

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.

September/October 2017
Volume 46, Issue 4



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

September 14th Meeting – Bird Behavior and Training

by Alex Wiles

Welcome our guest presenter Madison Brandon as she shares her experiences of training raptors and other birds. Madison has been working with birds in human care for seven years. She came to Nebraska in 2016 to work with Fontenelle Forest's display and education raptors. She now works as a bird trainer



Photo by Phil Swanson



Photo by Phil Swanson

at the free flight bird show at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium. Her focus is in utilizing positive reinforcement training for free flight birds.

Madison's presentation will be held Thursday, September 14th at 7 p.m. – Weitz Community Engagement Center, Room 201,

on the UNO Dodge campus. Non-members are welcome and we encourage you to bring friends to our meetings.

Bird Seed Sale October 21 & 22

It is not too soon to be thinking about your bird seed order for this fall. Our supplier, Des Moines Feed, gives us their estimated fall prices the last week of August and you will receive your order blank in mid September. Please consider ordering some Audubon Seed Products as the profits from this sale are used to fund many of our educational programs. If you have friends or neighbors who might be interested, call or Email Kathleen Crawford-Rose (402-292-8912 or katcr@cox.net) with their names and addresses.

We will also be asking members for help with the numerous tasks involved with this sale. In Sept. we will need volunteers to help with the mailing and on the delivery days we need volunteers for loading customers' seed. Please put these dates on your calendar and give Jerry Toll an Email geritol48@cox.net or phone call (402-453-9239) to let him know that you are available to assist with this major fund raiser.

Winter Songbird Identification Program Planned for October 12th Meeting

by Alex Wiles

Join us for our monthly meeting with guest presenter Rick Schmid. Rick is a local bird expert with a wealth of knowledge and he will be speaking about identifying winter songbirds. This meeting will be held at the UNO Dodge Campus in the Weitz Community Engagement Center, Room 201, on Thursday, October 12th at 7 p.m. This is a public event, so feel free to invite your friends!

Field Notes from the President: By Matt Miller

Hello fellow ASO members,

I hope the summer treated you well. It is hard to believe summer is almost over. Soon September and October will come, football will be on the television, and eventually the weather will turn cooler and leaves will begin falling.

This time of the year is important for me in my job for the fact that I have to start collecting seed. July to October allows me to collect the seed that I will use for various habitat areas in and around some Savanna Restoration sites. Seed collecting is a tricky game and takes a little research and a lot of exploring to find out where certain plants are, when they bloom, and finally when the plant will seed out. This time of the year also allows time for me to reflect on the importance of having remnant or restoration prairie and savanna habitats around our Omaha metropolitan area.

Below I've given some definitions to explain the differences between a remnant, restoration, and a reconstruction. All have their important qualities, but having remnant pieces of land is vitally important to the ecological communities and biologists in the area. Remnant ground allows me as a biologist to understand the complexities of the plants, insects, and other organisms that use that area. Unique plants grow in these remnants, thus bringing the opportunity for rare birds and other insects to use these plants. Most importantly, these fragmented pieces of awesome plant life allow people who want to start a restoration or reconstruction on another property a seed source of local ecotype.

Remnant: An original, native natural community (e.g., prairie or forest) that has survived on a site to the present day (e.g., a prairie that has never been plowed) but

was once part of a larger, original landscape.

Restoration: A native ecosystem that has been taken over to some degree by another plant community and is managed to restore pre-settlement vegetation. Restorations sometimes involve supplementation with seeds from plants that may have grown on the site in the past. Restorations usually involve removing invasive plant species

Reconstruction: A complete replanting of an area with plants originally native to a given natural community, which might also include restoring original hydrological patterns and/or earth moving (especially in the

case of wetland reconstructions). In the case of prairie, a reconstruction usually involves planting grasses and non-woody, broad-leaved plants (forbs) onto land that formerly had the native vegetation removed (e.g., such as after conversion of land to row crops). Reconstructions usually will not have the plant or animal diversity of a remnant or a restoration.

If you haven't had a chance to see the Audubon Society of Omaha's remnant prairie you should take a hike out there and you might be surprised to find such a gem in an area that was over-farmed and is now being over-developed.



The ASO Prairie Preserve

Have you visited the ASO prairie preserve? The south half of this 13 acre eastern tall grass prairie is virgin prairie (never plowed) and the north half is an old farm field that is being restored using seeds harvested from the south half and local prairies. The ASO prairie is open to the public. More information about the ASO prairie can be found on the ASO's website – omahaaudubon.org



Sand Milkweed



Photos by Glenn Pollock

Remembering One of Ours



Those who knew Marian Langan of Audubon Nebraska for her work and ability to inspire, lead and educate are saddened by her death on

June 3 after a battle with cancer. She was 54 years old.

Marian attained a M.S. In Biology and served as education coordinator at UNL's Morrill Hall before coming to Audubon 18 years ago to work with kids at Spring Creek Prairie. Here she inspired thousands of children through her passion for the environment and conservation, connecting them in a personal way with nature in the tallgrass prairie, its birds and other animals and plants.

Marian helped create the Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center near Denton, making it a destination for people to enjoy the tall-grass prairie and its inhabitants. Following her work there, she became Director of Audubon Nebraska, forming it into a national leader regarding the issues

of energy, water, grassland protection, and more, ensuring that our natural treasures are protected far into the future. She was also a leader and guide beyond our state's borders in Audubon's hemispheric approach to protect birds across their migration route in the Central Flyway.

Audubon CEO David Yarnold wrote, "Marian was kind and thoughtful and she brought those wonderful qualities to her leadership at Audubon. She cared deeply about the Nebraska state office and her centers and was

proud to call herself an Auduboner. She introduced me to Sandhill Cranes six years ago and she always delighted in seeing newcomers' jaws drop when they saw that spectacle. We will miss her tremendously."

Marian's influence will endure beyond her brief life. Her work is deeply valued by those of us who knew her.

Information from Arlys Reitan, Wachiska Audubon; and "Remembering a Prairie Pillar in Nebraska," The Babbling Brook, July 2017

"If future generations are to remember us with gratitude rather than contempt, we must leave something more than the miracles of technology. We must leave them a glimpse of the world as it was in the beginning, not just after we get through with it."

- Lyndon B. Johnson

FALL BIRDING

by Clem Klaphake

SEPTEMBER – Late summer and into fall can be a very exciting and productive time of the year to go out looking for birds. It is the time of the year for migration, just as spring is. One difference is that the migrants passing through in the fall aren't as vocal as the spring migrants are, and a second difference

is that a number of the fall migrants may have less colorful plumages.

Late August and through much of September there are many passerine species passing through eastern Nebraska and western Iowa. Examples are any number of warblers, vireos, tanagers, and flycatcher species. There also will

be waders, some prairie/meadow species such as Bobolinks, herons, bitterns, and hummingbirds passing through. You may be able to spot a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker also during this time period.

Local places to look for migrant passerines are Fontenelle Forest (Sarpy County), Platte River and Mahoney State Parks (Cass County), Two Rivers State Park (Douglas County), Arbor Lodge (Otoe County), Wilderness Park (Lancaster County) and the Memphis SRA (Saunders County).

Fall can also be a good time to observe shorebirds as well. Early in the fall season you will see mostly adults of the various species followed later by the juveniles.

Locations to observe shorebirds can vary from year to year. They can usually be found on mudflats where a lake or pond has receded from the shoreline, or in standing water in fields if there has been sufficient precipitation.

OCTOBER – There may or may not be a birding field trip in October. Watch for the update on the ASO web page (omahaaudubon.org) and/or on Face Book ([facebook.com/AudubonOmaha](https://www.facebook.com/AudubonOmaha)). October is when some waterfowl start to migrate through as well as a variety of sparrows: such as Harris's, White-crowned, White-throated, LeConte's, Clay-colored, Nelson's, Fox, Lincoln's, Spotted Towhees and Dark-eyed Juncos.

In both September and October there also are a wide variety of raptors migrating. So if you are out birding don't forget to look up (raptors are silent when they are migrating). You could see Sharp-shinned, Broad-winged, and Swainson's Hawks, Mississippi Kites, Northern Harriers to name a few. And remember there is a Hawkwatch at Hitchcock Nature Center counting migrating raptors through both of these months and on until December.

Omaha Youth Birding Group

by Tisha Johnson

This group is dedicated to birding areas within or nearly within the city. Why? So families may be made aware of the many natural sites that are among us. Here's a little recap of my most recent scouting trip. I was in the Elkhorn area looking at the 234th Wetlands site. It was not producing enough sightings to keep the attention of our participants so I needed an additional site. Driving back East, I remembered a friend had shown me a geocache in the woods on Metro Community's campus. Driving through the parking lot looking for those woods, I noticed some dead trees across the parking lot. To my surprise there was a mowed path to those trees and behind the trees, there was a lake, and to my right - mudflats! What more can a birder ask for?

Here are a few of the birds I was excited to find. A Lesser Yellowlegs and a Spotted Sandpiper were gleaning the water's edge on the same small mudflat. As I parked, the first Baltimore Oriole pair I had seen in weeks flew along the edge of the woods. A

Red Headed Woodpecker adult was feeding a juvenile from this year's hatch, in one of the dead trees alongside the lake.

Remember from the woodpecker lecture, Red Headed Woodpeckers are insectivores, but I couldn't say for sure what it was being fed. What color was the immature's head? Pink, Brown? no it was gray and the black feathers that contrast with the white feathers were gray as well.

The scouting trip was a success, now it's *your family's* turn to explore. Join us and catch the fever, the birding fever!

Sunday afternoon, 10/1 – one of the best weeks of the year to view migrating Swainson's and Broad-Winged Hawks as they fly by the 40 ft. lookout tower at Hitchcock Nature Center, near Crescent, IA.

Saturday morning, 10/28 – we're headed to Sarpy County reservoirs: Wehrspann, Prairie Queen and/or Walnut Lake to search along the walking trails for Cedar Waxwings and Bluebirds. Wherever there's a flock and a splash, we'll stop, pull out the scopes and look for migrating Shovelers and Gadwalls.

*Contact Tisha Johnson at 402-885-0990 for details, time and driving directions. Occasionally weather or other variables impact our logistics.



Photo by Phil Swanson

Addresses to Remember

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

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

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

Representative Don Bacon, U. S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515; Washington Capital Switchboard: 202-225-3121; 13906 Gold Circle, Suite 101 Omaha, NE 68144, 402-938-0300

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

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

Mayor Jean Stothert, Omaha/Douglas Civic 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

DONATE DIRECTLY FROM IRA, TAX-FREE

IRA owners age 70-1/2 or older are able to make a direct transfer of a distribution from their IRA trustee to a qualified charity, up to 100,000 annually. This amount is not taxable and may be excluded from the IRA owner's taxable income. If this is done, no additional tax deduction is available for these funds. Contact 402-505-9494 for more information. (Be sure to discuss with your professional tax preparer)

Memberships

For membership in the National Audubon Society (which automatically includes membership in the Audubon Society of Omaha), go to omahaaudubon.org and select "Get Involved." The drop down menu will allow you to choose "Become a member" or "Renew." The membership fee is \$20. You will receive the Audubon magazine and our local newsletter, the Meadowlark.

If you do not wish to join the National Audubon Society, you may opt to join our local chapter (ASO) only. This can be done online by following the steps given above and selecting Join/Renew ASO. Local memberships can also be obtained by filling out the form below and sending it, along with a check for \$20 made out to the Audubon Society of Omaha, to the following address:

Audubon Society of Omaha
19612 Ridgeway Road
Plattsmouth, NE 68048

With membership in the Audubon Society of Omaha, you will receive our local newsletter, *The Meadowlark*.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip code _____

Telephone _____

Email _____



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

Find ASO on social media:



@AudubonOmaha

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

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Audubon Society of Omaha, Mailing Address: P. O. Box 3542, Omaha 68103-3542

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Office: 1941 S. 42nd St., Omaha NE 68105

Elected Officers:

President Matt Miller – 402-681-4625

1st Vice President Bob Wells – 402-393-4683

2nd Vice President Tisha Johnson – 402-885-0990

Corresponding and Recording Secretary

Kathleen Crawford-Rose – 402-292-8912

Elected Directors:

Alex Wiles – 559-349-7359

Galyn Langar – 402-595-8543

Jackie Scholar – 402-551-5045

Sarah Miller – 402-980-9678

Shannon Engberg – 402-598-2127

Virginia Stauffer – 402-933-6063

Standing Committee Chairpersons:

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Education Clem Klaphake – 402-292-2276

Field Trip Clem Klaphake – 402-292-2276

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Membership Kathy Schwery – 402-296-4788

Natural Areas Management Glenn Pollock – 402-571-6230

Program – Alex Wiles 559-349-7359

Publication Helen Bartee – 402-657-3845

Publicity Jackie Scholar – 402-551-5045

Other Activities:

Bird Seed Sale Chairs

Kathleen Crawford-Rose – 402-292-8912

Carol Rasmussen – 402-731-3939

Art Contest Chair

Virginia Stauffer – 214-676-6289

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Interim Exec. Dir. Audubon NE – Bill Taddicken – 308-465-5282

ASO Administrator – Stacey Coury – 402-445-4138

ASO Accountant – Betty Fullerton – 402-493-4362

NAS Board Member – Michele Crist – 208-863-1918

Pan-Flyway Director – Karim al-Khafaji

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January - February, March - April, May - June, July -
August, September - October, November - December.

The newsletter may be accessed on our website,
omahaaudubon.org

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