

# 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.

May/June 2016  
Volume 45, Issue 4



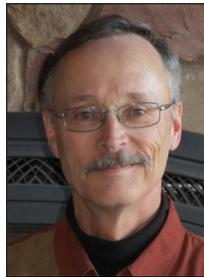
*ASO is a chapter of the National Audubon Society, serving eastern Nebraska and western Iowa.*

## Steve Van Riper to speak at ASO Banquet on May 12th The Headwaters of the Amazon and the City of Machu Picchu

*By Jerry Toll*

When I think of the once mighty and remote Amazon, I think of the Amazon of Brazil. When I think of Peru, I picture the Andes Mountains and the ancient Incas. A quick check of the map and I find that the headwaters of the Amazon and some tributaries are actually in Peru. The Andes occupy only about 1/3 of the landmass of the country. Our guest speaker for the May 12th banquet visited this remote part of the world. Steve and Linda Van Riper boarded a boat at Iquitos, Peru and leisurely sailed up the Amazon for five days. Along the way, they took side trips to see the incredible diversity of birds and wildlife of Amazonia. They visited river villages, immersed themselves in the pace of river life and got to know some of the people who live there. After leaving the tropical forest, they ventured

to the remote mountain top Peruvian city of Machu Picchu which was built as a citadel in the 15th century by the Incas at the height of their regional influence. There are many amazing wonders associated with Machu Picchu but I will leave you to explore those wonders with our banquet speaker.



Steve Van Riper has spent his career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Among his past postings was Laguna Atascosa

National Wildlife refuge on the Texas gulf coast where he was involved with the reintroduction of the Aplomado Falcon to the United States. His last posting, before retiring, was at

our own ASO adopted DeSoto Wildlife Refuge where I got to know Steve and his wife Linda while coordinating with him on the annual bird counts. Steve continues to be active both in conservation and the community. He has long been involved with the Boy Scouts of America in both an organizational leadership role and as an active leader.

Please come to the Audubon Society of Omaha Banquet where we join together in friendship and shared accomplishment. The banquet will be at Anthony's Restaurant, 7220 F Street, on Thursday, May 12th with cocktails and conversation at 6 p.m. followed by dinner at 7 p.m. The program will follow the dinner.

The reservation form for the May 12th banquet can be found on page 3.



## Field Notes from the President: By Tad Leeper

Greetings ASO members! As I write this column for the May-June Meadowlark issue, spring has arrived at last and the northward flight of all manner of migratory birds is in full swing. At the same time, ASO membership is nearly 1,200 persons strong and we are on a very solid footing financially.

Now let's turn to the focus of my President's column for our May-June Meadowlark newsletter: The many ways YOU can engage in the life of the Audubon Society of Omaha.

Let's begin with field trips. ASO hosts separate monthly field trips for adult and youth birders. The adult field trips are led by expert birders such as Board member Clem Klaphake - and all adults are welcome! One need NOT be an expert birder to participate in the ASO field trips. The monthly field trips provide a terrific way to learn from some of the best birders in the region. Monthly youth birding field trips are led by ASO Board members Tisha Johnson and Bob Wells. The youth field trips take place at different birding venues throughout the greater Omaha area. Attention parents and grandparents! YOU are cordially invited to bring young family members ranging in age from 8-18 on the youth birding field trips - and of course YOU too are welcome and encouraged to participate on the outings. Information about upcoming ASO adult and youth field trips is published in the Meadowlark newsletter.

As you know, the ASO Board publishes the Meadowlark newsletter on an every-other-month basis. A great deal of time and effort goes into the publication and distribution of this membership newsletter. I encourage YOU to consider writing and submitting a conservation-related article for the Meadowlark. An excellent example of the type of newsletter articles we're seeking is the Oak /Savanna article recently authored by Board member Matt Miller which recently appeared in the March/April issue of the Meadowlark. Publication Committee chair Helen Bartee invites and welcomes YOUR submission of both bird and/or conservation-related articles for the newsletter.

Now let's talk about how YOU can engage in ASO's monthly programming. As published in the Meadowlark, ASO hosts monthly program speakers on the second Thursday of the month from September through May (except for the December holiday season). As many of you already know, the monthly programs feature great presentations covering a variety of engaging topics ranging from birding to international travel to prairie restoration and conservation. Numerous ASO members (as well as non-members) have presented at our monthly programs in recent years. Presenting at a monthly program is an excellent way to support our organization. Of course, YOU are always welcome to attend the monthly ASO programs as an audience member - and to bring along a friend or two! It's a great way to introduce others to ASO. Please note: ASO Program committee chair Jerry Toll is always on the lookout for interesting program speakers. Jerry welcomes your program suggestions!

Another means of ASO involvement is via our website. We are excited to announce that a new and improved ASO website is currently under construction. Board member Bob Wells is leading the effort to build our new state-of-the-art website. Our goal is to ensure the new ASO website is eye-catching and engaging for users. That said, the ASO Board needs YOUR help on an ongoing basis to submit nature photos and relevant content for the new website. Meanwhile, we will keep you posted on the development status of the new ASO website.

Other manner YOU can engage in ASO includes helping with public activities/event such as the upcoming Earth Day event at Elmwood Park scheduled for Saturday, April 23 and/or the annual Student Art Show/Contest. Board Publicity committee chair Jackie Scholar could use YOUR help to staff the ASO booth at this year's Earth Day event.

Service on ASO's Board of Directors is another great way to involve yourself in our organization. Board Directors are elected at the April monthly general membership

meeting and serve two-year terms which begin in July (coinciding with ASO's fiscal year). Board Officers are also elected in April and serve one-year terms. Board Nominating committee chair Tisha Johnson identified a great slate of nominees for the ASO Board. All of the newly elected board members are committed conservationists and care passionately about the natural world. Here's the list of Board Directors and Officers who were elected during our April general meeting.

**President** – Matt Miller; **1st Vice President** – Laurine Blankenau; **Board Director** – Alex Wiles; **Board Director** – Shannon Engberg; **Board Director** – Galyn Langer

Last, but not least another important way for YOU to engage in the work of ASO is to help our organization from a financial aspect. There are multiple ways you can help in this regard. ASO continually seeks out conservation initiatives which merit financial support in the form of grants. I've mentioned a number of recent ASO funding grants for conservation-related projects in my previous newsletter columns. The ASO Board welcomes YOUR help in identifying and vetting conservation projects worthy of funding. Another way all of YOU can - and do help financially is through the purchase of your annual ASO/Audubon membership. Many of YOU also support ASO fundraisers such as our twice-a-year bird seed sale and the online Omaha Gives fundraising campaign.

Thanks to your support, both the fall 2015 and winter 2016 bird seed sales were very successful. YOU are encouraged to donate to ASO via the upcoming Omaha Gives drive scheduled for May 25th.

In closing, I want to encourage each of YOU to seek out ways to involve yourself in the vibrant life of YOUR ASO organization. Hopefully, some of the suggestions in this column have brought to mind a few ways YOU can participate. As always, the ASO Board and I welcome your ideas, suggestions and questions with the goal of continuing to move ASO's conservation mission forward. Here's wishing you great birding this spring!

## Patron Tickets Available for May Banquet

Patron tickets are available for \$50 per person for the May 12th Banquet. Tax deductible amount per patron ticket is \$50 minus cost of the dinner. Conservation and education projects that your donation helps support include an inventory of saw-whet owls in the southern tier of Iowa, a Boy Scout Conservation patch, Audubon Society of Omaha's Youth Birding group and maintenance and inventory of ASO's prairie. Major donations to conservation organizations from ASO in the last 2 years include the Nebraska Land Trust for conservation easements in western Nebraska and UNO's expansion of Allwine Prairie.



On Wednesday, May 25, 2016, the Omaha Community Foundation will sponsor Omaha Gives!, a 24-hour, online fundraising event to raise support nonprofits in Douglas, Sarpy, and Pottawattamie Counties. It is a community-wide event in its 4th year to demonstrate the area's spirit of giving, raise awareness about local nonprofits, and celebrate the collective effort it takes to make this city great. In 2015, more than 20,000 participants raised \$8.8 million for 704 local nonprofits. There are no fees and you do not need an Omaha Community Foundation account to participate. You can donate to multiple organizations, but only to those nonprofits registered on omahagives.org.

Last year, 52 donors gave a total of \$2,634 to Audubon So-

ciety of Omaha. With incentives from local sponsors, Audubon Society of Omaha received a total of \$2,737 for its local conservation efforts. **If you were a donor to 2015 Omaha Gives!, we sincerely thank you for your contribution and hope that you will consider giving to this year's Omaha Gives!**

Donate a minimum of \$10 by credit card on-line at Omaha Community Foundation's secure website: [https:// www.omaha-gives24.org](https://www.omaha-gives24.org) during the event on May 25, from midnight to midnight. Or, you can ensure that you don't forget the date by scheduling advance donations starting April 1st, which will be processed on May 25. Audubon Society of Omaha is a 501(c)(3) organization and your donation is fully tax deductible. Once your credit card donation has been processed, you will receive an email from the Omaha Community Foundation confirming the charitable deduction.

## NATURE PHOTOS REQUEST

Banquet attendees are encouraged to bring nature photos they have taken to our May 12th banquet. They should be mounted or framed. No more than four photos per person. Those in attendance will vote for their favorite photo during the social hour from 6 to 7.

### BANQUET RESERVATION

Anthony's Steakhouse 7220 F Street Omaha, NE 68127  
Thursday, May 12, 2016 Cash Bar 6p.m. followed by dinner at 7 p.m.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address and zip code \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

#### Please choose from the following entrees:

\_\_\_ \$26 Top Sirloin    \_\_\_ \$23 Chicken Picatta    \_\_\_ \$21 Pasta Primavera

Patron ticket(s) \_\_\_ \$50 (Tax Deductible amount is \$50 minus price of dinner)

Enclosed is \$\_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ person(s).

Make check payable to Audubon Society of Omaha.  
Mail to Helen Bartee, 521 Beverly Drive, Omaha, NE 68114

**Reservations must be received by Monday, May 9.**

# ASO STUDENT ART CONTEST 2016

A crowd of over 400 people attended the 2016 Audubon Society of Omaha Student Art Contest - Show at Bellevue University on April 9. This year there were 261 entries (from Kindergarten through 12th grade) representing 34 different public, homeschool and private schools in the greater Omaha area. All students who entered the contest had their artwork displayed for viewing. It was a very festive and rewarding day for all those involved. The children also enjoyed seeing and learning about a live screech owl from Fontenelle Forest.

The children and their families were excited to see their artwork in a show and also to receive the awards.

The drawings of birds were of very high quality and included watercolors, prints, oil paintings, collages, chalk, and crayon drawings. The categories for judging included Realism, Graphic Design and Cartooning. The blue jay, goldfinch, and eagle, as in the past, were

popular birds along with some unique endangered birds.

Students and their families were greeted by ASO members. Laurine Blankenau, Nellie Falzgraf, Virginia Stauffer, Julie Spellerberg and Jackie Scholar helped with the awards ceremony. Awards of Excellence and Merit in the various categories were presented to students in each grade level at the Awards ceremony. Best of Show awards were also presented to the following:

**Best of Show, Grades 9-12th – Realism** went to:

**Avery McKennan** of Fort Calhoun High School

**Kloey Appel** of Fort Calhoun High School

**Jacob Tegels** of Fort Calhoun High School

**Lizzy Humphus** of Millard North High School

**Maria Belem Rivera** of North High School

**Michaela Tonack** of North High School

**Best of Show, Grades 9-12th – Graphic Design** went to:

**Kloey Appel** of Fort Calhoun High School

**Ethan Shaffer** of Fort Calhoun High School

**Best of Show, Grades 5-8th – Realism** went to:

**Kenedy Rieschi** of St. Patrick's, Elkhorn

**Xander Muniz** of Papillion Junior High

**Best of Show, Grades 5-8th – Graphic Design** went to:

**Chloe Liebenritt** of St. Patrick's, Elkhorn

**Lorayne Williamson** of Mission Middle School

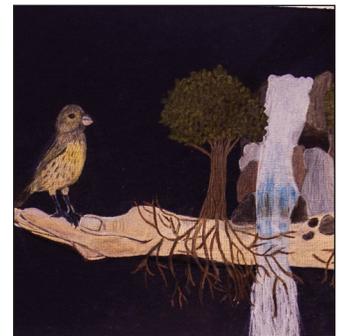
**Zoe Moffitt** of St. Robert Bellarmine

**Maureen Pieper** of St. Robert Bellarmine

**Best of Show, Grades 5-8th – Cartooning** went to:

**Denim Johnson** of the Alpha School

**Theresa Howard** of St. Wenceslaus



# ASO STUDENT ART CONTEST 2016

**Emily Swierczek** of Lewis & Clark Middle School, Bellevue

**Best of Show, Grades K-4th – Realism** went to:

**Wyatt Liebentritt** of St. Patrick's, Elkhorn

**Bethany Abdul** of Picotte Elementary

**Kruvel Worku** of Edison Elementary

**Bridget McGill** of St. Wenceslaus

**Best of Show, Grades K-4th – Graphic Design** went to:

**Isabelle Johnson** of Picotte Elementary

**Josie Rohr** of Montessori Cooperative School

**Best of Show, Grades K-4 – Cartooning** went to:

**Adele Tompsett** of St. Vincent DePaul

The Audubon Society is grateful to the wonderful volunteers and establishments for their time, support, enthusiasm and talents in making this show a great success. Thank you, all.

**Collection and hanging of artwork:** Nelli Falzgraf, Kathleen Crawford-Rose, Kathy Schwery, Loren and Babs Paddleford, Bob Wells, Dennis and Karlene Kingery, Virginia Stauffer, Laurine Blankenau, Julie Spellerberg and Jackie Scholar.

**Greeting the Public – Awards Ceremony:** Laurine Blankenau, Nelli Falzgraf, Virginia Stauffer, Julie Spellerberg, Jackie Scholar

**Certificates:** Nelli Falzgraf

**Raptor Presentation:** Kathy Fischer

**Photography:** Eric Scholar

**Fontenelle Forest Association**

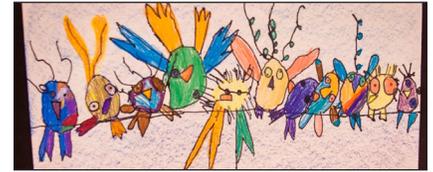
**Bellevue University Staff, Maintenance**

**ASO Art Contest website:** Jim McLochlin

**Judges:** Sandy Kovanda, Marlene McCann, Virginia Stauffer, Jackie Scholar

**Participating Art Teachers and Classroom Teachers**

**Parents of the participating students**



## Members Are Encouraged to Assist With Spring Bird Counts

### *The Annual Sarpy County Spring Bird Count*

The Annual Sarpy County Spring Bird Count will be held on Saturday May 14th. The county is divided into four sections from Fontenelle Forest on the Missouri River in the east to the Platte River in the west in the Linoma Beach area. In between are two sections including Schramm Park SRA, Swanson Park, and Walnut Creek Lake Recreation Area. Counters will be needed and any help is appreciated. If you are interested in helping out all day or part of the day contact Clem Klaphake at 402-292-2276 or ckavian@cox.net.

### *DeSoto NWR Spring Bird Count*

The DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge Spring Bird Count will be held Saturday, April 30th. We will meet at the Visitors Center at 7:30 to get our assignments. Plan to bring a lunch unless you can only come for ½ day. This count takes place ONLY on the DeSoto Refuge. If you have any concerns, as always you can contact me – Jerry Toll at 402-453-9239.



## Omaha Youth Birding Group

By Tisha Johnson

Greetings fellow nature lovers! As some of the bird world's beauties are descending upon Omaha, we are hitting the trails, binoculars in hand, ready for a fantastic Spring Treasure Hunt. Please join us on the following Saturday mornings, at 10:00am.

### April 30th

Platte River State Park,  
S of Gretna

### May 14th

Heron Haven,  
120th and Old Maple

### June 4th

Towl Park, 90th and Center



## ASO Begins Website Update

By Bob Wells

Work has begun on an update of the ASO's website. ASO is working with Firespring.org of Lincoln to review the content of the present website and provide updated content to the team at Firespring. We also have been granted the use of some photos from Phil Swanson and other local bird photographers to add visual appeal to the new website.

While there is much work to do, the prospect of an updated website is quite exciting. New efficiencies will include having the option of ordering bird seed on line during our bird seed sales and purchasing and renewing memberships on line.

Please contact Bob Wells at rcwells@cox.net if you would like to help.

## Blue Phlox (Sweet William, Timber Phlox) *Phlox divaricata*

By Eric Scholar



Eric Scholar

Blue phlox is a common wildflower seen throughout areas of partial shade of rich moist woodlands often in patches or colonies along streams. It blooms from April to June. Slender stems grow to 30 inches tall, mostly erect and unbranched to the flower head. Some stems may be somewhat reclining. Dark leafy shoots spread from the base and often take root at the nodes. Leaves on these shoots are leathery and may retain some brownish green color throughout the year. The upper stems often tend to be somewhat hairy and sticky. The leaves are opposite in widely spaced pairs. They are oval or lance shaped to 2 inches long and with little or no petiole. The perennial root system is tough, fibrous, and stringy.

A loose cluster of showy blue to violet, sometimes white, flowers occur at the top of the stem. Individual flowers are slender tubes with five petal-like lobes. The flowers are sometimes confused with blue Dames rocket flowers, which only have four petals. Lobes may be either rounded or with a shallow notch. The flowers are noted for their color, beauty and fragrance.

The fruit is a small oval capsule with 2 or 3 compartments and a single seed per compartment.

Many other Phlox species are found in this area growing under a wide variety of conditions. The typical three style branches, which extend from the ovary are characteristic of the phlox family.

Among the other phlox species are prairie phlox (*P.pilosa*) which is often found on prairies and has narrow leaves with pointed tips. Its flowers are typically deep pink with a darker magenta spot at the base and fall phlox (*P.paniculata*) a more pinkish flower which blooms in the fall. There are also several garden varieties derived from our native species.

Blue phlox as well as other phlox species are very attractive to pollinating insects. Nectar produced at the base of the flower tube attracts several insects, which then pick up pollen in the process of exploring the flower. Some sixteen species of insects have been documented to visit timber phlox in early spring.

In early medicine leaves of some phlox species were made into a tea and used to treat eczema and to purify the blood. A tea of boiled roots was once thought useful in treating venereal disease. No other food or medicinal uses by Indians or pioneers are known.



Eric Scholar

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

**Representative Brad Ashford**, U. S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515; Phone: 202-225-4155

**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

*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.

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### 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: National Audubon Society, Inc., 225 Varick Street, 7th Floor, New York, New York 10014

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### Membership in Audubon Society of Omaha only

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 bird of prey, please contact a Raptor Recovery volunteer at 402-731-9869.

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

Non-Profit Organization  
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**Omaha, Nebraska**  
**PERMIT NO. 79**

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

Phone: 402-720-1635 – omahaaudubon.org.

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

**Elected Officers:**

President Tad Leeper – 670-5919  
1st Vice President Eric Scholar – 551-5045  
2nd Vice President Tisha Johnson – 885-0990  
Past President Laurine Blankenau – 451-3647  
Treasurer Betty Fullerton – 493-4362  
Recording Sec’y Linda Dennis – 733-6548  
Corres. Sec’y Kathleen Rose – 292-8912

Elected Directors:

Jonas Grundman – 216-5413  
Bob Wells – 393-4683  
Bob Fuchs – 553-8242  
Helen Bartee – 657-3845  
Matt Miller – 681-4625  
Sarah Miller – 908-9678

Standing Committee Chairpersons:

Conservation Bob Fuchs – 553-8242  
Education Clem Klaphake – 292-2276  
Field Trip Clem Klaphake – 292-2276  
Finance Nelli Falzgraf – 292-9687  
Membership Kathy Schwery – 733-6548  
Natural Areas Management Glenn Pollock – 571-6230

Program Jerry Toll – 453-9239  
Publication Helen Bartee – 657-3845  
Publicity Jackie Scholar – 551-5045

Other Activities:

Bird Seed Sale Chairs  
Kathleen Rose – 292-8912  
Carol Rasmussen – 731-3939  
Speakers Bureau – Eunice Levisay – 393-0545  
Historian – Eric Scholar – 551-5045  
Exec. Dir., Audubon Nebr. – Marian Langan – 402-797-2301  
ASO Administrator – Julie Spellerberg – 402-720-1635  
NAS Board Member – Michele Crist – 208-863-1918  
Pan-Flyway Director – Karim al-Khafaji

Six issues of *The Meadowlark* are published annually:  
January - February, March - April, May - June, July -  
August, September - October, November - December.

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

Send address changes to: Kathy Schwery, 19612  
Ridgeway Road, Plattsmouth NE 68048, or  
email: djschw@windstream.net.