

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.

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

Invasive Species Threats Topic of Nov. 13 Meeting

By Clem Klaphake

Does there seem to be a new invasive species showing up in Nebraska every year? Have you ever wondered what makes a species invasive? Are pathogens invasive species? What about the estimated 100,000 Burmese pythons in Florida? How soon will the emerald ash borer be in Nebraska? Are there native invasive species? How much of an effort do we put out to try and deal with invasive species? What are the vectors for spreading invasive species?

At our Thursday, Nov. 13, general meeting we will have a chance to address some of these questions after our guest speaker, Allison

Zach, informs us of what we are dealing with in Nebraska. Allison, who is the coordinator of the Nebraska Invasive Species Program, received a B.S. in Fisheries and Wildlife from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2004 and a M.S. in Wildlife Management from Minnesota State University in 2010.



During our meeting, Allison will be giving an overview of invasive aquatics, plants, insects and pathogens just in Nebraska.

There also will be a brief showing of beautiful photos of ducks and other water birds given by Phil Swanson following the program.

Come join us at 7 p.m. at Hanscom Park Methodist Church, 4444 Frances St. (a block south of 45th & Center).

The program will be followed by a brief business meeting and social hour with cookies. Everyone is welcome to attend, and there is no cost.

Christmas Counts On Dec. 20, Jan. 3

This year's Omaha Christmas Count will be Saturday, Dec. 20, and the annual DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge Christmas Bird Count will be Saturday, Jan. 3.

Starting time for the Omaha count will be 8 a.m. Please contact Betty Grenon, count coordinator, at grenon925@aol.com or 402-731-2383 with any questions.

You're welcome to help, no matter your level of birding skill. You may count all day, a half day, or any time you can give. Record-keepers are needed, as well as counters. A compilation supper will be held at the end of the day.

The DeSoto count will start at 8 a.m. If you are familiar with the count and would like to count birds in a particular area, please contact the section leaders listed here: DeSoto NWR – Don and Janis Paseka at 402-727-9229

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Postings from the President: By Laurine Blankenau

The following is an article prepared by National Audubon after an exhaustive scientific study of the effects of climate change on bird species. National requests that we make the results available to our chapter's members, who are devoted to the survival of birds.

Half of North America's Birds at Risk from Global Warming

Fifty percent of the bird species in the continental United States and Canada are threatened by global warming. Many of these species could go extinct without decisive action to protect their habitats and reduce the severity of global warming. That's the startling conclusion reached by Audubon scientists in a new study.

Here in Nebraska, birds threatened by global warming include the purple finch, wood thrush, yellow-billed and black-billed cuckoos, piping plover and the cerulean warbler. (Many warbler species' numbers are decreased.)

Of 588 bird species examined in the study, 314 are at risk. Of those, 126 species are at risk of severe declines by 2050, and a further 188 species face the same fate by 2080, with numerous extinctions possible if global warming is allowed to erase the havens birds

occupy today.

"The greatest threat our birds face today is global warming," said Audubon Chief Scientist Gary Langham, who led the investigation. "That's our unequivocal conclusion after seven years of painstakingly careful and through research. Global warming threatens the basic fabric of life on which birds – and the rest of us – depend, and we have to act quickly and decisively to avoid catastrophe for them and us."



Phil Swanson

To understand the links between where birds live and the climatic conditions that support them, Langham and other



Phil Swanson

Audubon ornithologists analyzed more than 40 years of historical North American climate data and millions of

historical bird records from the U.S. Geological Survey's

North American Breeding Bird Survey and the Audubon Christmas Bird Count. Understanding those links then allows scientists to project where birds are likely to be able to survive – and not survive – in the future.

The study offers an invaluable new way for Audubon to discuss and

address global warming by bringing the issue into backyards and neighborhoods across America. It also reveals areas that are likely to remain stable for birds even as climate changes, enabling Audubon to identify "stronghold" areas that birds will need to survive in the future.

The result is a road map for bird conservation in coming decades in a warming

climate. The study provides a key entry point for Audubon's greater engagement on the urgent issue of global warming. Responding to the magnitude of the threat to our birds, Audubon is greatly expanding its climate initiative, aiming to engage a larger and more diverse set of voices in support of protecting birds.

Solutions will include personal choices to conserve energy and create backyard bird habitat, local action to create community climate actions plans, state-based work to increase rooftop solar and energy efficiency, and our work in important bird areas and other efforts to protect and expand bird habitats. Otherwise, we may fulfill this quote from Chief Seattle, "If the animals should disappear, man would die of loneliness of spirit."

For more information, visit Audubon.org/Climate.

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or paseka76@gmail.com;
Hitchcock Nature Center – Sandy
Reinken at 402-545-5790
or crazylady0@aol.com; Boyer
Chute NWR – Jerry Toll at 402-
453-9239 or geritol48@cox.net;
Fort Calhoun – leader to be
determined.

For more information or to be
assigned an area, please contact
Jerry Toll. The results will be
compiled at the Toll-Schmid house
afterward, along with a potluck
and soup dinner.

Thanks to Our Bird Seed Sale Volunteers!

Our 34th 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 \$3,000.

Thanks go out to all the volunteers
and customers who make this sale
a success each year. We apologize
if we miss anyone, but we would
really 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 Backup & Labels:
Duane Schwery

Web Master: Jim McLochlin

Facebook Master: Jonas
Grundman

Mailing: Helen Bartee, Kathleen
Crawford-Rose, Nelli Falzgraff, Sue
Gentes, Essie Grill, Carole and Dick

Make ASO Smile with Amazon Purchases

By Laurine Blankenau

Have you heard of AmazonSmile? Well, it could bring a big smile to ASO with a click of the mouse, effortlessly and without cost to you! All you need to do is shop! I promise that advertising for Amazon is not our motive.

Amazon will donate 0.5 percent of the purchase price of your transaction to the non-profit of your choice. Nothing is added to your cost. Here's how it's done.

After your purchase, click on AmazonSmile and choose Audubon Society of Omaha as your non-profit. ASO's name will appear whenever you subsequently go on the website to buy anything.

As a non-profit, we need to do a certain amount of fundraising, and this is a painless and cost-free method for you to help us. When you're making your X-mas and gift purchases, please think of us and add us as your chosen non-profit.

This can be ongoing through the year, with Amazon doing the giving. We are grateful for any help you can give.

Rasmussen, Jean Schmid, Kathy
Schwery.

Garages: Neal Ratzlaff, Bob and
Kathleen Rose.

**Distribution Crew (unloading and
loading the seed):** Laurine
Blankenau, Jerry Toll, crew chiefs.
Crew – Kris Chavez, Kathleen
Crawford-Rose, Betty and John
Fullerton, Mace Hack, Tim
Kautzman, Clem Klaphake, Loren
and Babs Padelford, John Pollack,
Deb and Neal Ratzlaff, Bob Rose,
Duane Schwery, Larry Sekyra,
Jessica and Don Westling.

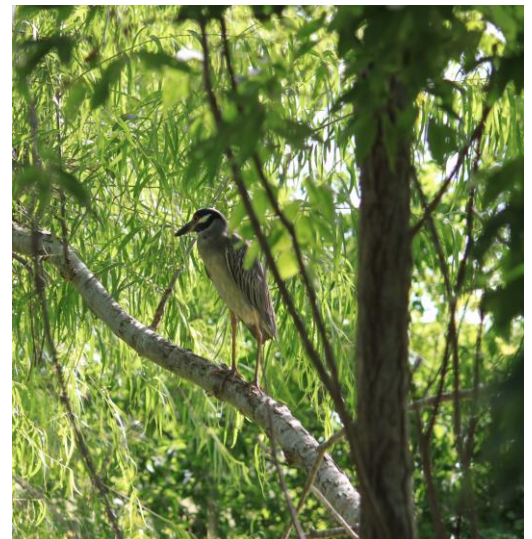
Area Lakes Sites for Nov. Field Trip

For the Saturday, Nov. 8, ASO
field trip we will be visiting area
lakes to see what birds may
have arrived from the north or
are still here because lakes
aren't iced over yet.

We will first meet in Sarpy
County at 8 a.m. in the parking
lot on the east side of Walnut
Creek Lake. That location is south

of State Highway 370 on
96th Street. From there we will go
to Wehrspann Lake. Depending
on what birds are being seen in
the area, we may then check out
some Omaha lakes.

For more information, call Clem
Klaphake at 402-292-2276.



World O! Water 2014 a Great Success

This year's World O! Water scored bigtime, Sept. 6, thanks to a top 10 day of abundant sunshine that helped bring out many Scout troops and families eager to soak up nature and learn about water.



Aquarium, Henry Doorly Zoo and the National Weather Service.

We're grateful to the NRD for lending us two mounted ducks for our booth. They added greatly to our displays and collection of Audubon materials about water

conservation and the Missouri River watershed, while ASO volunteers Gail Allbery, Mary Bensalah and Nelli Falzgraf, helped

hundreds of children with crafts.

The event, held at Wehrspann Lake, educated participants about water conservation, quality and recreation.

Festival fun included activities in the boat launch area, such as canoe rides and fly fishing, as well as fun brought in by participants such as Nebraska Game & Parks. Meanwhile, highlights in the children's activities area, where ASO set up shop, included the Papio Missouri NRD's live raptor programs, the Snake Lady, Keep Omaha Beautiful's Larry the Litterbug, face painting and the city's rock climbing wall. Others in our area were MORE Nature, Lauritzen Gardens, Gifford Farms, Fontenelle Forest, WoggWorks Kayaks and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

Out front and inside the Resource Center were organizations with informational and educational materials, such as Aksarben

Thanks also go event sponsors: Papillion Creek Watershed Partnership, Keep Omaha Beautiful, the NRD and the City of Omaha.

NYC March Shows Climate Movement's New Face

(Editor's Note: This article appeared in the National Audubon's October e-newsletter.)

On (Oct. 19), the People's Climate March took over New York City's Central Park West, Times Square, and much of Sixth Avenue, as well as the homepages of major newspapers, from The New York Times to the Guardian to Time magazine. Twitter lit up as the astounding number of 310,000 protestors circulated—triple the number the organizers had expected.

"Climate march shatters record," Politico boasted, as MSNBC declared it "the largest climate march in history." Photos of the crowd highlighted the sheer spectacle of so many people gathered in one place. By Monday, the final count leapt to 400,000 participants.

Young people of color were center stage at Sunday's march. New Yorkers whose homes were destroyed by Hurricane Sandy marched with Filipinos battling a rising sea. This section was called the Frontlines of Crisis, Forefront of Change and it had been reserved for "the people most and first impacted." Many of them represented El Puente, a non-profit in Brooklyn that engages youth in environmental action.

Some surrounded a giant float representing Mother Earth, holding aloft paper sunflowers. A group of them carried a banner reading "Climate change affects us the most!" above which their heads barely rose.

Business leaders, heads of state, and NGO representatives were to deliberate at the UN headquarters in New York the week after the march. The goals of their deliberations were to attempt to develop a strategy that will shape world climate policy once the Kyoto Protocol expires in 2020. Missing from that list of established and powerful attendees are the future generations who will bear the brunt of whatever decisions these key players make.

But at (the Oct. 19) march, they whooped and shouted, making sure their voices were heard.

Understanding Climate Change: By John Pollack

Last time, we saw that future global-scale climate changes are fairly clear, but regional changes are more variable and less certain.

Overall, we can expect warmer weather in the Central Plains region, especially in the winter, but average precipitation may not change much. Both flooding and droughts will probably become more common. Changes in other climate features, such as severe storms, windiness and snowfall, may not exhibit clear trends for a long time. Even if averages don't change much, extremes might, and the seasons will shift.

Since my last article, two important publications have become available. One is the Audubon Special Issue: Birds & Climate Change. I'll be keeping that one for a long time, and using it as a reference. Also see www.audubon.org/climate for the more detailed web version.

The other is the UNL publication *Understanding and Assessing Climate Change*, which can be found online at <http://snr.unl.edu/download/research/projects/climateimpacts/2014ClimateChange.pdf>. This is a consensus report written mainly by four UNL climate scientists, and it is an excellent summary of middle-of-the-road climate projections for Nebraska by late in the century.

There are a few things to keep in mind when using any climate projection. No climate model is perfect, so there will always be surprises. The details are fuzzy.

Weather will vary, regardless of the long-term trends. Most important, the outcome depends on the future collective behavior of humans, especially concerning fossil fuel burning and land use.

We are living on a planet that has become human-dominated in many ways. Our ability to limit our future use of fossil fuels, and our ability to maintain and (hopefully) expand natural refuges of all types will have a great cumulative effect on the fate of many species, including our own. UNL looks at two different emissions scenarios, which I would characterize loosely as "hit the brakes" and "business as usual."

Even the former scenario will produce some large changes, as the climate system gradually comes into equilibrium with the highest carbon dioxide levels in several million years. The latter scenario, with uninhibited fossil fuel burning, envisions some really extreme changes by late in the century. These correspond roughly to the B2 and A2 scenarios, respectively, used in the Audubon analysis of bird distributions. Audubon used scenarios developed for the IPCC 4 report, while UNL utilized the more recent IPCC 5 report.

As difficult as it is to make detailed climate forecasts for many decades into the future, it is even more difficult to predict the effect of climate change on birds or any other organisms. Birds often exist in a variety of climates, especially the many migratory species.

Climate change also affects food sources, and entire ecosystems.

Study of past climate change shows that ecosystems move as their favored climate range shifts. However, different organisms move at different speeds. Birds are highly mobile. On the other extreme, trees with large seeds or fruit may take many generations to shift, or even become stranded in an unfavorable climate.

The makeup of an ecosystem may change as some members are dependent on other conditions, such as soil type or specific pollinators. For example, the Nebraska Sandhills are a unique geographic formation. Even if the present Sandhills climate moves to North Dakota, there will likely be some plants and animals dependent on a sandy habitat that are unable to follow, or are confined to much more restricted sandy patches.

Geographic constriction is a general problem as species respond to climate change. An obvious example is moving up a mountain to follow a cool climate zone – until there is no more mountain. There are also human-caused restrictions as different plants and animals may be blocked by a developed landscape. This includes modern agricultural land usage, which often results in fence-to-fence croplands, with a few hardy strips of "weeds" along the borders.

Of course, humans can also choose to encourage climate-

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related migration of plants and animals by providing refuges. Undeveloped corridors can provide an important bridge for movement. There is also the possibility that people will move plants and animals, either through deliberate introductions to new areas, or inadvertently.

As people who care about birds, and the environment in general, we will have our work cut out for us!

The Audubon report highlights the most vulnerable species, and also considers some protective actions we can take. When considering the future, it is important not to despair. Our actions now can have real consequences for the better.

It is also good to remember that if we can slow down climate change toward the “hit the brakes” scenario, it will give ourselves and all the life that surrounds us more time to adjust, time which may be crucial for some threatened species to survive.

Environmental Tourism a Delicate Balancing Act

(Editor’s Note: This information comes from the website for the United Nations Environment Programme.)

The quality of the environment, both natural and manmade, is essential to tourism. However, tourism’s relationship with the environment is complex. It involves many activities that can have adverse environmental effects. Many of these impacts are

linked with the construction of general infrastructure such as roads and airports, and of tourism facilities, including resorts, hotels, restaurants, shops, golf courses and marinas. The negative impacts of tourism development can gradually destroy the environmental resources on which it depends.

On the other hand, tourism has the potential to create beneficial effects on the environment by contributing to environmental protection and conservation. It is a way to raise awareness of environmental values, and it can serve as a tool to finance protection of natural areas and increase their economic importance.

Negative impacts from tourism occur when the level of visitor use is greater than the environment’s ability to cope with this use within the acceptable limits of change. Uncontrolled conventional tourism poses potential threats to many natural areas around the world. It can put enormous pressure on an area and lead to impacts such as soil erosion, increased pollution, discharges into the sea, natural habitat loss, increased pressure on endangered species and heightened vulnerability to forest fires. It often puts a strain on water resources, and it can force local populations to compete for the use of critical resources.

The impact of tourism activities can be seen in expected resort luxuries such as swimming pools and golf courses. These amenities can lead to local water scarcity. That scarcity can stretch to include energy and other local necessities when they’re used to

accommodate visitors and their needs.

Along with the visitors comes more collateral damage, such as sewage waste generated by high concentrations of lodgings and people. There also is the waste found in the forms of littering and in the forms of carbon emissions and noise pollution.

Some of the most attractive places – such as beaches, mountains and others – bear the brunt of tourism. Thus, they are the frontlines of physical degradation that comes with accessibility and usage.

For instance, since 1945, visits to the 10 most popular mountainous national parks in the United States have increased twelve-fold. In the European Alps, tourism now exceeds 100 million visitor-days. Every year in the Indian Himalaya, more than 250,000 Hindu pilgrims, 25,000 trekkers, and 75 mountaineering expeditions climb to the sacred source of the Ganges River, the Gangotri Glacier. They deplete local forests for firewood, trample riparian vegetation, and strew litter. Even worse, this tourism frequently induces poorly planned intensive development.

And there are 109 countries with coral reefs. In 90 of them, reefs are being damaged by cruise ship anchors and sewage, by tourists breaking off chunks of coral, and by commercial harvesting for sale to tourists. One study of a cruise ship anchor dropped in a coral reef for one day found an area about half the size of a football field completely destroyed, and half again as much covered by rubble that died later. It’s estimated that coral recovery would take 50 years.

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 Michael Johanns, U.S. Senate, Washington DC 20510; Phone: 202-224-4224, Lincoln Phone: 402-476-1400, Lincoln Address: 100 Centennial Mall N. Rm. 294, Lincoln NE 68508-3803

Representative Lee Terry, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515, Phone: 202-225-4155; Fax: 202-226-5452, Omaha Phone: 402-397-9944, Omaha Address: 11717 Burt St., Omaha 68154

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

Governor Dave Heineman, Capitol Bldg., Box 94848 Lincoln, NE 68509, Phone: 402-471-2244; Fax: 402-471-6031

Mayor Jean Stothert, Omaha/Douglas Civic Center 1819 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 the Audubon Society of Omaha

Name _____
Street _____
City _____ State _____
Zip Code _____ Phone _____
E-mail _____

Introductory Membership (1st & 2 year) \$20 Make check payable to: National Audubon Society. Mail to: Audubon Membership Data Center, P.O. Box 422248, Palm Coast, FL 32142-6718

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Name _____
Street _____
City _____ State _____
Zip _____ Phone _____
E-mail _____

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



If you find an injured or downed raptor, please call the FFRR Center at 402-994-2009. Leave a voicemail if there is no answer, and your call will be returned. You may also contact the nearest [Nebraska Games & Parks Conservation Officer](#), your local Humane Society or local law enforcement.

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