



Meadowlark

celebrating our 50th year

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Feed the birds; then count the birds with Project FeederWatch

FeederWatch is a November–April survey of birds that visit backyards, nature centers, and community areas in North America. You don't even need a feeder! All you need is an area with plantings, habitat, water or food that attracts birds. The schedule is completely flexible. Count your birds for as long as you like on days of your choosing. Then enter your counts online. Your counts contribute to a continental dataset of bird distribution and abundance. Here's how to participate:

1. SIGN UP If you have not yet joined, sign up at FeederWatch.org, a Cornell Lab program. It takes a few weeks for your kit to arrive, but you can begin counting right away.

2. SELECT YOUR COUNT SITE Choose a portion of your yard that is easy to monitor, typically an area with feeders that is visible from one vantage point.

3. CHOOSE YOUR COUNT DAYS For each count, select two consecutive days as often as once a week. Even if you only count once all winter, your data are valuable. We recommend that you leave at least five days between each of your two-day counts and that you schedule your counts in advance.

4. HOW TO COUNT Watch your feeders for any amount of time over your selected count days. For every species you can identify, record the maximum number of individuals visible simultaneously during your two-day count. Keep one tally across both days. Do not add day 1 and day 2 counts together.

WHAT TO COUNT

- Birds attracted to food or water you provided
- Birds attracted to fruits or plantings you maintain
- Hawks and predatory birds that are attracted by the birds at your feeders

DO NOT COUNT

- Birds that simply fly over the count site, such as Canada Geese
- Birds seen on non-count days

5. REPORT YOUR COUNTS Submit counts through the Your Data section of the FeederWatch.org website. Or you can use the FeederWatch app, available for both Apple and Android mobile devices, to keep track of your counts and submit your counts directly to the Cornell Lab's database. The app is connected to the Cornell Lab's All About Birds online guide with detailed species information, including photos, identification tips, natural history, and a range map.

JANUARY MEMBER PROGRAM

Increase accessibility through Birdability

Mark your calendar to participate in Audubon Society of Omaha's January 13 General Education Meeting focused on Birdability — National Audubon's initiative to nurture inclusivity among all birders. The "Let's Bird Together" strategy aims to create a safe and welcoming environment for diverse individuals facing accessibility challenges.

Cassandra Dean, Nebraska Audubon's Birdability Captain, will share ideas for increasing access to birding to members of the LGBTQI+ community — and focus on what we can do to promote inclusivity and ensure the future of birding and the vitality of Audubon Society of Omaha.

Please join us to learn more about your role in this important effort.

GREEN CORNER: HOW YOU CAN COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE

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

Invest Responsibly January

Do you know where your money goes? Call your investment firm to see if you are inadvertently supporting industries that contribute to climate change, such as fossil fuel companies. You might have the option to move to ESG funds, investment portfolios that weigh environmental, social and governance factors.

Fly Less February

Air travel is a major contributor to carbon dioxide emissions — just think about the amount of fuel required to power a Boeing 737's sojourn across the country. When you can, opt for lower-impact transportation options, such as buses or trains.

ON THE HORIZON

January

MEMBER PROGRAM

THURSDAY, JANUARY 13

Speaker: Cassandra Dean, Nebraska Audubon's Birdability Captain

Topic: "Let's Bird Together," Creating a safe and welcoming environment for diverse individuals facing accessibility challenges

When: 7 p.m.

Where: Computer, laptop or tablet

How: Register for this meeting at audubon-omaha.org. A link to join the Zoom meeting will be emailed to you

Who: Members and the public (free)

FIELD TRIP - DIY INDOORS

JANUARY OR FEBRUARY

What: Feeder Watch

How: Register at Feederwatch.org to participate in this national citizen science project – see page 1 for more.

February

MEMBER PROGRAM

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10

Speaker: TBD, find details later this month on the calendar tab at audubon-omaha.org

When: 7 p.m.

Where: Computer, laptop or tablet

How: Register for this meeting at audubon-omaha.org. A link to join the Zoom meeting will be emailed to you

Who: Members and the public (free)

When: 7 p.m.

Where: Computer, laptop or tablet

How: Register for this meeting at audubon-omaha.org. A link to join the Zoom meeting will be emailed to you

Who: Members and the public (free)

FIELD TRIP

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26

When: 8 a.m.

Where: Meet at ASO office parking lot at 4339 S. 90th St and we'll search for returning waterfowl

BIRDSEED ORDERS DUE

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10

PRESIDENT'S LETTER:

New leadership and new initiatives call for renewed commitment *by Christine Jacobsen, President*

It's an exciting time in Audubon's 116-year history. For the first time, a woman will hold the CEO title — Dr. Elizabeth Gray, a scientist and ornithologist, will lead the organization. Prior to her time at Audubon, Dr. Gray was with The Nature Conservancy where she was the Global Managing Director for Climate and a member of the Global Gender Equity Council. She founded the first urban conservation program in Washington, D.C., and has empowered conservation leaders through a young professionals' network and a youth advocacy program.

Over the past six months, Dr. Gray has been Audubon's voice at significant climate events (NYC Climate Week and COP26), and has raised several million dollars to advance Audubon's mission. She has worked with Jamaal Nelson, Audubon's Chief Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Officer, to advance key equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts. As Audubon develops its next strategic plan, it will follow Dr. Gray's vision to focus work on three pillars: Climate; Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB); and Hemispheric Conservation.

"Becoming Audubon's CEO feels like a homecoming for me," she said. "Birds launched my career into conservation, and they opened my eyes to the importance of tackling climate change. As an early warning system for environmental threats, birds are the key to addressing the greatest conservation challenges of our time." Dr. Gray noted.

As Audubon moves into the future, we are looking for more conservation champions to join Audubon Society of Omaha. Check out our website: www.audubon-omaha.org, and GET INVOLVED! Attend one of our programs, visit one of our prairies, purchase bird seed, or if you have questions about how to get even more involved by volunteering, contact us at 402-445-4138 or email: audubonomaha@gmail.com

Know someone who would be a good fit for the ASO leadership team? Please send your nominations to Michaela Johnson at mjohnson@fontenelleforest.org. We have several openings on the board for our 2022-2023 term.

The eyes have it — your photos

We need your bird photos! Please email them to [Meadow Lark at asopublisher@gmail.com](mailto:MeadowLark@asopublisher@gmail.com)



Barred Owls, photo by Katy McTee



Common Redpoll, photo by Mary Clausen



Wild Turkeys, photo by Barbara Hayes

Picture this: Winning the ASO 2022 Student Art Contest



Artwork by Ella J.

Do you know a creative kid? Need a winter project that's kid-friendly? Check out the ASO 2022 Student Art Contest – it's free to enter and we award many prizes.

Studies show that children often learn more by drawing or creating artwork focused on a specific subject, so the Audubon Society of Omaha holds a Student Art Contest and Show each spring. Helping our community learn more about birds and our unique ecosystem is part of our organization's mission, so this event is a win-win for reaching new birders and their families.

This year's contest and show will be held online again due to staffing issues. Starting January 3, rules, entry forms and instructions can be found

at audubon-omaha.org under Special Events. **Electronic entries are due March 1**, uploaded to our website with your entry form.

The Art "Show" will also be online this year. Starting April 11, 2022, artwork of each student entering the contest (grades K through 12) will be on display in online galleries for each grade. These galleries will be posted on our website for viewing by students, their families and the general public.

Please invite your creative students to create and enter original artwork featuring birds. Even if their class or school is not participating, we welcome their entries and encourage our members to support their creative efforts as they relate to birds of the Midwest or endangered bird species. Rules, instructions and more can be found at audubon-omaha.org.

The artwork is judged for Excellence or Merit in these categories: Realism, Graphic Design, Cartooning and Recycled. Ribbons and prizes will be awarded to winners in each grade and will be available to pick up at our office April 14-16.

Update: UNO Student Chapter marks successful year of service *by Bob Wells*

The UNO students comprising Nebraska's first Audubon Conservation Student Chapter wrapped up their second full year of service in 2021. Monthly programming activities included:

- Studying Nebraska hawk species;
- Exploring the Hitchcock HawkWatch site, a conservation-focused research project staffed largely by volunteers, operating out of the Hitchcock Nature Center;
- Monitoring on-campus building bird strikes; and
- Birding on the UNO campus.

Audubon Society of Omaha, with help and guidance from faculty advisor Dr. John McCarty, drove the formation of the student chapter, made up largely of students pursuing coursework in UNO's Department of Environmental Science. Adapting to the fast-changing pandemic landscape, student members have interacted on Zoom and in person. Last winter, under the direction of the Fontenelle Forest Land Management team, they planned and conducted a large Pollinator Plot planting at the forest. The student chapter has plans to build a second pollinator garden at Fontenelle Forest in 2022 with funds from ASO's Audubon in Action grant.

Winter 2022 Bird Seed Sale – Better get clicking! *by Betty Fullerton*

Running low on bird seed? Want to help your feathered friends through spring migration?

Starting January 5, stock up on seed at Audubon Society of Omaha's Winter Bird Seed Sale. Here's the scoop: If you have ordered seed from us in the past – and have provided us your email address– we will email you an order form by January 5. As usual, we don't mail physical forms for the Winter Sale. You can order two ways:

1. Mail us your completed order form available on the website with payment
2. Order online at our website at audubon-omaha.org using a credit or debit card

ALL ORDERS ARE DUE FEBRUARY 10

Your order will be ready for pick up on **Sat., February 19 from 9 a.m.–5 p.m.** at ASO's office and warehouse at 4339 S. 90th Street in Omaha.

If you have questions, OR would like to volunteer for this important fundraiser, call John or Betty Fullerton at 402-493-4362 or 402-957-5901. If you need us to email an order form to you, please email efullerton00@gmail.com.



Goldfinch, photo by Mike Benkis

Strike a blow against bird strikes

By Lauren Robinson

NOW YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE TO BIRD MORTALITY RESEARCH

When Audubon Society of Omaha moved into its new headquarters at 4339 S. 90th Street in 2020, members were greeted by a symbol antithetical to their mission. A male Nashville Warbler lay dead on the stoop beneath the door after crashing into a window it perceived to be just another part of the natural landscape.

“To say the least, it was very disconcerting,” said Bob Wells, past ASO president. “We were kind of sick to our stomachs.”



Strike-proof window films are now installed on large windows at the ASO's office.

Unfortunately, bird strikes are a common occurrence, especially in urban areas. In the U.S., between 365 million and 1 billion birds die from window collisions each year. There are measures that can be taken — ASO moved quickly to apply window decals on its office windows to deter birds — but larger-scale change is going to take large-scale action. Kaitlyn Parkins, associate director for conservation and science for New York City Audubon, knows this firsthand. In 2019, New York birders celebrated the passage of legislation requiring all new construction and alterations to use bird-safe glass to curb bird mortality. But Parkins and her fellow advocates had a special tool in their toolbox: dBird.

dBird lets everyday people report dead or injured birds with just a few clicks. Accessible via a mobile phone or desktop browser at dBird.org, the simple user interface asks a few quick questions of its users, such as location, species (if known), and cause of death or injury (if known). The database pulls from existing eBird data on U.S. species.

Parkins and her colleagues were able to cite data from dBird to quantify bird mortality in New York City, building a case for taking action against window collisions. The database continues to inform collision research.

“We are looking at dBird data to learn more about where and when collisions are most likely to happen in different types of environments and combining dBird data with other datasets, such as rehabilitation data, to learn more about which birds are the most susceptible to collisions and why,” Parkins said.

The project has been adopted far and wide. In 2020, New York Audubon partnered with Seattle Audubon to redesign dBird's interface and make it available to other Audubon chapters and organizations. Seattle birders are in the midst of their own anti-bird-collision advocacy push, spearheaded by the Bird-safe Cities program that supported and funded dBird's expansion.

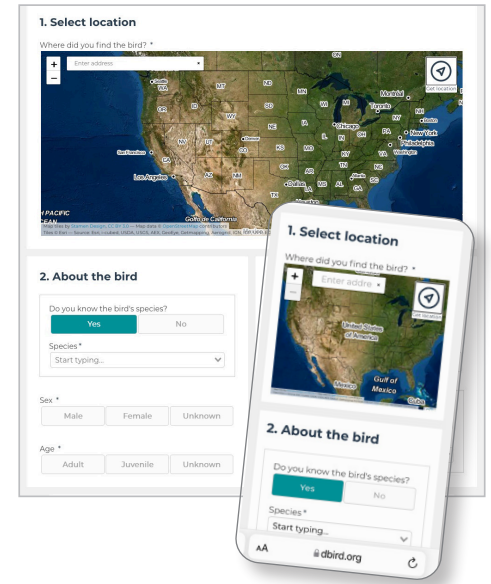
At press time, 38 organizations across the country — including ASO — have joined the effort. More than 9,000 observations have been recorded. As stewards of this resource in the Omaha area, we encourage bird lovers of all skill levels to contribute findings. Your input could help inform future campaigns to design bird-safe cities.

“As more organizations sign up to use dBird, I'm sure they will come up with all kinds of exciting new ways to use the data that we haven't even thought of,” Parkins said.

The University of Nebraska Omaha Audubon Student Conservation Chapter has been active in its campus-wide collision-data collection project.

REPORT A DEAD OR INJURED BIRD

1. Visit dbird.org on a mobile phone or desktop computer.
2. Input your location, bird species, bird condition, and other information when prompted.
3. Tap (mobile) or click (desktop) the blue “Submit” button.



WHY ARE BIRDS PRONE TO WINDOW COLLISIONS?

Birds and humans perceive the world differently. Most notably, according to the American Bird Conservancy, birds interpret reflections of vegetation, landscapes, or sky to be real. When they pursue these illusions, impacts with glass can result in serious injury or even death. It's up to us to help prevent this, which doesn't occur naturally.

“Humans actually don't see clear glass either — that's kind of the point,” Parkins said. “But we use visual clues, such as architectural features (mullions in windows, door handles) and other visual cues (dirty spots on the glass, for example) to recognize that glass is present. Decals work because they are providing the visual cues birds need to recognize a solid barrier is present.”

Girls Inc. girls get science, nature and birding through Bird Club *by Grace Gaard*



Bird Club members work on noting the adaptations that birds have made to survive in their environment.

The first rule of Bird Club is you DO talk about Bird Club!

In summer 2021, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) initiated efforts to introduce its values and goals to organizations and communities that do not typically interact with NGPC programming. These partnerships were established by its Fish and Wildlife Education Division, a small but mighty team of educators skilled in providing engaging outdoor education learning experiences. One of these efforts blossomed into a partnership with Girls Inc. of Omaha, which serves 5-18-year-old girls attending schools east of 72nd Street.

From bird walks to fishing, we had a blast introducing the girls to various outdoor adventures over the summer. After a brief pause in the fall, we began building a new program to integrate into sessions offered to girls every quarter. Girls Inc. does a fantastic job of creating opportunities for girls to explore real world issues and practice gathering scientific data. From this, Bird Club was born!

Bird Club emerged through Project FeederWatch, a Cornell Lab

of Ornithology program designed to turn the act of bird feeding into an opportunity for scientific discoveries. From November to April, this toolkit has everything you need to count the birds that visit your observation space. After collecting this data, FeederWatch scientists can analyze and determine the abundance of birds in various areas through the winter. Our goal was to expose the fifth- and sixth-grade girls in Bird Club to the numerous birds that call Omaha home in winter. By engaging the girls in research to determine which bird feeders might attract birds to Girls Inc., we helped them develop the skills needed to complete several bird counts by the end of the club session.

Bird Club took flight in October and has evolved into a fantastic way for the girls to practice scientific observation through bird identification! Club activities also have helped them understand how to properly research types of bird feeders suited to the birds that would use them. We also encouraged the girls to discuss categories of risks that birds face. One such risk is very relevant to Girls Inc. — many birds have crashed into a giant glass window on the side of its building. Recently, through Bird Club, the girls created decals to put on this window to reduce the risk of collisions, which has resulted in modest improvements. They have also installed feeders and have begun feeding the birds, with plans to clean the feeders regularly to prevent disease. Very soon, Bird Club will conduct its first official bird count, and the girls are really looking forward to submitting their data to Project FeederWatch.

The Bird Club girls are doing excellent work familiarizing themselves with local birds and collecting usable scientific data. We can't wait to see what they do next!

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 send a gift on behalf of someone? 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'll send them a thank-you note letting them know of your gift.

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0.5% of your eligible purchases to the charitable organization of your choice, including Audubon Society of Omaha. When you shop on Amazon, use this address: smile.amazon.com and login to your account as usual. In the account info section, there's a link to enter the non-profit of your choice. It's a win-win-win; there's no extra cost, you get the same convenient shopping, and you'll help local conservation efforts.

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 Recovery volunteer.

Non-raptor: Call Nebraska Wildlife Rehab at 402-234-2473.

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STEWARDSHIP OF THE EARTH AND ITS CREATURES

the Meadowlark

celebrating our 50th year

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Photo by Coleen Childers

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.

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