle Finley
Betty Fullerton
Steve Geddes
Melissa Sitze
Virginia Stauffer
Vacancy- Open

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Art Contest: Virginia Stauffer
Education: Amy Campagna
Finance: Michelle Foss
Fundraising: Betty Fullerton
Grant Review: Michaela Johnson
Legislative Affairs: Christine Prescott
Marketing and Outreach: Anne Maguire
Membership: Kathy Schwery
Natural Areas Management: Glenn Pollock
Nominating: Anne Maguire
Program: Amy Campagna
Bird Seed Sale: John & Betty Fullerton
ASO Administrator: Julia Rawnsley
Executive Director, Audubon Great Plains:
Kristal Stoner

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and Instagram.