

*December
2004*

Volume 33 Issue 10

ASO is a Chapter

*of the National Audubon
Society*

Serving Eastern Nebraska

and Western Iowa

The Prairies

By Nancy Leonard

"Gardens of the desert. . . boundless and beautiful,

. . . Lo, they stretch in airy undulations, far away."

With these words, William Cullen Bryant aptly described the North American prairie. It was seen by some as a promised land of fertile farmland and by some as land unfit for human habitation, a place one had to cross to get to somewhere else. But what really was the prairie?

The tallgrass prairie

- once covered about 142 million acres or 40% of the United States;

- was formed about 8,000 years ago, making it the most recently formed ecosystem in North America;

- was home to more than 5 billion prairie dogs living in extensive colonies across hundreds of miles.

Only about 1% of this magnificent landscape remains today. But thanks to education and conservation efforts at both the state and national levels, the tallgrass prairie has a future. From Oklahoma to Nebraska to Illinois, prairies are not only being preserved but recreated from the ground up by sowing the seeds in fallow fields.

Join us Thursday, December 9, 7:30 P.M., at Hanscom Park Methodist Church, 4444 Frances (1 block south of 45th & Center) when Marian Langan, Director of the Spring Creek Prairie Preserve, will share her experiences working at the site. Marian has worked for the National Audubon Society for five years, is a past board member of the Nebraska Alliance for Conservation Environmental Education, and is presently a steering committee member of the Nebraska Tallgrass Prairie Partnership. Spring Creek Prairie has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, has hosted visitors from more than 40 states and 15 countries, and has a bird list of more than 190 species. **(Cont. next column)**

Christmas Bird Counts

Omaha Area - Sat.

December 18

**DeSoto - Sun. December
19**

Each year we count our mid-winter birds for tabulation with others across the nation for a record of numbers and location of populations.

To join one or more of the Counts, choose a site and contact the captain of the site for instructions. If you are a beginning birder, you may be a valuable member of a team by helping to keep records.

For the Omaha Area Count on Saturday, December 18, contact one of the quadrant leaders: **Clem Klaphake**, Fontenelle Forest (morning only) - 292-2276; **Don & Janis Paseka** (afternoon, Fontenelle) - (402) 727-9229; **Loren Padelford**, Lake Manawa (292-5556); **Neal Ratzlaff**, Glenwood, Ia (397-0135); and **Betty Grenon**, Plattsmouth (731-2383). Dress for possible severe weather; warm footwear is essential. Bring something hot to drink and a lunch or be prepared to eat at a restaurant.

A compilation supper will be held at the home of Betty Grenon, 1409 Childs Road, at 5:30 P.M. Please bring your tallies, stories, and a pot luck dish. Contact Betty (731-2383) for details. **DeSoto participants (for Sat Dec 19)** need to contact quadrant captains: **Bob Barry**, DeSoto: Bob_Barry@fws.gov (402) 642-5404; **Sue Mattix**, Ft. Calhoun: mattixsm@aol.com 593-7433; **Mark Orsag**, Hitchcock: **Mark.Orsag@doane.edu** (402) 826-4162; **Jerry Toll**, Boyer Chute: jertol@radiks.net 453-9239.

Tentatively the groups will meet at Jerry's house afterward for supper and tabulation.

A short business meeting will follow the program, ending with coffee, cookies, and conversation. T-shirts and bird-related items are offered for sale. Raffle tickets may be purchased for the Mangelsen photo. Visitors are welcome.

By Nelli Falzgraf

Nelli's Notes

Rookery Repairs and On-site Issues

Elliott Bedows led a summer Board meeting on the ASO Rookery building. It is used 50 times a year, mostly for chapter meetings. There were questions of Heron Haven grants, and the Board reiterated past requests and motions to access them.

Board members noted that every few months, we are surprised with yet another repair of something (roof, bathrooms, furnaces, air conditioners, etc.) and decided to look into costs of building inspections.

The chapter spent over \$50,000 on Rookery renovation from 1997 to 2001, and much was replaced, except for fireplace, chimney, and septic tank. The Board requested overhead expenses. A cottonwood limb pierced the roof and heating duct. A suggestion was made to remove trees behind the building. The Board would consider tree inspections.

Elliott continued discussions about the Rookery after numbers came in for inspections and past overhead. New questions arose about recent programs and budgets at the premises, and the Board decided to set aside decisions of on-site projects.

However, before the NRD graded the parking lot in the summer of 2002, there were regular late-winter floods on site and repeated roof leaks after rainstorms. Safety hazards from water-damaged roof and supporting timbers were noted, as well as health hazards from possible mold growth behind drywall. The Board decided to look into inspections for safety and health reasons.

Update of the State Audubon

Mace Hack, our Chapter's Representative, provided an update of the Audubon Nebraska Board of Directors. The floor plan for the new Spring Creek Prairie Center is finalized; fundraising is proceeding, and it is slated to open fall 2005.

Allwine Prairie (west of the ASO Rookery) and Rumsey Station in Papillion are being considered as the site for an education center. Both offer important wildlife habitat and have space for large groups. Professional staff would provide extensive programs and could help our chapter.

By the end of September, 14 sites were nominated as Important Bird Areas,

to continue the IBA effort through May 2006.

Prairie Preserve Conservation Easement

Last month: ASO's conservation easement on Allen Hills greenspace.

Glenn Pollock obtained a conservation easement on our Prairie Preserve in the summer of 2000, and property taxes on the 13 acres dropped from \$1,505 a year to \$175. The easement prevented us from developing our prairie, thereby reducing its assessed valuation and the annual property taxes. The land is zoned an agricultural greenbelt and is a tiny part of the native tallgrass prairies that once covered eastern Nebraska.

Glenn manages the Preserve to restore it to native forbs that support prairie wildlife. He conducts burns to clear nonnative plants and favor endemic flora and harvests seeds to restore the previously plowed area. Invasive woody vegetation was cut to remove perching and hiding places for birds and mammals that prey on birds nesting and raising their young in the prairie.

As the landowner, the ASO protects and defends the prairie against claims. Earlier this year, Glenn wrote to the Omaha Planning Board about a neighboring business' plans to develop the adjacent property for a shopping center. Later the same business wanted to build housing and cut an access road through our prairie, prompting a letter to and testimony at an Omaha City Council meeting. If need be, the ASO could retain a lawyer to prepare countersuits.

It is a continuing effort to retain as natural the few remaining prairies in Nebraska amid ever-encroaching developments. We all appreciate Glenn's leadership to conserve natural habitat and take care of the ASO Prairie Preserve.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all!

Calendar

Dec 1 (Wed) Board Meeting

Dec 6 (Mon) Conservation Meeting

Dec 9 (Thur) General Meeting

including Fontenelle Forest, Neale Woods, Walnut Creek Lake and Recreational Area, and Boyer Chute NWR. A State Wildlife Grant request was submitted to the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

Dec 18 (Sat) Omaha Area Xmas Count

Dec 19 (Sun) DeSoto Xmas Count

After the Election - From the National Audubon President

By John Flicker

We just completed what some described as the most important election in our lifetimes. While every national election sends mixed signals, on balance, many of the environmental issues we care about suffered a setback, or were out of the main debate. While we are a 501(c)(3) organization that cannot take positions on candidates for elected office, of the many candidates that supported our issues, most did not succeed.

What do we do now? First, keep it in perspective. We are about to celebrate our Centennial. Audubon has gone through many elections, wars, depressions, setbacks and losses. Each time we regrouped, learned from what went wrong, and got back into the fight for the environment. We will do that again.

Second, remember what we stand for. We are committed to building strong communities through local programs that reflect mainstream conservation values. We believe that every community values birds, wildlife and habitat, so we work to protect Important Bird Areas, the places they need to survive. We believe that every community wants to be safe from poisons that harm both wildlife and people, so we fight pollution at every level. We believe there is an essential role for government in protecting the environment, so we advocate for strong public policies.

And we believe individuals can make a difference by what they do in their everyday lives, so we empower people to act through Audubon at Home.

Third, stay the course. The basic direction and programs we have been building are correct. Each of our state programs is building a community-based network of Chapters, Audubon Centers, and IBA's. We engage people and advance conservation through sound science, education and public policy advocacy. We have the fundamentals right.

Fourth, learn from what happened. While we may have the fundamentals right, and we can find many excuses for what happened in the election, we should not be in denial. Something went wrong, and conservation issues got lost in the noise. We need to figure out why. In the weeks ahead, we will be analyzing the messages of this election carefully.

Fifth, react strategically, strongly, and never give up. We will not lash out in anger. We will not become the "extremists" some accuse us of being. We will learn from the messages of this election, adjust our tactics, and come back stronger than ever. We will take the fight to them in every community, on OUR terms. And we will never give up.

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Bird Seed Sale Volunteers— Thanks!

Our 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 \$6,000.00. Thanks go out to all of the volunteers and customers who make this sale a success each year.

We apologize if we miss anyone, but we would like to recognize the workers who made this sale a success.

Head-of-it-all: Neal Ratzlaff.

Chief Assistants: Carole and Dick Rasmussen, Jerry Toll, Kathleen Crawford-Rose; Computer Program Assistant: Bill Swick.

Mailing: Pauline Dickey, Jean Warren, Earl Collins, Alfa Fiske, Louise Bates, Wanda Neaderhiser, Helen Rees, Carole & Dick Rasmussen, Jenny Henriksen, Nancy & Tom Gallagher, and Kathleen Crawford-Rose.

Garages and snacks: Neal & Izen Ratazlaff, Duane & Janice Bright, & Barbara Sennentz.

Distribution crew: Jerry Toll, Crew Chief. Crew: Eric Scholar, Roy Rayner, David Nichols, Mark Aiken, Elliott Bedows, Mark Armstrong, Janis & Don Paseka, Jim McLochlin, Jim Davis, Dick & Carole Rasmussen, Jim

Collette Chiesa, Roland Barth, Clem Klaphake, Kathleen Crawford-Rose, Loren Padelford, Dave Crawford, Pauline Dickey, Urban Lehner, Eunice Levisay, Al Reyer, Laurine Blankenau, Duane Schwery and Greg Stoiber.

By Kathleen Rose

ASO Receives Bequest

ASO has received a bequest for \$10,000 from the estate of Mary Carolyn Moore. A remainder amount is yet to be divided among three recipients, including ASO.

We are most grateful to the donor, who is deceased. The funds will be used for conservation and environmental education. The specific projects have not been determined.

By Ione Werthman

Conservation Column

Now that I've been semi-grounded for a few months after a life-threatening emergency trip to the hospital for surgery, I'm catching up on my reading.

The elections are over and we can once again fight to save life on this planet earth. I was fascinated with an article in the Green Elephant (Spring 2004) issue, "Doing Noah's Job Today," by John R.E. Bliese, Ph.D. Mr. Bliese, a strong Republican environmentalist, said, "In the U.S. the most important law for preserving God's creatures is the Endangered Species Act, which was signed into law by a Republican president, Richard Nixon." Today, says Mr. Bliese, "The ESA is the most controversial of environmental laws, and much of the opposition is unwarranted by the facts."

One case is that of the Spotted Owl, which Audubon rallied to the defense of several years ago. A federal judge stopped all logging in national forests in the Pacific Northwest until the Forest Service developed a plan to save the owls. The press and timber companies went crazy screaming "Jobs versus owls." A decade later, the best and most thorough study of employment in the timber industry concluded that saving the Spotted Owl had no effect on timber jobs.

Today we are wiping out forms of life 100 to 1,000 times faster than natural extinction rates, normally rare and very slow. An article from the *Los Angeles Times*, Oct 2004, reports that the severity of the global threat to thousands of species of frogs, salamanders and other amphibians in just a century is being caused by a range of factors including deforestation, pollution, habitat loss and climate change.

In the U.S. 1,263 species are officially listed as endangered or threatened, but the Nature Conservancy has identified 6,500 species in our country that are at risk of extinction. Significantly, we are destroying the habitat these species need.

Aldo Leopold said, "Since we humans know little about how ecosystems work, the first rule of intelligent tinkering is to save all of the parts." God ordered Noah to save all kinds of creatures. Mr. Bliese put it this way: "There is no reason to believe that God expects any less from us today. The Rainbow Covenant was not just with Noah and his family, but with all humans...and all creatures. We may have dominion on this earth, but that does not give us license to trash the place." I'm ready to send the article to

pollution standards more stringent than the federal government's. No other state has such powers. And thanks to a 1990 amendment to the Clean Air Act, other states can adopt California's standards directly without having to wait for the federal government to act. Seven northeastern states have adopted California's low-emission vehicle standards.

Japanese cars still dominate the government's annual list of vehicles leading the way with the best fuel efficiency, with an EPA-estimated 61 miles per gallon in the city and 66 mpg on the highway, though real experience is lower. Not considered on the ratings list are the largest vehicles, such as the Hummer H2 and the Ford Excursion because the law exempts from fuel-economy standards vehicles that weigh more than 8,500 pounds.

Missouri River. The EPA is giving added attention to the Missouri, Mississippi and the Ohio Rivers. Beginning next summer, field workers of the EPA will gather information on water quality, biodiversity and sediments, and in 2006 the agency will issue a report card on the rivers, furnishing data for their future protections. Where that report card will be used or filed has yet to be decided. In the past, politics has trumped science on Missouri River studies done by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the U.S. Academy of Sciences, and other government agencies, so time will tell where these studies will go. Into File 13?

Wind Power. At last OPPD has voted to purchase 10 megawatts of energy from a wind farm being built by the Nebraska Public Power District near Ainsworth. OPPD estimates that this addition will provide enough energy to power about 3,100 homes.

Space Veggies. From *Newsweek* comes an article on "space veggies," which states, "Chinese scientists have been growing cucumbers as long as baseball bats, eggplants up to four pounds, tomatoes the size of softballs, and other outsize fruits and vegetables using seeds having been shot into space. The seeds there are exposed to seven types of extraterrestrial conditions, from zero gravity and cosmic radiation to subatomic particles. Under conventional methods, a scientist might create just three new plants in his lifetime, but through trips into space, Chinese scientists have developed more than 50 new plants since 1999. The long-term

our Republican Bible-toting President, who should be listening to many of his fellow Republicans and heeding the message of the Bible.

Vehicle Pollution. California has been given special authority under the U.S. Clean Air Act to make its own vehicle

goal of the project is to feed more people and help endangered species escape extinction." However, the "commerical promise of China's space veggies has yet to bear fruit."

Continued on page 5

News from Meadowlark Farm

By Don Helmuth

Yesterday brought the season's first snowfall and with it frantic feeder activity that continued way past dark. I never got tired of the spectacle of bright red Cardinals against snow-covered pine boughs. We've already gone through 100 lbs. of sunflower seed and 30 pounds of thistle with an unusually large number of Red-breasted Nuthatches entertaining everyone.

Spring Creek Prairie held two nature journaling workshops this past month. One was for adults, and the other one was for families. These informative and stimulating workshops continue to be very popular - please look for future announcements to ensure that you have a place.

The drawings for the Spring Creek Prairie Center are 95% complete. Stop by either at the Prairie or the State Office to see our vision of the future. We will be looking for volunteers to participate in the "raising of the bales" event in the Spring (analogous to a barn-raising, only in this case we are using native hay bales instead of wood beams).

The Platte has water? Rowe Sanctuary reports that the fall rains and some interesting (and so far unexplained) moves by Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District have resulted in much higher flows than anticipated in the central part of the Platte River. Manager Paul Tebbel reports that even though irrigation deliveries are slated to be only 1/3 of average next summer, he is currently seeing modest flows (above 500 CPS) which have done a good job of helping clear the huge growth of annual weeds that sprouted everywhere when the river went dry in July. The onset of cold weather promises some ice, and when that breaks up, the ice chunks combined with decent water flows should provide above average roosting habitat for cranes in March 2005 and maybe even tern and plover breeding habitat in May-July.

Rowe Sanctuary Assistant Manager, Bill Taddicken, and some local volunteers are building a new viewing blind directly north and a bit east (downstream) of the old farmhouse. The "portable" blind has been there for the past four years, and staff decided that it was time to build a

taining and talented writer and artist who specializes in birds and nature. You've probably seen her work in *Birdwatcher's Digest*. Folks who sign up early (the registration should be ready in mid-January) will have a chance to be part of a new crane behavior workshop offered Friday and Saturday afternoons that will include the evening viewing. If you enjoy watching cranes, you won't want to miss this chance to learn what their vocal and body language mean.

We have had a significant change in our staff. Chris Sommerich has left Audubon and taken the Director of Development position at the Nebraska Humanities Council. We thank Chris for all he did for Audubon over the past four years and wish him good luck in his new job. He will be missed.

Announcement of upcoming talk: Dr. Richard Reading, Director of Conservation Biology for the Denver Zoological Foundation, will speak in Lincoln on "Human and Ecological Dimensions of Prairie Dog Conservation." When: Thursday, January 27, 2005, 3:30 P.M; Where: Hewitt Place, Center for Great Plains Studies Gallery, 1155 Q Street. For more information, call 472-3082.

In closing—Happy Holidays.....Don

**Nebraska Natural Legacy
Project Meeting November 15**

The Nebraska the wildlife that Natural Legacy depends on it. Project meeting attracted persons ASO members from several Nelli Falzgraf, organizations as Glenn Pollock, well as individuals Jenny Henricksen, without affiliation Jerry Toll and but with Laurine Blankenau enthusiasm and a attended.

wealth of recommendations for conserving habitat for

**Conservation,
Continued from
page 4**

Last But Not tributaries in this **Least** part of the State.

more permanent structure. The walls will be largely hay bale with no additional covering. It will be ready for use in March of 2005.

The Rivers and Wildlife Celebration March 18-20, 2005, has an excellent set of keynote speakers. Michael Forsberg will present on Friday night with an emotional and inspirational story of the trials and tribulations of making his excellent book on cranes, *On Ancient Wings*. Additional keynotes include Dr. George Archibald, founder of the International Crane Foundation, and Julie Zickefoose, an enter

A preliminary map This will of the Platte River emphasize the showing how importance of ground and surface cooperation of all water are parties and all interrelated Nebraskans to keep throughout central the Platte, a Nebraska has been backbone of the computer-state's economy, generated in a recreation and Denver U.S. wildlife, a viable Geological Survey river.

office. This will help determine Join us Mon, Dec where groundwater 6, 7:30 pm for our wells could Conservation significantly meeting at the deplete the flow of ASO office, 11809 the Platte and its Old Maple Road.

6

High Count at Hawkwatch

By Jerry Toll

Today (Tuesday, November 2), has been a red letter day. Last Saturday we broke last year's all-time season record and were anticipating seeing our 10,000th raptor soon. Today was the day!

At 11:55 Phylesia and Jim Sinclair saw a redtail to break the barrier. It was quite a morning. Cloudy skies and north winds were ideal conditions for flight. I saw my first raptor, a Bald Eagle, as I drove to Hitchcock about 9 am. When they start early, you know they are flying.

We had a steady stream overhead of redtails and harriers, not to mention thousands of crows and tens of thousands of icterids that the raptors mixed with. Streams of 6, 8, 10, 16 raptors went over at a time.

Just before the skies started to clear, we had a nearly continuous stream of raptors, which is when we saw Number 10,000.

Soon after the skies began to clear, and the number of raptors dropped way off. By 2 pm it was mostly over. By the end of the day, we had tallied 218 raptors. We had seen 42 Northern Harriers, which is possibly a new day record, and 2 Rough-legged Hawks.

Final season tally at the end of the day: 10,110, an excellent start on 11,000!

Other breaking news: Chad Graeve, the Lands Manager, told us that the monies are now in place to begin groundbreaking on the hawkwatch tower next spring.

Also, those of you who take the *Omaha World-Herald*, there is an article about the hawkwatch in the Midlands section of today's paper (11/2).

Travel Opportunities with

National Audubon

Escape the winter weather or lack of summer birds in the Midlands, or wait till next spring for a getaway. Try the Caribbean and farther south this winter or Alaska, even Lapland next spring and summer. National Audubon's trips are truly extraordinary.

National Audubon's mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds and other wildlife through education about and the enjoyment of nature by offering the finest natural history travel programs around the globe. For more information on any of the following trips, call Audubon Nebraska at 466-1220.

January 15-23, 2005: "Birding in Oaxaca: Mexico's Tropical Aviary" - Fantastic birding awaits, as do the ruins of Monte Alban and the Pacific coast village of Puerto Escondido.

February 2-9 - "Rain Forests, Reefs & Mayan Temples - Discoveries in Belize, Guatemala & Honduras" - Featuring the archaeological, cultural and natural wonders of this impressive region.

April 2-22 - "Trinidad & Tobago: Undiscovered Gems of the Caribbean" - This dual-island nation hosts more than 400 species of birds, 2,300 species of flowering plants, and 600 species of butterflies.

May 29-Jun 9 - "Lapland: Birding in Europe's Arctic Wilderness" - Enjoy primeval towering conifer forests, dwarf taiga forests, and treeless tundra at the Arctic coast.

June 25-July 8: "Realm of the Russian Bear" - Sail from Russia's magnificent Kamchatka Peninsula to the fabled Commander Islands and the Chukotskiy

Most of the eagles are yet to come, and Peninsula to Alaska.
we still have 6 1/2 weeks to go!

Mangelsen Photo Raffle

A Tom Mangelsen photo of a Red-bellied Woodpecker has been donated to ASO. We are offering the photo as a raffle prize, with the proceeds to help pay for ASO's programs. Tickets are \$5 each or 6 for \$25; they will be sold at our general meetings. Or fill out, clip the form to the right, and mail it to the address shown. No date has been set for the drawing.

Plans are to display the photo at the Nov. 11 general meeting and perhaps others. Join us for our program(s) and for a view of the photo, or access www.imagesofnature.com. Questions? Call 932-8205.

Photo Raffle Ticket: \$5 each, 6 for \$25 Name: _____ Address: _____

Phone: Name:

Address:

Phone:

Photo Raffle Ticket: \$5 each, 6 for \$25

Name:

Send check to Audubon Society of Omaha

2534 Benson Gardens Blvd.

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Addresses to Remember

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Phone: 444-5000 Hot Line: 444-
5555

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

The Audubon Society of Omaha greatly appreciates
the memorials it receives.

When sending your 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 68103-0342

Bequests

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

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3542, Omaha 68103-0342**

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1st Vice President Elliott Bedows, 309 Greenbrier Ct, Bellevue 68005 292-5017

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Mark Armstrong, 12741 Forestdale Dr, Omaha 68123 292-9770

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Field Trip Clem Klaphake, 707 Garden Ave, Bellevue 68005 292-2276

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Carol Rasmussen, 4503 So. 16th St, Omaha 68107 731-3939

Historian Kathleen Rose, 123 Bellevue Blvd So, Bellevue 68005 292-8912

Building Supervisor Bechara Embaid, 3218 No 120th Ct Apt 221 Omaha 68164... 965-9598

Audubon Nebr Director Don Helmuth, 5000 Central Park Dr, Suit 101 Lincoln 402 466-1220

ASO State Board Rep. Mace Hack, 1735 So. 87th St, Omaha 68124 934-5040

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You are alone in the woods. There is solace and safety there. I know that our ancestors were born there. We are home.

Jenean Hornbuckle,
Cherokee

2000

Cleaner, Greener Home Improvement

You have an opportunity to make your living space more beautiful and functional but also more energy-efficient and conducive to good health. Here are some ways to "green up" your next home improvement project.

Construction

Many remodeling materials contain toxic chemicals that have the potential to cause health problems and environmental damage. Consider these alternatives:

Paint. The Environmental Protection Agency advises caution when using products such as paints that contain volatile organic compounds (VOCs); exposure to these compounds can cause eye, nose, and throat irritation, headaches, and nausea. Nearly all major paint manufacturers offer low-or zero-VOC water-based paints that are comparable to conventional paints in terms of price and durability.

Wood. Since the EPA banned the sale of pressure-treated wood containing arsenic, a known carcinogen, lumber manufacturers now treat wood with other chemicals. To avoid chemical exposure altogether, use untreated redwood or cedar (which are naturally pest-and decay-resistant), plastic lumber, or wood-plastic composite lumber. For interior woodwork, use sustainably harvested wood certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

Plywood and particleboard. These composite wood boards are often manufactured using formaldehyde adhesives. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulates the use of formaldehyde - a suspected carcinogen - in industrial settings, but there are no such regulations for residential use. Green Seal (see link below) provides a list of fibreboard manufacturers that use alternative materials.

Flooring. FSC-certified wood, or wood salvaged from sources such as old houses and barns, are good choices for hardwood floors because they lessen the burden on our nation's forests. Other attractive, sustainable flooring materials include bamboo, natural linoleum, tile, and cork. If you prefer carpeting, choose natural fibers (such as non-moth-proofed wool, jute, or sisal) over synthetic fibers, which are primarily made from fossil fuel-based chemicals.

Efficiency

Improving the energy and water

Eco Travel With National Audubon

Audubon Nature Odysseys' travel expeditions are truly extraordinary. Their mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds and other wildlife, through education about and the enjoyment of nature by offering the finest natural history travel programs around the globe. For more information on any of the following trips, call Kevin Poague at Audubon Nebraska, 402-466-1220.

December 23 - 30: "Exploring the Yachtsman's Caribbean" - Visit St. Thomas, Jost Van Dyke, Tortola, Virgin Gorda, Salt Island, Norman Island, and St. John.

January 15-23, 2005: "Birding in Oaxaca: Mexico's Tropical Aviary" - Fantastic birding awaits, as do the ruins of Monte Alban and the Pacific coast village of Puerto Escondido.

February 2 - 9: "Rain Forests, Reefs, & Mayan Temples - Discoveries in Belize, Guatemala, & Honduras" - Featuring the archaeological, cultural, and natural wonders of this impressive region.

February 7 - 22, 2005: "Patagonia's Majestic Fjords - Discovering a Pristine Wilderness" - Located in the southern extremity of South America, Patagonia is one of the last untouched areas of the earth.

April 2 - 11, 2005: "Trinidad & Tobago: Undiscovered Gems of the Caribbean" - This dual-island nation hosts more than 400 species of birds, 2,300 species of flowering plants, and 600 species of butterflies.

May 29 - June 9, 2005: "Lapland: Birding in Europe's Arctic Wilderness" - Enjoy primeval towering conifer forests, dwarf taiga forests, and treeless tundra at the Arctic coast.

June 25 - July 8, 2005: "Realm of the Russian Bear" - Sail from Russia's magnificent Kamchatka Peninsula to the fabled Commander Islands and the Chukotskiy Peninsula to Alaska.

percent less energy but provide the same amount of light.

Insulation. Insulate attics, basements, and crawl spaces to help retain heat. Seal air leaks around doors, windows, and fire places, and replace old windows with Energy Star-labeled models. Wrapping your hot water heater with insulation improves heat retention as well. For

efficiency of your home will reduce your consumption of natural resources and lower your utility bills. Here are some suggestions:

more information, contact the U.S. Dept. of Energy, Energy Savers Portal, www.eere.energy.gov/energy_savers/; also www.healthyhomedesigns.com/articles

Fixtures. Replace old toilets, showerheads, and faucets with water-saving models. Replace incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent lights, which use up to 75